



A Class-Analytic Approach to  
Agricultural Joint Ventures in the  
Communal Areas of South Africa

Brittany Bunce

# Class Dynamics



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This paper engages with key debates regarding the dynamics of class formation in the former Bantustans (or 'homelands') of South Africa. It is widely acknowledged that the oppressive, racially defined character of the labour regimes that emerged in the colonial and Apartheid eras, constrained rural class formation in these areas to some extent. However, a dominant 'linear proletarianisation thesis' has overstated class homogeneity, and its continuing influence on scholars, means that processes of incipient class formation in these contexts continue to be underestimated (Levin and Neocosmos, 1989; Cousins, 2010). These debates are explored in the context of a comparative analysis of two Joint Venture (JV) dairy farms, located on irrigation schemes in the former Ciskei of South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. These farms involve residents from the rural settlements of Keiskammahoek and Shiloh, as both landowners and workers. JVs between agribusiness companies and customary landowners are currently a core focus of government attempts to revive agriculture in communal areas. The case study presented here, illustrates quite divergent outcomes when the same JV model is implemented in different rural settlements, most powerfully because of differences in the class structure of both settlements. A class-based typology assists in understanding the tensions that the JV model of capitalist farming generates in relation to household reproduction, in a class-differentiated manner. The paper focuses primarily on a class-analytic approach, which combines Patnaik's (1987) labour exploitation criterion with class typologies developed for the South African context by Cousins (2010) and Levin et al (1997). The paper argues that analysis of the nexus of relations between land and water rights and class dynamics (which intersect with other aspects of social difference in complex ways), accounts for many of the divergent outcomes evident in Keiskammahoek and Shiloh. In particular, it helps to explain the more intense intragroup conflicts that have emerged in the Shiloh case. A class-analytic approach is also significant, because it illuminates the emerging agrarian class structure that a JV intervention conditions, and thus explores the implications of the model for agrarian change in South Africa.

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# Contents

List of Tables and Figures .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Dynamics of Class Formation in South Africa’s Former Labour Reserves .....	4
3. A Comparative Case Study: Amadlelo Agri Sharemilking Farms in Shiloh and Keiskammahoek .....	7
4. Research Methods.....	9
4.1. Methodology for Class Analysis: Patnaik’s Labour Exploitation Criterion .....	9
5. Results of Employing a Class-Analytic Typology for Investigating Social Differentiation in JVs.....	15
5.1. Characteristics of Class Differentiation in Shiloh .....	17
5.2. Characteristics of Class Differentiation in Keiskammahoek.....	19
6. Discussion and Comparative Analysis of Shiloh and Keiskammahoek .....	26
7. Conclusion .....	30
References.....	32

## List of Tables and Figures

Table 2.1: <i>Existing Class Typologies for Agrarian Social Formations in South Africa</i> .....	5
Table 3.1: <i>Key Features and Main Contrasts Between Keiskammahoek and Shiloh JV Farms</i> .....	8
Table 4.1: <i>Methodology for Establishing Class Categories and Proportions for Case Studies</i> .....	13
Table 5.1: <i>Shiloh - Features of the Labour Exploitation Ratio</i> .....	17
Table 5.2: <i>Shiloh – Access to Different Types of On and Off-Farm Income Sources by Class Categories</i>	18
Table 5.3: <i>Shiloh – Aspects of Socio Economic Differentiation and Household Composition by Class Categories</i> .....	18
Table 5.4: <i>Keiskammahoek – Features of the Labour Exploitation Ratio (<math>E=X/F</math>)</i> .....	21
Table 5.5: <i>Keiskammahoek – Access to Different Types of On and Off-Farm Income Sources by Class Categories</i> .....	23
Table 5.6: <i>Keiskammahoek Aspects of Socioeconomic Differentiation and Household Composition by Class Categories</i> .....	24
Table 6.1: <i>Class Typology for Combined Taxonomic Groups of JV Dividend and JV Dividend and Wage Households</i> .....	27

## Abstract

This paper engages with key debates regarding the dynamics of class formation in the former Bantustans (or 'homelands') of South Africa. It is widely acknowledged that the oppressive, racially defined character of the labour regimes that emerged in the colonial and Apartheid eras, constrained rural class formation in these areas to some extent. However, a dominant 'linear proletarianisation thesis' has overstated class homogeneity, and its continuing influence on scholars, means that processes of incipient class formation in these contexts continue to be underestimated (Levin and Neocosmos 1989; Cousins 2010). These debates are explored in the context of a comparative analysis of two Joint Venture (JV) dairy farms, located on irrigation schemes in the former Ciskei of South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. These farms involve residents from the rural settlements of Keiskammahoek and Shiloh, as both landowners and workers. JVs between agribusiness companies and customary landowners are currently a core focus of government attempts to revive agriculture in communal areas. The case study presented here illustrates quite divergent outcomes when the same JV model is implemented in different rural settlements, most powerfully because of differences in the class structure of each settlement. A class-based typology assists in understanding the tensions that the JV model of capitalist farming generates in relation to household reproduction, in a class-differentiated manner. The paper focuses primarily on a class-analytic approach, which combines Patnaik's (1987) 'labour exploitation criterion' with class typologies developed for the South African context by Cousins (2010) and Levin *et al.* (1997). The paper argues that analysis of the nexus of relations between land and water rights and class dynamics (which intersect with other aspects of social difference in complex ways), accounts for many of the divergent outcomes evident in Keiskammahoek and Shiloh. In particular, it helps to explain the more intense intragroup conflicts that have emerged in the Shiloh case. A class-analytic approach is also significant, because it illuminates the emerging agrarian class structure that a JV intervention conditions, and thus explores the implications of the model for agrarian change in South Africa.

# 1. Introduction

A major and unresolved challenge facing South Africa's post-Apartheid Government, is how best to overcome the historical injustices of land dispossession and the resultant poverty now found in the communal areas of the former 'homelands', where most victims of forced removals were relocated. The former 'homeland's or Bantustans<sup>1</sup> are a key legacy of the 1913 and 1936 land acts, which reserved only 13 per cent of the land for black South Africans. These regions continue to suffer from a legacy of poverty and underdevelopment that has sharpened in recent years, due to the failure of post-apartheid land and agrarian reform to address land hunger, tenure insecurity and impoverished livelihoods (Cousins and Walker 2015; Claassens 2015). Many rural households maintain the strong linkages to urban areas that were forged under apartheid, and often 'rural settlements' are in reality, homes for displaced urban workers. Classical notions of 'the countryside' filled with 'rural people' are often inappropriate for describing rural South Africa (Murray 1995). Wage labour and remittances have long been the dominant income sources for rural households. However, a growing crisis of unemployment in recent years has meant that the livelihood contributions of formal employment are declining, and social grants have become increasingly central to meeting household reproduction needs. Along with increased dependence on off-farm income and state grants, as well as population increase, the ability of rural households to engage in farming has been compromised (Cousins 2013; Neves and du Toit 2013; Hebinck and van Averbeke 2013). Yet post-apartheid government policy continues to focus on the revival of agriculture as key to poverty reduction (DRDLR 2011; National Planning Commission 2013).

In line with the South African Government's hybrid of neo-liberal and social welfare approaches to development, one important strategy for addressing the challenges facing smallholder farmers and land reform beneficiaries has so far been the promotion of inclusive business models<sup>2</sup> such as joint ventures (Tapela 2005; Lahiff *et al.* 2012). JVs typically involve collaboration between 'agribusiness' investors and 'small farmers' (Cotula *et al.* 2009; IFAD 2012) or local people with existing land rights (Mayson 2003). Since around 2005, JVs have been promoted as a key model in land and agrarian reform (Pieterse *et al.* 2017; Lahiff *et al.* 2012). The JV model's success to date, however, is questionable. Research in South Africa has illustrated that many JVs have struggled to take off, and have collapsed after major losses for both investors and communities (van Koppen *et al.* 2018; Cousins and Gumede 2017; Bitzer and Bijman 2014; Davis 2014; Lahiff *et al.* 2012; Aliber and Maluleke 2010; Pellizzoli 2009; Tapela 2005). Despite mounting evidence of unfavorable outcomes, these models continue to be posited as 'win-wins' for both small farmers and agribusiness, if they are structured in appropriate ways, in both the South African and the international literature (Pieterse *et al.* 2017; Vermeulen and Cotula 2010; Liversage 2010; IFAD 2012).

When we situate the JV model of agricultural development within a political economy analysis of relations of land, labour and capital in South Africa, it becomes clear why a model in which private sector actors are supposed to lead development has become so dominant. Since Africans have been historically marginalised in the agriculture sector, concerns have abounded regarding the 'viability' of supporting a differentiated small to medium-scale sector of black farmers. This has led to the belief that promoting equity ownership of existing farms and other agricultural enterprises, alongside secure employment, is more pragmatic (Cousins and Scoones 2010; Davis 2014). The prevalence of a 'one-size-fits-all' JV model

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<sup>1</sup> There were 10 'homelands' designated for different South African 'tribes' (Claasens 2015). The Ciskei, which is the focus of this study, was one of four homelands that became 'nominally independent states' and was designated for the Rharhabe Xhosa (Switzer 1993).

<sup>2</sup> The term 'inclusive business model' is used to refer to a host of arrangements that aim to involve poor people in agricultural value chains as owners, producers or employees, including joint ventures, contract farming, lease contracts, farm worker share-equity schemes and management contracts (Vermeulen and Cotula 2010; Cotula 2013; IFAD 2012).

can also be explained by a tendency among both policy makers and researchers to assume that the destructive effects of the colonial and apartheid eras resulted in a 'linear process of proletarianisation' among former homeland residents (Levin and Neocosmos 1989). Empirical evidence presented in this paper, however, points to the reality that rural communities in contemporary South Africa are in fact highly differentiated. This is evident in the diverse socially reproductive strategies pursued by households and quite distinct responses to the same JV business model, both between and within different settlements in the former Ciskei homeland. This paper challenges dominant assumptions of homogeneity, exploring the underlying class dynamics that help explain these differences. The focus of this paper is thus on only one of many key aspects relevant to understanding the impacts of JVs of this kind.<sup>3</sup>

In the paper I propose a context-specific class typology for exploring the dynamics of social differentiation. The typology is based on application of the methodology that Patnaik (1987) developed for investigating class relations in rural India, using a 'labour exploitation criterion', together with relevant adjustments that take into account the character of class relations in South Africa's communal areas. I make use of class typologies developed by Cousins (2010) and Levin *et al.* (1997) for South Africa, but I also draw on those proposed by Neocosmos (1987) for Swaziland and by Scoones *et al.* (2012) and Cousins *et al.* (1992) for Zimbabwe. These authors have all considered, to differing degrees, the complex interrelations between class differences in agriculture and social reproduction strategies located largely, or entirely, off-farm.

Patnaik's (1987) conceptual framework, distinguishes between rural classes based on a key criterion - the degree to which one employs others, works for others or works for oneself. In this paper I combine this principal indicator of 'labour exploitation' with a range of other variables, such as the income contributions of social grants, levels of ownership of farming assets and livestock, and the contribution of agricultural production, to simple or expanded reproduction (Cousins 2010). This enables me to differentiate between classes which have similar labour exploitation ratios but which I consider to have a qualitatively different class character. I argue that making use of this class typology is illuminating of key processes and political dynamics in my case study sites. However, I caution, as do many other authors, that class dynamics are not the only ones at work in contexts such as these, since they are intermeshed with many other 'determinations', and are thus complex, contingent and subject to processes of constant change. Employing a typology based on only some key variables always involves a degree of reductionism, and on its own explains only some aspects of social reality (Scoones *et al.* 2012; Cousins 2010; Bernstein 2010).

In the paper, I explore how the dynamics of class and other aspects of social differentiation manifest within developmental interventions such as JVs through a concrete comparative case study of two JV dairy farms involving the same agribusiness partner, Amadlelo Agri. The farms are located on irrigation schemes in Keiskammahoek and Shiloh villages in the former Ciskei homeland, now in the Eastern Cape province. The comparative case study illustrates how implementation of the same business model tends to produce quite divergent outcomes.

Some of the key factors explaining these different outcomes are both the historical and contemporary processes of class formation, and how these intersect with land ownership and the wider crisis of unemployment. Employing the class typology illustrates how the JV model of capitalist farming generates a range of tensions and contradictions within processes of social reproduction engaged in by diverse households (Murray Li 2011; Murray Li 2014; Manenzhe 2018; Mackintosh 1989; Pellizzol 2009;

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<sup>3</sup> There are many other important dynamics not discussed here, such as the relations between socially differentiated communities and both agribusiness firms and the state; the nature of intragroup conflicts; the social relations of production that the JV model entails, as well as the significance of the latter for governance and financial relations and processes of agrarian change (see my forthcoming PhD thesis (Bunce forthcoming).

Davis 2014). These tensions are in turn engendering complex intra-group conflicts, which are framed by narratives of belonging and identity politics. The implications of this type of analysis is that 'changing the terms' of JV contracts and improving 'governance', the focus of much of the literature on JVs to date, may not fundamentally reverse the types of negative impacts documented by research. These contradictions, it will be argued, emerge from within the logic of the model itself.

## 2. Dynamics of Class Formation in South Africa's Former Labour Reserves

It is necessary to briefly sketch the historical process through which South Africa's Bantustans emerged, in order to understand the agrarian landscapes in which JV interventions are taking place. In the radical political economy tradition, forged through the pioneering work of authors such as Legassick and Wolpe (1976), the Bantustans were understood as constituting 'pre-capitalist modes of production', which articulated with the dominant capitalist mode of production. In this view, the Bantustans played an important role in the development of capitalism because they provided the basis for 'cheap' migrant labour essentially by subsidising low wages. This was possible because migrants reproduced themselves, in part through their rural households and own-account agricultural production (Wolpe 1972). Agricultural production was, however, constrained in the homelands by this exploitative system and slowly household livelihoods became less reliant on farming, as reproduction needs were met primarily through wage labour and migrant remittances (Cousins 2010; Murray 1995).

Bundy (1979) demonstrated how in the early period of industrialisation, conditions for accumulation existed and successful African petty commodity producers emerged. However, the state's increasingly discriminatory policies eroded these opportunities, thus marginalising the African peasantry. Radical political economists emphasise how this slow and uneven process eventually transformed the peasantry into a proletariat (Levin and Neocosmos 1989), which is seen as a crucial mechanism through which white agrarian capital emerged in South Africa (Morris 1976). However, this assumption of 'linear proletarianisation' is hotly debated in the literature. Beinart *et al.* (1986), for example, emphasise the rich diversity of regional experiences and the uncertain outcomes of capitalist development. Switzer (1993: 5) describes the results of the extension of capitalist relations in the Ciskei, which

...gradually undermined and destroyed the reproductive capacity of African homestead production [...] A growing portion of the African population- landless peasants, agricultural workers, urbanites who did not participate formally in the capitalist sector and were not employed by government, and women in a variety of occupations- operated on the fringes of the wage-labour economy and collectively composed the most disorganized and repressed social category. The vast majority of blacks would eventually be reduced to these super-exploited 'excluded classes'.

Switzer 1993

It is true that the oppressive character of the labour regime constrained rural class formation in the homelands to some extent (Cousins 2010). However, there has been an unfortunate tendency to overstate this homogeneity. Levin and Neocosmos (1989: 238) highlight the lapse in reasoning that underlies this view. 'The assumption of linear proletarianisation underlying Wolpe's thesis obscures the fact that wage remittances may be necessary to subsidise agricultural petty commodity production rather than the reverse' (Levin and Neocosmos 1989). Several authors emphasise that in the apartheid period wages and remittances were central to sustaining agricultural production (Murray 1981; Spiegel 1986; James 1985; Beinart *et al.* 1986). This issue was explored in the Ciskei by authors such as de Wet (1985: 90), who asserted that it is 'a family's participation in the migratory wage labour economy that provides it with the money necessary to cultivate'. In more recent studies, Hebinck and van Averbeke (2013) emphasise that agrarian activities continue to contribute significantly to household reproduction in spite of their contribution to monetary income being relatively low.

So how can we begin to shed light on the dynamics of class and other aspects of social differentiation? Interrogating tendencies towards rural class differentiation requires an engagement with the concept of petty commodity production. Class differentiation among the peasantry occurs as a result of being 'locked into' commodity production in order to meet subsistence needs, so that peasants can no longer

reproduce themselves outside of commodity relations (Brenner 2001). Within a capitalist mode of production, small enterprises that predominantly make use of family labour are best thought of as differentiated classes of 'petty commodity producers' (Bernstein 2010). These enterprises combine within them the contradictory class places of labour and capital. Since they own the means of production they are 'capitalists', but because they exploit their own labour power they also occupy the class place of 'labour'. In reality, many will make use of hired labour for certain tasks, but the majority of labour inputs are sourced from the family. The class positions of capital and labour can also be differentially distributed within the household. It is common, for example, for the class place of labour to be occupied by women and children, while men control the production process and thus occupy the class place of capital (Cousins 2010; Bernstein 2010). The position of petty commodity producers is characteristically unstable, in part because of how they combine these contradictory class positions (Bernstein 1986). Their ability to deal with competition and shocks, and to negotiate these internal contradictions of class, is uneven and this results in a tendency towards class differentiation (Cousins 2010; Gibbon and Neocosmos 1985).

Lenin (1967 [1899]) explored the tendencies and dynamics of class differentiation among the peasantry in the context of the Russian countryside in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and identified poor, middle and rich peasants. Poor peasants struggle to reproduce themselves without squeezing their own labour-power, their capital, or both. Many lose control of their capital and come to rely exclusively on the sale of their labour-power, thus transforming into proletarians (or semi-proletarians, if they maintain some foothold in agricultural production). Middle peasants can engage in simple reproduction and meet these pressures through their own efforts. Rich peasants are those able to engage in expanded reproduction, accumulating capital and perhaps producing on an increasingly larger scale of production, and some may become capitalist farmers over time.

Lenin's (1967) framework has been widely utilised to describe general tendencies towards class differentiation in a plethora of different contexts. Cousins (2010), however, has argued that it cannot be applied to the South African context, because the emergence of an African peasantry was deliberately constrained by the creation of the 'homelands' as labour reserves, and by the appropriation of land by an emerging 'white capitalist farming class'. Cousins (2010) proposes a different way of understanding class that takes account of the intricate ways in which wage employment is combined with self-employment.

An alternative approach to analyzing rural social formations in the region is to view both proletarianisation and the emergence of petty commodity production as class trajectories within a capitalist economy, and, furthermore, to see these as being able to be combined with each other (in complex and contradictory ways). This possibility yields the composite category of 'worker-peasants', in which simple reproduction is achieved through combining small-scale agriculture and wage labour.

Cousins 2010: 12

Typologies have been developed in the sub-Saharan African context, which attempt to capture this reality of households meeting their reproduction through both agriculture and wage employment (Scoones *et al.* 2012; Neocosmos 1987, Cousins *et al.* 1992). I have summarised two typologies in Table 2.1 below, which were developed for the South African context. Cousins (2010) framework focuses on small-scale agricultural producers, and thus does not include class categories for rural residents who do not engage in farming and combine off-farm incomes such as wages and social grants, while Levin *et al.* (1997) include a category for a 'rural proletariat, dependent on selling their labour power. I will draw on these two typologies in proposing a relevant typology for my case study sites, while making adjustments for contextually specific dynamics.

Table 2.1: *Existing Class Typologies for Agrarian Social Formations in South Africa*

Levin et al. (1997)	Cousins (2010)
<b>Petty bourgeoisie:</b> salaried individuals who engage in farming.	<b>Capitalists whose main income is not from farming:</b> farm on a small scale but their main income is another business.
<b>Petty capitalists:</b> engage in petty commodity production, hire some wage labour and some have access to small businesses.	<b>Small-scale capitalist farmers:</b> rely substantially on hired labour and can begin to engage in expanded reproduction and capital accumulation.
	<b>Petty commodity producers:</b> are able to reproduce themselves from farming alone (or only minor additional forms of income).
<b>Worker farmers:</b> wage workers with access to land.	<b>Worker farmers:</b> farm on a substantial scale but are also engaged in wage labour, and combine these in their simple reproduction.
<b>Allotment holding wage workers:</b> primarily dependent on wages and pensions, also have access to small garden plots.	<b>Allotment holding wage workers:</b> work small plots or gardens but are primarily dependent on wages for their simple reproduction.
<b>Rural proletariat:</b> landless or near landless, depend almost wholly on wages.	<b>Supplementary food producers:</b> work small plots or gardens and do not have access to wage income. Rely on social grants, craftwork or petty trading for their simple reproduction.

### 3. A Comparative Case Study: Amadlelo Agri Sharemilking Farms in Shiloh and Keiskammahoek

Amadlelo Agri<sup>4</sup> is an agribusiness firm whose stated mission is 'to contribute to transformation by creating profitable, sustainable, black empowered Agri Business'. They have established seven dairy JV farms in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces. *Keiskammahoek '7 Stars Trust'* was established in 2010 and the *'Shiloh Dairies Trust'* were established in 2011. Both farms are located on the site of homeland-era irrigation schemes, originally established in 1976 at Keiskammahoek and in the mid 1960s at Shiloh (and subsequently revitalised in 1979). In brief, the irrigation schemes were originally designed and established by a consulting company, Loxton and Venn, according to a capital-intensive and technologically sophisticated model, including estate farming of a central unit with hired labour, alongside food plots for household subsistence. The schemes were later managed by the Ciskei Agricultural Corporation (Ulimocor) until it was liquidated in 1997 (Averbeke 1998; Holbrook 1996), after which the schemes fell out of full commercial production, although some marginal production continued at Keiskammahoek. Both schemes were later resuscitated through the Recapitalisation and Development Programme (ReCap)<sup>5</sup>, when Amadlelo Agri was identified as the strategic partner. The similar contexts and time frames allow for some common features in these schemes that facilitate comparison, however they also differ in fundamental ways. Some key features of the farms are captured in Table 3.1.

The much larger group of 395 households at Shiloh, with rights to relatively small irrigation plots, is sharply contrasted to the historical context at Keiskammahoek, where land consolidation benefited only 35 households. The latter is significant because it points to a classic trajectory of class differentiation among petty commodity producers, resulting in some farmers being squeezed out of an original group of around 88 farmers that first settled on the Keiskammahoek scheme around 1976. Most of the remaining 35 households have private title to their land (or are in the process of finalising their titles), unlike Shiloh, where irrigation plots are held under a form of communal tenure (van Averbeke *et al.* 1998).

In Shiloh, most landowners have given all of their land over to the JV, with a minority maintaining a few quarter hectare food plots. The history of 'betterment planning' under apartheid, in which households were physically separated from their plots, means that homes are not located on the irrigation scheme but in nearby villages. This means that most people have the use of communal grazing camps and their small garden plots for own-account farming, and they do not have access to water from the irrigation scheme. This has limited the ability of households in Shiloh to continue to engage in own-account farming to the same extent as households in Keiskammahoek. In contrast, in Keiskammahoek households had accumulated relatively large plots in the past (of between 12 and 20 hectares), and most homes remain located on these plots and are surrounded by pastures on the irrigation scheme.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Amadlelo Agri's shareholders include: Vuwa Investments (a black empowerment company) which has a 35.1 per cent share, Amadlelo Milk Producers Investment Company (owned by 50 white commercial dairy farmers) which has a 49.9 per cent share and the Amadlelo Empowerment Trust (500 workers from 50 commercial farms) who own a 15 per cent share. Amadlelo asserts that no profits are currently distributed to its shareholders because of debt repayments. Management confirms that R100 million went into building Amadlelo Agri with an initial investment of only R25 million from the white commercial dairy farmers. Debts are therefore still being paid off to private financial institutions and to national development finance institutions like the Industrial Development Corporation and the National Empowerment Fund.

<sup>5</sup> Government has made access to ReCap funding conditional upon beneficiaries entering into an arrangement with a 'strategic partner' (DRDLR 2013). There is thus pressure placed on both communities and agribusiness to enter into JVs if they want to access scarce government funding (Lahiff *et al.* 2012).

<sup>6</sup> The houses of some farmers had to be removed to make way for the construction of new centre pivots for the irrigation scheme. In these cases they have been allocated new houses by the JV, including large household gardens.

Many households have maintained plots of around one to two hectares for cropping and livestock production.

Table 3.1: Key Features and Main Contrasts Between Keiskammahoek and Shiloh JV Farms

Name of JV Farm	Gov't funding (via Recap) <sup>7</sup>	Hectares of land under JV	Dairy herd size	Land tenure	Size of plots per household	Mean dividends per household in 2015/16	Households receiving dividends	Number of permanent labourers
<b>Keiskamma hoek</b> 7 Stars Trust	R54 million (€3.6M)	745	2000	Private title, deed of sale & municipal land	12-20 hectares	R110, 000 (€7367)	35	50
<b>Shiloh</b> Shiloh Dairies Trust	R30 million (€2M)	450	900	Customary tenure	+/- 1 hectare	R2096 (€140)	395	26

The Amadlelo Agri JV model is based on a '50/50 sharemilking'<sup>8</sup> agreement. The community, through government investment, brings the fixed assets to the business including the land, irrigation and the milking parlour. These assets are owned by the relative community cooperatives: Mayime Cooperative at Shiloh and 7 Stars Cooperative at Keiskammahoek. Amadlelo Agri brings the cows<sup>9</sup> and other movable assets. Each JV sharemilking farm has an operating company in the form of a Trust (Keiskammahoek 7 Stars Trust and Shiloh Dairies Trust). The Trusts are governed by representatives from both Amadlelo Agri and the community cooperatives. Amadlelo Agri is responsible for the day-to-day running of the farms. An important focus of Amadlelo's JV model is to train and mentor skilled black farm managers. After a 10 per cent management fee has been deducted, profits from milk sales are split on a 50/50 basis between Amadlelo Agri and households affiliated to the farming cooperatives. The dividends captured in Table 3.1 above include land rentals and profits. At Keiskammahoek, the fewer households benefiting and the larger scale of production, means the dividend for irrigation plot holders is substantially larger than at Shiloh. In the 2015/6 financial year, irrigation plot holders at Keiskammahoek received a once-off dividend of R50,000 (based on farm profits), as well as R5000 a month, which they referred to as a 'land-rental'.<sup>10</sup> At Shiloh dividends (based on farm profits) were paid twice a year and the amount depended on the size of plots contributed by households. The Shiloh JV farm acquired some additional quarter hectare food plots and households were paid a set rental of R600 a year for these.

<sup>7</sup> Amadlelo Agri reports that government investment in fixed assets across all of their projects to date has amounted to R197 million (€12.5 million), while they have invested R 92 million (€5.8 million) in dairy animals and movable equipment.

<sup>8</sup> Amadlelo Agri adapted their 50/50 sharemilking model from New Zealand (see Blunden *et al.* 1997; Pepper 2013; Gardner 2011).

<sup>9</sup> The majority of cows are rented from commercial farmers. In the long-term Amadlelo Agri plans to buy out these leases in order to own its livestock.

<sup>10</sup> Although landowners refer to these as rents Amadlelo explains that because the sharemilking model implies that the landowners' contribution to the farming business is their land and fixed assets, the dividend is in fact their profit share. There are however cases where additional land has been contributed to the JV schemes and a set land rental is paid, e.g. at Shiloh for additional quarter hectare food plots that were acquired and at Amadlelo's Middledrift JV farm.

## 4. Research Methods

This paper analyses data collected between September 2015 and December 2016. Research entailed a longitudinal analysis of livelihoods, land rights and land use. The current status of these aspects was revealed through a household livelihood survey, together with qualitative enquiry. To understand the livelihoods of people prior to the intervention, I drew on existing research findings, as well as my own life-history interviews, and what historical records I could obtain. The fieldwork included a household survey of 121 households.<sup>11</sup> Data were gathered on household composition, livelihood sources and incomes, labour relations, land ownership and use, household and farming assets and the distribution of JV benefits and risks. Survey data were complemented by qualitative data collected in 103 interviews and two focus groups.<sup>12</sup>

In this study, the main unit of analysis is the household. In order to generate a meaningful sample of the population for use in the livelihood survey, I created 'taxonomic groups' from across these households, which relate to the JV in distinctive ways. These groups included *JV dividend receiving households* (receiving profits and land rents from the JV), *JV dividend and wage receiving households* (receiving profits and land rents and also employed in JV jobs), *JV wage receiving households* (employed in JV jobs) and *no JV benefits households*<sup>13</sup> (a control group, comprising households which do not benefit directly from either JV dividends or jobs). Sampling<sup>14</sup> according to these taxonomic groups ensured that I included a variety of households 'benefiting' in different ways. I then made use of survey data as a starting point to identify different classes using Patnaik's (1987) labour exploitation criterion. These are substantive 'analytical categories' whose members relate to one another causally or structurally (Sayer 1992). The dynamics of social differentiation were investigated through ethnographic immersion and the use of qualitative methods, to understand relational processes underpinning class and other relations.

### 4.1. Methodology for Class Analysis: Patnaik's Labour Exploitation Criterion

The framework for my approach to rural class analysis is based in part on Patnaik's (1987) *Labour Exploitation Criterion*, which is embedded firmly in the Marxist tradition. Patnaik's empirical index, distinguishes peasant classes based on 'the degree and type of labour exploitation relative to self-employment, as the single most important indicator of class status (*ibid.*: 51). The primary forms of exploitation that she considers are, firstly, direct exploitation through hiring labour (i.e. surplus value

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<sup>11</sup> This comprises 62 households in Shiloh and 55 households in Keiskammahoek. In addition, four JV Managers were surveyed. Their data was analysed separately since managers are in a qualitatively different class position from other beneficiaries, and their households are outside of these rural communities.

<sup>12</sup> Additional fieldwork was conducted on another four JVs in the Ciskei and another two Amadlelo Agri JV farms, all of which has contributed to general insights.

<sup>13</sup> For all the taxonomic groups, except the *no JV benefits group*, household lists were available to apply a random sampling of households, and groups were manageable enough to ensure a representative sample. For the *no JV benefits group*, I had to make use of opportunistic sampling. The group was also very large, which didn't allow a representative sample to be achieved. The limitations of the sampling method, is that it was necessarily imprecise due to these constraints, and thus my conclusions about the *no JV benefits group* are tentative. However, for the other taxonomic groups, I can be relatively confident about the validity of the finding.

<sup>14</sup> In Keiskammahoek, I reached 54 per cent of households with irrigation plots (JV dividend receiving households and JV dividend and wage receiving households); 63 per cent of households with JV jobs (JV wage receiving households and JV dividend and wage receiving households); and 0.81 per cent of no JV benefits households. However, to be 'comparatively representative' I included the same number of households for the latter as irrigation plot holders. In Shiloh, I reached only 12 per cent of households with irrigation plots, (because of the large numbers); 73 per cent of households with JV jobs; and 0.5 per cent of no JV benefits households. However, I reached the same number of households for the latter as JV dividend receiving households, to be 'comparatively representative'.

appropriation<sup>15</sup>) and, secondly, indirect exploitation through leasing of land (rent appropriation). The latter is based on the Marxist theory of 'absolute ground rent', which cannot be given a comprehensive treatment here. Very schematically, under a capitalist mode of production rent is inextricably linked to the existence of a class of landed property, which claims a monopoly of property over land. The existence of rent is explained thus by Patnaik (1983: 75), 'Absolute ground rent is a tribute exacted by the class of landlords by virtue of their monopoly of landed property, from the capitalist class out of the total surplus value appropriated by the capitalist class from the working class'. In adopting this framework for analysis of my cases, I view the JV dividends that households with rights to irrigation plots receive as a form of rent involving indirect exploitation of labour.

Patnaik (1987) notes that, when defining a labour exploitation ratio for households, the unit of measurement could be labour-days, product or income. She chooses labour-days as her key criterion because it is easier to measure and 'because it lays bare the underlying production relation in the clearest possible manner' (Patnaik 1987). However, she notes that any unit of measurement would suffice, as the latter two are simply 'the product and value forms or expressions of the first, labour days' (*ibid.*:52). I have chosen to use income data as my key measure for the practical reason that in my household survey I gathered detailed data on incomes but not on labour-days. Given that residents of Shiloh and Keiskammahoek engage in a variety of off-farm livelihood activities, with quite variable degrees of income generation, it could also be argued that 'income' may be more illuminating than 'labour-days' worked, since days worked in an informal or seasonal unskilled job would render quite different incomes from, for example, a permanent job requiring skills.

I must, however, acknowledge that there are definite limitations in the use of income data for calculating a labour exploitation ration. I briefly detail these here, since other research along these lines may be able to overcome these limitations by designing appropriate household survey instruments. The most obvious limitation is that income data relies on the honest and accurate recall of income data by key informants, who for various reasons may under- or over-estimate incomes or provide inaccurate information. In my case, every care was taken to gather accurate data, and although a few expected discrepancies were observed, I was reassured of the general accuracy of my data when I observed clear patterns for particular types of income sources. In addition, incomes from social grants and public works programmes could be independently verified, and incomes from JV jobs could be verified through pay-slips.

Another limitation of income data, derives from the challenges of operationalising the 'labour exploitation criterion'. Income data do not allow for a neat division into different types of labour, in the same way that data on working days allow. This challenge presented itself particularly clearly in relation to 'own-account farming' where labour was being hired in. In many (but not all) cases this scale of farming entails some use of household labour as well. It is somewhat easier to distinguish between household labour *days* and labour *days* hired in, than it is to clearly distinguish *income* derived from these two forms of labour. One would need a great deal of detailed income data in order to accurately calculate the total surplus value being appropriated through hiring of labour, as opposed to self-exploitation (see Marx 1973 for rate of surplus value). Detailed information of this kind was not available in my survey, however, and thus a more in-depth analysis was not attempted.

I resigned myself to accepting that given that relatively little labour was being hired in in this context, if labour was being hired in more frequently for own-account farming, this in itself was significant and indicative of class location. For the purpose of calculating the labour exploitation ratio, it was thus sufficient to categorise income as being derived either from 'labour hired in' or from 'family labour', without dividing it into approximate proportions of total labour days. Since incomes derived from own-

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15 Surplus value is the product of the unpaid surplus labour time of producers (labour), which is appropriated by capitalists as profit (Bernstein 2010).

account farming were relatively insignificant, compared to other sources of income, it did not exert much influence on the overall patterns that emerged. In contexts where own-account farming is a predominant activity, involving both hiring in labour and self-employment, it would probably be worth the effort to develop a more discerning approach.

In the use of the labour exploitation index Patnaik (1987) acknowledges that one has to accept a degree of reductionism. I am aware of the limitations of the approach, but as with all 'typologies', one may need to accede to a degree of abstraction and then explore the degree to which it produces meaningful results. However, basing an empirical index first and foremost on labour relations is preferable to alternative approaches that infer the class position of rural producers from, for example, scale of production or size of land holding. It is also preferable to approaches which identify class by 'individual attributes', such as a person's education, which are then used to explain differential material life conditions, while often excluding the dynamics of systemic inequality (Wright 2015).

Patnaik' labour exploitation ratio is calculated by the following formula:

$$E = (H_i - H_o) / F = X/F$$

Labour-exploitation ratio = Net labour-days hired in / Family labour in self-employment

where  $H_i$  = Labour-days hired in or *net income from labour hired in* (including rents)

$H_o$  = Family labour-days hired out or *net income from family labour hired out* (i.e. total wages)

$F$  = Family labour-days in self-employment or *net income from family labour in self-employment*

In order to distinguish between different class categories, Patnaik establishes limits for each class for the value of E (labour-exploitation ratio) and assigns relative values for X (net labour hired in) as opposed to F (family labour in self-employment). The logic of how these 'limits' are established is documented in Table 4.1 below, in the 'reason' column, and I elaborate on these in the section that follows.

It is also important to establish a methodology for identifying 'outliers', or exceptions to the general rule. For example, Patnaik (1987) identified a class of 'petty employers' in her Indian case, who are very poor households that rely primarily on hired-in labour as a matter of necessity, owing to the absence of able-bodied workers in the family and not as a reflection of an exploitative class position. It is thus necessary to use other indicators to identify these exceptions.

In addition to 'labour exploitation', Patnaik (1987: 201) identified a further two 'secondary characteristics' to distinguish classes in agrarian societies, but which are not directly computed in her labour-exploitation criterion, namely 'the degree of possession of means of production, and the achievement or otherwise of a customary subsistence'. We can expect that both of these additional variables will correlate closely with the type of labour exploitation that predominates.

Patnaik's (1987) method is commensurate with Cousins' (2010) class-analytic typology, since his principle variables are, 'the degree to which agriculture contributes to social reproduction or expanded reproduction, and the degree to which hired labour is used in the agricultural production process' (Cousins: 14). I make use of some of the additional variables mentioned by Patnaik (1987) and Cousins (2010) along with relevant additions (e.g. the contributions of social grants) to distinguish between different classes which have a similar labour-exploitation ratio, but which are qualitatively different (see Table 4.1 below). These additions are considered as separate variables and are not calculated into the labour exploitation criterion.

I use ownership of farming assets (means of production), ownership of livestock, and whether or not there is sale of an agricultural surplus, to distinguish between 'allotment holding workers' and 'worker farmers'. The latter reinvest off-farm incomes in own-account farming on a more substantial scale than the former. I use social grant incomes as a separate variable to identify a class category of 'supplementary food producers' that rely substantially on grants, and to distinguish them from 'petty commodity producers'. These two class categories have similar labour exploitation ratios and are similar to Patnaik's 'small peasants', because neither has access to significant wage incomes (petty commodity producers might enjoy a little wage income). Social grant incomes are included as a separate variable because it can be argued that they are an income not derived from a household-based labour process.<sup>16</sup>

Patnaik (1987) makes use of the class categories employed by Lenin (1967) to differentiate classes of peasants, which may be relevant in the Indian agrarian context. I have chosen to steer clear of the term 'peasant' due to its 'conceptual baggage'. This term invokes intense debates within agrarian political economy about the nature of the 'peasantry', and about whether or not it has disappeared as a result of ongoing and accelerating processes of de-agrarianisation (Bryceson *et al.* 2000; Hobsbawm 1994), and is thus merely a historical category (Bernstein 2010), or is currently being eliminated (Kitching 2001), or continues to exist and is a major social force in the countryside, underpinning contemporary agrarian political movements (McMichael 2006; van der Ploeg 2008). Instead, I have chosen to use terms which shed light on the social relations of production on JV farms in Shiloh and Keiskammahoek, and the diverse ways in which households meet their reproduction needs both on and off-farms, across rural and urban spaces.

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<sup>16</sup> Some approaches have described incomes like pensions as a form of rent appropriation. This may be an accurate portrayal of labour relations in a developed country context, but I have chosen not to adopt this stance because it would misrepresent their class position in the South African context.

Table 4.1: Methodology for Establishing Class Categories and Proportions for Case Studies

Type of Labour Exploitation	Patnaik's (1987) Class Categories	Characteristics	Value of E=X/F	Reason	Bunce (2018) Revised Class Categories	Characteristics of revised class categories	Variables considered (in addition to Patnaik's value of E=X/F)	Class % in Shiloh sample (N=62)	Class % in Keiskamm ahoek (N= 55)
Primarily exploiting labour of others	<b>Landlords</b>	No manual labour in self-employment, large-scale employment of others' labour	$E \rightarrow \infty$	$F = 0$ $X > 0$	<b>Rent earning pensioners</b>	Survive entirely off rents (JV dividends) and pensions. No wage labour or manual labour in self-employment (besides in garden plot and rearing livestock, which most often involves hired labour).	JV rent appropriation and access to social grants.  $F \geq 0$	0%	5.5%
	<b>Rich peasants</b>	At least as large an employment of others' labour as self-employment	$E \geq 1$	$F > 0$ $X > 0$ $X \geq F$	<b>Rent earning rich farmers and business owners</b>	Employment of others' labour (including rents) is equal to or larger than self-employment. Some derive substantial income from off-farm business with hired labour. Also sell labour in off-farm activities and some labour on the JV. Reinvest income in own farming, especially accumulating livestock.	Livelihoods centered around JV incomes, own-account farming and own businesses with hired labour.	3.2%	14.5%
Primarily self-employed	<b>Middle peasants</b>	Rely primarily on self-employment but employ the labour of others to a minor extent	$1 > E > 0$	$F > 0$ $X \geq 0$ $X < F$	<i>Doesn't exist in either case study</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA
	<b>Small peasants</b>	Zero employment of others or working for others; or working for others to lesser extent than self-employment	$0 \geq E > -1$	$F > 0$ $X \leq 0$ $ X  < F$	<b>Petty commodity producer/ petty trader</b>	Reproduce themselves predominantly from self-employment (on-farm and/or petty trade) without any or minimal hired in labour, which may be supplemented to a minor extent by wage labour.	Self-employment is main income source	8.1%	5.5%

					<b>Supplementary food producers</b>	No access to wage income. Survive primarily on social grants, supplemented by garden plots and petty trading	Social grants are main income source (77-100%).	14.5%	0%
Primarily exploited by others	<b>Poor Peasants</b>	Some self-employment but rely primarily on working for others.	$E \leq -1$	$F > 0$ $X < 0$ $ X  \geq F$	<b>Worker farmer</b>	Engaged in wage labour (often migrant, also JV) for simple reproduction, but reinvest off-farm incomes in own account farming on a substantial scale.	Fulfill 2/3 criterion <sup>17</sup> : Cattle assets (middle or rich); farming assets (middle or rich); sell a surplus	32.3%	20%
					<b>Allotment holding worker</b>	Engage in wage labour for simple reproduction but also work small home gardens or plots.	Do not fulfill 2/3 criterion. Tend to have fewer livestock, farm assets and marginal/ no sales	30.6%	41.8%
	<b>Landless labourers</b>	Do not engage in self-employment since they have no means of production, and depend entirely on working for others.	$E \rightarrow -\infty$	$F = 0$ $X < 0$	<b>Near-landless labour</b>	Depend almost wholly on wages and social grants. Landless or near-landless.	No plots, no livestock, most do not cultivate garden or to minor extent $F \geq 0$	11.3%	12.7%

(Source: Patnaik 1987; Cousins 2010; Levin *et al.* 1997, with the author's own additions)

<sup>17</sup> 2/3 criterion avoids excluding households e.g. livestock farmers, who may have fewer farming assets or different types of livestock (not cattle); and/or no sales in the last year, due to rearing/harvesting times or drought.

## 5. Results of Employing a Class-Analytic Typology for Investigating Social Differentiation in JVs

In Keiskammahoek, those households who did not engage in wage labour and relied primarily on JV rents, social grants (primarily pensions) and own-account farming with hired labour were identified as *rent earning pensioners*. This class category is found only in Keiskammahoek, and accounts for 5.5 per cent of the sample. Their labour exploitation ratio tends towards plus infinity:  $E \rightarrow \infty$ ; they have little or no self-employment:  $F \geq 0$ ; and net income from labour hired in tends to have a large positive value, derived primarily from JV rents:  $X > 0$ .

A substantial part of the sample in Keiskammahoek was classified as *rent earning rich farmers and business owners* (14.5 per cent), while in Shiloh only 3.2 per cent of the sample fell within this category. In Shiloh, these households were not identified in this category due to JV rents (which are insignificant compared to other incomes). Rather, they earned income from off-farm businesses in which they hired labour, combined with own-account farming. This class category's labour exploitation ratio equals or succeeds one:  $E \geq 1$ ; self-employment is greater than zero:  $F > 0$ ; net income from labour hired in is greater than zero:  $X > 0$ ; and net income from labour hired in succeeds or at least equals that from self-employment:  $X \geq F$ .

A *middle peasantry* could not be identified in either case. In the case study sites, even if self-employment (with some hired labour) was undertaken, as in Keiskammahoek, it earned much less income than was contributed by JV rents. The value of  $E$  was thus necessarily larger than 1, placing these households in the class category of *rent earning rich farmers and business owners*. I also did not classify any of these households as 'small-scale capitalist farmers', as identified in Cousins' (2010) typology. This is because there were no cases where households relied substantially on hired labour in agricultural enterprises and were engaging in expanded reproduction (accumulation).

Most of the households engaging more extensively in own-account farming were classified as *rent earning rich farmers and business owners* or *worker farmers*, in the latter case because of heavy reliance on the sale of their labour in return for wages. Among these households, a minority were hiring in labour more frequently, but generally no more than a single labourer for between 1 – 5 days a week in household gardens or for herding, where households generally paid a herder collectively. The significance of this absence of *middle farmers/peasantry* and *small-scale capitalist farmers* for agrarian change in South Africa, particularly in light of the prominence of the JV model is discussed further below.

*Supplementary food producers* were identified only in Shiloh, where they made up 14.5 per cent of the total. Social grant contributions ranged from 77 per cent to 98 per cent of overall household income. In both sites, only a minority of households identified as *petty commodity producers or traders*. Both of these class categories have a labour exploitation ratio  $0 \geq E > -1$  that corresponds to Patnaik's (1987) *small peasants*. An ideal petty producer would have a ratio of zero, but because some are obliged to supplement self-employment with wages, the ratio may be less than zero but will be greater than -1. Self-employment is greater than zero:  $F > 0$ ; net income from labour hired in is less than or equal to zero:  $X \leq 0$ ; and the modulus<sup>18</sup> value of net income from labour hired in is less than income from self-employment. If less than half the total income is from working for others, the household is still a small

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<sup>18</sup> modulus  $|x|$  of a real number  $x$  is the non-negative value of  $x$ .

peasant:  $|X| < F$ . As detailed in the previous section I distinguish between these class categories on the basis of their degree of dependence on social grant incomes.

A *near-landless labour* class category was also identified, which depends almost wholly on wages, supplemented by social grants. They have no field plots, no livestock, few or no agricultural assets and most do not cultivate a garden. Their labour exploitation ratio tends towards minus infinity  $E \rightarrow -\infty$ ; They have zero or near zero self-employment:  $F \geq 0$ ; and their net labour days hired in will have a large negative value, since their entire income is from working for others:  $X < 0$ . Some of the labourers on the JV farms in both sites fall within this class category. In Keiskammahoek, they account for 12.7 per cent of the sample, and in Shiloh, 11.3 per cent.

Cousins (2010) notes that the boundaries between his *worker peasants* and *allotment holding wage workers* are blurred, however, the main distinction he draws 'rests primarily on scale of land-holding'. In the specific contexts investigated here, however, scale of land-holding is not a relevant variable. Even if households own irrigation plots, none of the households in these class categories farm these plots themselves, because they are hired to the JV scheme. Historical processes of land closure related to the establishment of the irrigation schemes, means that there are very few dry land plots. Limited access to land and the importance of wage labour means many households are not cultivating plots but rather investing in livestock farming, using communal grazing land for goats, sheep and cattle, or their household yards for small livestock like pigs and chickens. I did not want to exclude dynamic livestock producers engaged in farming on a substantial scale from the category of *worker farmer*, simply because they did not have plots. As described in the previous section, the additional parameters I established for *worker farmers* included: cattle ownership, ownership of agricultural assets<sup>19</sup> and whether a surplus was being sold or not.

*Worker farmers* and *allotment holding workers* correspond to Patnaik's (1987) *poor peasants*. Their labour exploitation ratio is less than or equal to -1:  $E \leq -1$ ; self-employment is greater than zero:  $F > 0$ ; net income from labour hired in is less than zero, because they sell their labour to a greater extent than hiring the labour of others:  $X < 0$ ; and the modulus of net income from labour hired in may equal, but is generally greater than self-employment:  $|X| \geq F$ .

*Worker farmers* engage in wage labour for their simple reproduction, but also reinvest off-farm incomes in own account farming on a substantial scale. In Shiloh, a larger proportion identified as *worker farmers* (32.3 per cent), as compared to Keiskammahoek, where they account for only 20 per cent of the sample because there are more households located in the category *rent earning rich farmers and business owners*. *Worker farmers* with access to JV dividends and JV wage incomes were reinvesting these in own-account farming, particularly significant being the relatively large dividends so reinvested in Keiskammahoek. As I will discuss in more detail below, there are important qualitative differences between the reproductive strategies of worker farmers in Shiloh and Keiskammahoek.

*Allotment holding workers* rely mostly on wage labour (including JV jobs) for their simple reproduction, but also work small home gardens or plots. They own fewer livestock and farm assets than worker farmers, and earn little or no income from sales from their own-account farming. In Shiloh, they accounted for 30.6 per cent of the sample, and in Keiskammahoek, 41.8 per cent of the sample. In the following section I explore further the characteristics of these various class categories, in each case study site, and disaggregate them according to taxonomic groups.

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<sup>19</sup> I established asset groups for the variable of cattle (no cattle, poor, middle and rich) and agricultural asset ownership (poor, middle and rich) according to data for each case study site.

### 5.1. Characteristics of Class Differentiation in Shiloh

Table 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 present a picture of a highly differentiated sample of households. These different class categories comprise households which compose their livelihoods in very diverse ways. The extent, to which they exploit their own household labour, engage in wage labour, or hire in labour, differs significantly among households. Unsurprisingly, it is the rent earning rich farmers and business owners who have the highest mean incomes. This is closely related to their exploitation of hired labour in off-farm businesses and in own-account farming, which accounts for 81 per cent of their incomes, as indicated below in Table 5.1. These incomes are complemented by off-farm permanent jobs and old age pensions. Households in this class category do not have members who labour on the JV farm.

Worker farmers have the second highest household incomes, however, this is a feature of this class category having the largest proportion of income from wage labour. The highest proportion of JV jobs, are found in this class category, with a mean of one per household. They also have access to a range of other incomes, notably a mean of one job per household for off-farm permanent and casual jobs, and access to remittances. There are more households in this category self-exploiting family labour in own-account farming, but many are also hiring labour. Households also have access to a mean of one old age grant and child support grants.

Supplementary food producers have the lowest incomes and derive a mean proportion of 93 per cent of household incomes from social grants. Their only other income is from own-account farming, in which no labour is hired, and some engage in petty trade. The near-landless labour class category has the second lowest incomes, and 72 per cent of their income is derived from wage labour. However, the types of jobs are limited to casual and precarious jobs. The generational characteristics of these households (with young household heads), means that most do not have access to pensions but they have a mean of one child support grant.

Table 5.1: *Shiloh - Features of the Labour Exploitation Ratio (E=X/F)*  
(N= 62 households)

<b>Class Categories:</b>	<b>Near-landless labour</b>	<b>Supplementary food producers</b>	<b>Allotment holding worker</b>	<b>Worker farmer</b>	<b>Petty commodity producer</b>	<b>Rent earning rich farmers and business owners</b>
	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)
E= Labour Exploitation Ratio	-41557.5 (-22200)	-0.03 (0)	-7384.24 (-39.17)	-25673.65 (-44.73)	-0.46 (-0.4)	227600 (227600)
Total yearly cash income for household (HH)	R55511	R36193	R82374	R201533	R147724	R271500
Proportion of Income from Labour Hired In	0	0	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.81
Proportion of Income from Labour Hired Out	0.72	0	0.6	0.73	0.13	0.12
Proportion of Income from Self-Employed Family Labour	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.59	0
Proportion of Income from Social Grants	0.24	0.93	0.33	0.18	0.27	0.07

Allotment holding workers derive their largest income from labour hired out, which accounts for 60 per cent. After worker farmers this class category has the next greatest number with access to a JV job. There is at least one household member engaged in own-account farming with family labour, and a

minority is hiring in labour. Notably there is no mean of one for any specific type of waged income source, in part because there is a great diversity among these households in terms of 'types of jobs' they engage in. Social grants account for 33 per cent of their incomes, which is the second greatest contribution to a class category, after the supplementary food producers.

Table 5.2: Shiloh – Access to Different Types of On and Off-Farm Income Sources by Class Categories (N= 62 Households (including 331 individuals))

Number of HH Members with Access to Different Income Sources:	Near-landless labour		Supplementary food producers		Allotment holding worker		Worker farmer		Petty commodity producer		Rent earning rich farmers and business owners	
	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum
<i>JV permanent jobs</i>	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	11	0	1	0	0
<i>JV casual jobs</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
<i>JV dividend</i>	0	0	0	2	1	11	1	16	1	4	1	2
<i>Off-farm permanent jobs</i>	0	1	0	0	0	4	1	20	0	1	0	0
<i>Off-farm casual jobs</i>	1	6	0	0	0	7	1	10	1	3	1	2
<i>Civil servants</i>	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	5	0	0	0	0
<i>Own-account farming (no hired labour)</i>	0	1	1	9	1	20	1	21	1	7	0	0
<i>Own-account farming (hired labour)</i>	0	1	0	0	0	4	1	10	0	1	2	4
<i>Off-farm self-employment (no hired labour)</i>	0	0	0	3	0	4	0	3	2	9	0	0
<i>Off-farm self-employment (hired labour)</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	2	3
<i>Public works jobs</i>	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0
<i>Old age grants</i>	0	3	1	11	1	13	1	20	1	3	1	1
<i>Disability grant</i>	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	1	3	0	0
<i>Child support grants (total #)</i>	1	8	1	12	1	26	1	14	3	13	0	0
<i>Remittances</i>	0	3	0	2	0	12	1	18	0	1	0	0

The class category, for which self-employed family labour contributes the most to livelihoods, is unsurprisingly the petty commodity producers. They derive 59 per cent of their income from self-employed family labour, and they have a mean of two household members engaged in these activities (with no hired labour). Social grants accounting for 27 per cent of their incomes, and notably there is a mean of three child support grants per household. Markedly, the petty commodity producers have higher mean household incomes than the allotment holding workers, in part because they are complementing self-employment with off-farm casual jobs, where there is a mean of one job per household.

Table 5.3: Shiloh – Aspects of Socio Economic Differentiation and Household Composition by Class Categories (N= 62 households)

<i>Class Categories:</i>		<b>Near-landless labour</b>	<b>Supplementary food producers</b>	<b>Allotment holding worker</b>	<b>Worker farmer</b>	<b>Petty commodity producer</b>	<b>Rent earning rich farmers and business owners</b>
<i>JV Taxonomic Groups: % in Class Categories</i>	JV Dividend HH		22.20%	42.10%	40.00%	60.00%	100.00%
	JV Wage HH	14.30%		21.10%	20.00%		
	JV Dividend & Wage HH			10.50%	35.00%	20.00%	
	No JV Benefits HH	85.70%	77.80%	26.30%	5.00%	20.00%	
<i>Gender of HH head: % in Class Categories</i>	Female	85.70%	66.70%	52.60%	35.00%	60.00%	50.00%
	Male	14.30%	33.30%	47.40%	65.00%	40.00%	50.00%
	Other						
<i>HH Asset Groups: % in Class Categories</i>	Poor	85.70%	44.40%	47.40%		40.00%	
	Middle	14.30%	55.60%	31.60%	40.00%	40.00%	
	Rich			21.10%	60.00%	20.00%	100.00%
<i>Cattle Groups: % in Class Categories</i>	No Cattle	100.00%	77.80%	94.70%	5.00%	80.00%	50.00%
	Cattle Poor			5.30%	10.00%	20.00%	
	Cattle Middle Rich		22.20%		45.00%		
	Cattle Rich				40.00%		50.00%
<i>Garden plot cultivated during the last 12 months</i>	Yes	28.60%	55.60%	73.70%	65.00%	60.00%	100.00%
	No	71.40%	44.40%	26.30%	35.00%	40.00%	
<i>Household size</i>	Mean:	4	4	5	6	5	4
<i>% Adults present most/all nights</i>	Mean:	0.85	0.88	0.78	0.57	0.89	0.63
<i>% HH members under 18 years</i>	Mean:	0.35	0.2	0.23	0.17	0.08	0
<i>Age of HH Head</i>	Mean:	53	72	61	67	65	67
<i># Types of income sources</i>	Mean:	3	3	5	6	6	5
<i>HH members with no incomes</i>	Mean:	1	1	1	0	0	1
<i>Cattle owned</i>	Mean:	0	1	0	10	0	60
<i>Goats owned</i>	Mean:	0	2	0	11	2	15
<i>Pigs owned</i>	Mean:	0	1	0	1	1	1
<i>Sheep owned</i>	Mean:	0	0	0	4	1	3
<i>Chickens owned</i>	Mean:	0	2	1	7	4	9
<i>Weighting of farming assets</i>	Mean:	Poor (3)	Middle (5)	Middle (5)	Rich (11)	Middle (6)	Middle (7)
<i>Motor vehicles owned</i>	Mean:	0	0	0	1	0	3
<i>Number of irrigation plots</i>	Mean:	0	1	1	1	1	2

Table 5.3 presents different aspects of household composition, and some other important aspects of socioeconomic differentiation among different class categories. Of particular interest, is how the taxonomic groups intersect with the various class categories. The near-landless labour category is made up predominantly (85.7 per cent) of those households, which derive no benefits from the JV. The remaining households are those with access to a JV job. The supplementary food producers are likewise made up predominantly (77.8 per cent) of 'no JV benefits households', with the remainder being 'JV

dividend households'. It is significant, that our two most vulnerable classes are made up predominantly of those without access to irrigation plots. However, it is also noteworthy, that there are JV dividend households among the supplementary food producers. This highlights the levels of differentiation among households with irrigation plots.

On the other extreme of the class typology are the rent earning rich farmers and business owners, who are entirely derived from JV dividend households. Allotment holding workers are represented among all of the taxonomic groups, but the largest proportion is from JV dividend households (42,10 per cent). Worker farmers are also found across all taxonomic groups, but with most representation among JV dividend households (40 per cent) and JV dividend and wage households (35 per cent). The largest proportion of petty commodity producers, are among JV dividend households (60 per cent).

The class categories with the highest proportion of female-headed households are the two most vulnerable class categories – the near-landless labourers (85.7 per cent are female-headed) and the supplementary food producers (66.7 per cent). The class category with the most male-headed households, are the worker farmers (65 per cent). Table 5.3 illustrates how household assets correlate with household incomes in some cases. The two class categories with the highest incomes also have a large proportion of households located in the 'asset rich' category. Worker farmers are located in the 'rich' farming asset category, followed by rent earning rich farmers and business owners, who have the highest score in the 'middle rich' category.

Cattle ownership is disproportionately distributed across these class categories, it is concentrated among the rent earning rich farmers and business owners, followed by the worker farmers. These two class categories also have the highest means for all other types of livestock, except for pigs which are more equally distributed across the class categories. There is a mean of one pig among all groups, except for near-landless labourers and allotment holding workers, who do not own pigs. Notably, households categorised as near-landless labourers own no livestock at all, and allotment holding workers, only have a mean of one chicken. The supplementary food producers own more small livestock than the allotment holding workers. This indicates differentiated livelihood strategies and the increased dependence on wage work among allotment holding workers, and possibly a reduced availability of household labour to engage in own-account farming. However, generational characteristics may also account for differences in livestock ownership. Supplementary food producers have the oldest mean for household heads at 72 years, possibly allowing for generational accumulation and investment of pensions in livestock.

Notably, the worker farmers have the smallest proportion of adults present most or all nights (57 per cent), signifying the highest incidence of migration among the class categories. Petty commodity producers, on the other hand, have the most adults present. The percentage of household members under 18, speaks to dynamics of generational reproduction and a consumer/producer ratio. Notably this variable correlates with income levels. There are no child dependents in the rent earning rich farmers and business owner households, while the near-landless labour households have 35 per cent of household members under 18 years. These different aspects of household composition, illustrate how class on its own cannot explain everything, and how aspects of generation, gender and other identities, intersect with class in complex ways.

## **5.2. Characteristics of Class Differentiation in Keiskammahoek**

It is clear that these class categories have different characteristics of household composition and other important aspects of socioeconomic differentiation. Table 5.4 illustrates that the class category with access to the highest incomes in Keiskammahoek, are the worker farmers. They derive 70 per cent of their household incomes from hiring their own labour out. It is only households classified as near-landless labourers, which rely slightly more on hiring their own labour out, with 72 per cent. Table 5.5 indicates that worker farmer households have a mean of one JV job. They also have access to a range

of other incomes, including a mean of one permanent and casual off-farm job, and one civil servant job. 18 per cent of their income is from labour hired in, which is in part from labour exploitation through JV rents. However, it is also due to there being a mean of one member engaged in own-account farming, with hired labour. Worker farmers have the lowest social grant contribution to income, of only six per cent.

Table 5.4: *Keiskammahoek – Features of the Labour Exploitation Ratio (E=X/F)*  
(N= 55 households)

<i>Class Categories:</i>	<b>Near-landless labour</b>	<b>Allotment holding worker</b>	<b>Worker farmer</b>	<b>Petty Commodity Producer/ Trader</b>	<b>Rent earning rich farmers and business owners</b>	<b>Rent earning pensioners</b>
	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)	Mean (Median)
E= Labour Exploitation Ratio	-53280 (-2000)	-6395.54 (-20)	-29149.46 (-14.75)	-0.53 (-0.55)	54712.63 (20.67)	36866.22 (63.48)
Total yearly cash income for household	R85, 916	R116, 117	R341, 014	R116, 813	R228, 769	R132, 262
Proportion of Income from Labour Hired In	0	0.06	0.18	0	0.64	0.76
Proportion of Income from Labour Hired Out	0.72	0.61	0.7	0.21	0.21	0
Proportion of Income From Self-Employed Family Labour	0.01	0.09	0.06	0.44	0.06	0.01
Proportion of Income from Social Grants	0.27	0.24	0.06	0.35	0.09	0.23

The next greatest mean, for total household incomes, is among the rent earning rich farmers and business owners. Their greatest proportion of income is derived from labour hired in, which accounts for 64 per cent. Table 5.5 indicates, that this is mostly from JV dividends, as there is a lower incidence of hiring labour in own-account farming. Exploitation of family labour in own-account farming is more common among these households, where there is a mean of one. These households complement their incomes from labour hired in, with wage labour, particularly JV jobs and civil servant jobs. They also have access to off-farm permanent and casual jobs (and remittances), but these are distributed unequally among households. In general, their livelihoods are centered more closely around the JV farm and their own-account farming, than worker farmers, who rely more significantly on off-farm jobs. The livelihoods of rent earning rich farmers and business owners, like worker farmers, rely relatively insignificantly on social grants, which constitute just nine per cent of incomes.

The class place of rent earning pensioners intersects with generational dynamics, as household heads have the oldest mean age of 78 years. 23 per cent of their income is derived from social grants, and notably they are the only class with a mean of one for disability grants. Together with generational dynamics, ill health may explain why they are not accessing wage labour. The highest contribution to their income is from labour hired in (76 per cent), predominantly from the JV dividend. The use of hired labour in own-account farming reflects in part, illness and old age.

Allotment holding workers, derive 61 per cent of their income from hiring their own labour out, particularly in JV Jobs. Most JV workers are located in these households. They also have a mean of at least one permanent and casual off-farm job. These incomes are supplemented by own-account farming with family labour, and petty trade. Social grants contribute significantly to their household incomes, accounting for 24 per cent. Petty commodity producers, derive 44 per cent of their income from self-employed family labour. At least two household members are engaged in own-account farming and one in off-farm petty trade, both with no hired labour. Social grants contribute most significantly to this group, accounting for 35 per cent of household income. They also access wage labour, particularly off-farm casual jobs.

Households classified as near-landless labour, have by far the lowest incomes. They have access to precarious and poorly paid types of wage labour, and notably they are the only class category with a mean of one public works job. A few households have access to JV jobs, and there is a mean of one casual job, one permanent job and one remittance. This is the class category with the second highest reliance on social grants, which contribute 27 per cent of total household income. There is a mean of one child support grant. When compared to other social grants, child support grants have a relatively low-income contribution (R350 per month in 2016), as compared to an old age grant (R1500 per month).

Table 5.6 illustrates how the class categories intersect with the taxonomic groups. The majority of near-landless labourers are 'no JV benefits households' (57.1 per cent), with the remainder from JV wage households. Allotment holding workers are primarily 'JV wage households' (52.2 per cent), followed by 'no JV benefits households' (34.8 per cent), with the remaining minority distributed among the two taxonomic groups with access to irrigation plots. Worker farmers are most prominent among 'JV wage households' (45.4 per cent), followed by 'JV dividend households' (27.3 per cent) and 'JV dividend and wage households' (18.2 per cent). Petty commodity producers are concentrated in 'no JV benefits households' (66.7 per cent) and the remainder in 'JV wage households'. Rent earning rich farmers and business owners, are concentrated in 'JV dividend and wage households' (87.5 per cent) and the rest are found in 'JV dividend households'. Rent earning pensioners are only found in 'JV dividend households'.

Rent earning rich farmers and business owners, have the highest incidence of female-headed households with 50 per cent, and worker farmers have the lowest with only 9.1 per cent. Worker farmers have the largest household sizes and the highest incidence of migrant labour, with only 46 per cent of adult household members present most or all nights. Table 5.6 also captures some striking aspects of generational reproduction. Near-landless labour households have the youngest household heads, and 29 per cent of their household members are under 18 years. While, rent earning pensioners have the oldest household heads, and the lowest percentage of household members under 18 years, with only 13 per cent.

Table 5.6 also illustrates how asset ownership correlates with class categories, and their defining livelihood strategies. Near-landless labourers, for example, have a high proportion (57.1 per cent) categorised as asset 'poor'. While, both rent earning rich farmers and business owners, and worker farmers have the most households categorised as 'middle rich' in household assets, but 'rich' in farming assets. In contrast, rent earning pensioners, are 'rich' in household assets but 'middle-rich' in farming assets, illustrating differentiated reproductive strategies.

The most prolific livestock owners are worker farmers, rent earning rich farmers and business owners, and petty commodity producers. Accumulation of cattle is most pronounced among worker farmers, followed by petty commodity producers, and then rent earning rich farmers and business owners. Ownership of large herds of goats is notable among petty commodity producers but also among worker farmers. The high number of chickens among rent earning rich farmers and business owners, is because a few households are engaging in small-scale broiler farming, targeting local markets. Pig ownership among worker farmers, and rent earning rich farmers and business owners, also indicates some small pig businesses targeting markets and run mostly by females. Notably, allotment holding workers only have a mean of four chickens and one pig and they are characterised as 'middle rich' in farming assets. Near-landless labourers in contrast, have 71.4 per cent of households who have not cultivated a household garden in the last year, they own no livestock, and have few or no farming assets.

Table 5.5: Keiskammahoek – Access to Different Types of On and Off-Farm Income Sources by Class Categories

(N= 55 households (including 368 individuals))

Number of HH Members with Access to Different Income Sources:	Near-landless labour		Allotment holding worker		Worker farmer		Petty Commodity Producer		Rent earning rich farmers and business owners		Rent earning pensioners	
	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum
<i>JV permanent jobs</i>	0	3	1	12	1	10	0	1	1	4	0	0
<i>JV casual jobs</i>	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	0
<i>JV Dividend</i>	0	0	0	3	0	5	0	0	1	9	1	3
<i>Permanent jobs</i>	1	5	1	13	1	13	0	1	0	3	0	0
<i>Casual jobs</i>	1	4	1	18	1	8	1	3	0	3	0	0
<i>Civil servant jobs</i>	0	0	0	2	1	6	0	0	1	4	0	0
<i>Own-account farming (no hired labour)</i>	0	3	1	34	1	11	2	5	1	9	0	0
<i>Own-account farming (hired labour)</i>	0	0	0	2	1	7	0	0	0	2	1	4
<i>Off farm self-employment (no hired labour)</i>	0	2	0	6	0	4	1	3	0	1	0	0
<i>Off farm self-employment (hired labour)</i>	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
<i>Public works jobs</i>	1	5	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<i>Old age grants</i>	0	1	1	12	0	5	1	4	1	7	1	3
<i>Disability grant</i>	0	3	0	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
<i>Child support grants (total number)</i>	1	7	1	31	1	14	1	4	1	7	1	2
<i>Remittances</i>	1	4	0	11	0	4	0	1	1	6	0	1

Table 5.6: Keiskammahoek Aspects of Socioeconomic Differentiation and Household Composition by Class Categories  
(N= 55 households)

Class Categories:		Near-landless labour	Allotment holding worker	Worker farmer	Petty Commodity Producer/ Trader	Rent earning rich farmers and business owners	Rent earning pensioners
<i>JV Taxonomic Groups: % in Class Categories</i>	JV Dividend HH		4.30%	27.30%		12.50%	100.00%
	JV Wage HH	42.90%	52.20%	45.40%	33.30%		
	JV Dividend & Wage HH		8.70%	18.20%		87.50%	
	No JV Benefits HH	57.10%	34.80%	9.10%	66.70%		
<i>Gender of HH head: % in Class Categories</i>	Female	28.60%	30.40%	9.10%	33.30%	50.00%	33.30%
	Male	71.40%	69.60%	90.90%	66.70%	50.00%	66.70%
	Other						
<i>HH Asset Groups: % in Class Categories</i>	Poor	57.10%	34.80%	9.10%	33.30%	12.50%	
	Middle	14.30%	43.50%	54.50%		50.00%	33.30%
	Rich	28.60%	21.70%	36.40%	66.70%	37.50%	66.70%
<i>Cattle Groups: % in Class Categories</i>	No Cattle	100.00%	78.30%	9.10%	33.30%	25.00%	
	Cattle Poor		17.40%			37.50%	100.00%
	Cattle Middle Rich		4.30%	36.40%	33.30%	25.00%	
	Cattle Rich			54.50%	33.30%	12.50%	
<i>Garden plot cultivated during the last 12 months</i>	Yes	26.60%	65.20%	63.60%	100.00%	62.50%	100.00%
	No	71.40%	34.80%	36.40%		37.50%	
<i>Household size</i>	Mean:	6	6	8	7	7	6
<i>% Adults present most/all nights</i>	Mean:	0.57	0.59	0.46	0.67	0.65	0.58
<i>% HH members under 18 years</i>	Mean:	0.29	0.22	0.3	0.17	0.27	0.13
<i>Age of HH head</i>	Mean:	54	57	65	72	63	78
<i># Types of income sources</i>	Mean:	4	5	6	6	6	5
<i>HH members with no incomes</i>	Mean:	1	1	1	1	1	0
<i>Cattle owned by household</i>	Mean:	0	1	15	13	7	3
<i>Goats owned by household</i>	Mean:	0	1.43	9.36	28.67	3.88	1.33
<i>Pigs owned by household</i>	Mean:	0	1	3	1	4	2

<i>Sheep owned by household</i>	Mean:	0	0	4	12	0	0
<i>Chickens owned by household</i>	Mean:	0	4	9	5	29	5
<i>Weighting of farming assets</i>	Mean:	Poor (5)	Middle (7)	Rich (13)	Rich (14)	Rich (14)	Middle (10)
<i>Motor vehicles owned</i>	Mean:	1	0	1	1	1	1
<i>Number of irrigation plots</i>	Mean:	0	0	2	0	3	3

## 6. Discussion and Comparative Analysis of Shiloh and Keiskammahoek

The results of employing the class typology, illustrate definite patterns between the class categories. These differences are expressed, not only in terms of trends in different forms of labour exploitation, but also in terms of reproductive strategies, access to different types of incomes, assets and also household composition. This indicates that despite limitations in using income data, the modifications to Patnaik's (1989) labour exploitation ratio were successful in distinguishing class categories with common characteristics. The results of the livelihood survey and life histories (which could not be presented in full here), have confirmed that in both Shiloh and Keiskammahoek, the local communities in which these JVs are being implemented, are socially differentiated along lines of class. However, aspects of generational difference, gender, religion, race, and ethnicity, intersect with class in complex ways. There are also important differences between these two sites, in terms of historical trajectories of class formation, social differentiation and particularly land use and consolidation, which assist in explaining the very diverse outcomes.

At an obvious level, the divergent outcomes between Shiloh and Keiskammahoek are also a function of the size of the beneficiary group, and scale of production. In Keiskammahoek, 2000 cows are kept on 745 hectares with dividends deriving to only 35 households. This sharply contrasts to Shiloh, where you have 900 cows on 450 hectares, with a huge beneficiary group of 395 households, and hence both smaller dividends and fewer JV jobs. The difference in reproductive strategies across these case studies, is in part, a reflection of the way in which larger holdings of land had been historically accumulated in Keiskammahoek prior to the JV. Farming their irrigation plots, had remained a central livelihood activity up until the JV was implemented in 2010. This fact, along with historical processes of class formation, can in part account for the much larger numbers of rent earning rich farmers and business owners, and worker farmers engaging extensively in own-account farming. However, access to a larger JV dividend also enables a surplus to be reinvested in farming, and at the same time influences their labour exploitation ratio.

This contrasts sharply with Shiloh, where the majority of landowners reported having abandoned cropping on the irrigation scheme between 1994 and 1997, when the Ciskei's agricultural parastatal Ulimocor was dissolved, and the homeland was reincorporated into a democratic South Africa. Following this, on the most part, the land was only used to graze cattle in Shiloh. Access to wage-labour and social grants thus became comparatively more critical for the reproduction of these households. This explains the relatively small number of rent earning rich farmers and business owners, and a larger grouping of worker farmers in Shiloh, relying substantially on wages. The wider context of unemployment in Shiloh also accounts for the identification of the class category of supplementary food producers (not identified in Keiskammahoek), who rely almost entirely on social grants, supplemented marginally by own-account farming.

In order to understand the heightened levels of intra-group conflict in Shiloh, as compared to Keiskammahoek, it is revealing to compare the class structure of those households with access to irrigation plots, which is documented in Table 6.1 below. Clearly in both sites there is differentiation among these households. However, in Shiloh, this differentiation is more extreme. In particular there are classes like petty commodity producers, which make little or no use of wage labour and mostly exploit their own family labour. Households identified as supplementary food producers rely considerably on social grants, and can thus be considered quite a vulnerable class. In Keiskammahoek, neither of these class categories can be identified among households with rights to irrigation plots.

The majority of households in Shiloh are located in the allotment holding worker class and worker farmer class, comprising 74 per cent together. In Shiloh, the rent earning rich farmers and business owners are a very small minority, and the rent earning pensioner class category, does not exist. In contrast in Keiskammahoek, when these two classes are combined, they account for 57.5 per cent of households with irrigation plots. These classes both exploit the labour of others, to an equal or usually greater extent, than they exploit their own labor in self-employment. Rent earning pensioners do not sell their labour, and rent earning rich farmers and business owners, sell their own labour to a smaller degree than they hire in the labour of others. This demonstrates how the predominant dynamics of labour exploitation among irrigation plot holders, is vastly different between the two case study sites.

Table 6.1: *Class Typology for Combined Taxonomic Groups of JV Dividend and JV Dividend and Wage Households*

<b>Class categories for irrigation plot holders<sup>20</sup></b>	<b>Shiloh</b>	<b>Keiskammahoek</b>
Supplementary Food Producers	7%	0%
Allotment holding worker	30%	15.5%
Worker farmer	44%	27%
Petty commodity producer/ trader	12%	0%
Rent earning rich farmers and business owners	7%	42%
Rent earning pensioners	0%	15.5%

In Keiskammahoek, there are a relatively large proportion of worker farmers among households owning irrigation plots, although less than in Shiloh. In both case study sites, worker farmers have quite high household incomes, relative to other class categories. However, in Keiskammahoek, this is much higher with a mean of R341,041, as compared to Shiloh, with only R201,533. However, the former also tends to have larger household sizes. In Keiskammahoek, social grants only contribute six per cent to total worker farmer incomes, whereas in Shiloh they contribute 18 per cent. In Keiskammahoek, worker farmers have a mean of one civil servant job, whereas in Shiloh, only a few households have access to these jobs. This speaks to a difference in the type of wage labour and possibly the 'political connectedness' of Keiskammahoek's worker farmers.

The life histories also reveal that there are qualitative differences between worker farmers' reproductive strategies. In Keiskammahoek there is evidence of accumulation in farming, which is simply not present in Shiloh to the same extent. For example, I found a worker farmer who had accumulated 20 dairy cattle and is renting them to the JV farm. This also illustrates the point that the qualitative differences in the class place of worker farmers, in relation to rent earning rich farmers and business owners in Keiskammahoek, may not be as pronounced as to create the type of class conflict that is evident in Shiloh.

There are also half as many allotment holding workers among irrigation plot holders in Keiskammahoek as there are in Shiloh. In Keiskammahoek this class has higher overall household incomes, (a greater proportion of which is from self-employment, particularly agricultural sales), they rely less on social grants and they have more assets and livestock. A closer look also reveals that in Keiskammahoek some households were located in this category because of gender and generational dynamics. These were

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<sup>20</sup> The near-landless labour class category is not included here because this is a class typology for households that own irrigation plots, and thus they are not landless.

female-headed households who didn't own cattle and, because of old age or illness, some were no longer generating a surplus from own-account farming. These households are relying predominantly on the JV dividends, supplemented by the support of younger, healthy household members engaged in wage employment.

In Shiloh, the incidence of female-headed households is however far more pronounced, and shows an almost opposite trend to Keiskammahoek. In Shiloh, every class category except worker farmers, has more female-headed households than male-headed households. In contrast, in Keiskammahoek, it is only among rent earning rich farmers and business owners where there is a 50/50 split, and all of these were households headed by elder widows. This is an important characteristic difference between the two sites. Literature highlights how female-headed households tend to be more vulnerable. This is not only because of gendered struggles in the work place, home and other social spaces. Women (particularly when unmarried), also generally have inferior customary inheritance rights, which are contingent on their relationships with male household members (Claasens 2013; Cousins 2013b; Fay 2005; Oomen 2005; Berry 1989; Whitehead and Tsikata 2003; Knowles 1991).

Various layers of social networks mediate access to jobs, dividends and decision-making power in Shiloh. Many intra-group conflicts have emerged, focused around the JV farm. However, life histories and ethnographic emersion revealed that many of these conflicts preceded the establishment of the JV, but had since been reinvigorated by it. Several aspects of social difference intersect in complex ways with the class categories, including generational and gender dynamics, as well as association to the local Moravian Church and being considered a member of the 'traditional community', in good relations with the local headman who is a member of the cooperative.<sup>21</sup>

In Keiskammahoek, although the JV has not led to the same levels of intra-group conflict, there are still visible areas of contention. The history of land consolidation under 35 landowners has contributed to shortages of grazing land in this area. In the first years of the farms establishment, the surrounding community would frequently cut fences to let their livestock on to the pastures, which caused serious challenges for the biosecurity of the farm's dairy herd. The local community often refers to the landowners as 'settlers', since many originate from other parts of South Africa. The legitimacy of their rights to the land is frequently questioned, framed by discourses of belonging and membership to customary groups, which endure in spite of the title deeds most households hold.

Another important finding emerging from this study is the need to focus, not only on intra-group conflicts through a class lens, but also on the distribution of benefits and risks at an intra-household level. In some cases, JVs are precipitating a reorganisation of labour processes and their gendered-relations within households. Some female respondents expressed frustrations over male members controlling JV dividends and wages. This quote from a woman, in a rent earning rich farmer and business owner household in Keiskammahoek, is revealing of gendered struggles: 'Men always want all the money to come to them. Sometimes you can't know how much you got because they don't tell you, they control it. The dividend goes straight to my husband's bank so I don't even know if it's paid or not'.

Gendered struggles were especially marked in Keiskammahoek, where households were still farming their land prior to the JV. The comparatively large size of the dividend also explains why it is igniting intra-household struggles over the distribution of this income. Women explained how it had been easier to have a degree of control over farming income prior to the JV. Since the JV women were developing new strategies to renegotiate their livelihoods. Some women had refocused their efforts on household gardens, and many had started small pig or broiler businesses. However, the effects of the JV on gender relations were differentiated and contingent, and the outcome was not always negative for women's

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<sup>21</sup> These dynamics have been explored through life history but due to space can't be included here and are explored in more detail in my forthcoming PhD thesis (Bunce forthcoming).

relative power within households. Some women emphasised having equal, or at least considerable negotiating power, over how JV dividends and wages were spent in the home.

In spite of these conflicts over the distribution of JV jobs and dividends, it must be recognised that the evidence indicates that in both sites, jobs, in particular, made significant contributions to household incomes. This was especially the case among JV wage receiving households located in allotment holding worker and near-landless labour class categories, where they were often the largest and most stable income source. There is also evidence in Keiskammahoek of JV dividends being reinvested in own account farming, particularly in the households of rent earning rich farmer and business owners and worker farmers.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper has explored the question, of how a class lens can assist in understanding the impacts of Joint Ventures (JVs) on ongoing dynamics of agrarian change, and the challenge of transforming relations of land, labour and capital in South Africa's former homelands. The failure of both policy and research to adequately investigate and understand incipient class formation, has meant that residents in the former 'homelands' are assumed to be a fairly homogenous class of proletarians or semi-proletarians (Levin and Neocosmos 1989). Although these debates have progressed, and detailed studies have endeavoured to highlight dynamics of class and other aspects of social differentiation (Levin *et al.* 1997; Cousins 2010), dynamics of class formation in the former 'homelands', continue to be somewhat misunderstood today.

This paper made use of a methodology for exploring class dynamics, that brings together Patnaik's (1989) labour exploitation criterion with other approaches to develop class typologies in the South African context (Cousins 2010; Levin *et al.* 1997). The results of employing the class typology, demonstrate how differing dynamics of class formation and other aspects of social differentiation help explain divergent outcomes in the comparative case study of the Amadlelo Agri JV farms in Shiloh and Keiskammahoek.

A longer view of historical processes of class formation and accumulation of land, livestock and farming assets in Keiskammahoek under a few households, can in part account for the JV's relative success. This is demonstrated by the examples of rent earning rich farmers and business owners and worker farmers, who are investing JV dividends and wages extensively in own-account farming. In Shiloh, the many intra-group conflicts that have emerged around the JV farm reflect the realities of a highly differentiated community, and a context where household reproduction is under more extreme pressure. The case of Shiloh perhaps provides a precursory warning, regarding the implementation of capital-intensive agricultural projects like JVs, within large beneficiary groups in communal areas. This is particularly the case where there is intense contestation over land rights, pre-existing intra-group conflict, and high levels of poverty and unemployment. The tensions that capitalist farming introduces, and the contradictions it poses to the social reproduction of poorer households, can in part explain the emerging conflicts.

The class typology, detailed in this paper, is also significant because it speaks to the type of emerging agrarian structure that a JV intervention conditions. This has important implications for debates around agrarian change in South Africa. Significantly, the study could not identify any households as 'middle farmers'. This contrasts to research conducted by Scoones *et al.* (2012: 503) in Zimbabwe, for example, which identified a dynamic middle farmer class category, 'reliant on 'accumulation' from below' through petty commodity production'. Cousins' (2013a) research on Msinga, has likewise illustrated that smallholder irrigation schemes in South Africa, where plots are being used for own-account farming, can provide conducive conditions for establishing a class of middle farmers. Many authors consider accumulation from below to be a more progressive, dynamic and desirable pathway of agrarian reform (Cousins 2015; Aliber and Hall 2012; Scoones *et al.* 2012). The JV model does not, however, seem to provide the conditions for establishing such a class category of accumulating middle farmers.

Also I could not find evidence of the emergence of small-scale capitalist farmers, as identified in Cousins' (2010) typology. However, it could be argued that some of the black JV farm managers could be viewed as small-scale capitalist farmers. A few have begun accumulating cattle, which they rent out to the JV and other commercial dairy farms. One female farm manager had accumulated 92 dairy cows, while a male manager had accumulated 160 dairy cows. The rentals from their dairy herds provide significant passive incomes. The male manager had also become a '10 per cent sharemilker' and is remunerated according to a 10 per cent share of the farm's profit, rather than a set salary. Amadlelo's model does

therefore seem to be facilitating the entrance of new black managers, into a dairy sector dominated by white commercial farmers and managers. The entrance of black small-scale capitalist farmers could be viewed as contributing to transformation of the dairy sector. However, benefits to this class, need to be evaluated in relation to benefits to households that hold land rights to irrigation plots, and particularly the high levels of intragroup conflicts emerging in Shiloh in the face of the JV intervention.

Debates around the extent of social differentiation in the former homelands are important precisely because they have implications for the types of pathways we imagine for agrarian reform. The solitary focus on JVs, has excluded other possible ways of organising production, to meet a variety of contexts and the diverse reproductive needs of households. At the same time, however, this does not mean that JVs are inappropriate in all contexts. Rather, closer attention is required on more appropriately crafting solutions to meet the realities of diverse 'communities'. Opening up and broadening out the range of possible pathways is suggested, in which JVs may be one possibility, among a range of other production models, notably differentiated small-scale farming systems (see Cousins 2010; Aliber and Hall 2012). Land-use may be reorganised in some cases, to allow for the complementarity of a large-scale JV or other model, alongside land reserved for household production in which producers are adequately supported (Manenzhe 2016). It is argued that, apart from the very different dynamics of class formation in Shiloh and Keiskammahoek, the fact that most households in the latter maintained some land on the irrigation scheme to keep livestock and cultivate household gardens, can in part account for its relative success.

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