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Industrial and Economic Sociology

**SOUTH AFRICA'S MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK,
GOVERNANCE, AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF MANAGEMENT AND LABOUR**

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Degree of Master of Social Science**

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this research is to understand the ways in which the (working and living) conditions confronting employers and employees on mohair farms are the complex outcome of their position in the global mohair value chain, the nature of the labour process, and the ‘contours of voice’ (i.e., how and why employees voice). These three bodies of literature represent different levels of analysis: at the broadest level, the political economy of the mohair value chain is explained by drawing on the chain literature. This literature has been supplemented, at the level of the production process, by deploying the concepts of labour process theory (LPT), which focus on the control of work processes by management as well as workers’ responses to this control. These responses were analysed by incorporating insights from the burgeoning research on employee voice (EV) in an effort to understand the practical ways in which workers on mohair farms articulate their needs and interests. The cross-pollination of these three bodies of literature is, to my knowledge, a novel feature of this research on the mohair industry in South Africa, which, in turn, has itself been woefully under-researched. The research design consisted of a qualitative approach in which I used in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions as the primary sources of data collection. The secondary source of data was available publications and documents from the agriculture industry and mohair sector. A qualitative approach acknowledges and gives great insight and meaning into the research topic. Twenty participants were interviewed for my research: six from key organisations within the mohair industry, ten farmers, two mohair farm workers and two mohair shearers. The main findings of the research include the following: first, institutions in South Africa’s mohair industry not only determine (in part) the structure of the mohair value chain but also play a vital role in governing the chain. Each institution and actor plays a significant role in adding value to the mohair product that leads to economic upgrading. Second, understanding the actions of farmers (as employers) by drawing on LPT allows me to show how the systemic pressures of capitalist accumulation compel employers to continuously enhance their control over production – and, by extension, over workers – who, in turn, resist and/or accommodate to these impositions

by management. Lastly, the research shows that employee voice at the farm level is complex and contested – not surprisingly, given South Africa’s troubled history – yet, it is increasingly exercised by farm workers and accepted by mohair farmers as a necessary and inescapable means of resolving issues that arise in the employment relationship at the workplace and remaining competitive in a global market.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS, LABOUR PROCESS AND EMPLOYEE VOICE

My interest in how the global economy functions stimulated a desire to pursue a deeper understanding of global value chains. With this in mind, I decided to explore the mohair value chain in South Africa for a variety of reasons: first, the size of the mohair industry has been acknowledged as a hidden gem in South Africa's agriculture landscape. The actual story of how the mohair industry came about in South Africa is an amusing story and has progressed into the biggest single producing economy of global mohair with up to 53% of the global market share, despite only having approximately 800 commercial farmers. The industry has expanded rapidly and is producing and processing mohair from across the globe with 90% of global mohair coming through Port Elizabeth at one stage or another.

The mohair value chain is both different and similar to other agricultural value chains. In other words, it has unique characteristics and common trends with other sub-sectors in agriculture. In order to bring variation to available value chain research I have drawn on different bodies of literature, which help encapsulate in the dynamics of the value chain. Particular aspects of the chain, such as power dynamics, labour relations and the farm as a production unit, form central aspects of my research.

This research aims to bring together three different bodies of thought in an attempt to understand the mohair value chain in South Africa. In theory, these bodies of literature represent different levels of analysis: at the broadest level, the political economy of the mohair value chain is explained by drawing on the chain literature. This literature has been supplemented, at the level of the production process, by deploying the concepts of Labour Process Theory (LPT), which focuses on the control of work processes and management at a given level as well as workers' responses to control. The latter was concretised by incorporating insights from the burgeoning

research on employee voice (EV) to understand the practical ways in which workers on mohair farms articulate their needs and interests.

On a macro level, the research explored the institutional landscape which takes into consideration the chain literature and the structure of the mohair industry. At this level, the main organisations and actors that govern and sustain the mohair value chain in South Africa were studied. There are a variety of actors and institutions with different roles in governing the value chain. At the next level, which is mid-level we look at the farm as the initial point of production in the value chain. We look at what takes place at the farm level and the relationships that are developed using LPT. At this level, the analysis proceeds from the farmers' perspectives. Finally, at the micro-level we look at workers and shearers in the mohair value chain and consider their experiences at work. The notion of employee voice is used as a tool to navigate the relationships between workers and farmers at the production-side of the global value chain.

Essentially this research brings together three levels of research and there is reason for this; for example if we only look at it from the level of the value chain which is what a lot of the literature does, we lose sight of what actually takes place at the production site and what pushes the employers in terms of the labour process. We are also unable to appreciate what channels workers use to express themselves. Secondly, if we only analysed it from the labour process we lose that broader context of the value chain in which the farmer is embedded and we also lose the concrete mechanisms through which labour is able to express themselves. And finally, if we only looked at employee voice we would miss out on the structural processes that are imposed on employers. We would also lose out on the control dynamics in the labour process and lastly we will lose out on the broader political economy of the value chain. For us to make sense of the mohair value chain in South Africa we bring together these three levels of literature namely chain literature, labour process and voice literature; it is how these three bodies of literature interrelate that help us make sense of conditions on mohair farms.

The cross-pollination of these three bodies of literature is, to my knowledge, a novel feature of this research on the mohair industry in South Africa, which, in turn, has itself been woefully

under-researched. In the following section, I provide an outline of the research goals of the thesis. Next, I outline the structure of the thesis.

1.2 RESEARCH GOALS

This research was guided by the following primary goal: to understand the way in which the (working and living) conditions confronting employers and employees on mohair farm is the complex outcome of their position in the global mohair value chain, the nature of the labour process and the contours of employee voice (how and why voice). This goal is pursued by drawing on three distinct bodies of literature: namely, global value chains, labour process and employee voice.

In order to appreciate the mohair value chain, the issue of governance has been explored, I studied the institutions that play a key role in the value chain and direct the chain and the way in which it functions. The other part of my research is to explore the views of two key parties at the production-side of the value chain: namely, farmers and farm workers, who are viewed as having an inherently antagonistic relationship in a capitalist society despite having some common interests. The relationship between farmers and farm workers plays an instrumental role in how the chain functions as they are working together at the primary site of production which is the farm level.

The secondary goals, which are built on the primary research goal, include the following:

- Identifying key historical changes in the mohair industry and developing a clear understanding of the mohair value chain and sub-sector in the Eastern Cape, including the chain structure and key role-players.
- Exploring the views of the producers (the farmers) as well as the pressures that they faced at the farm level as a result of their (particular) insertion into the global value chain for mohair.

- Understanding the mohair industry from labour's perspective, highlighting the challenges and opportunities confronting workers, exploring the ways in which social and economic upgrading or downgrading is experienced, and outlining the mechanisms of voice available to mohair farm workers.
- Understanding the nature of work in the mohair sub-sector – themes that have been explored include the production process, skill formation, working hours, payment methods, employment contracts, forms and levels of managerial control, labour agency on the job, and different forms of accommodation and resistance.

1.3 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Each chapter draws on a given aspect of the research and helps to develop the argument. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic and outlines the primary and secondary research goals. Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature. I look at available chain literature and the different streams of chain literature - namely, Global Commodity Chains, Global Value Chains and Global Production Networks. I then look at LPT as it provides a more detailed analysis of power relations at the point of production. Three waves of LPT are discussed. The chapter is concluded by exploring the literature on employee voice, its development over time and the benefits it may bring to workers.

Chapter 3 provides context to the research. I provide a brief outline on what mohair is and how it has developed as a high-end-fashion fibre. I look at mohair production in South Africa and specifically the Eastern Cape as South Africa is the biggest global producer of mohair. A brief analysis of historical trends in the industry and the South African farming environment is provided. Chapter 3 also highlights some of the trends in the global and local agricultural industry.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methods that were used to carry out this research. Briefly, the research is a qualitative study and relies on in-depth, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and reviewing available documents. The aim was to get as much detail and

information from participants to provide insights into the mohair industry and its place in the global value chain.

Chapter 5, 6 and 7 are the data analysis chapters. Chapter 5 outlines the institutional landscape of the mohair industry in South Africa. The relevant actors in the chain are acknowledged and we highlight their role in governing and enabling the chain to function effectively. Chapter 6 draws on the views of farmers and their conceptions of the mohair industry. Chapter 6 explores some of the dynamics at the farm level and how these feed into the value chain. LPT is used to understand these dynamics at the point of production (the farm). Finally, chapter 7 provides an analysis of the workers' experiences in the mohair value chain in the Eastern Cape. The conditions confronting mohair workers are explained by drawing on the literature on employee voice.

Chapter 8 contains the conclusion to my research. Here, I highlight the key findings from my research as well as ways in which my research could be improved. Finally, I highlight areas of potential interest for future research.

CHAPTER 2

VALUE CHAINS, LABOUR PROCESS AND EMPLOYEE VOICE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to make sense of my research it is of great essence to look at existing literature and be able to build on this available literature. A brief outline of what this chapter contains is as follows, the literature review commences with a discussion of world systems theory, which provides a foundation for the next section on the value chain literature. Under chain literature there are three different streams that will be discussed; we look at global commodity chain literature which developed into global value chains and is now recognised as global production networks (Bair, 2009:1). Important issues have been highlighted in this literature, which include the global integration of production, governance, the role of social actors (including workers) and social and economic upgrading (Bair, 2005; Bair, 2009).

With the different streams of literature various additions have been made and the theory has evolved overtime making it as comprehensive as possible. For example, under global production networks the role and position of labour have been recognised, which was previously overlooked in the value chain literature This has highlighted the vital role of labour in creating and adding value (Thompson *et al.*, 2015; Bair, 2009; Henderson *et al.*, 2002; Bair, 2005). In essence, the value chain literature is strong on political economy but weak on production and labour; by contrast, the labour process and voice literature (discussed below) is strong on production and labour but weak on political economy. This provides an ideal opportunity for a synthesis of these bodies of literature.

Labour process theory emphasises the position of labour and its role in production and the broader economy (Taylor *et al.*, 2015; Smith & Thompson, 2009). The notions of control,

consent and resistance will be explored in relation to the antagonistic relationship between capital and labour (Cumbers *et al.*, 2008; Bair & Werner, 2015:119). More specifically, employee voice has been incorporated and emphasises at the practical level what employees do and how they raise issues, which recognises their agency (Marchington, 2007). As we recognise agency, it is important to remember the South African historical context and how formal employee voice was limited to white workers. Although a democratic dispensation and constitution were introduced in the 1990s, there is still a limit in expression and voice for black workers (Visser & Ferrer, 2015; Maree, 2016).

By drawing on these three theoretical traditions, I will hopefully provide a broad conceptual framework that will help make sense of the mohair industry in South Africa at three levels: institutions that operate at the hands of given actors, farmers and farm workers. The argument in this chapter will unfold as follows. Firstly, I will outline world systems theory. I will then outline the value chain literature which builds on world systems theory. Thirdly, I will explore labour process theory and link this to employee voice by studying the relationships and interactions between farmers and farm workers at the farm level. In concluding this chapter, I will provide a brief explanation of how these three bodies of literature can be synthesised and the importance of doing this for my research.

2.2 WORLD SYSTEMS THEORY

World systems theory came to the forefront in the 1970s and was initially acknowledged as the work of Immanuel Wallerstein. Wallerstein (1974) referred to a world-system as a "multicultural territorial division of labor in which the production and exchange of basic goods and raw materials is necessary for the everyday life of its inhabitants" (cited in Martinez-Vela, 2001:4). With this definition in mind, Wallerstein sought to understand and conceptualise unequal development in the "capitalist world system" (cited in Martinez-Vela, 2001:1). World systems theory came about as an intellectual response to the limited available literature which sought to explain the structure of the global economy and the way in which it was rapidly industrialising in a capitalist context (Martinez-Vela, 2001:1-5; Bair, 2009:7-8). At the time when world systems

theory was being developed, dependency theory and Marxist analyses of society were available and became foundational literature in the development of world systems theory (Martinez-Vela, 2001:2).

Dependency theory argues that there are core and peripheral nations. Core nations are identified as the developed, first-world nations that seek to form relationships with the peripheral nations as a tool to advance their power and capital (Martinez-Vela, 2001:3-4; Bair, 2009:7). Peripheral nations are underdeveloped and are usually characterised by their supply of resources (Gereffi & Korzeniewicz, 1994; Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1982). The relationship between core and peripheral nations is said to be structurally based, with power and wealth being the driving force (Martinez-Vela, 2001:3).

The division of nations and the unequal relationship between countries is linked to Marx's analysis of society and dependency theory; both these theories look at the structure of the capitalist society (Martinez-Vela, 2001:3; Bair, 2009:7). The strategic goal of the core nations is to make as much profit at the hands of the peripheral nations which are being exploited for their resources (Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1982:157). This breeds differentiation in development patterns and further emphasises the conflict between classes and nations in this case (Martinez-Vela, 2001:3-4). These theories help us to understand the way in which society has developed over time (Martinez-Vela, 2001:3).

In Wallerstein's model of world system theory, he seeks to explain the global economy as an organism that is driven by market forces (cited in Martinez-Vela, 2001:3). One of the main points under world systems theory is the process of rapid development which holds society together; this process is termed globalisation and seeks to understand the way in which resources and production is taking place on a global scale (Bair, 2009:8-9). Wallerstein uses a specific concept, the "multicultural territorial division of labour", to understand contemporary society (cited in Martinez-Vela, 2001:4). This division of labour is conceptualised as "the forces and relations of production of the world economy as a whole and it leads to the existence of two interdependent regions: core and periphery" (Martinez-Vela, 2001:4). The distinction between

the core and peripheral nations is extremely important as this affects the way in which these countries perceive and relate to one another and function as a result. The relationship is centred around the use of physical resources, human capital and consumption (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:6). The underlying feature of power is seen in world systems theory by those that control the markets and resources (Martinez-Vela, 2001:4).

In seeking to understand society and the nature of globalisation and its processes we need to be aware that the work of individual people enables this system to function (Martinez-Vela, 2001:4). There is a great need to acknowledge the foundations of the literature. We need to be mindful of the complexities that influence the extent to which the global system has since developed. As globalisation has evolved distinct theoretical approaches have been developed to explain the international division of labour (Bair, 2009:1). The existing body of literature is growing and we will unpack the main streams of literature as we go.

2.3 CHAIN LITERATURE

Initially, the chain literature (global value chains and global commodity chains) focused on the activities that were involved in changing goods from their raw material state to a final product, which was ready for sale on the market (Bair, 2009:1-2). Commodity chains then developed into global commodity chains (GCC) as it incorporated the operation of these networks on a global scale (Bair, 2009:9; Taylor *et al.*, 2015:6). The global operations of these chains have been brought together by the notion of the global division of labour (Martinez-Vela, 2001:4). Global commodity chains literature was built upon and is now often labelled global value chains (GVC) as there is value added at each stage of the chain (Bair, 2009:6; Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7). When we speak about value being added we are highlighting how products undergo various processes from the initial inception as a raw material until these products are ready for sale. More recently, the global production networks (GPN) literature has been developed, which further appreciates and develops an understanding of the way in which global production takes place. The GPN approach highlights the spatial configuration of production and argues that it is not necessarily limited to a chain structure but rather forms networks (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:5).

In all of these theories, different concepts have been outlined, however, of particular interest to this research is the different actors involved such as businesses, producers and those that labour in these chains.

Even though GCCs, GVCs and GPNs may be regarded as loosely integrated traditions ... using them interchangeably might be problematic. Terminological variation (the chain or network metaphor) does not signify contrasting intellectual orientations, methods, approaches and objects of study... Even when comparing GCCs and GVCs, the contrasting acronyms signify distinctions in theoretical and disciplinary affinity, and in substantive emphases and empirical concerns, to describe ‘the sequence of processes by which goods and services are conceived, produced and brought to market’ (Bair, 2009:2). In sum, then, notwithstanding similarities and overlap, the ‘acronym soup’, to use Coe’s phrase, is meant to portend analytical difference even if, in reality, variation among these frameworks is not nearly as clear at the level of empirical research... In essence they share the common objectives of describing and analysing the expanding and increasingly interconnected transnational systems of production (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:5-6).

This quote above shows the differences and similarities between the approaches. In the sections below, I will seek to unpack GCC, GVC and GPN and show how each of these frameworks developed. Part of the discussion below will include what each variation adds to our understanding of global systems of production. To begin with, we will look at GCC.

2.3.1 GLOBAL COMMODITY CHAINS

The 1980s were marked by rapid economic industrialisation and market liberalisation (Bair, 2009:5). Developing nations, particularly in East-Asia, were being integrated into the global economy for various reasons such as their available resources and expertise but even more so, as a result of their cheap labour which assisted in gaining a competitive advantage. The idea of cheap labour, or as the world systems literature recognises it, the global division of labour has been instrumental to the way in which this capitalist economy has developed, as well as the creation of surplus value leading to profit (Gereffi & Korzeniewicz, 1994:68). The structure of

the global economy embodies how important the notion of cheap labour is and the extent to which it is controlled by those that have power.

With this in mind, the term ‘commodity chain’ was formulated and referred to the way in which production, distribution and consumption were occurring on a vast scale in a chain sequence; there was an increased sense of global movement and integration of goods and services (Bair, 2005; Bair, 2009:5). The global commodity chain literature came from a world-systems perspective and was later adopted by development scholars (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:6). Over time, scholars of global commodity chains considered the way in which these chains were set out, and how production and labour were combined to bring about a finished commodity (Bair, 2005; Lee, 2010:1). The emphasis was on the commodity nature of products that were being produced and primarily explained the need for raw materials in these chains. Hopkins and Wallerstein were instrumental in developing this theory in the 1980s and 1990s; their focus was on the role of the state in coordinating these chains. The role of the state was to determine and influence the way in which these chains were able to function and their set-up (Sturgeon, 2008:6). Hence, one could argue that chain analysis developed with an industrial focus and did not adequately consider the wider societal context.

In the 1990s, Gereffi (1994) added essential aspects to the GCC literature that have advanced the theory, later becoming known as global value chains (GVC). In exploring GCC, Gereffi (1994) emphasised the role of the lead firm in forming links within these chains that would drive global production and expand global influence. Gereffi highlights four dimensions that characterise GCC: input-output structure, institutions, geographical location and governance (cited in Dicken *et al.*, 2001:98-99).

Input-output structure is understood as the transformation process that takes place with a given raw material, from the beginning to the final stage when the product is ready for sale (Bair, 2009:9). Geographical location explains the way in which activities within the chain are strategically distributed across different areas to access resources most efficiently (Dicken *et al.*, 2001:18, 99). Institutions refer to the rules that are made that govern the chain and its functions

(Gereffi & Korzeniewicz, 1994:18-9; Bair, 2009:9). Lastly, and most importantly various authors have paid particular attention to governance and its role within a chain (Bair, 2009:9).

2.3.1.1 GOVERNANCE

Governance is simply the way in which the commodity chain is controlled, in simple terms who controls the chain and how the chain is controlled (Dicken *et al.*, 2001:99; Gereffi 1994; Bair, 2009:9; Gereffi, 2013). The aspect of control further highlights the differences in power between core nations, also known as “global buyers” who lead and direct these chains (Schmitz & Knorringa, 2000:177-178). The peripheral nations are recognised as “local producers” who are on the receiving end, and get told what to do and just how to do it (Schmitz & Knorringa, 2000:177-178). There are power dynamics at play throughout these chains and these will be discussed further below (Schmitz & Knorringa, 2000:177-178; Kaplinsky, 2000:117-119; Bair, 2005:171).

Over time, much attention has been given to the governance of commodity chains as it forms a central part of understanding the way in which these chains function. As mentioned above, it also places great emphasis on the power dynamics at play within these chains (Dolan *et al.*, 1999; Ponte, 2001; 2002; Plahe, 2005:2; Bair, 2009:10). In its purest form, governance is understood as “authority and power relationships that determine how financial, material and human resources are allocated and flow within a given chain” (Gereffi, 1994:97). Governance refers to the ways in which all aspects of the chain are directed and coordinated by those in power, and this is often across various geographical locations (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:2-3; Plahe, 2005:3). Part of controlling the chain means to look at the way in which the chain is structured and to coordinate the way in which the chain will function in the broader market while maximising returns (Dolan & Humphrey, 2000; Kaplinsky, 2000:124).

Governance also acknowledges power relations and the power imbalances within a given global commodity chain (Bair, 2005:159). The most influential stakeholders in the chain are those that hold power and wealth as they dictate how everything works in the chain and the way in which value is distributed throughout the chain (Kaplinsky, 2000:124-125). The power and influence of

these stakeholders are global and strategic, which is linked to the capitalist economic structure. The gains made in terms of profits continue to expand their position and influence in society (Kaplinsky, 2000:124). Notions of power and control encourage one to ask: who leads and controls these chains? A simple response is chains are driven by 'lead firms'. These can be defined as:

small, medium, or large firms that have forward or backward commercial linkages with a significant number of Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Examples of lead firms include buyers, traders, input suppliers, veterinarians, exporters and processors...They are often engaged in aggregating the production of MSMEs, adding value to raw materials, and selling finished products in domestic and international markets. Lead firms can vary significantly in size and may operate as part of either the formal or informal economy. They are often key innovators and respected thought leaders in their industries (Lusby, 2008:1).

From this we are able to acknowledge the strategic role of lead firms in governing commodity chains, yet there is often a lack of institutional context in our understanding of what is taking place in given commodity chains. Hence, part of my research aims to bring the idea of lead firms to the fore as well as provide context for the roles played by these in the mohair chain in South Africa (Brewer, 2009:1; Brewer, 2011).

Governance structures were initially conceptualised in two different ways: a buyer-driven commodity chain (BDCC) and a producer-driven commodity chain (PDCC) (Gereffi, 1994:97). In order to assist in understanding these two types of chains, a brief illustration will be provided. A river runs from the highest point, which is known as the source, downstream into the sea. In the same way, we can view the manner in which a commodity chain 'flows'. A chain that is directed from upstream is labelled as a PDCC, which refers to the way in which producers, those that are actually producing and adding value, control and direct the way in which the chain functions from the source (Gereffi, 1994; Gereffi, 1999:1-9). By contrast, since BDCC are

controlled by those who are buying the product, the chain is controlled from downstream (Gereffi, 1999:2).

Traditionally, PDCC are seen as chains that are controlled by large transnational manufacturing organisations; the lead firms are characterised by the extreme amounts of wealth, knowledge, technology and capital they possess (Gereffi, 1994; Gereffi, 1999:1-9). As a result, it is often very hard to access and function in these chains because of the amount of concentrated power and specialisation that is involved in these chains. Typical examples include the aviation and automobile industry (Gereffi, 1994; Gereffi, 2001; Bair, 2005:10).

BDCC are subjected to control from large retailers and multinational organisations that have power. These retailers programme different parts of the chain through decentralisation, meaning ultimate power and profits essentially still remain with these large global firms, yet given functions are distributed to smaller firms that specialise in a given area which then forms the chain structure with each actor/organisation carrying out their function (Gereffi & Sklair, 1994:92). The stakes are high in a BDCC as production is directed by the buyer and their demands, which functions under a market structure meaning there is great competition. There is a need for skills that are linked to effective marketing that meet consumers' demands (Gereffi & Sklair, 1994:92). Agricultural commodity chains often fall under BDCC where the buyers, which are large supermarket chains and the fashion industry, control and direct these chains (Gereffi & Sklair, 1994:92; Bair, 2005:11). Significant amounts of pressure are placed on the rest of the chain, particularly on the workers and farmers in less developed countries to meet required standards (Gereffi, 1994:97; Dolan & Humphrey, 2000:160). The mohair value chain in South Africa is a clear example of a BDCC.

The distinction between PDCC and BDCC suggests that value chains can function either as one or the other. Consequently, this distinction has “failed to capture the range of governance forms in actual chains” (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:6). What often happens is that different parts of a given chain have aspects of PDCC and others where BDCC is more evident; hence, they are not

mutually exclusive (Bair, 2005:11-12). PDCC and BDCC are subject to change due to various external factors (such as the market or the state) and do not operate in isolation.

Another critique that has arisen is that very little has been said about workers and their role in these chains; the main focus has been on businesses and those with power. For this reason, we can say chain analysis is a top-down approach (Bair, 2005:11-15). In doing this research, I was reminded of just how central various actors are in a chain – not only lead firms but also smaller businesses, farmers and workers (Bair, 2005:15). Hence, it is important to seek out their voice on what their jobs are like and what it means to be a part of a given chain as well as to understand the inequalities in the associated firms, chains and nations (Bair, 2005:15-17; Kaplinsky, 2000:117-119; Schmitz & Knorringa, 2000). This brings us to the source from which value is derived. In order to understand this more clearly, we now turn to the Global Value Chain literature.

2.3.2 GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS

The Global Value Chain (GVC) literature built on the GCC literature in an attempt to understand the way in which global production was changing. The new wave of GVC literature was strongly driven by the shortfalls that were identified within GCC; particularly with control in chains being seen as either buyer or producer driven. The idea that a given chain could have various forms of governance was brought to the fore in GVC literature (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7). Lead firms were revolutionising the way in which production and trade were occurring. Their power was leading to greater access and control of global markets but could not be divided into a dualism of BDCC or PDCC. GVC analysis highlights the relationships between firms as well as inter-firm governance in a given chain (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7). There was a shift from looking at the entirety of the chain to more specific functions which provided more detail for chain analysis.

Importantly, with the global expansion in production, the notion of value being added at each stage of the chain had previously been overlooked (Ponte & Gibbon, 2006). The idea of value being added is important when we think of the overall economic structure that society functions under, namely capitalism. This structure has been made in such a way that at each stage there is

the need for value to be added in order that a greater profit can be made at the end, to the benefit of those that govern the chains, we will analyse aspects of GVCs inter-firm governance below.

2.3.2.1 INTER-FIRM GOVERNANCE AND GEOPOLITICAL FACTORS

Governance is a central aspect when it comes to GVC and builds on what was highlighted in the GCC literature (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:3). Humphrey & Schmitz (2000:4) defines governance as the “coordination of economic activities through non-market relationships”. The type of governance that occurs in a given value chain has the power to either enhance or undermine economic upgrading and development of the Global South (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:1). Therefore, one cannot generalise and say that all governance leads to upgrading within a chain in a particular nation. As mentioned above, we need to remember that governance is context specific (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:3). Each value chain has inter-firm governance structures in which some actors benefit more than others. The proponents of neoliberalism argue that the Global South is benefitting more by being part of these chains, which have helped push the globalisation and competition agenda further for those that govern parts of the chain (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:3). The purpose of GVC analysis is to understand these inter-firm governance types and given relationships and see where value is being added (Sturgeon, 2009:15; Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7).

In order to understand governance under GVC, we will look at three independent variables that influence the type of governance that occur at different places along a given chain. These variables are: “the complexity of transactions, the codifiability of information, and the capabilities of the supply base” (Bair, 2009: 13). Taylor *et al.* (2015:7) explain the relationship between these three variables and the prevailing types of governance as: “knowledge and information complexity, the degree to which this information can be codified and thus transmitted more easily between parties and the existing capacities or capabilities in the supply base - produces a typology of five possible governance forms” (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7).

These forms of governance include arm’s length market relations, modular, relational, captive and hierarchical forms of chain governance which will all be explained below (Humphrey &

Schmitz, 2000:16). The order of these governance types speaks to the amount of power lead firms have as a social relation and the ability to coordinate the chain which is attached to each type; with arm's length market governance regarded as extensively relational between firms and having the least power differentiation, whereas hierarchical governance having the most differentiation in power and coordination between firms (Gereffi, Humphrey & Sturgeon, 2005). These forms of governance are not mutually exclusive, and some chains contain all five types of governance (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:16).

Arm's length market relations occur where no close relationship is formed between the buyer and supplier. The buyer takes control by dictating what is needed and suppliers meet these needs (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:16). Modular governance is based on market specifications and seeks to meet the needs of the customers (Gereffi *et al.*, 2005). Relational governance occurs when there is an established dependence between buyers and suppliers, and is based on competence and technology/innovation (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:16; Gereffi *et al.*, 2005). Captive governance happens when there is a great deal of control enforced by the buyer/lead firm over the supplier. There is tight control and power exercised in this relationship as the supplier is not trusted (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:16). Finally, hierarchical governance is prominent when the lead firm takes control over all of the production process, there is extensive amounts of power exerted in this type of chain over relationships and firms (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:16). The form/s of governance shape the type of upgrading that is possible in a chain. Case studies will be discussed below which highlight the effects of different types of governance.

Governance patterns in the discussion above have been set out in a way which implies ideal types, clear-cut processes and relationships (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:16). However, in reality, governance is dynamic, differentiated and messy as different types of control and organisations make-up different stages of the chain (Humphrey, 2004:2). Further, various geopolitical factors influence the way in which a chain is structured and the relationships that occur between firms. Some of these geopolitical factors have specific implications on given chains and states whereas others are more generalised, yet all play a role (Humphrey & Schmitz,

2000:3). Geopolitical factors include the institutional framework of a state (as well as on a global scale), actors, policies, education, markets, foreign exchange, technology and infrastructure including communication, labour, natural resources and the environment which includes the climate (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:28-31; Humphrey, 2004:6-10, 22, 28, 34-36; Pietrobelli & Rabellotti, 2006:109-110; Bamber, Guinn & Gereffi, 2014:1). A mix of these geopolitical factors affects the structure of the chain and the type of governance that can be sustained in a given chain.

Before moving on and seeing how governance plays out in a chain, through economic upgrading, we must first acknowledge that governance takes place through private or public actors or both (Backer, 2011:751; Vellema & van Wijk, 2014). Public and private actors are the individuals that make up various institutions as well as lead firms, which has been discussed under GCC literature (Vellema & van Wijk, 2014:1). These actors control the functions of chains and have a vested interest in the way in which these chains function (Vellema & van Wijk, 2014:1). Various organisations in the private and public sector have taken on new realms of responsibility where they are able to create standards and become regulatory bodies for given industries or chains (Backer, 2011:751-752; Vellema & van Wijk, 2014:1-2). An example in the agri-food sector is rooibos tea production in the fynbos area in South Africa that is governed by Utz (Vellema & van Wijk, 2014:1, 3-4). Utz puts standards in place and certifies tea production, which is a powerful form of control (Vellema & van Wijk, 2014:1, 3-4). Key role players governing chains benefit greatly from being able to put standards in place, which leads to our next topic of discussion, economic upgrading.

2.3.2.2 ECONOMIC UPGRADING

Economic upgrading and development are often seen as beneficial for those that govern value chains. Economic upgrading is defined as a process by which there is a shift in activities and capabilities in order to gain more income or position in a given global value chain (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:19; Humphrey, 2004:9). The notion of upgrading considers leading firms in developing countries and uses them as an entry point into these nations; this formed part of an

agenda that was pushed by development scholars to help advance suppliers' position and power (Humphrey, 2004:9). Development scholars push the agenda for suppliers in developing nations to join the global value chain to enhance their own agenda and often promote the benefits of joining the chain (Humphrey 2004:9). This, however, overlooks the role of workers (which we will discuss in the social upgrading section). In order for upgrading to occur, there needs to be a balance of favourable governance patterns and geopolitical factors which bring about economic upgrading. Upgrading will always look different as a result of the chain, who is involved and the factors that are influencing the chain (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:28). That is, chains are characterised by different types of upgrading and some chains embody more than one type.

There are four types of upgrading that have been identified: process, product, functional and inter-sectoral (which is also known as inter-chain upgrading) (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:19). Process upgrading is understood as and when firms upgrade their processes (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:3). This is the idea that the input-output process occurs in a more efficient manner as a result of changing the production system by introducing upgraded technology (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:19). Product upgrading looks at firms moving to increasingly sophisticated product lines (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:4). Functional upgrading is when firms gain further functions to increase skill content and activities, examples include marketing or design (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:19; Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:4). Finally, inter-sectoral upgrading is identified when firms have gained particular competences or functions and use this to move to a different sector (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:19). Consequently, there is increased effectiveness and efficiency as well as the spreading of risk through repositioning that takes place in markets (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:4).

Value chains are purposefully structured by those that govern them. Usually product and process upgrading will occur in developing countries, which is a strategic move as these forms of upgrading are seen as processes that require minimal skills, training as well as resources. The result is that these countries stay in these particular stages or processes and cannot move up the chain (Humphrey, 2004). In comparison, functional upgrading is specifically for developed nations that lead and control these chains as this is where the expertise, skills and money are

situated (Humphrey, 2004). We can see that there is a strategic aspect to the way in which chains are developed and the positions of firms and countries that reflect given power dynamics.

In order for developing countries to advance, it is essential that upgrading occurs. However, this cannot occur on its own; a specific type of governance and geopolitical factors are necessary to achieve the desired upgrading (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:20). This is a continuous process that must not be looked at in isolation, but rather addressed on a business level, state specific level as well as on a global scale (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:20-22). Upgrading is seen as beneficial, particularly for those that direct these chains. However, with this argument there is very little to say about the adverse effects in developing countries such as increased poverty, depletion of resources and exploitation particularly for workers as everything is assumed to be improving (Bair, 2005). The adverse effects are a concern and cannot be justified in the economic upgrading argument, which leads us to the next section on social upgrading before we address social downgrading.

2.3.2.3 SOCIAL UPGRADING

Social upgrading is the idea of "identifying with workers' conditions" in value chains and how these conditions can be improved (Rossi, 2013:223). A further social upgrading definition that is contained in the Decent Work Agenda is "the process of improving the rights and entitlements of workers as social actors, which enhances the quality of their employment" (Selwyn, 2013:79). Social upgrading is recognised by the International Labour Organisation's Decent Work Agenda and constitutes four pillars, which include "the idea of having employment, social protection and rights as well as social dialogue for each worker" (Selwyn, 2013:79). The Decent Work Agenda also encourages work with conditions of "freedom, security, equity and human dignity whereby rights are still protected, and pay and social aspects" are evident (Selwyn, 2013:79).

The notion of social upgrading has proved to be an interesting and increasingly researched area of study, which falls under GVC (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:303). Social upgrading has previously been overlooked. Much attention was given to economic upgrading as it portrayed the West as an agent that assisted in bringing about greater development for developing nations. This ultimately

resulted in the West gaining more power and bettering themselves economically (Rossi, 2013:223). Economic upgrading literature is continuously produced to benefit the West and lead firms as it portrays them as heroes that are there to rescue developing nations; hence, the literature is tailored to present developed nations in a favourable light (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:302). Therefore, it intentionally overlooks all the adverse effects and issues that workers face at the bottom of the value chain, which is primarily what social upgrading seeks to address.

The literature assumed if economic upgrading was taking place, it would automatically mean social upgrading was occurring too, which has not been the case (Rossi, Luinstra & Pickles, 2014:60). Therefore, it is important that researchers look at things in a different way: instead of top-down from lead firms, a reverse approach has been taken that looks at things from a bottom-up perspective, which is essentially from the workers' view (Selwyn, 2013:76). Undoubtedly, workers are increasingly at the centre of value chains and should be studied as they keep the chains functioning with the work they do (Rossi *et al.*, 2014). More research needs to be done that explores workers' conditions in light of the growing levels of exploitation, injustice and insecurity they face (Pegler, 2015:929).

There has been a grave misunderstanding and simplification of this relationship (economic and social upgrading), below we will see just how and why it is problematic to assume a direct and positive relationship between the two. Social upgrading, if anything, has come about as a critique of economic upgrading. With the aid of various case studies, I will also seek to show that social upgrading is a fallacy; more than anything, social downgrading is occurring on a much broader scale with dire outcomes for workers. Selwyn classifies these chains as global poverty chains (Selwyn, 2016:1). The notion of global poverty chains reflects the social downgrading that is occurring with workers at the bottom of these chains and how they are continuously being subjected to poor conditions (Selwyn, 2016). This is considered a race to the bottom regarding conditions for workers (Knorringa & Pegler, 2006:470).

Much research has been done over the past 30 years into GVCs and their related processes (Selwyn, 2016:75; Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:303). In-depth research on GCCs and GVCs came at a

time when the world economy was adjusting to neoliberal policy and countries began to specialise in trade and resources. Part of this agenda of development was to move production to the Global South as a means of being all-inclusive and promote development (meanwhile, it has been a method of exploitation and if anything, detrimental) (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:302; Rossi *et al.*, 2014:65-66). Further, this movement to the Global South was linked with the idea of the South having resources and labour, which elites in the West could use to their benefit and increase their profits (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:302-303). However, the South did not have much of a choice; they saw it fit to integrate into this new way of business (Rossi *et al.*, 2014:65-66). The move to the South has been very rapid and has become very complicated. This was increasingly promoted by lead firms and advanced with technology and communications, which gave the West further power to govern the chains (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:302).

Available research has been necessary and used as a basis for understanding what was occurring in value and commodity chains, which was mainly economic upgrading for the West (Knorringer & Pegler, 2006; Rossi *et al.*, 2014). Value chains were viewed positively in light of the benefits that specific actors, such as lead firms and suppliers, could get from being a part of them (Rossi, 2013:223). However, this literature did not consider the entirety of these chains and their negative side, particularly for the Global South and its workers (Selwyn, 2013:76). Therefore, increasing research has gone into social upgrading literature, which has added significant value to the field and a more objective and holistic outlook has been developed, which has led to the findings on social downgrading which will be discussed below (Selwyn, 2013:76).

2.3.2.4 SOCIAL DOWNGRADING

Social downgrading is seen as the opposite of social upgrading: while it has been assumed that workers would receive improvements in their “measurable standards (wages, working hours etc.) and enabling rights (union rights, collective bargaining, non-discrimination etc.)”, this has often not been the case leading to poorer rights and standards for those workers (Funcke *et al.*, 2014:6). The assumption that all economic upgrading leads to social upgrading has been re-evaluated and reconsidered as research has shown otherwise. The notions of social upgrading

and social downgrading are linked to workers' position in a value chain. Workers in positions of power, who are recognised as 'core' workers, are likely to experience some sort of social upgrading whereas workers, who are seen as peripheral, are often subjected to social downgrading (Rossi, 2013:227).

Particular emphasis has been placed on developing countries as this is where much of the product and process upgrading occurs; in developing countries there is access to a large pool of labour that is willing to work for comparatively low wages, resulting in wide-spread exploitation of these workers (Knorringa & Pegler, 2006:471). Workers need to survive and sustain their welfare and livelihood; hence, they subject themselves to poor working conditions as a means of survival (Selwyn, 2013:79).

Many organisations, governments and firms have been quick to sign and accept these ideals of social upgrading, but in practice have nowhere near put into place these conditions for their employees (Selwyn, 2013:79-80). This is both contradictory and problematic. The Decent Work Agenda (social upgrading) has been diverted and used for the benefit of transnationals and capital, which, if anything, has moved away from the original aim of promoting social upgrading (Selwyn, 2013:80). We see examples in section 2.3.2.5 below.

Economic upgrading has also become central to the discourse of value chains as well as helping to implement and reinforce the capitalist system by having more control and capital. Therefore, it is assumed that social upgrading would somehow occur despite its contradictory nature of having to be compatible with increasing profits as well as the higher costs associated with improving the conditions of workers. Social upgrading has been a lesson hard learnt: economic upgrading does not inevitably or automatically lead to social upgrading (Pegler, 2015:929). The link between economic upgrading and social upgrading is further complicated by the deterministic nature of the capitalist system, the vast expanse of these chains, the different countries of operation, as well as the differentiation of workers in these chains (Pegler, 2015:93). With this in mind, there is the process of exploitation attached where capitalists exploit workers but there are real limits

as capital relies on workers cooperation. Workers do not operate in isolation and need to agree to work and even with this, there are laws that protect workers and their conditions.

The capitalist system is built on profit taking; one party has to lose out, and this is acknowledged as the workers. Social downgrading is occurring, meaning that increasingly the standards of work have deteriorated for a particular group of workers who are not part of management who have been referred to as periphery workers (Selwyn, 2013; Pegler, 2015). Conditions for peripheral workers include low wages, long and increasingly intense working hours, women and child labour, poor living and working conditions, contracts that do not provide any security as well as the increasing level of poverty by those that work (Selwyn, 2013:84). This is clearly a cause for concern. Social downgrading has come at the cost of increasing power and competition for businesses, which has led to a worsening of conditions for peripheral workers (Knorringa & Pegler, 2006:474).

There has also been a rise in differentiation in the type of employment contracts given, with few core workers having permanent contracts and a growing number of workers on flexible or seasonal contracts, which causes even further differentiation and social inequalities (Rossi, 2013:227). The practice of casualised work symbolises social downgrading and means that peripheral workers are increasingly vulnerable.

The assumption that economic upgrading leads to social upgrading is therefore only relevant to core workers. For peripheral workers, economic upgrading leads to social downgrading. Hence, it is problematic to assume that there is direct causality (Selwyn, 2013:79). Smith (2016) highlights how there are both winners and losers within the capitalist system. The winners include those that are experiencing economic upgrading and growing resources and power as a result of their position in the chain (Rossi, 2013; Selwyn, 2013), whereas the losers are workers facing deteriorating conditions in their work who are categorised as those experiencing social downgrading.

The capitalist system is made up of given actors one being, labourers who work to keep the system going, with all the work being done by workers profit is generated. Profit and labour

formulate an ongoing dependency relationship. In order to generate more profit, labour costs need to be minimised, which creates surplus value (Smith, 2016:9-11). The capitalist system aims to increase surplus value as much as possible. One of the main ways that this is done is through cheap labour; hence, there is what is known as global labour arbitrage (Smith, 2016:1). This is the movement of labour processes to the South because of the low cost of employment and high levels of unemployment (Smith, 2016:1). This is recognised as super-exploitative, yet it is a mechanism used to the benefit of the capitalists and helps with economic upgrading (Smith, 2016:9-11).

A super-exploitative method that is used is the working day. A worker is paid for the first couple of hours of their work shift and the rest of the work is for free. Another mechanism that is used to create surplus value is by extending the working day and often workers work overtime to help produce more goods or services but are not paid for the entirety of their work. The capitalist system, particularly for peripheral workers is both manipulative and degrading in nature (Smith, 2016:9-11). Further, one can see that the Global South is targeted because of the need for development as well as the availability of resources and cheap labour (Smith, 2016:12). Labour is often highlighted as an inherent input for production by businesses; the associated costs of labour are a primary concern for how businesses function and are usually kept minimal (Selwyn, 2013:77).

2.3.2.5 CASE STUDIES OF SOCIAL UPGRADING AND DOWNGRADING

In order to help conceptualise the idea of social upgrading and social downgrading, I will consider two case studies: the Moroccan garment industry and Amazonian acai production. The Morocco garment industry is an interesting case. Morocco produces garments for a global chain, and the local economy thrives because of this industry (Rossi, 2013:223). There are various locations of production within the country, which have been shaped by the culture, history and the labour markets (Rossi, 2013:225).

In Morocco, a division has arisen within the industry. There are two types of workers: regular and irregular (Rossi, 2013:227). Regular workers, also known as core workers, are those with

secure contracts and are trusted employees. They are highly valued by management and are treated well; however, they do not make up a significant proportion of the sector. These workers are likely to experience social upgrading (Rossi, 2013:227-228). Whereas irregular workers, who are also described as peripheral workers, are proving to be increasingly common and help the sector to thrive (Rossi, 2013:225-227). Irregular workers do not have contracts and are usually unskilled and young. They also do not have much social security, work long hours and their pay does not reflect the work they do as well as their efforts (Rossi, 2013:225).

The case shows that under functional upgrading there are significant differences. For regular workers, social and economic upgrading is likely to occur whereas irregular workers face social downgrading (Rossi, 2013:227). With this case study in Morocco's garment industry we see that the position that workers take up in a chain influences the opportunities they will receive and whether they will undergo social upgrading/downgrading. There are various pressures at work partly as a result of the system of global production that prevails. Until this is restructured, there is likely to be ongoing tension and differentiation between regular and irregular workers (Rossi, 2013:232).

Acai production in the Amazon is a case which reflects how labour, that is integrated into the global acai value chain, is often subjected to social downgrading and exploitation as a result of the capitalist agenda (Pegler, 2015:929). This case is somewhat unique in that the family is used to assist with the production process of acai. There are also various levels of integration within the chain, ranging from group one (highest integration) to three (lowest integration) (Pegler, 2015:941-945). We see that group one can benefit and access security. In other words, this group receives a fairer share (yet are still exploited) from being integrated into the value chain (social upgrading). The levels of security assess the "sustainability, collectivity and cultural attachment" on the job (Pegler, 2015:941-945). Group three, however, does not receive as many benefits from being integrated into the acai chain. The case on acai has added various other considerations to the social and economic upgrading debate, such as the position and incorporation of these

workers into the value chain and the subjective nature of each chain and worker (Pegler, 2015:951).

Research is ongoing and seeks to explain the disparities in GVCs and how only a few are benefiting economically (Selwyn, 2016:2). To this end, Selwyn proposed that chain literature should be called Global Poverty Chains because of the detrimental effects on workers (Selwyn, 2016:1). Workers in general are increasingly facing growing inequalities, harder work, more extended hours and increased poverty. This is a result of multinationals taking the lion's share of capital and using their power as a control mechanism (Selwyn, 2016:7; Kruger *et al.*, 2005:1). These conditions have resulted in workers surviving on the bare minimum (Selwyn, 2016:1; Kruger *et al.*, 2005:1). Lead firms and multinationals together are promoting conditions that inflict both poverty and social downgrading on a large number of workers throughout the world, which is a cause for concern (Selwyn, 2016:17). A few elites are benefitting from both social and economic upgrading and they continue to push the agenda forward (Selwyn, 2016:17).

This section has sought to explain the notion of social upgrading and how this plays out within GVCs. I have also shown, with the help of case studies, that economic upgrading does not inherently mean that social upgrading is taking place. If anything, the workers at the bottom of these chains are increasingly facing downgrading whereas those that are recognised as core workers are experiencing some social upgrading (Pegler, 2015; Lemke & Jansen van Rensburg, 2014). Global poverty chain research highlights the conditions that workers are facing at the bottom of the chain and how exploitative this system is (Selwyn, 2016:1). Social upgrading is not as simple as it is made out to be. There is a need for further research and viable solutions to help the workers escape the cycles of downgrading. Global Production Networks, the subject of the next section, looks precisely at these concerns.

2.3.3 GLOBAL PRODUCTION NETWORKS

The global production network (GPN) literature developed as a result of the gaps that had been identified in the GCC and GVC literature. Scholars of GPNs seek to understand the changes that are taking place in production and employment as well as being aware of the multiple layers of

the political economy that influence global production. The notion of GPN recognises the different influences that play a role in the way in which a production network operates (Coe *et al.*, 2008; Barrientos *et al.*, 2011; Barrientos, 2013). In order for one to understand a given network and its functions there is a need to consider the broader context that surrounds it (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7). Taylor *et al* (2015) highlight key aspects of the GPN approach in the following:

Global production activities should be conceived, not as vertical and linear sequences, but as highly complex networks, in which intricate horizontal, diagonal and vertical links formed multi-dimensional, multi-layered lattices of economic activity ... As is well known, GPN theory emphasized ‘the dialectics of global-local’ relations, for the principal reason that firm-centred production networks are deeply influenced by the concrete socio-political contexts in which they are embedded. GPN sought to restore the territorial dimension of the specific locations comprising the node of global networks, emphasizing the institutional and regulatory contexts, and non-firm actors - especially the state - also shape the dynamics of production systems ... Further, the GPN framework has, despite qualifications, explicitly acknowledged the importance of labour among the territorial factors that give GPNs their structure, and shape their consequences for both global and local actors (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:6-7).

This quote highlights several central aspects of GPN that will be discussed further. In the GPN approach, there is an emphasis on the need to contextualise the different parts of a given GPN and the way in which all aspects of the network are essential to its functioning (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011; Barrientos, 2013; Taylor *et al.*, 2015). Under GCC, the whole chain was understood in its fullness from the perspective of those that govern and control the chain (Bair, 2009:11). Under GVC, the literature focuses on given aspects of the chain such as inter-firm relationships and specific forms of governance. We are able to see that with the development of chain literature there has been a shift in the understanding of how chains and now networks function (Bair, 2009:1).

Much emphasis has been placed on the way in which a given network functions as a system, which includes inputs and outputs that relate to the production, distribution and consumption of a given good or service. Often, these processes are affected by a wide range of factors both internally and externally, which gives further insight into the way in which the network functions (Barrientos *et al.*, 2015). GPN literature seeks to explain the multi-dimensional aspect of a given network and the complexities in the way in which these systems operate.

Within the GPN framework, emphasis is placed on three dimensions: value, power and agents and/or structures (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7-8). These factors are seen as foundational concepts that help to understand a GPN. Each network is embedded in a specific context with specific actors that influences the way in which the network functions. Value highlights the way in which a good or service is created or the processes that assist in advancing this good or service (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7-8). It is important to remember as part of the network that each stage is significant and is potentially there to add value when developing a given product or service.

Relations of power explain a given sense of authority or control as well as how the chain is directed and maintained over time (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:8). Lastly, agents and structures have a determining impact on the way in which parts of the network function (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:8; Carswell & De Neve, 2012). For example, the production of mohair is different in South Africa and in America, which relates to available actors, legislation and institutions that have been put in place which help maintain a balance in given networks (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The agents and structures that are in place in a given network affect how a network functions; this speaks to the context-specific nature of how networks operate (Carswell & De Neve, 2012; Coe & Hess, 2013).

As discussed above, agents are also recognised as actors who form a vital part of the network; there are different types of actors and they operate in different capacities. We have also discussed the role of lead firms above (identified in the GCC and GVC literature). There are other actors such as workers, local governments, international trade bodies, private institutions and trade unions that have an impact on the way in which GPNs function (Hess & Yeung, 2006; Bair,

2009:4; Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:3). All actors have influential power and have specific agendas that they are working towards hence they influence how the network operates.

More importantly, in the GPN approach there is a strong emphasis on the agency of workers (which has largely been overlooked in previous streams of chain research). The workers' primary role is to create and add value to a given product or service (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011). Workers are vital in every network and provide an essential function to the global economy (Jenkins, 2006). Yet, very little research has been done to understand their position and conditions. Several studies have been done that promote the neo-liberal agenda and disregard workers, thereby failing to provide a convincing insight into the critical role of workers in GPNs (Jenkins, 2006; Barrientos *et al.*, 2011; Carswell & De Neve, 2012). The GPN perspective seeks to understand workers for who they are and what they bring to the network. Cumbers (2015) refers to GPNs as networks of embodied labour, emphasising just how central labour is to the production process and how all processes rest on the work of labourers.

The GPN approach recognises the changes in the structure of work; particularly with the shift of production into developing countries to take advantage of cheap labour as seen through outsourcing, seasonal work, and minimal protection for many 'non-standard' workers (McGrath, 2013; Barrientos, 2013; Oya, 2015). In conjunction with the fragmentation of work, there is available labour law in these developing countries, yet there is often a lack of adherence to the law (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011; Oya, 2015). This has had an impact on work and how it is done as well as on those that carry out the work, at the bottom of the chain or given network (Jenkins, 2006; McGrath, 2013; Oya, 2015). As mentioned above, many workers have experienced social downgrading in their work, which is linked to the way in which society is structured around capitalism where workers are losing out at the hands of profit (Jenkins, 2006).

Various studies have analysed just how poor conditions of work are, and the way in which workers are continuously being denied their rights (Kruger *et al.*, 2005:1). Hence, there is a need to recognise, develop and strengthen institutions that promote the Decent Work Agenda, particularly in developing countries as this is a key site of exploitation (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011).

It is also important to promote the Decent Work Agenda by developing mandatory standards to protect workers and if they are not followed, there is a need for justice to be served (Oya, 2015).

Workers are increasingly becoming aware of their conditions as well as their own role and voice, which has shaped the way in which they are taking initiative and ownership of their work (Taylor *et al.*, 2015). The idea that labour can have its own agency is important as it gives a form of ownership in their work (Coe & Hess, 2013; Taylor *et al.*, 2015). In recent times, we have seen an increase in awareness campaigns as well as workers ability to question and interrogate the way work is being carried out. However, these measures are inadequate (Fitcher *et al.*, 2011; Coe & Hess, 2013; Oya, 2015). One of the central aims of the GPN literature is to create awareness of the role of workers in and of themselves through actual case-studies (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:322). One of the central aspects of this research is to understand the actual “working and living conditions as well as entitlements of workers” (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:305) in the mohair industry in South Africa. In order to do this effectively, one needs to recognise the worker as a factor of production in the chain and part of the capitalist system as well as workers as agents of production (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011:305). With this in mind, we can then interrogate workers’ conditions of work and their position in these networks.

2.3.4 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAIN LITERATURE

In the discussion above, we are able to see the way in which the literature has developed over time. Initially we looked at world systems theory which has formed the foundation of chain literature, we then looked at GCC. Under GCC the focus was on the structure of the chain and particularly the way in which it was governed either by buyers or producers. We then saw the move from the entirety of the chain to parts of the chain under GVC. GVC literature seeks to understand inter-firm relationships and governance at specific points in the value chain. We also looked at economic upgrading and social upgrading and downgrading and the influence this has on different parties. From GVC we moved to the GPN approach and its emphasis on the multi-scalar and multi-dimensional nature of networks. We also looked at the importance of actors involved in a given network, with a particular focus on the workers role in these networks.

Our understanding of the functioning and processes in chains and (later) networks has expanded greatly and is further being refined with time.

In applying chain literature to my research, I have built on aspects of the available literature and have sought to add insight into what is taking place in the mohair value chain in South Africa. I have used aspects of GCC, GVC and GPN that have been discussed above as a foundation to my research. My research seeks to highlight the role of institutions and governance as discussed in the GCC approach. Next, my research explores more specific types of governance and upgrading that takes place between firms as well as social upgrading and downgrading, which links to aspects of GPN that highlight the role of workers in the network. The need to study labour in a chain is essential. I will draw on a given production point which is the farm level and acknowledge the employment relationship and the nature of work that takes place. As mentioned in my research goals the nature of work refers to the structure of work, the hours, pay and skills (amongst other things) that are needed to perform the job. GVC literature is strong on political economy but weak on labour, whereas LPT is strong on labour but weak on political economy. This creates the basis for synthesising the two perspectives into a framework that is strong on both political economy and labour (Taylor *et al.*, 2015). To this end, LPT combined with chain literature will guide my study of the mohair value chain.

2.4 LABOUR PROCESS THEORY

LPT forms a central pillar in my three-part analysis by linking the chain literature and employee voice literature. To reiterate what was said in the introduction these three theories speak to different levels of analysis and have intentionally been chosen to help understand the different facets of the mohair value chain. As seen above chain literature forms the broadest level of analysis which is at a macro level, and seeks to understand the associated processes from the point of production right through to the sale of a good or service.

LPT helps us conceptualise the next level of analysis which is mid-level. The main focus of LPT is the given point of production in a value chain and the associated relations in the workplace between management and labour. In our case we look at the initial point of production in the

mohair chain which is the farm level; we look at the relationship of producers (who are farmers) with the rest of the chain as well as with those that they work with, farm workers. Chain literature and LPT (and later employee voice) have been combined in this research as they focus on different dimensions of a given value chain and this is deemed important as individually these theories leave out vital aspects of chain analysis.

In the sections below, LPT will be reviewed through the different time frames which have more commonly been presented as distinct ‘waves’ of analysis (Smith, 2012). The structure is as follows: firstly, a broad understanding of LPT will be provided. Thereafter, I will engage with the three waves of LPT (Thompson, 2010; Smith, 2012). The first wave arose in the mid-1970s and draws on Marx's analysis of society and work from the 1800s (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3). The second wave evolved in the 1980s and built on the first wave by creating the “core LPT” (Thompson, 2009:100-101). The third wave is a much more recent development and has built on both the first and second waves of LPT and speaks to wider societal issues that affect the workplace (Thompson, 2009:100-101; Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3). Each of these waves will be discussed below to form the conceptual basis for an understanding of management and labour in the workplace.

LPT recognises the importance of the interaction that takes place between management and labour in the work space (Adler, 2004). The interaction is centred on “exploring the dynamic of control, consent and resistance at the point of production” (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:4). As we consider LPT, it is important to contextualise the given framework of production which is embedded in a capitalist system which operates with the goal of making profit (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3). The aim of the system is to make as much profit as possible and reduce cost to business, such as labour. Labour and management are engaged in a unique relationship characterised by conflict and consent. Labour is inherent to the way capitalism functions as it drives the system through its ability to work and produce value. However, this ability to produce value is placed at the discretion of management through the employment relationship (Adler, 2004).

In order to understand the labour process, it is important to define it. The labour process is defined as a “transformation process that occurs from a raw material into a finished product that satisfies a human need” (Smith, 2012:2; see also Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3-5). Human labour forms a central component in the transformation that occurs at the site of production as well as the larger capitalist system (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3; Wright, 2011; Adler, 2004; Selwyn, 2007; Jaros, 2005; Kitay, 1997). “In simple terms, labour process analysis has recognised the indeterminacy of labour as a ‘particular’ commodity through uncovering the mechanisms that transform the capacity to work into actual work” (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3).

2.4.1 FIRST WAVE OF LABOUR PROCESS THEORY

The first wave of LPT, which sought to understand labour and associated processes, was a response to the work of Harry Braverman (Adler, 2004:4; Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3; Smith, 2012). Braverman was a key theorist and sought to understand the way in which work and workplace relations were adjusting to the changes in capitalism and greater emphasis was placed on competition and accumulation. With the changes in the nature of work and the reality of competition, work increasingly became fragmented and divided which Braverman argued was part of a process of deskilling (Adler, 2004:4). This analysis by Braverman emphasises the role that management plays at the point of production as a mechanism of control.

Braverman’s analysis rested on various aspects of Marx’s analysis of capital and the importance of organising work within the structures of capital. Braverman, in his book *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism* deals with the deskilling of work through advancements in the production process, such as developments in technology as well as the restructuring of work through scientific management to make it more efficient (Adler, 2004:4; Kitay, 1997). My analysis focuses on the workplace and what occurs at the micro level as a result of the structure of capital and market relations.

Smith (2012) argues that the restructuring of work seeks to increase the amount of power and control over the production line by management which has a detrimental implication for workers as it causes further deskilling and detachment on the job. The deskilling and detachment can

either occur in a physical sense where jobs are increasingly becoming fragmented in that individuals are performing tasks that are part of a bigger project or on their own (Thompson, 2009:101-102). The division in work can take place with the loss of skills for workers, which leads to monotonous jobs where there is very little satisfaction and creativity on the job, often leaving workers more reliant on management (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3). This is a control mechanism used by management over labour in order that they are able to maximise work efforts without building resistance and achieve results (Price, Mansfield & McConney, 2012:89-90).

The discussion on deskilling forms an essential part of my research with the different responses and views that management and workers have of their work as well as the way in which it has changed over time in light of the pressures to make a profit. Part of my research has included finding out how work is structured and the role that workers have in actualizing their work. Another point of research is the extent to which management controls the work carried out and the extent to which workers consent or resist management in their places of work. These findings will add to the available literature on labour process specifically from South Africa's mohair industry.

Various criticisms have however, been made of Braverman's work in general and the deskilling thesis in particular (Spencer, 2000). Braverman could not respond to these critiques as he passed away soon after the release of his book. At this time, theorists such as Burawoy, Friedman, Edwards and Thompson came to the fore and have been classified as the second wave of LPT (Thompson, 2009:100-101; Smith, 2012). The foundation of this second wave is the understanding that labour is seen as a commodity and, as noted above, the process of transformation is central to the functioning of the capitalist system, which is from a Marx foundation (Kitay, 1997; Smith, 2012).

2.4.2 SECOND WAVE OF LABOUR PROCESS THEORY

The second wave of LPT aimed to provide a deeper understanding of what occurs at the point of production (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3). The second wave came about in the late 1970s and 1980s with various theorists providing their insight into capitalism, management and labour, which we will

see below. At this point there were many interpretations of what constituted LPT which was beneficial and provided a wide range of ways to understand what takes place in this system. However, there was a great need for coherence between these theorists which led Thompson to develop what we now call the core LPT (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3).

In seeking to unpack the core LPT, Thompson highlights four central points which assist us in making sense of what “contemporary labour process looks like and gives us conceptual tools to help understand it” (Thompson, 2009:100-102). The central features of core LPT are as follows. First, at the centre of the labour process is the conversion of the capacity to work into actual work, resulting in a given surplus which allows the capitalist system to function (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3; Thompson, 2009). Next, the process of accumulation that occurs in such a system; this speaks to how competitors are constantly looking for ways to enhance their position and accumulate more in the form of capital from this system (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3). Third, the control aspect of management in helping to create a surplus. Management plays a pivotal role in determining how much capital is accumulated over time, if more capital is accumulated outweighing the costs then a surplus is formed. Hence, management puts great pressure on workers to create this surplus (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:4).

Lastly, at the core of LPT is the “structured conflict” that occurs between capital and labour (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:4). For the capital accumulation to function effectively, it is important that there is coordination and control by managers over the production system. However, management controlling and directing the system is only one side of the coin; there is also the need for workers to cooperate and consent to the conditions of work. The relationship between workers and management is characterised by a structured conflict because of their conflicting positions in the labour process. Workers can respond either by consenting or resisting. When workers consent to what they are to do they become tools of capital and keep the system functioning (Taylor *et al.*, 2015). However, when workers respond with resistance to managerial control it puts significant pressure on management to make concessions. The resistance affects

their antagonistic relationship by influencing the amount of production that can take place at a given time.

Other theorists that formed part of the second wave of LPT include Burawoy and Friedman (Smith, 2012). The constant thread between theorists of the second wave of LPT is the idea of “typologies of workplace regimes” that are based on the control, resistance and consent dynamic of work (Smith, 2012:13). All theorists of the second wave sought to understand workplace relations and production in more depth. I will outline the contributions of Burawoy and Friedman to aid our understanding of the capitalist labour process.

Burawoy (1979) alludes to the control, resistance and consent dynamic, which highlight the issues that occur in a given workplace being reflected in the capitalist society at large. For example, workers developing the ability to resist has implications for the functioning of a given workplace and when this occurs on a large scale it will affect societal relations (Larmer, 2017:171). Burawoy used case studies in the Zambian mining industry and a Hungarian manufacturing plant to explore the conflict occurring between labour and capital (Larmer, 2017). Burawoy (1979) was concerned with given micro-level such as the shop floor or production site and the role of workers in these spaces as well as the power of workers in resisting control in the workplace.

Friedman (1977) developed the notions of “direct control” and “responsible autonomy” to explain fundamental types of managerial control (Spencer, 2000:232; Smith, 2012). Friedman refers to himself as a materialist rather than a Marxist; many LP theorists studied the point of production and the relationship through a Marxist lens. Marx’s analysis is based on the idea that social transformation occurs through class struggle and requires workers rising up against management (Kitay, 1997). By contrast, materialists acknowledge the differences in capital and labour, and their roles in functioning as part of the capitalist system. Materialists acknowledge how difficult it is to bring transformation to the system, where they are also able to benefit (Kitay 1997:3).

Friedman (1977) develops an approach that looks at responsible autonomy in the workplace in relation to capital and workers. In Friedman's analysis, the notion of control was examined and different types of control were conceptualised, which include simple, technical and bureaucratic control (cited in Kitay, 1997:2). Simple control refers to the conventional form of control that is exerted by management in a standard workplace. Simple control is linked to managers' position of unilateral power (Kitay, 1997:2). Technical control is the control that comes about as a result of machinery and equipment; hence, it can be understood as control that is specialised as a result of a given skill (Kitay, 1997:2). Bureaucratic control refers to the structure that occurs in organisations and the power dimensions that gives particular positions control (Kitay, 1997:2). These given types of control occur in workplaces and part of my research is focused on the types of control that are exerted over workers by management on mohair farms.

2.4.3 THIRD WAVE OF LABOUR PROCESS THEORY

The third wave of LPT argued that there were both internal and external influences on the point of production and the relationship between management and labour (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:4). The main motivation behind the rise of the third wave was to develop a deeper appreciation of the labour process with an emphasis on labour but to do this at multiple levels. As Taylor *et al.* (2015:5) put it:

Attempts to position an understanding of the dynamics of the labour process within a wider framework of changes at the level of political economy have recently intensified. The disjuncture between the dynamics of the labour process at the point of production with the broader political economy shaping the nature of contemporary production has been termed 'connectivity problem'. Recognition of this problem and attempts to redress it by engaging with complementary theoretical and explanatory resources has become increasingly common for theorists of the labour process... The renewed case for LPT to work at multiple levels of analysis, thereby rendering more explicit the connections between the dynamics of workplace transformation, political economy and shifting regimes of accumulation, is compelling.

Key proponents of the third wave of LPT include post-structuralists, Foucauldian and feminists who address various issues in society and the effect that these issues have on the workplace (Thompson, 2009:100). Some of the issues highlighted in this literature were also raised in the second wave, but the former does so in an extensive and holistic manner by emphasising the ideas of resistance and subjectivity (Kitay, 1997:4). Issues that are structurally larger than the point of production have rippled into the workplace; these issues include gender, race, class and the home environment and non-wage labour all affect what takes place at the workplace (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:4-5). These features mean that labour process and the relations at the point of production are affected by what is occurring at the societal level, including the political economy as well as social, cultural and environmental issues (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:5).

Workplaces are increasingly being affected by these issues and they are playing a significant role in the nature of work (and capital and labour relations). The developments in technology have also led to an increase in the fragmentation of work and the decreased levels of skill for workers. As ‘external’ societal issues (mentioned above) continue to intensify there is an increase in consciousness and awareness through available media and education. This awareness often impacts the point of production and affects workers.

To conclude, LPT stresses the importance of the organisation of work and control at the point of production to the relationship between management and workers. Control is understood and experienced differently by management and workers given their positions in the wider political economy. For management, control has been used as a tool to direct workers and make sure that workers are fulfilling their duties. Workers have a choice on how to respond to management's control, often this response is not clear cut and at times it comes across as a form of resistance (Thompson, 2009:105-107).

Chain literature and LPT integrate two levels of analysis in understanding a given value chain. We have unpacked chain literature and the way in which the production of a good to its final sale is part of a capitalist structure and is made up of different actors who are part of the process of adding value to the given product (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:5-9). We have also studied LPT, which

analyses the relationship between management and labour at a given point of production. Of great interest is the way in which management relates to labour and the notion of control; with workers' response either being that of consent or resistance or both (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:4-5). In the next section, we unpack another layer of research which looks at how employees respond to management through exercising their voice. Employee voice is an essential aspect of any employment relationship and there are several benefits to employees if voice is used through the available channels as we will see below.

2.5 EMPLOYEE VOICE

In line with the three-part analysis informing this research, we have looked at the chain literature, labour process theory and now our focus moves to employee voice. The structure of the discussion in this section is as follows: initially, we explore the literature on employee voice and show its links to the International Labour Organisation's conception of 'decent work'. We then unpack what employee voice is, how it has developed over time and how effective it can be in the workplace. Thereafter, voice in the South African context will be examined, which will provide a foundation for the study of employee voice in the mohair value chain.

In order to understand employee voice at the point of production, it is important to highlight what the International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines as decent work. The ILO seeks to "promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent work, in conditions that allow for freedom, equity, security and human dignity" (ILO, 2018:1). There are four pillars to decent work, which include "employment creation, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue" (ILO, 2018:1). Each pillar is important in its own right and together the agenda outlines that which is acceptable for a healthy work environment. However, for the purpose of the discussion in this section, attention will be given to social dialogue, which is relevant to my discussion of employee voice.

Social dialogue is understood as forms of discussion, negotiation or the "exchange of information" that occur between the different parties associated with the employment relationship, which include workers, employers and institutions such as the government

(International Labour Office, 2018:1). Farm workers, shearers and farmers form part of my research focus and will be examined in light of what they have to say about employee voice and how it plays out in the mohair sector. The exchange of information and discussions that occur between these groups involve issues that are related to the employment relationship; they are often centred on the improvement of workers' employment conditions; however, they are not limited to these issues (International Labour Office, 2018:1). We are able to recognise the relationship between the different parties involved and see the power inequalities that exist for example between farmers and workers and see the effect this may have on voice.

One of the aims of this research is to understand the conditions of employees; how and where workers fit in particularly in line with the larger institutional framework and employers as well as employees' rights to social dialogue which means having a voice, being able to participate and get involved in issues that concern them. In order to do this effectively, the notion of employee voice will be studied at the most concrete level, which is specific mohair farms in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Part of the research is to study the extent to which workers on these farms have a voice at the production point and to see how they are affected by the larger institutional framework they function under. With this, I seek to understand the link between LPT and the GVC literature. GVC literature focuses on governance by institutional actors whereas LPT captures the position of management such as farmers which then influences and affects the relationship management has with workers and their ability to voice.

Employee voice, involvement and participation have become a popular area of study and research in industrial relations (IR). This was motivated by the decline in union membership in developed countries and the subsequent rise in non-union forms of communication between management and workers (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:382). Employee voice is used for several reasons, one being the need for employees to be heard and to put forward their issues with the hope that their personal and working conditions will improve (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:382). The idea that voice is becoming increasingly important relates to the changing nature of the employment relationship, where management has deemed it of great value to have employees actively participating and getting involved in issues that affect their work (Wilkinson & Fay,

2011:71-72). There is a recognised benefit to the relationship and the balance of power that occurs between employers and employees. However, sometimes the use of voice can end up bringing about more issues.

The employee voice argument generally recognises the decline in unions in the workplace and, as a result, workers carry their own voice and need to speak out on issues that concern them with management directly (Marchington, 2007:231). The lack of unions in workplaces, particularly on farms in South Africa (and elsewhere) has been recognised (Nchabeleng & Manamela, 2011:1). More pressure is placed on workers to use their own voice and represent themselves in order to be heard and experience change (Nchabeleng & Manamela, 2011:1).

When seeking to understand employee voice one needs to be mindful of the wider societal context as identified by IR, there are various factors that affect voice such as the political, economic, historical, technological and social aspects of a given society (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:383; Maree, 2016). In seeking to understand employee voice, one must be aware of the nature of the capitalist structured society that it occurs in. This means that the employment relationship is centred on parties that acknowledge the organisation but remain driven by different factors such that management desires increasing profits and employees' desire increasing wages. As a result of these conflicting demands the employment relationship is regarded as an antagonistic relationship (Edwards, 1990:41-42). Voice, in this context, is used by employees to express their needs and concerns that relate to their work. On the other hand, the organisation behaviour (OB) literature believes that employee voice is used to the benefit of the organisation and to see improvements in the way in which the organisation is run, this will be discussed further in section 2.5.3 (Barry & Wilkinson, 2015:2).

2.5.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF EMPLOYEE VOICE

The actual practice of employee voice has been around since the rise of factories yet the concept of employee voice is a recent development. In order to appreciate the origins of the notion of 'voice', consider the following:

The best-known use of the word voice goes back to Hirschman's classic study (1970) of African Railways. However, he conceptualised voice as an option for customers in the context of how organisations respond to decline, and since then the term has been used with different applications (Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington & Ackers, 2004:1151).

Hirschman explored the options that customers had when they were not satisfied with services received. The alternatives that were identified include exit, voice or loyalty. Hence, the framework came to be known as the exit-voice-loyalty model (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:384). To exit meant that one would find an alternative brand or product. The other option was to voice, which was based on the idea that an unsatisfied customer would speak up about the dissatisfaction that they experienced (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:384). This was with the hope that an improvement would be made. Loyalty was linked to a customer that would remain content with a given service, with the hope that somehow something would change; this would benefit the business as customers were loyal and would stay on (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:384). This model proved to be important in understanding employee voice in the employment relationship.

Farrell (1983) used Hirschman's idea and applied it to employees. Employees that were unhappy or experienced issues in their actual work or workplace had various options or methods of dealing with these issues. These options include to exit the organisation and lose their job, to voice their concerns with the hope that change would occur which is linked to remaining loyal (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:384). Lastly, the neglect option was added to the model, this assumed that an employee could not be bothered about the state of the organisation as a result of the issues that they faced on the job or that they simply did not care. Outcomes of neglecting the organisation include working slowly, absenteeism and generally acting in a negative way towards work (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:384). For the purposes of this research, employee voice is defined below.

Hirschman's definition of voice is any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to a higher authority with the intention of forcing a change in management, or through various types of actions or protests,

including those that are meant to mobilize public opinion (cited in Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:382).

The definition above shows the power that voice is assumed to possess. However, this is not always the case, as the discussion below will show; employee silence can be just as deafening in the workplace.

2.5.2 EMPLOYEE SILENCE AND THE TRANSACTIONAL-COST MODEL

With the focus on employee voice, the idea of employee silence has often been left out; however, it has been a manifest aspect of the employment relationship. The discussion below will cover employee silence and the transactional-cost model which goes with the idea that whichever option is chosen, employee voice or silence, there is a cost associated that impacts the employment relationship (Edwards, 1990:59). We will also seek to explain why employees articulate voice or remain silent.

Employee silence is defined as “an employee’s motivation to withhold or express ideas, information and opinions about work-related improvements” (Donaghey *et al.*, 2011:52). There has been much emphasis placed on the idea that employees willingly choose to remain silent. However, the other part of the argument is left out which recognises that the context is just as important. The context in choosing whether to speak or remain silent is influenced by the organisation climate and culture, management style and previous experiences amongst other factors (Donaghey *et al.*, 2011). The contextual factors play a big role in workers choosing to remain silent as we will see below when we discuss South Africa’s history (Maree, 2016).

Institutions and management set agendas and are able to play a strong role in creating employee silence (Donaghey *et al.*, 2011:52). To appreciate context further, the organisation culture can have a way of promoting employee silence. For example, certain traditional cultures where age is well respected and assumed to have a link to wisdom, if a younger employee is seen to voice their issues this can be seen as insulting to older management; meaning that employees would

rather remain silent and keep the respect. It is important to explore whether silence is a choice or whether it is a result of the given context and certain restrictions (Donaghey *et al.*, 2011). Often management is afraid to give employees voice as they feel this takes away from their (management's) skills and position and may in fact harm the organisation. Research has shown that, by inhibiting voice, there may be greater negative effects on the organisation and the employment relationship (Donaghey *et al.*, 2011:61). A culture of silence is influenced by the party's concerned and who would benefit from or be affected by silence, as well as the issue at hand and whether there would be more harm or overall good involved (Donaghey *et al.*, 2011:61). Management needs to recognise the extent to which employee voice and silence play a role in an organisation and further promote healthy channels of communication to benefit the parties involved.

As noted above, the notions of employee voice, exit, loyalty, neglect and silence are extremely complex in nature particularly that these choices function in a broader employment relationship and are also influenced by the structure of the capitalist society. Together this encapsulates the transaction-cost model which is based on the idea that whichever option is chosen, there are costs incurred (Edwards, 1990).

To be sure, conflict and consent can occur simultaneously. The preferred choice to consent or conflict needs to be weighed out according to the given relationship in which these decisions are made as there is a dependence formed between employers and employees (Edwards, 1990:42). Which makes the choice between consenting and conflicting carry even more weight and is complex in its very nature (Edwards, 1990:53-55). An employee always plays a double role in that he or she needs to remain obedient to the employer who determines their livelihood; however, the employee also has to deal with their position and conditions that may be causing problems (Edwards, 1990:44). For example, if the employee is unhappy, then he/she can choose to voice or exit. If the employee uses voice, this could affect the relationship that one has with the employer negatively, alternatively this could be beneficial and lead to better conditions and relationships. Had another choice, such as exit, been chosen this would affect the relationship and the given parties in a rather different manner. Therefore, these given choices combined with

the labour contract create an on-going relationship of conflict and consent (Edwards, 1990). Both parties need to be aware of employee voice and silence and what this can do for their relationship.

2.5.3 CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES OF EMPLOYEE VOICE

Employee voice has been defined and understood in various ways. This is as a result of the different disciplines that provide their own understanding and conceptualisation of employee voice (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011:64; Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:384). These disciplines include Human Resource Management (HRM), political science, IR and OB (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:385).

Briefly, the political science discipline believes that voice is a given right that employees have and must be exercised in order that organisational democracy occurs (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011:67). The OB field identifies voice as a mechanism used by individuals to benefit the organisation, this is done through teamwork (the collective) giving the group of individuals further choice and voice in the way in which they want to see work organised (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011:68). HRM acknowledges the way in which management sees employee voice, which focuses on bettering the organisation and increasing profits and in the process somewhat helping employees too (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011:67). Lastly, IR scholars see voice as a mechanism used by unions to represent the workforce (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011:67). The framework above is a generalised understanding of voice in these disciplines, however, we will look at IR, HRM and OB further, including how voice came about and their influence on voice as it is today.

The IR perspective has undergone various changes in its attempts to explain employee participation and voice (Ackers, 2002:2). With IR there is an overarching understanding that policies and society at large, have a strong influence on the employment relationship. Employees also play a particular role and influence society and the workplace. This is done through the collective body of workers recognised as unions. Freeman and Medoff, who are IR scholars, recognise the role of unions and believed that unions play a determining role in the employment relationship in that they are able to speak up for employees and highlight the issues that employees face (Barry & Wilkinson, 2015). This has been identified as an indirect form of voice

as it uses a third party to voice for the employees (which will be discussed further in section 2.5.4) (Marchington, 2007:232). Various additions have been made to help develop and understand employee voice over time (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:384).

In the 19th-century, there was a strong sense of workers having an important role in the workplace, and this was recognised as employee participation (Ackers, 2010:56). At this time, there was talk of an ideal society where workers would turn the employment relationship in their favour and control the workplace. However, with the nature of capitalism this seems like a utopian world.

Thereafter, industrial democracy came about which is the notion of employees having institutions such as trade unions where they would be able to participate and speak about work issues through collective bargaining (Ackers, 2010:58). Officially, this is where American IR was birthed (Ackers, 2010:57). Industrial democracy brought about a change of dynamics in the employment relationship and impacted society at large as workers were recognised (Ackers, 2010:58). Between World War I and II under British IR there was an explosion of idealised workers power where workers somehow believed that they could overturn the employment relationship as a result of their increasing strength and power through strikes (Ackers, 2010:62-63). Once again, this was short-lived as reality is quite different in terms of power differentials between workers and management (Ackers, 2010:60).

As mentioned above, the workplace in Britain in the 1950s was undergoing change with the rise of industrial democracy, this was through workers participating in the creation of joint production committees. Employees felt they had a voice and were recognised in the organisation as they had a say in issues that related to conditions in their workplace (Ackers, 2010:62-63). However, unions were increasingly concerned with any position that workers took on where they would participate in schemes that management had created. The associated fear was being trapped in unitarism and workers agreeing to management's position without recognising it (Ackers, 2010:63). Industrial democracy was redefined and included the idea that trade unions were independent bodies and functioned in their own right. Management and the state needed to

recognise the position that unions hold. There was also the idea that only unions were able to understand worker issues and represent them accordingly which has been subject to debate (Ackers, 2010: 63).

Since the 1980s, voice and participation have increasingly been recognised aspects of the employment relationship from management's viewpoint. Hence, there has been broadened understanding of methods that could benefit the relationship such as team work and joint consultation (Ackers, 2010:67). Management has come up with alternative ways in which to include the employee in schemes that would benefit the organisation at large. IR scholars however oppose this as workers are increasingly becoming puppets of management (Ackers, 2014:2613).

HRM promotes the unitarist view and recognises the position of management in the employment relationship by promoting employee involvement and voice; this is a technique management uses as a way in which to integrate employees into the work that they carry which helps workers feel involved (Ackers, 2010:67-69; Boxall & Purcell, 2010:30). Examples of techniques include "representative participation, upward problem solving, downward communication and financial employee involvement" (Ackers, 2010:68). These are the methods used by managers as they want to hear from employees and include employees in decision making as well as to establish ways that could possibly better the organisation and working conditions. Whereas, if managers hinder voice and participation, this could affect the organisation and employment relationship in a negative way.

The methods of employee involvement discussed above have been subjected to various criticisms particularly by IR scholars in that they promote management ideals. However, HRM scholars argue that employee involvement is a way in which employee voice is promoted and employee participation occurs, particularly for those employees who are not part of a union (Boxall & Purcell, 2010). Many organisations continue to bring in trade unions as well as promote these employee involvement channels to cater for both unionised and non-unionised

workers and their need to voice in the workplace (Ackers, 2010:68; Boxall & Purcell, 2010; Mowbray *et al.*, 2015).

The way in which voice and participation are practiced are important to IR and HRM scholars. Central to the IR and HRM perspectives on voice and participation is the idea that voice is promoted through trade unions and collective bargaining (Barry & Wilkinson, 2015). Trade unions act as a means of representing collective employee voice and issues faced at the workplace with the idea that improvements will be made. There is a belief that unions add power and legitimacy to workers issues as a result of their independent nature compared to when workers bring their issues forward to management. Employees and employers are believed to be in a pluralistic relationship. These two parties have opposing interests. Workers are seeking out a voice to help themselves have better working conditions, whereas management is focusing on increasing their profits by bettering the way in which work is organised and carried out (Heery, 2015:38). Hence the union plays an instrumental role in the relationship.

HRM with the influence of the unitarist framework is increasingly becoming evident in workplaces (Boxall & Purcell, 2010). This frame of reference claims that employers and employees are on the same team. Often the link is associated with the employer being the father figure and pushing forward a given agenda with the employees having a say or participating, but their voice does not carry much weight (Heery, 2015:21). There are two broad ways of understanding HRM: one in which employees are seen as resources who are to be heard and looked after because that is to the benefit of the employment relationship (soft HRM) and another in which workers are factors of production that do not need a voice and are used as the employer pleases (hard HRM) (Heery, 2015:22). Voice, as has been mentioned above takes place in a given context, and in this case, it would be in line with management's view on employees. An interesting part of my research will be formulated in analysing the type of relationship that is formed between management and workers and their view on voice.

The OB model defines employment voice as the “communication of ideas, opinions or concerns that are related to work and are specifically for the improvement of the organisation” based on

workers efforts (Kaufman, 2015:20). There are various ways that employees are able to voice, including face-to-face, verbally and in a manner that is constructive and will help in developing the organisation (Kaufman, 2015:20). Employee voice is often used to benefit the individual and as a means of challenging management (Barry & Wilkinson, 2015:2).

These perspectives on employee voice (IR, HRM, OB and political science) have come from different time frames and understandings of the work relationship. Good insight and building blocks have been provided through these perspectives and have allowed us to combine the different models and conceptualisations of voice. With this, we can create an alternative model to help understand voice in a more holistic and relatable way to what is taking place in South Africa now (Kaufman, 2015; Barry & Wilkinson, 2015). The dimensions of voice will be unpacked below to further understand the notion of employee voice.

2.5.4 DIMENSIONS OF AND REASONS FOR EMPLOYEE VOICE

In order to understand voice, we must move from the theory to various practical dimensions of voice. Employee voice is a complex issue with many aspects. Firstly, there has been a shift from the indirect (traditional) method of voice to a more direct method, however other firms have kept both going alongside each other for different issues (Boxall & Purcell, 2010). Indirect voice refers to the situation where a third party is used as an intermediary in the employment relationship; a given example would be relying on unions to engage in collective bargaining (Boxall & Purcell, 2010:32-34). There has been a decline in indirect voice as a result of the fall in union membership; and a change in the work relationship whereby employees and employers would rather engage directly on issues that affect their relationship and workplace or use farm committees (Visser, 2016:206).

Direct voice is understood as the channel of voice between two parties, in this case, it would be between employees and employers without a third party (Boxall & Purcell, 2010:32-34). Indirect and direct voice can be understood in relation to the issues that are addressed in the workplace, such as whether an issue is task-centred, power centred or lastly ownership centred (Boxall &

Purcell, 2010:33). An objective of this research is to highlight the different forms of voice that are used and what issues are dealt with through each form of voice by different parties.

Marchington highlights the increasing relevance of direct voice in the workplace (Marchington, 2007:234). Direct voice occurs in three forms: “task-based participating, problem-solving techniques and lastly complaints to management about unfair treatment” (Marchington, 2007:232). Task-based participation highlights the ways in which employees participate at work and are able to voice out their concerns on how they would want to see work changed or improved (Marchington, 2007:234). Due to workers being familiar with their work it is usually effective if they are given the opportunity to speak about their work methods in order that they are improved and at a competitive advantage (Marchington, 2007:232).

Task-based participation goes together with high performance work systems and gives employees motivation to do their own work (Marchington, 2007:233-234). The major issue that has been identified with task-based participation is the idea that employers could use workers inputs as a weapon against their workers and increase pressure on workers (Marchington, 2007:233-234). Upward problem solving explores the ways in which employees are able to come up with creative ideas in groups or through individual suggestions. These forms of voice are used to help build the firm and to keep organisations relevant and in competition (Marchington, 2007:236-237). Complaints are directed to management when unfair treatment occurs about a given aspect of work, or a given decision or behaviour from management that employees are not happy with, and the complaint is lodged with the hope that change will occur (Marchington, 2007:233). These methods of direct voice are important as they help workers develop as well as the given workplace.

Voice, in itself, is complex (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:382). Voice takes on various forms and can be direct or indirect and can be a combination of methods used together or one given method. Other aspects include who is using voice and who it is directed at as well as the response to voice is just as important. In order for voice to be used effectively by workers it needs to be promoted by management and there must be adequate responses given, which takes time and a willingness to

understand the employees by management (Marchington, 2007). Voice that is received well can be used as a competitive advantage and brings an overall benefit to the organisation and the working environment.

Another aspect of voice is the breadth and depth that it takes (Marchington, 2007:239-240). Breadth looks at how many varying voice elements are used and the way in which these methods reinforce each other (Marchington, 2007:239-240). It has been argued that the more methods of voice that are used the more effective it is (Marchington, 2007:240). Whereas depth looks at how often voice occurs and the extent to which workers pursue a given cause. If voice is deeply rooted and appreciated in an organisation, there is likely to be change in the organisation, which would be to the benefit of the employees and to the workplace at large (Marchington, 2007:240).

There are various factors that shape employee voice both inside and outside the workplace and on a broader societal level. These factors are recognised as the policy framework and financial system; product markets; technology, skill and staffing levels; labour markets and industrial relations; management style and supervisory skills; and workers interests (Marchington, 2007:243; see also Mowbray *et al.*, 2015; Kaufman, 2015). For example, in terms of workers' interests, it is important that management takes time and considers employee voice and acts on what has been said in order to make workers feel part of the organisation and valued (Marchington, 2007:246). Workers observe the way in which their voice is taken and, if it dealt with effectively, workers are likely to be more trusting and will continue to voice. Conversely, if their voice is not considered, workers are unlikely to voice again and this affects their loyalty to the business, in turn it may affect how they work. Another example is product markets: in this context, voice is promoted as employees play an important part in developing and upgrading products, thus input through voice helps with competition and relevance of products on the market (Marchington, 2007:244).

Other aspects of employee voice are recognised as motive and content, mechanisms and channels and target of voice (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:387). Under motive of voice, two aspects are identified: one is based on making recommendations that will help in improving the business, the

other is personal and improving personal dissatisfaction experienced in the workplace (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015; Kaufman, 2015). Content refers to what workers voice out; this includes conditions that surround work, ways in which participation can be promoted as well as issues that cause dissatisfaction. There are various studies that have been done that outline different types of voice and these include the idea that voice can be suggestion focused, problem focused or opinion which all deal specifically with the content of voice (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388).

Another aspect of voice is the different channels and mechanisms that may be used. There are both formal and informal voice mechanisms (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388). Formal mechanisms are the available structures that the organisation uses which are recognised by the IR and HRM framework. Examples include email, open-door policy and work councils (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:389). OB looks at informal voice mechanisms and these are identified as “voice that is expressed outside the dedicated formal structures”, examples of this include word-of-mouth and informal discussions (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:389). It has also been noted that employees often use a combination of mechanisms depending on the situation as well as who is involved (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:389). The research has also focused on the effects of employee silence as well as who and how this shapes the employment relationship and the organisation involved (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:389). There are different targets of voice and this speaks to who voice is directed at (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:389). OB research highlights the different targets as top management and co-workers, whereas HRM and IR research shows that management is the prime target (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:389). The way in which voice is directed depends on the extent to which a relationship has been formed with management, for example if there is an open relationship then there is likely to be more voice (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:390).

Other important aspects include the governance structure, which relates to the formal position-based and political structures of the organisation (Kaufman, 2015:25). Governance structure in an organisation determines who and how much voice is allowed as well as whether it is a formal or informal voice that is promoted in the organisation (Kaufman, 2015:25). More recently, employee participation has been promoted and employees are increasingly being given

the opportunity to voice their opinions (Kaufman, 2015:26). Another aspect that shapes voice is the employment relationship (Kaufman, 2015:26). Voice depends on the strength of the relationship as well as the benefits it gives to the parties, amongst other things.

The way in which voice is managed needs to be understood too; this is an important aspect that management and organisations need to consider in order to remain effective. In this discussion voice management, voice climate and leadership are explored (Kaufman, 2015; Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:392). Voice climate looks at the way in which management creates an atmosphere for employees to voice out their issues or one that leads to employees remaining silent (Kaufman, 2015:391). A balance needs to be created that will enhance both the productivity and progress of the individual and the organisation. The leadership aspect refers to the structure and style of leaders within the organisation (organisational configuration). Leadership is important, as it provides an environment in which workers can be open and trust their leaders or not (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:392). Leaders need to promote a healthy environment for voice and one that will help employees feel heard, which means acting on employee voice.

Employee voice is beneficial and there are various reasons why it is promoted in an organisation. These include bringing about change, as this could be beneficial to the individual and the organisation. In relation to the organisation, employees can provide ideas that will promote competitive advantage, which may enhance overall profits (Barry & Wilkinson, 2015:8). Other benefits to the organisation include better methods of production or arranging work as well as safety on the job (Barry & Wilkinson, 2015:8). Voice helps in dealing with unresolved conflict (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388). Voice also allows workers to feel recognised and part of the organisation, which relates to organisational democracy (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:389). Employee voice helps with the balance of power between management and employees, which gives employees the feeling that they are valued and that they have a position in the work relationship too (Edwards, 1990:54).

2.5.5 HISTORY OF EMPLOYEE VOICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

We have analysed employee voice on a theoretical and conceptual level, but there is also a need to see how voice plays out at a particular time and place. In the discussion below, which draws extensively on Maree (2016), I briefly outline the ways in which employee voice has developed over time in South Africa. We will look at the prevailing institutions, which includes the different channels that voice has taken, such as unions and workplace forums (Maree, 2016). In addition to the different aspects of voice, the ways in which legislation has promoted the institutions that shape collective and individual voice, as well as indirect and direct voice, will be explored (Steadman, 2004; Botha, 2015).

Due to its history, South Africa has had a unique way in which voice has developed over time. Initially, voice was only provided for white employees as black employees were not recognised in legislation. However, over time this has changed and the black employee, who had been silenced for a long period, was encouraged to speak (Maree, 2016). We are able to see the repercussions of silencing black employees; for example, the lack of trust in the employment relationship and growing levels of insurgency (Maree, 2016:137). This has been as a result of the wider political sphere that has influenced the workplace over time; hence, we see the spill-over effect from society into the workplace (Maree, 2016).

The focus is on black employee voice in South Africa for various reasons. Firstly, black employees make up a majority of the general population as well as the working population (Maree, 2016:138-139). Black employees have also suffered much injustice and were not formally recognised during apartheid, meaning they had no (formal) voice. We also see that black employees were denied the right to education and other work-enhancing aspects during this era and this has affected and hindered their “voice from developing” (Maree, 2016:138-139). With this in mind, we need to recognise what voice is and the different forms voice has taken in South Africa from silence on one end (1960s-1973), to insurgency on the other (2007-2016), which is made evident through strikes, as was seen in the case of Marikana (Maree,

2016:169-170).

Initially, unions that organised black workers were not recognised. This meant that they did not have any form of official voice during the years 1963-1973. This was as a result of the main trade union federation, known as South African Congress of Trade Union (SACTU) which was destroyed due to its militancy (Maree, 2016:146). This provoked much fear and resulted in black workers remaining silent. 1973-1979 was recognised as the union shop steward phase, this era was marked by an increased number of strikes, particularly in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town (Maree, 2016:146-147). This helped with raising voice and creating an awareness of the power that employees have both at the workplace level (shop floor) and against management. Many issues were brought forward and despite being a slow process there was an increasing level of voice from workers. This led to new strategies being developed through unions, as they tried to push forward into companies; which was not easy and the unions were often rejected. The next era is designated as the union collective bargaining phase, which was from 1979 to 2016. This period was further divided into the workplace participation phase (1982-1990s) and the insurgent phase (2007-2016), which will be covered in the post-apartheid voice section below (Maree, 2016).

The collective bargaining phase resulted in a real change in the system for black employees and gave them a voice (Maree, 2016:148). This occurred as a result of black workers formally being recognised as ‘employees’ and thereby being allowed to join and form trade unions lawfully. There was an increased number of workers joining these unions and this resulted in some unions operating at sectoral levels. In this period, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was formed (Maree, 2016:149). COSATU gave workers various channels to develop and articulate their voice. Simultaneously, collective bargaining rights were given to the public sector, which raised the number of employees that were given voice dramatically (Maree, 2016:150). There was however a reduction in industrial councils (now recognised as bargaining councils) but this meant that there was an increase in the number of workers that each of these councils were representing, which gave further strength to employee voice (Maree, 2016:149).

The workplace participation phase was marked as an era in which management encouraged employees to participate and get involved in their workplaces (Maree, 2016:151-159). This was as a result of the breakpoint experienced which was the strikes of the 1980s, which brought about a radical shift in conditions that affect the given organisation. In this case, it was a political shift from the apartheid era to a new democratic era as well as the strength of black employee voice that was on the rise (Maree, 2016:151). An example of this was seen in the strike that took place at the Volkswagen plant in Uitenhage in 1989; this was a major breaking point. Managers quickly saw an increasing need to introduce methods that would give opportunity for workers to voice their grievances and experiences that related to their work (Maree, 2016:153). This was done using employee participation that occurred at different levels in the organisation. However, this was not as easy as management conceptualised it to be for a number of reasons. Firstly, as a result of the union's lack of capacity, secondly the lack of education these workers had which made it difficult to engage in work related issues. And lastly but most importantly the lack of trust between the parties which meant that workers felt that not much was changing in their favour and thus resorted to more intense forms of voice (Maree, 2016:158-161).

2.5.6 EMPLOYEE VOICE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

There has been a rise in the insurgent culture in South Africa (2007-2016), which has had profound effects on the workplace (Maree, 2016:161). There are various reasons for the rise in insurgency which include the broken promises of the new government to the people, such as the rights and benefits these workers would receive (Maree, 2016:161-163). Other issues that have affected the level of insurgency include the high levels of unemployment, nepotism and mismanagement of funds, and the underlying privilege that white people have received at the expense of the black workers (Maree, 2016:161-163). Therefore, these workers resorted to strikes (which often became violent) as an increasingly intense way of voicing their concerns.

Over the past ten years, there has been an increase in the number of strikes as well as their intensity in terms of days lost, property damaged and lives lost (Maree, 2016:163). There are various examples that help reinforce this argument, such as Marikana, de Doorns, Sunday's

River Valley and the public service sector strike in 2007 (Maree, 2016). There are various reasons behind each strike, however the biggest underlying issue is workers' lack of voice and belief that it is time for action in order to be heard, and for issues regarding their treatment in the employment relationship and work environment to be brought forward in order that change may occur (Maree, 2016:161-163). Therefore, voice has escalated to insurgency as the available institutionalised channels have not produced results or worked in employers' favour.

Post-apartheid era saw the establishment of various institutions to channel employees' voices. These institutions include collective bargaining, which went hand-in-hand with trade unions. Collective bargaining is identified among workers as a preferred method of raising voice (Botha, 2015:1813). Collective bargaining involves institutions that establish voice on a formal, indirect (third-party involvement) and on a collective level. However, issues that were represented through trade unions in collective bargaining related to the issues that were conflictual in nature and could affect the employment relationship, this included wages (Botha, 2015:1813-1815). Studies have shown that there has been a decline in the number of individuals in trade unions, which also means that a decline has occurred in collective bargaining (Botha, 2015:1816). This has occurred for several reasons, one being that employees feel it is pointless, secondly that the power of a given employee is lost as they are represented at a higher level through a given institution. Also, when unions represent workers it seems as though employees do not have much of their own say over issues that affect them directly which is problematic (Botha, 2015:1816).

Workplace forums were introduced in the 1995 LRA, this was to be used alongside collective bargaining with the hope that employees would have a greater voice and engage in production issues that affected them directly (Steadman, 2004:1170). This was recognised as a second channel of industrial relations (Botha, 2015:1816). There was an underlying desire that workplace forums would assist in giving workers a place to speak up, this would be possible with consultation between management and the employees as well as employees having a say and being able to participate in joint decision-making (Botha, 2015:1821). There was also provision made that gave workers the right to information from management on these issues.

More recently, direct forms of involvement and participation have been considered in South African workplaces (Steadman, 2004: 1202). This is identified as a way in which to get workers to have a say in and around work with the hope that their work ethic would improve as well as the idea that workers would be able to have direct confrontation with management. The other benefit is to the organisation, in that improvements would be made to production and how things are managed and done in the organisation, with the idea that workers are often very knowledgeable (Steadman, 2004:1202). Worker involvement and participation takes on various forms and includes quality circles as has been seen in the automobile industry such as Volkswagen (Maree, 2016:153). Other participation and involvement techniques have been used in different organisations at different levels in order to incorporate all employees and benefit all with a voice. With this, it will be interesting to see what type of channels have been made available in the mohair industry specifically for farm workers as well as the type of issues that are brought forward in the employment relationship.

Collective bargaining, trade unions, workplace forums and, to some extent, employee participation and involvement have not been as effective in reality, in comparison to what was proposed on paper (Botha, 2015:1836). This is largely because of the lack of trust between the parties involved (Botha, 2015:1829). Another issue includes the available channels that have been created in South Africa which is as a result of the history of South Africa; meaning that the remnants of the past are still ingrained in the system (Maree, 2016:161). The central features of the IR system, as well as the legacies of apartheid, continue to shape employee voice to a large extent (Maree, 2016:162). As a result, we see how the lack of voice has spilled into the workplace and has left workers feeling like they have no option but to be radical and insurgent to be heard (Maree, 2016:159-161). Neoliberalism is also playing an increasing role. This means that atypical work is on the rise, which means that voice is often lost as atypical workers usually do not have a stable contract or negotiated conditions of employment.

Employee voice is influenced by various factors and operates in a given employment relationship. There is, however, more than just this relationship; there are other contextual factors

that influence the type and channel of voice that is used. This section also interrogated the reasons why employees articulate voice and why they do not articulate voice and remain silent, depending on the cost associated with each option (Edwards, 1990).

2.6 CONCLUSION

This research aims to bring together different bodies of thought in an attempt to understand the mohair value chain in South Africa. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, these bodies of literature represent different levels of analysis: at the broadest level, I outlined the chain literature, which will help me to understand the structure and governance of the mohair value chain and to ground the analysis in the wider political economy. This macro focus was supplemented by middle-range LPT, which seeks to understand the dynamics of capitalist production and focuses on the control of work processes. Finally, LPT was complimented by incorporating insights from the burgeoning research on employee voice, which will assist in understanding the practical ways in which workers on mohair farms articulate their needs and interests. The next chapter will outline the context of the research, thereby adding a spatial and historical dimension to the analysis.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to provide context to my research. In providing context, I unpack the role of global agriculture and then shift to the South African agriculture industry. To do this effectively, I have outlined the state of affairs under apartheid and post-apartheid. There is also an acknowledgement of what these eras meant for key social agents, such as farmers and farm workers. I then transition into what mohair production entails and provide an outline of mohair production at a global scale. Next, the discussion moves to South Africa in general, and the Eastern Cape in particular, where my research took place. South Africa is acknowledged as the global leader of mohair production and is advancing its position by becoming more innovative and strategically marketing the product. In order for us to understand the contemporary market for mohair, we need to acknowledge where and how the mohair industry and value chain have evolved in South Africa.

3.2 THE NATURE AND ROLE OF GLOBAL AGRICULTURE

Agriculture forms a necessary aspect of any society and at a global level it plays an important role to many. Agriculture provides both food for individuals and jobs for people thereby enabling them to have a livelihood (Cleaver & Donovan, 1995; Greyling, 2012). Agriculture is made up of animal husbandry and crop production and under both of these there is a broad range of activities that take place. These agricultural activities can either take place on a subsistence or commercial level. Increasingly agriculture is becoming business-oriented and is running in a commercial fashion allowing given economies to supply products, to grow and compete on a global scale with profit in mind (Cameron, 2006; Best & Mamie, 2008; Jordaan & Kirsten, 2019; Greyling, 2012).

Various stakeholders, such as governments and non-government organisations, are taking an interest in farming and related activities by providing advice, subsidies and products to farmers. Stakeholders are aware of the influence of the agriculture sector and are making a business out of it too (Cameron, 2006; Best & Mamic, 2008; Jordaan & Kirsten, 2019). These bodies are also helping to make trade agreements in order that agricultural produce is secured on the market at a good price which, in turn, helps with trade and foreign exchange (Peel, 1996; Ponte & Gibbon, 2005; Best & Mamic, 2008). To our benefit the world market has opened up and is increasingly accessible to individuals through technology and transport, which has resulted in the expansion of global trade (Peel, 1996; Best & Mamic, 2008). Yet, it is important to note that agriculture is still heavily influenced by environmental conditions such as the climate and rainfall patterns. Often environmental conditions remain the determining factor of what can grow or be produced in a given area.

Globally, agriculture provides employment and livelihoods for many individuals and their families. Africa and Asia provide a large number of agricultural products on the global market and can be linked to their position as primary producers (both in animal husbandry and horticulture), which has proved to be beneficial for the growth of their economies as well as providing jobs for many (Reardon & Barrett, 2000). Africa and Asia have been strategically positioned by the West to stay in the position of producing primary commodities, while the West has developed its secondary and tertiary sectors. One of the main reasons that Africa and Asia are trapped in the primary sectors such as agriculture is because of the availability of land, the climate and the large amount of human capital available as well as the high levels of unemployment, which reinforces the low wages that workers are paid (Chossudovsky, 1998; Reardon & Barrett, 2000; Bryceson, 2000). Low wages benefit those that own and control these global value chains as they are receiving more value for that which is being produced as well as seeking further innovation for the chain (Peel, 1996).

With global agriculture there are given products such as skin, hair, feathers and hides that fall under animal husbandry (Best & Mamic, 2008). This is a given market that supplies the fashion

industry and has been around for a while yet it is often overlooked. Investing in these given products is becoming increasingly popular with elite groups in society as there is great value. There is a great amount of income that is generated from this sector yet it remains a niche market due to the affordability (Jordaan & Kirsten, 2008). There are various actors that makeup institutions that are involved in niche markets such as mohair. Yet, for the purposes of this research, farmers and workers at the bottom of the value chain, who are often overlooked form a key interest area and will be analysed further (Dolan, 2004; Pegler & Knorringa, 2008; Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2017).

The global economy has benefited from farmers and workers and what they do in these value chains. The notion of cheap labour has taken on new meaning with workers becoming increasingly exploited. The primary cost of production comes from workers' wages. Businesses in the form of farmers aim to keep workers costs at a minimum either by paying less for the work that is carried out, adjusting contracts or introducing machinery (Gereffi, 2001). There are however other factors such as managerial control and market access that affect how farming practices are carried out.

The need for cheaper alternatives has echoed into the world of farming and farming practices, where various inputs are needed yet cannot be neglected as this would affect the way in which the farm would run (Barrientos & Barrientos, 2002). Farmers have ended up with minimal number of workers and often rely on a few core workers with the rest being contract workers with minimum benefits in order to save costs (Barrientos, Gereffi & Rossi, 2011). This is seen as a managerial move to cut costs. Workers are continuously being dehumanised with the very basic working and living conditions that they are exposed to and are treated like slaves of production with very little to say (Barrientos & Barrientos, 2002; Gereffi, Humphrey, & Sturgeon, 2005). This minimal treatment has a wider effect on communities and societies as they are expected to use their minimum wage to help a family survive. Realistically speaking this becomes impossible. We are constantly exposed to the effects of businesses cutting their costs

and how this plays out on workers' wages as this is a global and recurring issue (Kritzinger, Barrientos, & Rossouw, 2004).

As a result, these workers often subject themselves to very poor working and living conditions which are classified as dangerous and hazardous, which further perpetuates health and safety concerns (Barrientos, Gereffi & Rossi, 2011). The ongoing state of affairs is a product of the large number of unemployed people, and the sheer number of people who could easily replace those that are not happy with their work or raise concerns about their conditions. Hence, a pattern of poor employment conditions as an exchange for the need to survive operates. There are labour laws in these countries, however they are often ignored or selectively enforced by those in power (Pegler, 2015). It is important to recognise that those multinationals that govern global agriculture chains have considerable influence and often determine what takes place within the global economy (Pegler, 2015).

The other side of the coin is that workers are often unaware of all their rights, which means that they get taken advantage of which then forms a spiral of deterioration for workers which further invites the West to make use of these labourers as a result (Welford & Frost, 2006). In order to understand these issues better, we will explore conditions in the South African agriculture sector.

3.3 SOUTH AFRICAN AGRICULTURE

Agriculture plays an important role in South African society and a declining but still significant role in the economy (Competition Commission, 2008; Motaung, 2018). The agriculture economy of South Africa is estimated to generate a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of between three to five per cent, with more than six million people relying on agriculture related activities for their subsistence (Mather & Greenberg, 2003; Greyling, 2012). There are various businesses that exist only by virtue in agriculture and there are still others that are linked to agriculture yet function in other sectors too (Bonano, 1991). A given example would be transport companies that operate for the mohair industry yet are not only limited to mohair and agriculture. There are various business links in the South African economy and this is magnified in the mohair industry.

The state of South African agriculture resonates with what is occurring globally, which is restructuring to fit the neo-liberal agenda (Bayley, 2000; Mather & Greenberg, 2003; Greyling, 2012). Yet, there are two distinct time frames that mark South Africa's history and its agricultural sector: namely, the apartheid era and post-1994 (after apartheid). There are two significant points that arise from these given periods: firstly, the move from highly regulated markets that were controlled by the government to deregulated market post-1994. Secondly, the adjustments made to labour policy where black workers were not recognised and catered for and are now being acknowledged and protected by law (Chitiga, Kandiero & Ngwenya, 2008).

During the apartheid era, markets were highly regulated and there was much government intervention in terms of how the markets would operate. After apartheid the trade markets were said to be deregulated which meant that they would be left to the market to function independently and dictate its own price, demand, supply and products. Yet as we know markets need human intervention in order to function effectively (Bayley, 2000). In the post-apartheid era there is a deregulated market in that goods are able to flow freely yet this is all controlled by individuals and businesses in the market, hence we could term this institution re-regulation which will be discussed further below (Bonano, 1991; Bullion, 2003; Blanchard & Giavazz, 2003).

The other major change that has occurred is in labour relations. Previously, only white labourers were recognised by the government and by legislation. Now, everyone is acknowledged as being part of the agricultural work force and there has been an increase in labour regulation and law enforcement in South Africa. The current workforce has much more protection in terms of their human and legal rights when it comes to their working and living conditions (Visser, 2016). The regulation has impacted the way in which business is done and businesses are held to a tight rein in this regard. South Africa is recognised as having one of the most progressive labour law frameworks and employment rights in the world. Yet the extent to which these laws are followed and enforced are often questionable. Often resulting in workers still being subjected to very poor

conditions, particularly in the agriculture sector (Visser, 2016). In order to understand what is occurring in the agricultural sector now, it is imperative to look at the past.

3.3.1 AGRICULTURE IN APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is part of a much bigger global capitalist agriculture system (Edwards, 2005). South Africa is often influenced and subjected to global developments and trade agreements. The structures of business and capital have played a critical role in the development of this nation. In a very generalised manner businesses have benefitted to a large extent whereas workers who are positioned at the bottom of these value chains have been subjected to conditions of capital which is based on class relations. Apartheid played a significant yet problematic role in the way in which the agriculture sector has developed over time, often resulting in black workers being subjected to the past where they were not recognised by formal legislation (Bernstein, 1998). The history of race in South Africa and the capitalist development model places a double burden on the black worker, particularly those that are part of the agricultural system which seems to be slowly emerging from the previous era as far as labour is concerned (Belli, Finger & Ballivian, 1993).

During apartheid, South Africa was operating in an independent manner; this was due to sanctions that were put in place by global leaders that were in opposition to the government of the time and its choices. The separation stirred up various issues and meant that South Africa was isolated from the rest of the world, increasingly this led to the Afrikaner nationalists of the time choosing how to run the country. Various issues arose as South Africa introduced policies that benefited the white race (Hall *et al.*, 2013). Black people were marginalised and overlooked, constantly being subjected to dehumanising conditions (Belli *et al.*, 1993). The agriculture industry among other industries were nationalised and highly regulated. The government provided the white agriculture farmers with subsidies, inputs, expertise and co-operatives who would market the given agriculture produce (Bernstein, 1998).

Large areas of land were owned by white commercial farmers and black workers would work for these farmers (Hall *et al.*, 2013; Bernstein, 1998). At this time black workers were not

recognised as employees in the industrial relations system; hence, they did not have any laws to help protect them (Belli *et al.*, 1993). Black workers had no voice and had very little access to humane living and working conditions. Living and working conditions were marked strictly on the lines of race and meant that there was a dual system in place. White owners were recognised as the owners and had access to capital and control, subjected to this were black workers who were marginalised (Kassier & Groenewald, 1992; Belli *et al.*, 1993).

The nature of agriculture is somewhat unique with each individual farm having common practices as well as some unique ways of functioning (Hall *et al.*, 2013). Farms are often separated by great distances and are isolated in the sense that it constitutes a small community separated from the next farm (Belli *et al.*, 1993). Each farm often has several workers and an owner or a manager. However, this is subject to what is being farmed: for example, with livestock farming fewer permanent workers are needed throughout the year due to the nature of the labour process. Hence, there is less need for authoritative positions which refers to those in power such as managers. Whereas horticulture often needs more workers but on a seasonal basis (Belli *et al.*, 1993). The relationship between the farmer and workers is often seen as authoritative and top-down, which breeds a sort of dependency by the farm worker (Belli *et al.*, 1993; Visser, 2016). The dependency may result in workers always looking to the farmer for advice, modelling behaviour or material goods (Visser, 2016). There is also limited access to the conditions of workers on other farms as there is very limited communication and accessibility.

Trade union activity among farm workers is minimal and there is very little representation for these workers. There are several reasons why representation and activity is minimal: firstly, due to the fear of being picked on or fired at the farm level by the farmer should any information come out of being mistreated. Another reason is that farm workers receive minimal pay and as they do not see results, they would rather keep this money for their own use. The other main issue is the long distances between each farm which hinders mobilisation and activism among farm workers (Visser, 2016).

Policies were created for the benefit of white commercial interests by the Union of South Africa, which had a profound impact on agriculture and the way in which the sector was structured (Belli *et al.*, 1993; Visser & Ferrer, 2015:36). The Acts that founded the problematic divide in race, labour and land include the Land Act of 1913. The Land Act of 1913 was centred on the idea of acquiring land which was seen as power, with all the best land going to white farmers (Belli *et al.*, 1993; Visser & Ferrer, 2015:36), and the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936, which allocated only seven per cent of the land to natives, which were divided into homelands where they were forced to work. There were strict measures put in place to limit the movement of black people (Belli *et al.*, 1993; Visser & Ferrer, 2015:36). The dual system affected land ownership patterns and led to racial divisions at the farm level (Belli *et al.*, 1993).

As if this was not enough, additional policies and institutions were put in place in the agriculture sector that promoted this division and increased the positional power of the white farmers (Vink & Kassier, 1991). White farmers were subsidised by the government in order to assist them with the costs of farming and the development of the land (Vink & Kassier, 1991; Belli *et al.*, 1993). The other way in which white farmers were helped was through cooperatives, which assisted farmers to get their produce sold on the local and global market. The cooperatives were able to negotiate and set prices for the market as they had insight and monopoly power (Belli *et al.*, 1993; Hall *et al.*, 2013).

The cooperatives assisted farmers with the production of goods and tried to ensure they were delivered to the market in good time and quality. If there was excess the cooperatives dealt with this as they had mass storage (Belli *et al.*, 1993). This meant that there was very little wastage and the farmers and industry at large were well protected. However, there were challenges with this system and not everything was as good as it sounds. Firstly, with the cooperatives and their method of the one-channel marketing system made it difficult for farmers as they had very little say in the product and price as it was all dictated by those in charge (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985:233). The other main issue was the pressure that farmers faced with the exceptional high

standards of mohair that needed to be produced to get to the market (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985:234).

The mohair sector was somewhat different in the way that it functioned since its market was slightly more open than other agricultural markets. As the market was more open there were various pressures that were being faced by this sector as global competition was already occurring yet the methods of advertising that were used by the South African marketing board was poor affecting sales (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985:236). Poor sales mainly put pressure on farmers who had an invested interest in their products being sold on a global scale and even with this, farmers still needed to help finance these advertisements (Mather & Greenberg, 2003).

3.3.2 AGRICULTURE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

After 1994, there was a shift in the political, social and economic environment and this came with the new, democratically-elected government. The post-apartheid government introduced new economic policies and these were largely neo-liberal in nature and included the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme (Visser, 2004; Mbeki, 2013). This programme was introduced on a macro-scale with the hope that it would help South Africa adjust and reposition itself to be able to compete on a global scale (Visser, 2004). The other main objective of these policies was to eliminate or reduce social and economic inequalities. However, this is inherently difficult as the past was built on these exact inequalities and have formed part of the structures in society (Harsch, 2001; Visser, 2004).

We see that this change in economic and political policy is on-going and requires consistent adjustments and redevelopment as these policies get rolled out over time (Visser, 2004). There have been major changes made and this has been felt by different parties in different ways, with some benefiting greatly. However, it is still important to understand that the current state of agriculture despite moving forward is still being influenced by various political and economic policies that were made during the apartheid era particularly for those that are at the bottom of the value chain, farm workers (Belli *et al.*, 1993).

3.3.3 CONDITIONS OF FARM WORKERS IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

In 2013, in the State of the Nation Address, the President noted that agricultural workers (among others) faced the most oppressing conditions and were subjected to poverty and the greatest inequalities. Hence, there was a renewed call made for the National Development Plan (NDP) to address these issues and create an economy that would cater to everyone's needs and become inclusive of all (Mbeki, 2013).

With this in mind, this discussion will be formulated around workers conditions for those involved in livestock farming specifically mohair production. The conditions that farm workers face have not changed much since apartheid and due to workers' position being marginal. There has been limited advancement in agriculture policy over time. It is also interesting to see how farm workers have not been acknowledged in terms of official institutions such as trade unions (Visser & Ferrer, 2015). Very few farm workers are members of trade unions, and even those that are members have seen very little change in their working and living conditions (Visser & Ferrer, 2015).

A major difference between horticulture and animal husbandry is that with animal husbandry farm workers are more likely to live on the farm as it is usually a permanent position and not seasonal. To echo the argument, many mohair farm workers live on the farm due to the nature of their work which includes their hours and structure of work such as taking the goats out, feeding them and making sure they are safe from predators. There are no clear boundaries between the living and working conditions, which often means that they blur into each other. This is advantageous to the owner in that they can call on the worker to check on the goats when need be or attend to a sick goat. In other words, the workers need to be on standby in case of anything. In the agriculture sectors, there has been an adjustment as many workers are now being employed on seasonal contracts; hence, they do not live on the farm which shifts dynamics significantly.

The discussion below is contextualised on mohair farms and rests on mohair farm workers' working conditions, which include their type of employment contract and duties, their pay,

working hours, safety on the job and training amongst other issues (Visser & Ferrer, 2015). The nature of the mohair farm is that there are very few workers on each farm but their work is more intensive and many mohair farm workers live on the farm due to their type of work and the hours that are carried out when working with livestock.

There is a link between the type of contract, level of skill and the amount of pay that an employee is likely to receive. It has been noted that wages in the agriculture sector are particularly low compared to wages in many other sectors of the economy (Bureau for Food and Agriculture Policy, 2018). Mohair farm workers on the whole are doing better than other sub-sectors in agriculture. The living and housing conditions vary between farms; however, workers are often taken advantage of and are placed in a cycle of debt that leads them to be dependent on the farmer for resources. Farm workers often live in conditions which are still at a bare minimum despite constant awareness and reports that have been published that speak to poor living conditions for farm workers (Visser & Ferrer, 2015).

Many farm workers live in small houses or shacks that have limited water, lighting, sanitation, ventilation and drainage. Many of these workers have had deductions made from their wages for their housing despite how problematic their conditions are (Visser, 2016). Often the farm worker has a number of dependents that live in the provided accommodation yet it does not sufficiently cater to their needs. Farm workers also lack the money to satisfy their monthly needs, which often leads them into a cycle of debt with farm managers or owners providing loans that need to be paid back, leading to a downward spiral of debt (Visser & Ferrer, 2015). Their work and conditions often leave farm workers turning to alternative survival tactics such as drugs and alcohol to numb their pain and realities faced on their job which often leaves them worse off (Visser & Ferrer, 2015). The other issue that many workers have voiced about their housing on farms is that the employer takes advantage of the workers who live on the farm and can be used at his or her discretion without considering working hours and family time. The workers become part of farm furniture and are often used as the owner pleases.

Due to the lack of finances and poor pay in the agriculture sector, it has been noted that farm workers and their families often face the lowest education standards and highest illiteracy levels. This is due to the lack of resources, schools, teachers and funding to take their kids to school (Visser & Ferrer, 2015). This often leads these families to be stuck on the farm with the youth ending up working on the farm too in order to support themselves. Opportunities are limited and these families are often unable to see beyond their livelihoods on the farm (Visser & Ferrer, 2015).

Few meaningful changes have been made to living and working conditions of farm workers. These issues have been experienced over generations and seen in a broad range of studies and reports that have been carried out (Visser & Ferrer, 2015). Part of the issue is that workers lack employee voice and representation hence they are unable to voice their issues and see changes in the way they live and work which is of great concern.

In the section above, we looked at working and living conditions of workers who form the bottom node of the mohair value chain. The conditions that are being faced by workers are evolving slowly yet they are still relatively poor. Farmers, who form part of the value chain, face great pressures to compete on the global market and workers often feel this through the conditions that they face.

Having provided an outline of the role of agriculture both on a global and local scale and the impact this has on different parties, specifically workers and farmers. We go on to look at mohair more specifically as an agricultural product; what it is, where it is produced and I provide a breakdown of sales in South Africa under apartheid and post-apartheid in order to provide context to this study.

3.4 MOHAIR: THE DIAMOND FIBRE

Mohair is the coat or hair of Angora goats which is shorn off its body at least twice a year. At this stage, mohair is a raw material and it undergoes various processes to make it into other products or goods. Often, it is combined with other materials to make items of clothing or

accessories such as scarves, blankets, coats, socks, suits and jerseys, which can be worn by people as well as for home decor (Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries, 2012; Van der Westhuysen, Wentzel & Grobler, 1985; Mohair South Africa, 2018). Mohair is recognised for its traits of being warm, strong, long-lasting, resistant to heat and crease, and sheen which reflects the high quality of the fibre (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Jordaan, 2005; DAFF, 2012; Annette Oelofse Mohair Products, 2019). Mohair is a luxury product and the price speaks for itself. As a result, it is often called “the diamond fibre” (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Mohair South Africa, 2018; Annette Oelofse Mohair Products, 2019).

Mohair is graded according to the given quality and texture. There are several factors that influence this grading of mohair, which include the “goat lineage, age of the goat, health and nutrition, as well as the given season” (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985:34-37). The micron grading refers to the texture of the mohair and can be anything between 20 to 45 microns in diameter. There are different uses for different readings. The lower micron readings (20 to 30) are generally much smoother in younger goats and are used for scarves and suits. The finer mohair from kid goats is the most expensive on the market due to its properties (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Whereas older goats have higher micron readings (30 to 45) as the texture is more course and can be used for blankets and jerseys (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Over time there has been a significant improvement in the variety and quality of mohair. The improvements stem from the research and development that has taken place on the goats and mohair. This research studies breeding and rearing practices as well as optimising feed mixes for the goats (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Jordaan, 2005; Mohair South Africa, 2019).

Next, we will study how mohair is produced on a global scale and how this production functions as part of a global value chain. Production takes place in different countries and is exported around the world to meet various needs (Mohair South Africa, 2019; Mohair Cluster, 2019). Each country has its own type of mohair, due to unique climate and vegetation, with very specific demands made by each market.

3.4.1 MOHAIR PRODUCTION ON A GLOBAL SCALE

Mohair is a global product and is produced around the world. South Africa is known for its exceptional mohair production both in terms of quality and quantity (Jordaan, 2005). It is currently the world's largest producer, producing up to 53% of global mohair output (DAFF, 2017; Mohair South Africa, 2018). In addition to South Africa, countries with similar arid conditions, such as the United States of America (USA), Lesotho, Australia and Turkey, are seen as conducive environments for the rearing and production of Angora goats that produce mohair (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Mohair Cluster, 2019). There have been exceptional improvements made in different environments; from the way in which the goats are shorn to the production and processing of mohair as well as the sales, which have coincided with improved expertise, technologies and awareness (Jordaan, 2005; Mohair South Africa, 2018). Currently, the USA, Italy and China are identified as the world's largest buyers of mohair, which reflects the large retail and fashion-related industries within these nations (DAFF, 2012; Mohair South Africa, 2019).

3.4.2 MOHAIR PRODUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The production of mohair in South Africa forms a central aspect of the agriculture sector both in the South African economy and on a larger global scale (DAFF, 2012; DAFF, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2018). There have been strong global trade relations formed over mohair due to its quality and value (DAFF, 2012; DAFF, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2018). The production of mohair has assisted in providing jobs, stimulating economic growth, increasing levels of trade and competition (Greyling, 2012; Mohair South Africa, 2018). Other benefits from the mohair industry include sustainable development programmes and associated projects that involve the communities. Practically, the mohair community has been involved in developing rural areas and in giving livelihoods to those that form part of the community (Misashi, 2017; SAMIL, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2018; Empowerment Trust, 2018). South Africa's mohair production is the main contributor to global mohair retail and the global value chain (DAFF, 2012). Mohair is

recognised as a unique niche product and forms a market that has been beneficial to the development of South Africa's agricultural economy (Jordaan, 2005).

Mohair production in South Africa begins at the farm level which leads into the global mohair value chain. There are resources known as farm inputs which include land, vegetation, water and medication for the goats which are seen as essential preconditions to farming mohair (DAFF, 2012). These inputs feed into the farm which becomes the primary production site for rearing goats. There are a variety of processes that take place in order that the best quality of mohair is produced and shorn. There are various institutions and actors that are involved throughout the value chain but are also integrated into the activities of the farm (Mohair Cluster, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2018). These actors all seek to add value to the mohair product until it becomes a semi-processed good or final product that is ready for sale at the local or international level. Hence there is significant control exerted on the farmers from external sources.

Inherent to mohair production at every level of the chain are the workers and their work which adds value at each stage. However, there is very little information available from the workers' perspective and the way in which they see the industry which they are a part of (Jordaan, 2005). In order to understand mohair production in South Africa it is important to provide context and unpack how the sector came about, as well as the different actors that play an instrumental role in the value chain (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985).

The way in which South Africa's mohair industry began forms an exceptionally unique story. Initially, Angora goats were sent from Turkey as a gift to South Africa. This included twelve male goats (rams) that were believed to be infertile and one female goat (ewe); little was known about the ewe being pregnant and giving birth along the voyage (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Mohair South Africa, 2018). This was to the benefit of South Africa and has meant that the mohair industry has grown rapidly from this, becoming the world's leading location for mohair production (Mohair South Africa, 2018).

South Africa forms a central part of the global mohair value chain and has gone through various phases of expansion and reduction, yet it remains in the primary production sector of mohair

despite its development over time (Mohair South Africa, 2018). South Africa's mohair production is currently at 53% of global mohair output, which is recognised as the largest single economy producing mohair on a global scale (Mohair South Africa, 2018). Following South Africa is Lesotho and the USA (Mohair South Africa, 2018).

Another aspect of the industry is its small size and how intertwined it is, making it easier to govern and keep each stakeholder accountable for what they do. There are about 30,000 dependents on the industry in South Africa (Mohair South Africa, 2018). There are 800 commercial farmers within the industry (Mohair South Africa, 2018). This makes it a close-knit and interactive industry. With the new regulations of sustainable production being rolled out it is relatively easy to check-up and make sure that all actors are following these guidelines. It is also much easier to trace back where the product is coming from and the given conditions on a farm especially while shearing, which has put the fashion houses at ease as they are aware of where the product is coming from. The other benefit of having a small industry is that people are determined to make the product better. There are various initiatives that assist in doing this, such as ANGELA, which is a research institute that assists with breeding goats and improving their hair (Mark Krige, 29/04/19). This research and information is accessible to all of the mohair community. Another benefit of this small industry is the niche market that it has globally. There are consistent buyers, agents and clients that have bought into this product and keep pursuing and using this product for their upmarket buyers.

Despite South Africa having a small number of producers the value or share of mohair has been increasing over time, yet the quantity of mohair production has fallen over time (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Jordaan, 2005; DAFF, 2012; Mohair South Africa, 2018). In studying South Africa's mohair production over the years there is a recognisable shift; in the 1980s the production of mohair was at 12 million tonnes and in 2018-2019, the supply of mohair has fallen to about two-three million tonnes (Mohair South Africa, 2018). There is a limited supply of mohair globally but more specifically in South Africa, and the global demand is exceptionally high, which means that prices are rising (it is worth repeating that mohair is an upmarket

product, which is exceptionally pricey and forms part of a niche market that is dominated by the wealthy-elite of society).

The fall in South African mohair supply is a result of a wide range of factors. Some of these include the ongoing drought which has meant that farmers have cut down on their goat numbers, as their carrying capacity is not able to cater for large amounts of goats and their grazing patterns. The industry has also gone through various cycles and there have been exceptionally hard times particularly for farmers with the economic environment and unpredictable market prices (Mohair South Africa, 2019). We are also able to see change in the times (apartheid and post-apartheid which will be discussed further in this chapter) with the way in which the government during apartheid previously subsidised farmers which meant they were supported in various ways (Coetzee, 2018). Now the government has retracted and there is minimal support for farmers, the exception being diesel (Coetzee, 2018). There is great pressure on these farmers and they need to make ends meet in order to survive. There are also issues around labour legislation; the country's law is very strict when it comes to employee relations. Often organisations are afraid to employ people on permanent contracts because of the binding nature of these contracts and the expense that this comes at.

South Africa is a global producer but can also be classified as the global leader of the mohair industry due to the sheer volume of mohair that is continuously produced (DAFF, 2012; DAFF, 2017). Nonetheless, actors within South Africa have acknowledged a gap in the global market and they are pushing to create global standards for the mohair industry that will be recognised and will influence the functions of the industry at large (Mohair South Africa, 2019; Mohair Cluster, 2019). These global standards look at the way in which mohair is produced and handled, the different chemicals that mohair is subjected to, the way in which the goats are handled, health and safety of those that work along the chain as well as the long term sustainability of the industry (Mohair South Africa, 2019). There is a concern for the ethical and environmentally friendly treatment of goats and the product by the industry (Mohair South Africa, 2019). These standards are yet to be finalised and are still undergoing various conversations by different

parties. Leading the global standards will further bolster South Africa's position and influence, enabling the industry to be transparent and accountable to all of its stakeholders which will be of great benefit to the employers. The lead that South Africa is taking comes at a critical time and will help in directing the industry's future as well as expanding its global role.

3.4.3 MOHAIR PRODUCTION IN THE EASTERN CAPE

Mohair is grown and produced across South Africa; however, large-scale production takes place in areas such as the Western Cape, Free State and Eastern Cape; particularly in the area of the Karoo. The Eastern Cape is known as the mohair hub of the world due to its large-scale production; the province produces up to two-thirds of South Africa's sales (DAFF, 2012; DAFF, 2017). The Eastern Cape is ideal because of the vast farm lands that are available as well as the weather conditions and vegetation which has helped in bettering the quality of mohair being produced (DAFF, 2012). There is also a port in Port Elizabeth for exports and the city is known for its central position where sorting, auctioning and sales take place. Hence, over time various factories, brokers and auctioneers have been established in and around this area forming the global mohair hub trade site. Up to 90% of global mohair has come through the harbour in Port Elizabeth at one point or another; hence, it is called the central node in the global mohair value chain (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). There are various benefits to having the farming and production hub in close proximity, which include speed and expertise.

The Sarah Baartman district, which was previously known as the Cacadu district, is an area in the Eastern Cape that produces the largest amount of mohair (up to 52% of production and market shares occur in this region) (DAFF, 2016; DAFF, 2017). As such, it plays a significant role in the agriculture economy of South Africa (DAFF, 2012). The Sarah Baartman district is made up of the following farming areas: Aberdeen, Jansenville, Willowmore, Somerset East and Cradock amongst others (DAFF, 2017). These areas have a fitting climate and vegetation to produce mohair as well as the proximity to Port Elizabeth where all mohair is taken for further processing (DAFF, 2017).

Due to an ongoing drought over the last few years, there has been a reduction in the amount of mohair that is produced and this has negatively affected the supply of mohair to the global market (DAFF, 2017; Mohair South Africa, 2018). There have been other global issues (political, economic, social, environmental, and technological) that have affected the price, supply and market of mohair (DAFF, 2012; DAFF, 2018). As a result, it has not been easy working in the industry, specifically at the farming stage of the value chain. However, mohair is a popular and unique material that is sought after, particularly in countries in South East Asia such as China and Taiwan with the development and trade of the fashion industry. Yet, in recent years there have been trade issues with China and the market has suffered various setbacks, which is seen in the amount of mohair produced and sold annually (DAFF, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2018).

With a broad outline of mohair production globally and more specifically in South Africa, we go on to discuss the mohair sales. We study both current and historical mohair sales with the hope that these would provide further insight into what is happening in the mohair industry in South Africa. The analysis on mohair sales is an important indicator of the changes that have taken place in the industry.

3.4.4 SYNOPSIS OF HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY MOHAIR SALES

As we consider two time periods, apartheid and post-apartheid era in this research, I am fully aware that two different yardsticks are being used to look at this readily available data. It can be said that there is a severe lack of readily available data which consequently compelled me to use total output for the apartheid era and averages per season for the post-apartheid era. As a result, a direct comparison cannot be made between these time periods but an indication of the industry status can be provided at a given time.

Firstly, I will provide details of the state of the mohair industry and sales from 1980-1984 using total amounts. The purpose of seeking out data from the 1980s is to show how the industry has evolved over the last 35 years. The data from the 1980s represent the late-apartheid era which is

the only accessible data from that time period (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985:7). This will assist in providing some historical perspective to this research (Mohair South Africa, 2014).

In order to provide an indication of contemporary mohair sales, a brief summary of the 2014 winter and summer mohair sales will be analysed below. In order to gain a holistic understanding, I have taken all the sales in each season and added them together then divided them by the number of sales to get an average for each season. These figures will allow us to see what is occurring in the industry, to assess given trends and see the impact that this has on the industry. In the same manner, we will outline 2018 and 2019 winter and summer sale averages. The 2014 sales will then be analysed in relation to the 2018 winter and summer mohair sales, which allows us to make a comparison of given trends (Mohair South Africa, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2019). In the same manner, we will compare 2018 and 2019 sales. This provides us some context of what is taking place in the industry post-apartheid.

Mohair is grown and shorn in two distinct seasons in a given year: summer and winter (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985:38). The summer season includes any mohair that is grown and shorn between January and June in a given year (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985:201). The actual mohair product of the summer clip is often slightly lighter in weight and finer in its nature due to the heat at this time of the year and the goats' ability to adapt. The winter season is mohair that is shorn between July and December of a given year (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985:201). Winter mohair is recognised for its thicker consistency as it protects the goats from the cold. During the summer and winter season there are auctions that happen every three to four weeks, the last of the summer mohair clip is sold in June and the last of the winter mohair clip is sold in December (Mohair South Africa, 2018).

There is a recognised classification system for mohair sales which is according to the age groups of the goats (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985:203). The age groups include kids, young goats, and adults which are further divided into fine and strong types of mohair (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Kids include goats that are six to 12 months, young goats are goats between 12 and 18

months and adults are any goats above two years of age. The age of the goat has an implication on the type of mohair produced and the value that is received.

3.4.4.1 A HISTORICAL COMPARISON OF MOHAIR SALES

To provide some perspective, an analysis of the mohair industry in the apartheid era is essential. We need to be cognisant of the fact that the reporting structure was different, nevertheless the limited available data from that era has been collected to help provide some form of understanding to the industry then and now. In Table 3.1 below, we see key figures representing the development of the mohair industry between 1980-1984 using total figures. The general pattern was that with each passing year there was an increase in the number of goats and the amount of mohair that was produced. The prices and value of mohair increased each year showing that the industry was growing and expanding. These figures show how South Africa was advancing amidst the apartheid era which could be linked to the strict trade sanctions that were put in place by the world, leading South Africa to develop its own industry (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). The results are now being experienced with South Africa leading the mohair industry on a global scale (Mohair South Africa, 2019).

There has however been a decline in the number of goats with an estimated 700,000 goats at present from 1,7 million in 1984 (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Mohair South Africa, 2019). The value of the mohair industry has fallen immensely from R125,987,000 in 1984 to R25,000,000, which was recorded in 2018 with a major fall in value as a result of the on-going drought (Mohair South Africa, 2018). It seems that the value and number of goats have fallen since the 1980s yet we need to remain sober minded as we look at these figures as the value of goods have changed over time and the time periods that are being compared are significantly different for various reasons.

Table 3.1: Development of the mohair industry, 1980-1984

Year	Goats (millions)	Production (millions kg)	Price (c/kg)	Value (R000)
1980	1.3	6.1	706.7	36 857
1981	1.7	6.9	791.3	45 755
1982	1.8	7.6	838.4	54 504
1983	1.7	7.2	1 314.7	94 831
1984	1.9	8.1	1 553.6	125 987

Source: Van der Westhuysen *et al.* (1985:7)

3.4.4.2 CONTEMPORARY MOHAIR SALES

I have looked at available figures from 1980-1984 which was the peak of apartheid to provide a historical review and consider the industry then versus now. In looking at the apartheid period and post-apartheid period it is important to note that we are not providing a direct comparison of these two periods due to the nature of readily available data. Consequently, we have used different yardsticks to contextualise the two time periods of apartheid and post-apartheid; the apartheid period data uses totals whereas post-apartheid era we consider averages. More than anything this is to provide given insight into what is occurring in the industry.

To deepen our understanding and provide context for post-apartheid mohair sales we use averages of each season, the figures for 2014 will be analysed below. Table 3.2 shows information on mohair summer sales for 2014. For the kids category, an average of 147 bales of summer clip was sold at each sale throughout the season which came to an average mass of 17,231.90kilograms. The average price of summer kids clip was R415.25kg (Mohair South Africa, 2014). The average value of kids clip for the 2014 summer season was R7,046,942.79 (Mohair South Africa, 2014). Another category is the young goats: an average of 271 bales were sold of the summer clip throughout the season at an average mass of 33,916.90kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2014). The average price was R279.18kg and the average value of the

young goats' clip was R9,377,539.71 (Mohair South Africa, 2014). Under fine adult mohair, an average of 226 bales were sold at each sale at an average price of R166.06/kg, with the average mass of 30,026.22kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2014). The average value of fine adult mohair was R4,887,677.89 (Mohair South Africa, 2014). Lastly, an average of 255 bales of strong adult mohair were sold and this was at an average price of R113.30/kg. The average mass came to 33,593.03kilograms at a value of R3,844,537.59 (Mohair South Africa, 2014). The exchange rate was 1 Euro = R14.56 and 1 US\$ = R10.61 (Mohair South Africa, 2014).

Table 3.2: Mohair summer season sales, 2014

Goat age group	Number of bales sold	Average price of each bale (R/kg)	Average mass of sold mohair (kilograms)	Total average value of sold mohair (Rands)*
Kid	147	415.25	17,231.90	7,046,942.79
Young goat	271	279.18	33,916.90	9,377,539.71
Adult goat (fine mohair)	226	166.06	30,026.22	4,887,677.89
Adult goat (strong mohair)	255	113.30	33,593.03	3,844,537.59

* 1 Euro = R14.56 and 1 US\$ = R10.61

Source: Mohair South Africa (2014a)

The second set of post-apartheid data that I will outline is the winter sales for 2014 (Table 3.3 below). The exchange rate was 1 Euro = R14.01 and 1 US\$ = R10.93. For the kids category, an average of 190 bales of winter clip was sold at each sale throughout the winter season which came to an average mass of 21,911.40kilograms. There is no available data for the average price of winter kids clip (Mohair South Africa, 2014). The average value of kids clip for the 2014 winter season was R8,758,527.16 (Mohair South Africa, 2014). Another category is the young goats; an average of 169 bales were sold of the winter clip throughout the season at an average mass of 21,305.07kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2014). The average price was R247.80/kg and

the average value of the young goats' clip was R5,257,966.06 (Mohair South Africa, 2014). Under fine adult mohair, an average of 168 bales were sold at each sale at an average price of R170.03/kg, with the average mass of 22,008.80kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2014). The average value of fine adult mohair was R3,770,152.68 (Mohair South Africa, 2014). Lastly, an average of 314 bales of strong adult mohair were sold and this was at an average price of R145.51/kg. The average mass came to 41,822.37kilograms at a value of R6,039,573.45 (Mohair South Africa, 2014).

Table 3.3: Mohair winter season sales, 2014

Goat age group	Number of bales sold	Average price of each bale (R/kg)	Average mass of sold mohair (kilograms)	Total average value of sold mohair (Rands)*
Kid	190	no available data	21,911.40	8,758,527.16
Young goat	169	247.80	21,305.07	5,257,966.06
Adult goat (fine mohair)	168	170.03	22,008.80	3,770,152.68
Adult goat (strong mohair)	314	145.41	41,822.37	6,039,573.45

* 1 Euro = R14.01 and 1US\$ = R10.93

Source: Mohair South Africa (2014b)

There are a few trends that can be acknowledged if we look at the 2014 mohair sales (table 3.2 and 3.3). Firstly, 1 Euro = R14.56 in the summer to 1 Euro = R14.01 in winter, which is a slight decrease, whereas with the 1US\$ = R10.61 in the summer to 1US\$ = R10.93 in the winter which is a slight increase (Mohair South Africa, 2014). Other trends include under kids the rise in the number of bales, mass and value from summer to winter (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3 for the values). Again, the average price cannot be compared as there is no available data for kid mohair for the winter sales. For the young goats there is a decrease in all figures from the summer to the winter

season (Mohair South Africa, 2014). With fine adult mohair there was a fall from summer to winter in terms of the number of bales, mass, and value. However, the average price increased from R166.06/kg in winter to R170.03/kg in summer. Lastly, the strong adult mohair increased across all avenues (Mohair South Africa, 2014).

The figures that have been analysed above are for a given year, 2014 and help provide a reference point in understanding mohair sales as they were 5 years ago. Yet these figures are not a sufficient indicator of where the industry is coming from and just how much it has changed. In order to carry this analysis out effectively I have chosen 2018, which is the previous year as well as 2019 which provides the latest information on yearly sales which helps form an analysis of the mohair sales post-apartheid. Here, I have begun analysing trends in each year as well as across the years.

Table 3.4 provides insights into the average figures of 2018 mohair summer sales. The exchange rate was 1 Euro = R14.89 and 1US\$ = R12.32. For the kids category, an average of 142 bales of summer clip was sold at each sale throughout the season which came to an average mass of 16,778.60kilograms. The average price of summer kids clip was R382.22/kg (Mohair South Africa, 2018). The average value of kids clip for the 2018 summer season was R6,560,994.90 (Mohair South Africa, 2018). Another category is the young goats; an average of 211 bales were sold of the summer clip throughout the season at an average mass of 26,907.44kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2018). The average price was R310.02/kg and the average value of the young goats' clip was R8,375,112.58 (Mohair South Africa, 2018). Under fine adult mohair, an average of 294 bales were sold at each sale at an average price of R279.28/kg, with the average mass of 38,464.79kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2018). The average value of fine adult mohair was R10,733,095.64 (Mohair South Africa, 2018). Lastly, an average of 132 bales of strong adult mohair were sold and this was at an average price of R264.28/kg. The average mass came to 18,745.56kilograms at a value of R5,001,948.26 (Mohair South Africa, 2018).

Table 3.4: Mohair summer season sales, 2018

Goat age group	Number of bales sold	Average price of each bale (R/kg)	Average mass of sold mohair (kilograms)	Total average value of sold mohair (Rands)*
Kid	142	382.22	16,778.60	6,560,994.40
Young goat	211	310.02	26,907.44	8,375,112.58
Adult goat (fine mohair)	294	279.29	38,464.79	10,733,095.64
Adult goat (strong mohair)	132	264.28	18,745.56	5,001,948.26

*1 Euro = R14.89 and 1US\$ = R12.32

Source: Mohair South Africa (2018a)

In order for us to understand what happened in the second half of 2018 mohair figures from the winter sales have been taken and averaged (see table 3.5 below). For the kids category, an average of 178 bales of winter clip was sold at each sale throughout the winter season which came to an average mass of 20,456.09kilograms. There is no data available for the average price of winter kids clip for 2018 (Mohair South Africa, 2018). The average value of kids clip for 2018 winter season was R8,352,393.51 (Mohair South Africa, 2018). Another category is the young goats; an average of 158 bales were sold of the winter clip throughout the season at an average mass of 19,531.67kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2018). The average price was R330.32kg and the average value of the young goats' clip was R6,493,773.01 (Mohair South Africa, 2018). Under fine adult mohair, an average of 203 bales were sold at each sale at an average price of R300.68kg, with the average mass of 25,911.10kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2018). The average value of fine adult mohair was R7,111,288.27 (Mohair South Africa, 2018). Lastly, an average of 208 bales of strong adult mohair were sold and this was at an average price of R290.96kg. The average mass came to 27,607.97kilograms at a value of R8,144,585.91 (Mohair South Africa, 2018).

Table 3.5: Mohair winter season sales, 2018

Goat age group	Number of bales sold	Average price of each bale (R/kg)	Average mass of sold mohair (kilograms)	Total average value of sold mohair (Rands)*
Kid	178	no available data	20,456.09	8,352,393.51
Young goat	158	330.32	19,531.67	6,493,773.01
Adult goat (fine mohair)	203	300.68	25,911.10	7,111,288.27
Adult goat (strong mohair)	208	290.96	27,607.97	8,144,585.41

* 1 Euro = R16.44 and 1US\$ = R14.28

Source: Mohair South Africa (2018b)

There are several trends that are evident in the 2018 mohair sales, as set out in Tables 3.4 and 3.5 above. Firstly, an increase in the average number of bales from 142 to 178, an increase in the mass from 16,778.60kilograms to 20,456.09kilograms and lastly an increase in the value from R6,560,994.90 to R8,352,393.51 of kids clip between the two seasons. Unfortunately, we cannot compare the average price as there is no available data for the winter season of 2018. With the young goats there is a decrease in average bales, mass and value over the two seasons yet the average price increased from R310.02kg in summer to R330.52kg in winter (see table 3.4 and 3.5 above for figures). The fine adult goat mohair experienced a decline in the average bales, value and mass over the two seasons yet there was a rise in the average price from R279.28kg in summer to R300.68kg in winter. Lastly, with the strong adult mohair there was an increase seen across all fronts from summer to winter clip.

Moving on, with the seasons and age classifications in mind, the final summer sale of mohair took place on 18th June 2019. In order to give a true reflection of what happened in the mohair market, all figures from the summer sales between January and June of 2019 have been taken and averaged (see table 3.6 below). For the kids category, an average of 146 bales of summer

clip was sold at each sale throughout the summer season which came to an average mass of 14,838.38kilograms. The average price of summer kids clip was R502.26kg (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The average value of kids clip for the 2019 summer season was R8,889,478.98 (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The kids clip has special characteristics and is bought for its soft feel and purity which is why it is often used in scarves and suits. At the final summer sale of 2019, the highest recorded pay for a given bale of kid mohair bale was R661.00kg which is seen as an impressive amount in the industry (Mohair South Africa, 2019).

Another category is the young goats; an average of 215 bales were sold of the summer clip throughout the season at an average mass of 27,220.93kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The average price was R393.79kg and the average value of the young goats' clip was R7,896,350.95 (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The adult goats also play an important role in producing mohair and are recognised for their sheer numbers. As mentioned above the goats are divided according to the type of mohair that they produce and this is either fine or strong. Under fine mohair, an average of 290 bales were sold at each sale at an average price of R296.43kg, with the average mass of 38,294.29kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The average value of fine adult mohair was R11,158,602.00 (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Lastly, an average of 76 bales of strong adult mohair were sold and this was at an average price of R255.95kg. The average mass came to 9,024.85kilograms at a value of R2,805,867.20.

Table 3.6: Mohair summer season sales, 2019

Goat age group	Number of bales sold	Average price of each bale (R/kg)	Average mass of sold mohair (kilograms)	Total average value of sold mohair (Rands)*
Kid	146	502.26	14,838.38	8,889,478.98
Young goat	215	393.79	27,220.93	7,896,350.95
Adult goat (fine mohair)	290	290,43	38,294.29	11,158,602.00
Adult goat (strong mohair)	76	255,95	9,024.85	2,805,8677.20

* 1 Euro = R16.06 and 1US\$ = R14.28

Source: Mohair South Africa (2019a)

Generally, the sale reflects a reasonable season considering the effect of the Dollar-Rand and Euro-Rand exchange rate as well as the drought that has been felt throughout the mohair farming community, which has placed great pressure on producers (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The Angora goat is able to withstand pretty dry conditions as it has been bred in arid areas. Nonetheless, the need for water is still at the core of running an effective and efficient farm as well as maintaining healthy livestock (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Jordaan, 2005; SAMIL, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2019). These figures give us some perspective of what is currently happening in the industry.

The final winter sale of mohair took place on 3 December 2019. In order to give a true reflection of what happened in the mohair market, all figures from the winter sales between August and December 2019 have been taken and averaged (see Table 3.7 below). For the kids category, an average of 182 bales of winter clip was sold at each sale throughout the winter season which came to an average mass of 22,016.07kilograms. The average price of winter kids clip was R464.08kg (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The average value of kids clip for the 2019 winter season was R9,530,649.92 (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Another category is the young goats; an

average of 135 bales were sold of the winter clip throughout the season at an average mass of 17,464.96kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The average price was R284.56kg and the average value of the young goats' clip was R4,927,316.26 (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Under fine adult mohair, an average of 197 bales were sold at each sale at an average price of R217.34kg, with the average mass of 26,115.09kilograms (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The average value of fine adult mohair was R5,639,600.66 (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Lastly, an average of 112 bales of strong adult mohair were sold and this was at an average price of R198.16kg. The average mass came to 15,322.41kilograms at a value of R3,011,739.78.

Table 3.7: Mohair winter season sales, 2019

Goat age group	Number of bales sold	Average price of each bale (R/kg)	Average mass of sold mohair (kilograms)	Total average value of sold mohair (Rands)*
Kid	182	464.08	22,016.07	9,530,649.92
Young goat	135	284.56	17,464.96	4,927,316.26
Adult goat (fine mohair)	197	217.34	26,115.09	5,639,600.66
Adult goat (strong mohair)	112	198.16	15,322.41	3,011,739.78

* 1 Euro = R16.52 and 1US\$ = R14.94

Source: Mohair South Africa (2019b)

The value of mohair in 2019 is worth noting and together these figures, despite being averages show the contribution of the mohair industry to the agricultural economy of South Africa. A couple of trends can be acknowledged from the 2019 average sales figures which include, firstly, the average price of summer kids mohair is R502.26kg for each bale which is seen as positive and the highest average price across the age groups. Kid mohair is highly sought after due to its unique feel and qualities that are useful in production. Another trend from the summer clip of 2019 is the average number of 290 bales sold under adult fine mohair with an average mass of

38,294.29kilograms which shows that there is a sheer number of adult goats producing fine mohair.

Other general trends we can acknowledge from Tables 3.6 and 3.7 is that the average number of bales, mass and value for the kids clip increased from summer into the winter season, however the average price fell from summer R502.26kg to winter where it was R464.08kg. Another trend we see is under young goats and adult fine mohair is the fall from the summer clip to winter clip in average number of bales, mass, price and value. Finally, under adult strong mohair we see that there is an increase in the average number of bales, mass and value from summer to winter clip yet the average price has fallen from the summer when it was R255.95kg compared to R198.16kg in the winter.

As with all sales we acknowledge that they do not function in isolation but are impacted by wider social, economic, political and environmental factors. We are able to see a slight rise in the foreign exchange rate from 1 Euro going for R16.06 and 1 US\$ going R14.20 in the summer season to 1 Euro going for R16.52 and 1 US\$ going for R14.94 in the winter season sales. The increase in Euros and US\$ means that farmers are affected in a positive way as it means that they are receiving more for their produce. Better prices mean more income for farmers which would generally mean happier farmers. However, there has been a crippling drought that is taking place, this has affected production in given areas and has meant that all parts of the value chain are affected by mohair supply. Farmers have felt the impact directly and they have had to devise strategies to keep their goats surviving. For some farmers it has meant that they have needed to buy extra feed for their stock, which has meant their input costs have risen and they are facing a cost-profit squeeze as the income coming in is positive yet not sufficient in relation to their input costs. Farmers are feeling heightened pressure to keep farming amidst these uncertain conditions.

When one studies the 2018 and 2019 mohair sales results there are a few things that stand out. Firstly, there has been a decrease in the average bales, mass and value of mohair in 2019 winter sales in relation to summer 2019 as well as summer and winter 2018 which has been red flagged as a result of the ongoing drought (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Another noticeable trend is the

rise in the value for kid mohair over the seasons with winter 2019 having the highest recorded figure of R9,350,649.92 (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Another trend is the rise in the foreign exchange value with 2019 winter mohair sales trading at its highest; this can be compared across all seasons in 2018 and 2019 which is seen as positive by those involved in the mohair value chain as it brings in more income. Lastly, another noticeable trend on the kids front is the increase from summer to winter for both years in the average number of bales, mass and value (Mohair South Africa, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2019). The average price is difficult to comment on as not all data is available.

I will now briefly look at trends across 2019, 2018 and 2014, which is marked as the post-apartheid era before looking at data from 1980-1984. To begin with, the average price of mohair has generally improved over the years from 2014, with 2019 having the highest average price across the age groups. This is a promising indicator for the industry (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Another positive indicator is the value in the exchange rate with the value increasing over the years and 2019 having the highest value yet (Mohair South Africa, 2014; Mohair South Africa, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2019). This is beneficial for the industry, particularly the producers as they are receiving better prices and in turn more income. Another trend is that the average mass of mohair seems to have fallen over the years with 2019 having the lowest to date (Mohair South Africa, 2019).

There has also been a noticeable decline of strong adult mohair bales over the years with 2019 being the lowest year and this has been linked to the drought (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Kids mohair bales have remained relatively consistent over the years. Finally, the value of mohair for kids is promising and has remained relatively consistent with each year. Nevertheless, 2019 winter kid mohair has had the highest average value of R9,530,649.92 (Mohair South Africa, 2019). The young goats' value has also remained fairly stable over the years whereas the strong adult mohair has been subject to fluctuations in its value. Finally, the fine adult mohair has increased with each summer season but the winter sales have fluctuated (Mohair South Africa,

2014; Mohair South Africa, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2019). From this, we see that there are a mix of trends over the years in the post-apartheid era.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have provided context for this research. We have looked at mohair and unpacked what it is. We have also looked at how mohair presents itself in the global and local economy of South Africa by looking at the agriculture economy. Much has changed, a brief synopsis of current and historical sales was provided as a means of seeing how the industry has evolved over time. When one compares time periods, South Africa has faced various changes from the apartheid era to post-apartheid and influences what has taken place and the future of the industry. The context chapter helps us have an appreciation of where the mohair industry is now and has been beneficial to our understanding.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to carry out any research it is of great importance to come up with a research design that outlines the proposed way in which the research will be carried out. As with any research the proposed method is often quite different from what actually takes place, my research was no different. Nevertheless, I took proactive steps to make sure that the research was still in line with the proposed research; which is to unpack the nature of the mohair value chain in South Africa. I was able to do this by understanding the actors and their given experiences within the chain by addressing three levels of literature, namely, value chain literature, labour process theory and employee voice. Throughout this chapter I outline the research methodology that was used to gain data for the purposes of my research.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING

In order to carry out my research effectively and engage with the issues that stakeholders face in the mohair industry, a qualitative research design was adopted. Qualitative research is understood as getting the meaning and description behind social contexts and experiences that create and give meaning to society or a given aspect of society that cannot be measured or analysed in terms of quantity (Berg, 2007:3-12; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:8). Simply put this is identifying key questions and exploring issues that assist in analysing the industry. At a practical level I engage with what is occurring in the industry, how is this industry run, where are the central locations of production and trade, who are the primary role players and why are things done as they are. The themes acknowledged in the previous sentence speak to the institutional landscape right through to the way in which shearers experience conditions in the mohair industry in the Eastern Cape. The reason for using a qualitative research approach was to assist

in giving as much insight and perspective into the industry as it is a relatively new area of study and there is very little academic literature available (Berg, 2007:3).

For the purpose of my research, there are greater benefits that qualitative data has over quantitative data; hence my choice to work with qualitative research. Some of the benefits of qualitative research include, firstly, the depth of engagement that occurs within a given topic provides great insight into the area of research (Berg, 2007). Qualitative research also allows the researcher to ask questions and to probe in order that there is further clarity and insight on a given topic. Often when probing takes place other issues arise which may have been overlooked by the researcher which strengthens the research and provides greater research validity. In addition, there is also background information given that may have been overlooked by quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). With qualitative research, responses can be creative and not limited to yes and no, meaning that the questions are often open-ended in their nature, allowing for a wide variation in findings and responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

There are, however, some issues that arise from this format of research, these have been identified with and where possible the negative impacts have tried to be minimized as far as possible. Some of these include great subjectivity in responses, however this was anticipated and was seen as a benefit in giving detail to the workplace and industry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Another issue that often arises in qualitative research is with the research responses, the classification of data often results in some information or context getting side-lined. Another issue that may arise is the influence of the researcher, the researcher needs to take a neutral position in the research and needs to be open to different opinions and narratives (Berg, 2007). With the two points above, I made sure that I understood the importance of my position and I remained neutral throughout the research process; I also made sure to effectively analyse the collected data.

With qualitative research, there are different methods of collecting data. For the purposes of this research I have used in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions which are acknowledged as primary methods of data collection as they are directly related to this research

(Bryman & Bell, 2011: 178). In order to substantiate the responses that were received, I have identified with other ways of collecting data which are known as secondary methods of data collection which have proved to be informative and have added value to my research (Bryman & Bell, 2011:178). Some of these secondary methods include accessing and analysing documents from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries which address the mohair industry. Other documents include data from different institutions in the industry that release publications on their specific business. There is also insight given into the production and sales of mohair which has helped in providing context. Interestingly, with secondary data sources there is a limited amount of available literature and data on the mohair industry in relation to other agriculture sectors such as grain or beef production (DAFF, 2012; DAFF, 2016; DAFF, 2017). The limited availability of literature made some parts of my research quite tricky yet were rewarding in that they are possible future research avenues.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews proved to be my primary source of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Simply defined, this is where I, as the researcher had questions prepared for the given interactions which provided a guideline of what needed to be covered in relation to my research (see Appendix C, D & E). There was great freedom in carrying out this research as there was no specific order of asking questions but rather as long as each question was addressed; often there was an overlap in responses from different questions which further confirmed given responses and the reliability of responses. All interviews were carried out in English and took place between February 2019 and June 2019, with three exceptions which were carried out in October 2019 due to their limited availability. A given strength of the in-depth semi-structured technique is that it allows for great detail, flexibility and engagement on key issues. The biggest constraint was time which meant that some of these interviews had to be rushed through as participants were only available for a given amount of time. Nevertheless, some good responses were given.

The other method of data collection was focus group discussions which is where people of a similar nature in this case it was related to their work would gather together to discuss given

questions (Krueger, 1988; Marczak & Sewell, n.d). The nature of a focus group is to stimulate conversation with a number of people at a given time with the hope of getting a variety of responses and creating a space to discuss issues (Krueger, 1988). In these settings it was interesting to watch the interactions between participants, often encouraging one another to share further. Often, participants also engaged with the researcher with questions which they had which was a great experience. Again, this was carried out in English. Managing a focus group discussion proved to be of great importance, particularly with making sure that the discussion stayed relevant and research related (Krueger, 1988). At times, participants got distracted or drifted to other issues which meant that I needed to reign them back in. The primary methods of data collection are important as the questions are created specifically for the purposes of this research (Taylor *et al.*, 2016). Whereas secondary methods of data collection have already been used for another primary purpose yet provide context for this research.

Before the research started, various figures were estimated in terms of the number of planned interviews that were to be carried out with potential participants. However, once I went into the field the numbers changed due to limited accessibility and availability of specific participants. Nevertheless, I used this to build my research further and relevant changes were made, leading to participants from across the mohair value chain being interviewed for the research. I changed the method of accessing participants and approached Mohair South Africa who are the governing organisation of the industry who gave me permission to do research. This was a pivotal move as they gave me entry into the sector. Mohair South Africa provided me with specific contacts who were relevant for my research and gave me much needed insight into the industry.

Non-random sampling methods were used for this research. This type of sampling provides specific insight into the mohair chain as it speaks to specific participants which is beneficial. The responses from this sampling provided specialised in-depth information from given participants yet I acknowledge that these findings cannot be generalised across the industry (Singh, 2018). Yet it is a good starting point.

The primary method of sampling research participants was snowball sampling which was by gaining entry into the research field through the governing organization of the industry, Mohair South Africa (Singh, 2018). With this access was given and referrals were made to specific participants that were in the chain who were very willing to be a part of my research. After initial contacts were set-up other participants were identified which assisted in expanding my research group and this reflects the very nature of snowball sampling, which is one person suggesting another person forming an overall snowball effect (Bryman & Bell, 2011:200-202). With the participants that were suggested for my research I had to identify when an appropriate and suitable time (convenience) would be for both parties (researcher and participant) in order that it worked out (Singh, 2018). On the whole, most of the suggested participants were either interviewed or formed part of a focus group discussion which proved to be positive.

In order to help understand the research further, details of the participants will be briefly outlined below (refer to Table 4.1 for more detail). A range of participants were chosen and interviewed to get a holistic understanding of the mohair value chain in South Africa, right from the very top which is Mohair South Africa right to the very bottom of the value chain which include shearers and farm workers. Altogether 20 participants have been involved in in-depth semi-structured interviews or focus group discussions (see table 4.1 below). Of this, ten participants are farmers, two are shearers, two are farm workers, and six are from different institutions in the industry. Two important individuals from different institutions have still not given feedback despite many attempts to contact them.

Table 4.1: List of interviewees

Organisation/ Farm*	Name*	Position	Age	Interview Date
Mohair South Africa	Mr Johan Cawse	Director	Mid-50s	15/04/19
Empowerment Trust	Ms Hope Mitha	Director	Mid-40s	15/04/19
Cape Mohair Wool	Mr Yanga Naledi	Assistant Manager	Mid-30s	22/03/19
SAMIL Division A	Mr Mark Krige	Manager of Division A	Mid-30s	29/04/19
SAMIL Division B	Mr Edward Dankwart	Manager of Division B	Mid-60s	29/04/19
SAMIL Division C	Mr William Wales	Manager of Division C	Late-20s	29/04/19
Rocklands Farm	Mr John Green	Farm owner	Late-50s	23/02/19
Greenveld Farm	Mr Xolani Booï	Farm manager	Early-40s	25/04/19
Oakdale Farm	Mr George Step	Farm owner	Early-30s	02/05/19
Willow Way	Mr Steve Wright	Farm owner	Early-40s	09/05/19
Sunny Lake Ranch	Mr Greg Moore	Farm owner	Mid-30s	09/05/19
Three Hills	Mr Anthony Preston	Farm owner	Mid-50s	13/05/19
Spring Mount	Mr Jeffrey Stein	Farm owner	Late-20s	29/04/19
Daisy Dale	Mr Aaron Ross	Farm owner	Early-40s	07/10/19
Ex mohair farmer 1980s-1990s	Mr Richard Emsile	Ex farmer	Mid-60s	16/01/19
Green Farm	Mr Sean Brown	Owner	Mid-40s	10/10/19
ZYX Shearing Firm	Mr Brian Swazi	Shearer	Mid-30s	23/06/19
ZYX Shearing Firm	Mr Siya Mohkele	Shearer	Mid-50s	23/06/19

Rocklands Farm	Mr James Mila	General mohair farm worker	Mid-60s	23/02/19
Daisy Dale	Mr Tabo Kota	General mohair farm worker	Mid-30s	07/10/19

*These are not the real names of the participants and their farms as well as ZYX shearing firm. The use of pseudonyms formed part of the ethical agreement between the researcher and the participants in order that their identity is protected.

With the 20 participants the interactions were either face-to-face or over the phone. As with the industries in Port Elizabeth, it was easier to have face-to-face interviews and focus groups as it was a central location. However, the majority of farmers are spread all over the Eastern Cape which proved difficult for face-to-face interviews. Hence, telephonic interviews were carried out and recorded with the permission of participants. This method was practical and realistic in keeping within costs for my research.

Various issues arose with participants and this varied from those that made commitments and were unable to fulfil them for reasons such as being too busy, forgetting scheduled interviews as well as those that kept postponing appointments. Others simply did not respond to messages, calls, or emails. Another common issue that was identified was fear and skepticism as a result of the report that was issued by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in 2018. This left many participants in the industry shaken and were not willing to participate as a result (even with permission from Mohair South Africa) (Andropoulos, 2018; Matavire, 2018). Hence, as a researcher it was important to keep trying to recruit new participants and some did prove successful but not all. Nonetheless, the participants that I did interview and have discussions with have proved to be invaluable offering a wealth of responses to work with. There are valuable lessons that I have learnt from this research such as the ability to bounce back and make another plan to make sure my research works out. If I had more time, I would have identified more participants.

Interviews and focus group discussions were recorded with permission from the participant. Once, the data collection occurred the data was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis (University of Auckland, 2019). Under thematic analysis given themes were identified prior to the research taking place and additional themes were added as the research data was being analysed which has widened the scope of research (University of Auckland, 2019). The major themes will be addressed in the data analysis section below.

4.3 RESEARCH ETHICS

Another aspect of the research methodology are the ethical issues that were considered in doing this research (Resnik, 2015). Ethics is of great importance in any research as it considers participants and their protection. There are various ethical issues that were taken into consideration for this research and include: informed consent, the ability to withdraw from research at any given time, protection from harm and anonymity with participants receiving pseudonyms as well as their farms and given organisations. Each of these aspects of research ethics will be expanded on below.

Firstly, informed consent is where I (as the researcher) explain what the research is about and ask whether the participant is able and wants to be a part of my study at which point they are able to agree or disagree (Resnik, 2015). They were also informed about the ability to withdraw at any time during the research if they desired to. If potential participants agree to be a part of the study, they are providing informed consent. As with this research all participants involved have been given pseudonyms to protect their identity and protect them from any form of harm (Resnik, 2015). It is extremely important for me as the researcher to make sure that there is minimal risk for all involved in my research. The other issue that goes hand in hand with research ethics is the role of the researcher; at all times it has been important for me to be aware of my role as the primary researcher and minimise bias and the use of leading questions (Resnik, 2015).

4.4 CONCLUSION

As with any research, the research methodology forms the core and determines what type of research results you get. Hence, it is an instrumental part of the research process and needs careful consideration. As has been stated above, throughout the course of my research various changes had to be made which was critical as it led me to think out of the box and bounce back. A general observation from my research has been the very friendly and warm nature of the mohair industry as well as the unity between all stakeholders. Key role players provided assistance by giving information and relevant contacts where they could, which was a great source of encouragement. Overall, the actual process of carrying out the research has been eye-opening and given me direction for new avenues for future research. The collected data is significant and forms the research analysis chapters below.

CHAPTER 5

INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MOHAIR INDUSTRY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter will provide an overview of the mohair industry of South Africa with a particular focus on the main institutions and actors that are involved in different parts of the mohair value chain, from the production of the raw material up to the process of exporting a semi-processed commodity. Chain literature provides a foundation for appreciating the way in which a particular chain is structured, the key role players and how the relevant organisations and institutions function individually and as part of the wider value chain (Gereffi & Korzeniewicz, 1994; Gereffi, 2013; Dicken *et al.*, 2001). Having interviewed some prominent individuals in these organisations, I was able to explore their role in the wider value chain as well as the ways in which governance takes place in the mohair industry in South Africa. The chain literature also allows for an engagement with the different types of upgrading that have taken place in different organisations.

5.2 MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN: INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE

Throughout this section we continue to highlight the different organisations and actors that make up the South African mohair value chain. The aim is to provide a clear understanding of what is taking place in South Africa and the way in which these actors and organisations form a chain that connects one organisation to the next. We are using chain literature as our foundation to this chapter.

The mohair value chain forms a distinct network and is made up of various actors, organisations and institutions. The mohair value chain can be described as institutionally dense and is therefore not left to the functions of the market alone. Many of the institutions and firms in the mohair chain are privately-owned and operate (largely) independently of the government; if anything,

the government has had minimal influence on what takes place in the South African mohair chain (DAFF, 2016; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). Each of the bodies play an important role in how the chain functions. The actors and institutions function in their own right, in that they carry out specific tasks and do their own business, but also play an important role in the functioning of the value chain and the links that exist between the different organisations.

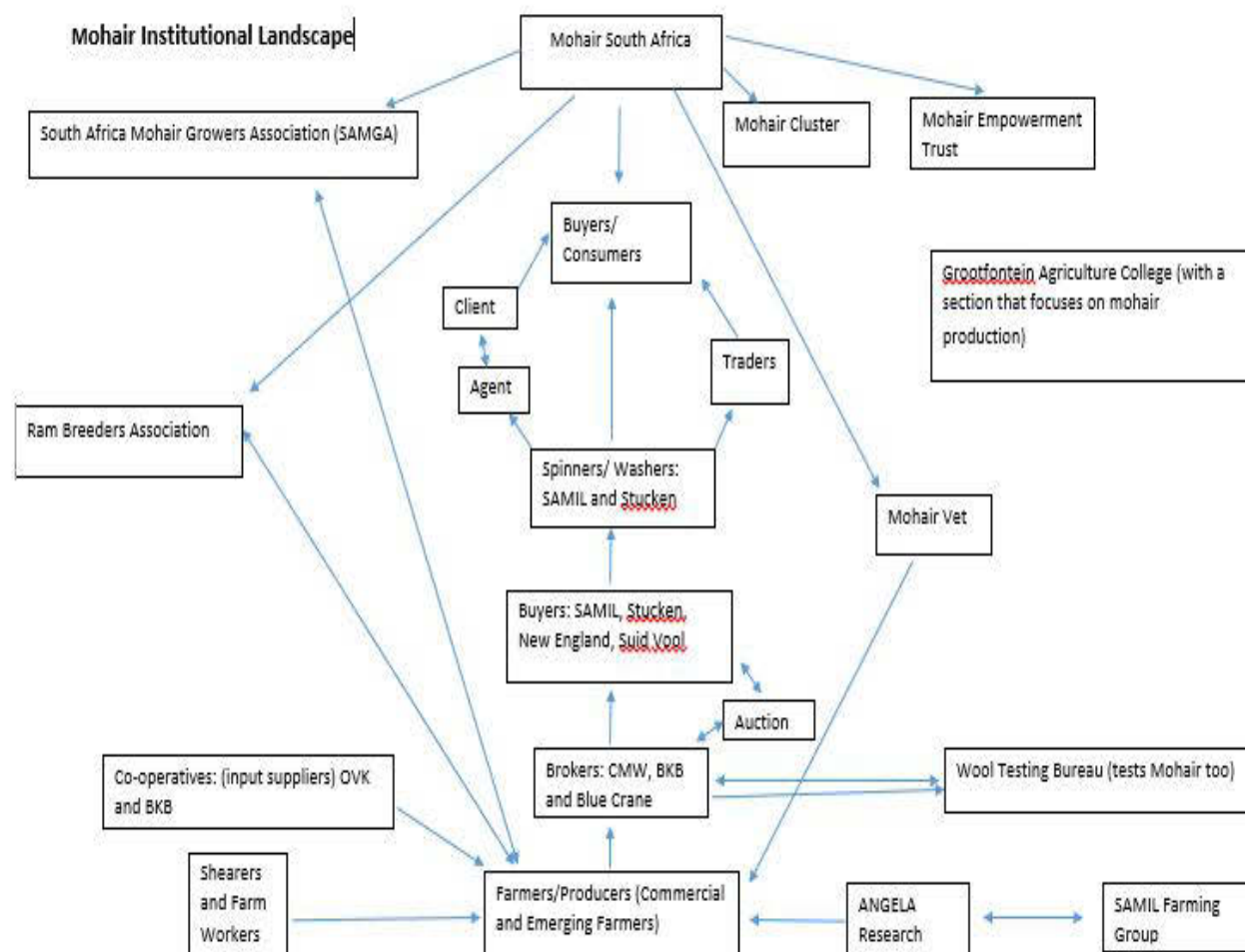
The primary product in this chain is the natural fibre known as mohair. This product goes through various processes of refining and upgrading before it is ready for sale, to the final consumers around the world. To South Africa's benefit many of the value-adding processes are done within the country and there are various institutions that make sure that the processing of the product is up to the required standard (imposed by agencies further down the value chain). These institutions perform their primary business but also provide checks and inspections along the chain as the product comes through their business. These checks are to make sure that the product is fit to be sold on the world market and meets the required standards.

Below are two visual presentations of the mohair industry in South Africa, with this we will look at different organisations and what they do within the chain. Figure 5.1 is a visual representation of the mohair industry's institutional landscape in South Africa and has been created through the responses received during the interviews as well as publications from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries. Figure 5.2 represents the structure of the mohair value chain as conceived by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (DAFF, 2016). The different institutions will be discussed below as a way of explaining their role and how they allow the industry to function.

Figure 5.1 provides a representation of the institutional landscape of South Africa's mohair industry. There are different organisations and actors that make up the mohair industry in South Africa (as we can see below in figure 5.1). The arrows show the established pathways of interaction between the different parties and allows us to have a visual representation of the institutional landscape as it is now. We are able to see the chain from the top (Mohair South Africa) all the way through to the ground level which includes farmers, workers as well as

shearers. The next section is dedicated to explaining what each actor and institution does in the chain and how these bodies interlink to give the chain its structure.

Figure 5.1: Institutional landscape of the mohair industry in South Africa, 2019



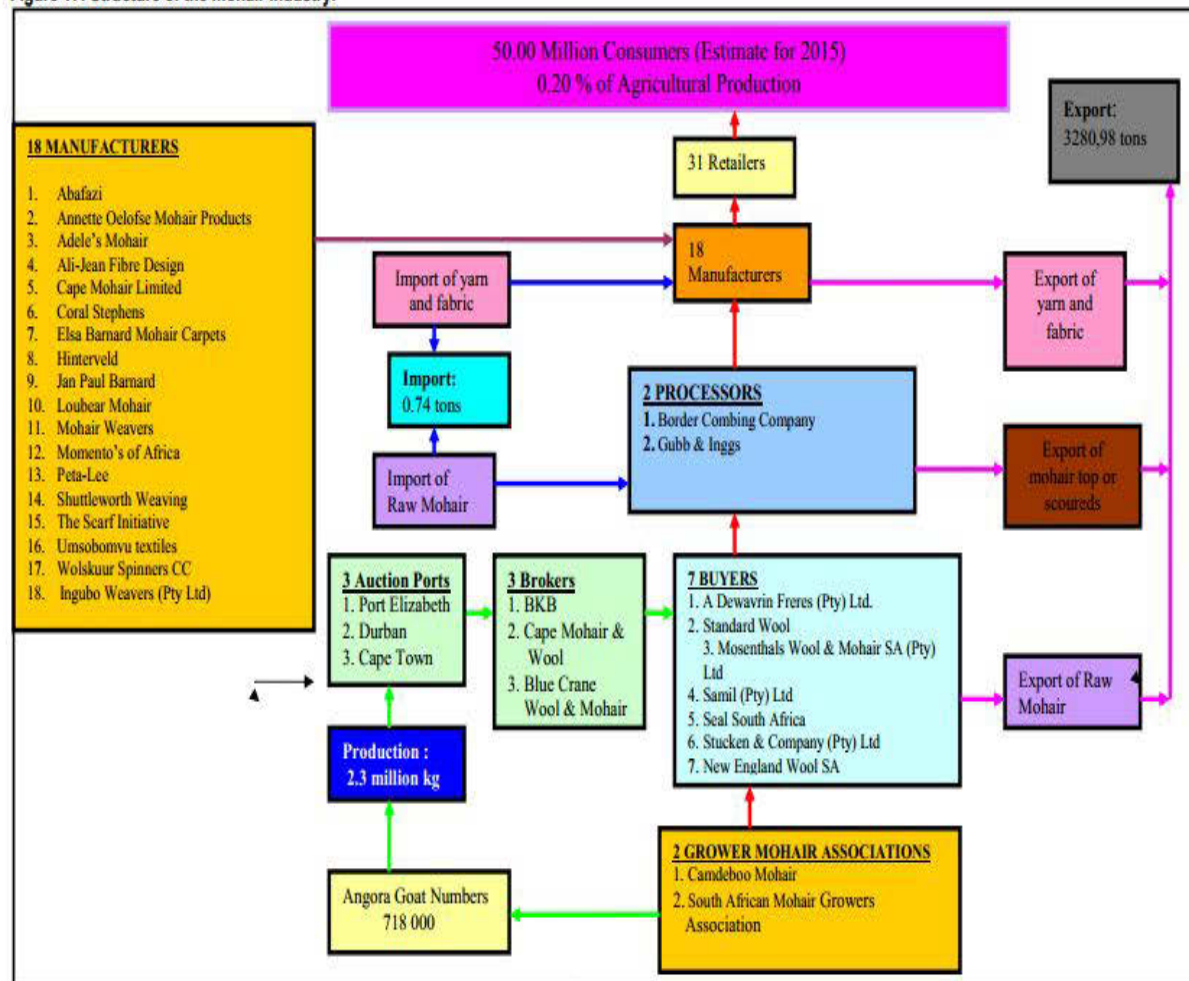
Source: Johan Cawse (15/04/19); Yanga Naledi (23/03/19); Edward Dankwart (29/04/19); William Wales (29/04/19); adapted from DAFF (2016:16).

Figure 5.2 provides a representation of the structure of South Africa's mohair industry as it was in 2016 with specific details. There is great insight provided into the industry, for example, the number of goats at the time which was 718,000 that produced up to 2.3 million/kg of mohair (DAFF, 2016:16). As South Africa forms a key node in the global mohair value chain; global mohair is brought in and value is added, resulting in 3280,98 tons of mohair being exported (DAFF, 2016:16). Other figures that give us an idea of the capacity of the industry include the idea that mohair makes up 0.20% of agriculture produce in South Africa and has an estimate of 50.00 million consumers (DAFF, 2016:6). The given numbers in the figure show us how many institutions are involved in South Africa, for example, there are 30 mohair retailers, three brokers and 18 manufacturers (DAFF, 2016:6). The figure below outlines important figures that allow us to have a more vivid image of what is taking place in the industry.

Figure 5.2: Structure of the mohair industry in South Africa

9. MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN

Figure 17: Structure of the mohair industry.



Source: DAFF (2016:16)

I will briefly explain the functions of each of these organisations and how they are linked to the mohair value chain. The main nodes of the chain include the farmers, who are the primary producers in the chain. There are two co-operatives, OVK and BKB, who supply many of the inputs to the farmers, including the feed, medication and the necessary knowledge to ensure that the goats are kept healthy and productive. Once farmers have shorn their goats, they send their

mohair clip to the brokers. The latter include Cape Mohair Wool (CMW) which falls under OVK, BKB, and Blue Crane. Blue Crane functions independently as we see in this quote: “BKB is a somewhat different kind of broker in that it does not auction its products through a centralised open-market system as the other two do” (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). This means there are different ‘channels’ within the mohair value chain and that farmers therefore have some choice in how to trade in the structure of the chain. Some farmers spoke about how they prefer channels such as Blue Crane as it is immediate money and farmers feel they have more control over their product.

Once the brokers have received the mohair, they class it and send samples to the Wool Testing Bureau, which assesses the quality of the mohair. The assessment covers several factors, including the fineness, stretch, strength, purity and structure of the mohair (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). Once the mohair is classified according to these standards, it goes to auction and is sold to the highest bidders. There are two large, local buyers in South Africa: Stucken Group South Africa and SAMIL, which account for up to 70% of the market. Other smaller buyers include Seal South Africa, Safil, New England and Mosenthals. These buyers are mainly focused on acquiring mohair of the desired quality for their clients and partners in Europe, America, and Asia (DAFF, 2016; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

SAMIL and Stucken buy their mohair locally as they have their own production and processing plants which add value to the raw material. These plants are located in the Eastern Cape (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). Some of the methods of adding value that are used include scouring, which is a process of washing the mohair to get rid of any impurities in the hair such as grass, mud or oils from the goat. The mohair is also combed during this process of washing. Once this is done, the mohair can be dyed at this point or at a later stage, whether after scouring, spinning, weaving or knitting (Edward Dankwerts, 29/04/19). The use of the mohair will determine at which stage it will be dyed, which forms an important part of preparing the mohair for its final use. Another process is that of carding, where the fibres are blended together

and straightened out in order that there is uniformity in the fibre. This all shows the mohair product is being upgraded and being refined in the process (William Wales, 29/04/19).

At this point, either the process of combing or drawing occurs. Combing is when the mohair fibre gets spun into a finer yarn which is smoother (than drawing) and the fibre is often longer; the outcome is recognised as tops (William Wales, 29/04/19). The fibre is twisted together to become a yarn, yarn is often twisted in a process called drawing where it is mixed with mohair and other materials such as silk, cashmere or angora to give it certain qualities which make given products. At this point spinning occurs which is bringing either the single yarn together or the mix to produce different combinations in size, length and texture depending on what is needed and ordered by manufacturing firms or fashion houses (William Wales, 29/04/19). With this it can either be woven or knitted depending on what the product will be. Finally, there is the process of finishing which is a process of inspecting and making sure that the final product is up to standard.

Once these processes have been carried out the fabric is packed and ready for the next stage. The products are either sold locally or are shipped and then sold around the world. The trading partners from around the world (USA, Japan, China, Taiwan and the European Union) send in their orders and products are made according to specifications. The trading partners often work on behalf of clients and act as a go-between or agent (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). Once the trading partners have received their goods through the clients, they then sell these products onto the final buyers or consumers, who are often high-end fashion houses or final consumers. Mohair has strong links to the global fashion industry. The high-end fashion houses and suit-makers form a targeted market and buy products for an elite social group (given the prices of mohair products) (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). There are different nodes (actors and institutions) where value is being added to the product until it is ready for sale, either locally or on the international market (Bair, 2009:6; Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7).

Above we have provided an outline of the industry at the South African level and how this links to the global market. The structure of the global mohair industry can potentially be informed by

world systems theory (Martinez-Vela, 2001:1). World systems theory highlights the structure of the global economy and the uneven development of the capitalist system at an international level (Bair, 2009:7-8). In world systems theory, South Africa would be classified as a peripheral nation since it supplies primary resources (raw materials) to core nations such as Japan, USA and countries in western Europe for the processing and manufacturing of mohair products (Martinez-Vela, 2001:1-4). South Africa has become an influential player and producer of mohair, which forms part of a global value chain (Mohair South Africa, 2018; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). The South African mohair industry has also enhanced its power and position through its knowledge of the market.

Below I will discuss each of the institutions and given actors and their unique role in the mohair value chain in South Africa as an outline of the institutional landscape of the mohair industry in South Africa. This focus on institutions is a key feature of the GPN literature, which emphasises the importance of a “spatial network” in a value or commodity chain (Barrientos *et al.*, 2011; Barrientos, 2013; Taylor *et al.*, 2015:7-8).

5.2.1 MOHAIR SOUTH AFRICA

Mohair South Africa has been functioning for the last 30 years and has changed from an agricultural cooperative and now functions as a non-profit organization (NPO) (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). Mohair South Africa is innovative and has gained much experience over time. It is recognised as the overarching body governing the mohair industry in South Africa. Mohair South Africa oversees and streamlines the processes from the field where the farmer is rearing the goats, which is the initial stage of the mohair value chain right through to the export stage (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Mohair South Africa, 2018). The sales of mohair products mark the end of the South African component of the value chain as the product goes onto the global mohair market (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Mohair South Africa, 2018). Mohair South Africa has assumed an influential position in the global mohair value chain (Johan Cawse, 15/04/2019).

One of the primary roles of Mohair South Africa is to create awareness through the marketing of the actual mohair product (both local Cape mohair and international variants of mohair) (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Mohair South Africa, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2019). The marketing includes informing the market about the qualities of this resource such as its durability, lustre and sustainability. The global market for mohair is growing, particularly with the awareness of the product and the sustainability aspect of mohair which is key as it is a regenerating material; in that the hair grows back and is shorn every season from the Angora goat. Mohair South Africa has several caps to fit as the overseeing body in South Africa and is looking to become the official global body too (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19).

Mohair South Africa has its head office in Port Elizabeth and plays an instrumental role in the mohair value chain in its work by liaising between stakeholders both in the industry and outside the industry. A relevant example of Mohair South Africa liaising and creating awareness is through the press. In 2018, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) produced several alarming reports on the conditions and the treatment of Angora goats on mohair farms in South Africa (PETA, 2018).

In response, Mohair South Africa has had to deal with these reports and promote the industry as a whole by showing its interest in sustainability. In promoting sustainability the focus is on adhering to guidelines that deal with how the Angora goats are treated, shorn, housed, the products that can be used on the goats for treating their coats as well as the training that workers and shearers receive on how to care for the goats (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). These all form an integral part of the sustainability guidelines for the industry to ensure that mohair is produced under ethical conditions (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). Mohair South Africa is looking to innovatively lead the global industry and seems to be heading in that direction with the development of the mohair standards which has been adapted from the wool standards, which are still under negotiation (Responsible Wool Standard, 2019; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19).

Mohair South Africa is recognised as the gate-way into South Africa's mohair industry; hence, its position as the lead firm in South Africa's mohair value chain. Mohair South Africa gives

directives for the industry as a result of the associated power and expertise it has (Lusby, 2008:1). The organisation thrives off its large network as well as its technology and communication abilities, which all allow it to function as the ‘governing body’ for the industry. A central aspect of Mohair South Africa is the relational nature that has marked their dealings with various actors and the industry at large. The relational nature of Mohair South Africa has created a form of governance for the mohair industry in South Africa (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:16; Gereffi *et al.*, 2005).

5.2.2 EMPOWERMENT TRUST

The Empowerment Trust forms an independent arm of Mohair South Africa. The aim of the Empowerment Trust is to enhance mohair production by exploring both potential and emerging mohair farmers in South Africa in order that there is long term sustainability in the industry (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Hope Mitha, 15/04/19). This is of great importance to South Africa’s economy as it assists in redistribution, creating jobs and gives individuals a livelihood as it partners with various people in different communities (Hope Mitha, 15/04/19). The farmers that are identified by the Trust are mainly black emerging farmers that have the potential and desire to farm Angora goats, they have available land to their name and infrastructure that will assist with rearing goats. Infrastructure includes adequate dipping facilities, water tanks, handling kraals and fields. These factors are central as they help in assessing and deciding who can be a potential partner in this Trust, which then influences the quality of mohair production and the future of the industry (Hope Mitha, 15/04/19).

The Empowerment Trust was set up in 2010 in response to the need to develop black emerging farmers in an effort to address the legacies of apartheid and increase the overall supply of mohair for the market. However, the Empowerment Trust does not leave it there (at the primary production level), it is also committed to the ‘holistic development’ of the industry by including more black employees throughout the value chain, as well as promoting opportunities for black

entrepreneurs in order that there is opportunity for all at every level (Mohair Empowerment Trust, 2019; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Hope Mitha, 15/04/19).

Various projects function under the Empowerment Trust at present and have been recognised as success stories. In order to understand what the Trust does, a given farming practice success story will be unpacked as an example. As mentioned above, the Empowerment Trust identifies potential farmers and will go and inspect the farm in relation to given criteria that need to be met in order for an individual to be considered as a potential farmer. The criteria includes land and facilities that can support the goats and the willingness by the farmer to partner and operate effectively on a given project. Lastly, there needs to be some sort of vision and passion from the potential farmer for the goats, which shows promise to the industry.

Once the inspection has been passed according to the given criteria and the board has agreed to the project, goats of worth a million rand (or to that effect) will be purchased by the Empowerment Trust under Mohair South Africa and entrusted to the emerging farmer (Hope Mitha, 15/04/19). Approximately 1,000 castrated goats, which are known as wethers, are bought by the Trust; wethers are the easiest goats to manage due to low maintenance needs. The agreement is interest free, once the goats are bought and arrive on the farm the money is paid back through the sales from shearing the goats each season (twice a year) over a period of five years. The money will be divided between the emerging farmer who gets 75% of the sales money and the Empowerment Trust getting 25% (the payment is done directly from the brokers to the relevant parties).

Once the money to the effect of one million rand is returned to the Empowerment Trust over the five years (or less) with no interest, the goats will then belong to the emerging farmer, up until this point the goats are owned by the Empowerment Trust and the emerging farmer farms the goats with advice from the Trust (Hope Mitha, 15/04/19). This initiative assists with start-up costs of acquiring goats and is beneficial as the Trust assists in helping an emerging farmer settle

into the industry as well as offering assistance to the farmer such as with dips, medications and feed.

There are several success stories and it has been recognised that the return period does not have to be five years, it can be less than five years. More black emerging farmers are being empowered and brought into the industry which is going hand in hand with the need for diversifying the industry and increasing mohair production (Hope Mitha, 15/04/19). The Empowerment Trust is an ongoing initiative and has expanded over time with the number of partners at present (2019) being more than ever and the desire for even more partners to join.

We are able to see how the mohair industry is evolving over time and the diversification that is taking place in the mohair value chain (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Mohair South Africa, 2018). These bodies that are made up of actors have been able to shape the direction and steer the development of the industry. The functions in these organisations are increasingly becoming diversified as we have seen above and are run privately meaning that the mohair scene is largely run independently of the government. Throughout this chapter we will continue to look at different institutions that make up the mohair industry.

5.2.3 SOUTH AFRICAN MOHAIR GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

The South African Mohair Growers' Association (SAMGA) is a vital component in the mohair value chain as it represents all the growers or producers of mohair in South Africa. The main issues that are dealt with at this level relate directly to the actual farming of Angora goats and ways of bettering and making the environment for farming more suitable (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Mark Krige, 29/04/19). There are representatives that are mohair farmers, who have meetings set up with other producers in order to find out their needs, concerns and any other issues at the farm level. Farmers also share what is working in their favour to further promote farming practices across the larger farming community which will in turn benefit the industry.

Each year, there are farmers that are elected from different regions all over South Africa (John Green, 23/02/19; Mark Krige, 29/04/19). Once elected, they act as representatives for given areas

and come together for an Annual General Meeting (AGM) once a year to discuss their concerns and issues that have come up, they then try and find a resolution or take it to the relevant organisations. SAMGA also liaises with stakeholders such as the government and other bodies both within the industry and outside that may impact farmers and their processes. The main mission of SAMGA is to provide a beneficial and healthy environment for producers where they are able to function at their optimum level (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19).

5.2.4 RAM BREEDERS' SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Ram Breeders' Society is a body within the mohair industry that focuses on producing quality goats and is into breeding rams that are of good genetic character (Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). These rams are sold to mohair farmers that are looking for specific traits in their goats. In order to join the society, a farmer firstly needs to have a herd of goats that are rams (male goats) (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). Members of the breeders' society will monitor the rams on a farm and after several years, if the rams are of the requisite standard, the farmer concerned will be recognised as a breeder. Importantly, this means that recognised breeders are able to sell their rams for higher prices and the goats are in demand because they possess the necessary genetics that buyers may want to add to the genetic pool of their livestock (Mark Krige, 29/04/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19).

The purpose of the breeders' society is to continuously improve the production of goats within South Africa (and beyond) by 'improving' the genetics of these goats. There are various sales throughout the year for the rams as they are in great demand and often go for high prices because of their genetic qualities. The Ram Breeders' Society is growing as farmers are increasingly recognising the importance of good genetics in their goats and how this translates into higher yields and better quality mohair, which can be sold at a higher price.

5.2.5 GROOTFONTEIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

This is an Agricultural College that was established in Middelburg (Eastern Cape) to train, capacitate and educate individuals on small-scale farming practices (Grootfontein Agriculture

College, 2019). There is a specific focus on goat and sheep farming and ways to improve practices associated with this kind of farming. A wealth of experience underlies what takes place at this institution and it is actively sought out by many stakeholders in the mohair industry (Grootfontein Agriculture College, 2019). The expertise and practices are fed into the value chain and are accessible for the farmers as well as other individuals that may have a vested interest in what is taking place at the farming level as well as the wider mohair industry.

5.2.6 BROKERS: CAPE MOHAIR WOOL, BKB AND BLUE CRANE

There are various brokers in the mohair value chain that play an instrumental role in adding value to the chain (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). The brokers buy the mohair from different farmers and begin to add value to the raw material. These brokers are situated in Port Elizabeth. Cape Mohair Wool (CMW which falls under an organisation called OVK) is the biggest broker in South Africa (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). As a result, they have significant influence and power in the chain. The other broker is BKB, which consists of BKB and Blue Crane (a minor branch which mainly caters to farmers that do not want to go through the official auction system). Blue Crane is much smaller in size and functions. Hence, it caters for the specific needs of farmers (George Step, 02/05/19). Most farmers use either CMW or BKB and have a long-standing relationship with these brokers.

To appreciate the functions of the brokers, a brief outline of the labour process is provided below, which reveals the processes that are undertaken and how value is added at each stage (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). Mohair needs to be transported by the farmer to the broker. On arrival, the mohair is offloaded in the form of bales or sacks (depending on how much is being delivered, this is weighed in kilograms) from the trucks or bakkies onto the platform. With each arrival, detailed records are created about the mohair: how many bales were delivered, the type of mohair (there are different classifications), how many kilograms were received and the identity of the farmer who produced the mohair (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). Each farmer has a unique producer number, which is a form of identification.

The trucks arrive from the farms and the bales need to be offloaded as quickly as possible. The trucks stop at the offloading bay and a crane is used to offload the truck. In this process, there are workers using forklifts who assist in sorting the bales out using the given identification, which includes the name of the farmer and producer number. This allows the workers to classify the bales and keep the piles separate as they need to be processed separately at the next stage. Each of these bags are marked. For example, looking at the bale in Figure 5.3 the producer number (473919) is visible. Although we cannot see the details below every bale has the following information; the initials of the producer, a bill number and type (kid, young goat or adult goat), which refers to the nature of the mohair inside the bale (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). Once all the bags have been offloaded, there is the process of sorting the bags and bales into different groups.

Figure 5.3: Producer number on bales of mohair



Source: photo by researcher

The next stage is the weighing in of each bale. There is a designated individual who captures the producers' number (473919 in the image above) and then a portfolio is created for each farmer. Since each farmer has his or her own identification, which is stored in the system, his or her mohair can be recognised at any stage. The farmer's profile contains details such as (among others) how many bales have been delivered, the farmer's production records over the years, and the number of sales in different seasons (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

Once the bales are brought in from the loading ramp into the warehouse, they need to be weighed. It is important that the weight that has been captured on the scale agrees with the records from the farmer. If there is a disparity in the figures, it needs to be relayed to the farmer so that he or she is aware of what is occurring and can follow-up on the matter. Hence, the process is deemed to be transparent and accountability is a primary aspect of the working relationships within the industry. The records from the farmer are known as “clip advice”, an example of which is provided below. When the trucks arrive at the brokers factory with mohair bales the clip advice is received from mohair farmers (Figure 5.4 below). The clip advice is in Afrikaans and English. The information on this paper includes the name of the farmer, the producer number, the number of bales, the type of bale and weight of each bale. The bales are also scanned for metal to ensure that there is nothing in them that could be tampering with their weight. Other inspections include opening each bale to ensure that the contents and the label of the bag correspond.

Figure 5.4: Mohair clip advice that accompanies farmers produce to the factory

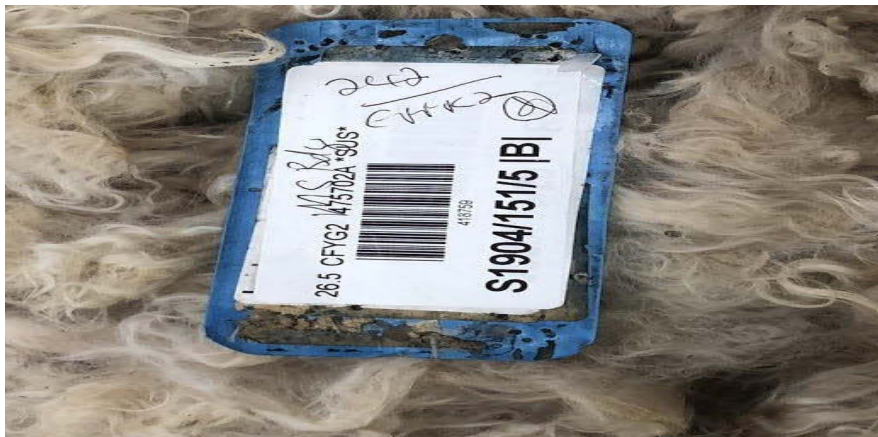


Source: photo by the researcher

Mohair comes from different ages and sizes of goats which include kids, young goats and adults. The different ages of goats have specific requirements in terms of the weight of each bale; for kids, a full bag needs to be 80kg +, a young goat needs to be 90kg+ and for an adult goat it needs to be 100kg +. The maximum for each bag is 190kg (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

Once the mohair is weighed, a ticket is issued which acts as a check showing that the bale has been weighed in. The ticket is a barcode which is clipped onto the bale that shows the type of mohair being received, the contents inside the bale, the producer number, and the weight in kilograms of the bale. The barcode on the ticket is a form of identification of the contents in the bale (Figure 5.5). There are different workers doing different things throughout the production line. At this stage there are two people involved: one clamps the ticket onto the bag and the other one is writing the information on the bail in case the ticket gets lost inside the plant. This is an important job as it means that the bag and its contents can be recognised throughout the factory.

Figure 5.5: An issued ticket in the factory



Source: photo by the researcher

The third stage is sorting the mohair into different bins; there are little cars that are seen moving around the factory site that take the mohair bales to the correct bins (large storage containers). There are different catalogues that come in and this goes with the season, the winter and summer clip and season. Earlier in the year (April-May) catalogue four and five come in. In the summer season we start with catalogue one-seven, so for example we have S192511- 'S' for season, '19' for the year, '25' is the farmers identification on the system which is his sequence and '11' is for his 11th bale that has come in from his lot. Farmers usually have a bit of everything within a given bale which include locks, stain and clean mohair. These bales are emptied out and sorted

by sorters according to the contents of the bag. A specific skill is needed here which is touch and sight for mohair as there are subtle differences between the different types (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

Some mohair farmers do not have the expertise or resources to sort the mohair. Part of the brokers' services is to offer a sorting service that comes at a cost of R2/kg. The main aspects in the sorting process include the length of the mohair, the fineness of the mohair and the cleanliness of the yield (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). On the factory floor, there are about 250 bins and they are divided according to the different types of mohair, the age of the animals (adults, young goats and kids) and whether the mohair is from the back or the belly of the goat. Below is an example of a factory bin (Figure 5.6) where a given type of mohair is stored; this is also an example of the best kids mohair (bin 269) which was sold for R580/kg at the time of research (March 2019).

Figure 5.6: A factory “bin”



Source: photo by the researcher

The fourth stage is testing and evaluating the type of mohair. Two employees are trained to inspect the mohair in a process that tests the farmers' claims about (among others) the value,

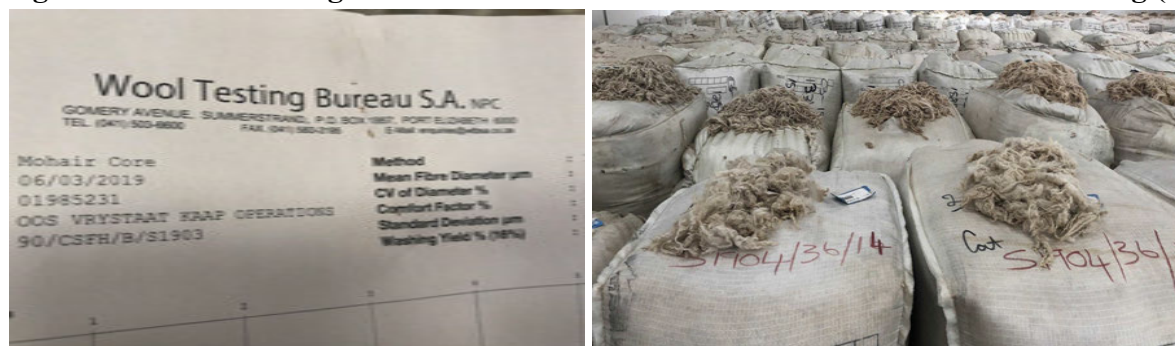
style, and length of the mohair. Once these employees, who have specialised skills, have evaluated the mohair samples, the latter are taken from these big bins and placed into smaller bins (image below). However, the mohair needs to be up to standard. For example, the ‘BSFYG (back side for young goat)’ needs to be what it says it is (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

These bales are then taken according to the grading they receive and are recorded on the system. At this point, the mohair is sorted for the Wool Testing Bureau. In the factory visit, there was a female employee who sat at a sorting machine and ensured that accurate information was recorded about the type of mohair and how much was available of any given type. There is another important aspect to this task: the above-mentioned employee handling the sorting machine took a sample from each bale that came through the machine. These samples were then taken to the Wool Testing Bureau to test for the fineness, clean-yield, and for the evenness of the yield (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

Once the testing has taken place and there is an agreement in what is said to be available and what has been tested, the buyers are able to see the mohair on the stands. There is variation in the colours, which is a result of a number of factors that include climate, environmental conditions and geographical location. For example, the orangey coloured mohair comes from the Tarkastad area because there is a lot of dust and the whiter mohair is from Sterkspruit, a mountainous area in which the Angora goats are exposed to less dust and live on the rocks. In short, a range of factors determines the quality of the mohair. Farming with Angora goats where the land is ploughed, for example in the Free State, the dust in the air stains their hair with an orange hue, especially after the goats are dipped (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

The Wool Testing Bureau, situated in Summerstrand in Port Elizabeth, tests all the mohair. It is the only official body that possesses the resources and expertise to analyse all the mohair samples. Staff at the Bureau test a sample from each bale to determine the diameter and fineness of the mohair as well as the comfort factor (softness) and washing yield (effect of washing material) (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). Each sample of mohair is documented accordingly (Figure 5.7). The image on the right is mohair once it has been tested and approved.

Figure 5.7: Wool Testing Bureau S.A. documentation and mohair bales after testing (right)



Source: photo by the researcher

The fifth stage in the process (once the mohair is tested and approved) is the marketing and display of the mohair (Figure 5.8 below). The set-up is made up of smaller bins which are direct samples of the larger bins which show how much mohair is available. Hence, they are seen as literal representations of the larger bins and what is ready for marketing and sale (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). When a given buyer arrives, they are able to see what is on offer and roughly how much is available as there is a physical representation in the bins as well as the results from the Wool Testing Bureau. If for example there are 20 farmers contributing to a given type of mohair it will all be mixed together. If the buyer takes all of that given type of mohair each farmer will be paid according to what he has sold from a given bin. Buyers come with their own specifications and demands; buyers will buy according to their needs and who they are buying for. Naledi, briefly explains how this occurs:

With all the sorting that takes place we as the buying houses get ready for the big auctions that happen once or twice every month, on average every three weeks. At the time of the interview, in the past week on Tuesday 19th March 2019 we had an auction, and I myself was auctioning to the buyers who are bidding (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

There are about five different buyers and these include Stucken, SAMIL, Safil, Mosenthals and New-England. Local representatives come and bargain different types of mohair for their clients who are overseas. Clients operate in places such as China, Italy and India, and local

representatives will report back to them on what is available and how much it is going for. So, for example, box number one is made up of all adult goat hairs, which are ‘light locks’, a type of mohair. Quality is important and is seen in the setup of the warehouse. “In our set-up we always start with the worst or poorest quality which then builds up all the way to the very best in a given range” (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). The poorest quality mohair is the cheapest and is sold for R45/kg and up, including R60/kg, R90/kg and R100/kg. The prices go up to R500/kg, R600/kg, and R1000/kg for younger clips such as kid mohair (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). Figure 5.8 shows a sample of mohair that has been tested and graded, it is now ready for buyers to come and see and bid in preparation for the auction. In the image we are able to see the character of the mohair, which includes its style, fineness and length.

Figure 5.8: Mohair sample



Source: photo by the researcher

Stage seven is made up of the shipping bay. All the mohair that has been sold is stored and marked accordingly.

The bales are placed according to their buyers and we wait to hear from the buyers regarding collection. Bales may be taken to the port and shipped overseas or internally in South Africa, but we are told what to do by the buyers. Some ask that it gets washed here at Stucken or Samil, who are local processors, which are able to wash the mohair and add

value as they have a processing plant where they are able to make yarns or blankets. As a broker we go up to the point of shipping and organising the transport to leave the factory to whichever destination is required (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

When the bales arrive down here, they are strapped and secured to make sure they are properly stored in the container. Another guy will come with the hyster and put all the bags together that are labelled and strapped with the same thing representing a given buyer. So, a guy who has bought mohair will say: 'I want all my STs or LOHs, and we will sort all of them and then they will be shipped and taken to the harbour. A lot of our work is done by computers; so, it becomes much easier. We do not have to remember all of these details (Yanga Naledi, 29/03/19).

This shows how value is added throughout the factory and there are many processes involved from the mohair arriving as a raw material to it being sold on the market to local and international buyers, by which time various processes have taken place and transformed the raw material (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

The brokers play an instrumental role in the value chain and have effectively streamlined their processes to make it as efficient and transparent as possible. The brokers connect various actors and institutions in the chain due to their multiple roles and value-adding processes. Despite CMW and BKB being in direct competition as brokers they both have their own loyal buyers and farmers that supply mohair. BKB and CMW often have to come together to make decisions for the industry.

5.2.7 MOHAIR TESTING BUREAU

The Mohair Testing Bureau is an independent body that is sourced to test mohair fibres and provide data for the industry, particularly the buyers, as they are interested in the composition of the fibre. The Bureau plays a central position in testing mohair and is the only entity that can carry out these functions. The Testing Bureau functions as a research body under the auspices of the Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth. Throughout my research the importance of this

organisation was highlighted in numerous interviews and the interviewees attested to the importance of this organisation in the mohair value chain. (Despite making it a priority to interview staff from the Mohair Testing Bureau and repeated efforts to set up interviews, I was unable to interview any of these staff).

5.2.8 BUYERS

The buyers, who play a vital role in the mohair industry in South Africa include SAMIL, Stucken, New England, Safil and Mosenthals (Edward Dankwart, 29/04/19). SAMIL and Stucken occupy a dominant position in the local mohair value chain, which is reflected in the amount of mohair that they are able to buy on the market, which gives them power over the producers (Edward Dankwart, 29/04/19). SAMIL and Stucken are in direct competition and together account for about 70% of the market share, which means they have a determining role over what happens in the local market. Stucken and SAMIL buy the mohair as is and then go on to add value and process it in Port Elizabeth (discussed below). Different buyers go for different types of mohair depending on the season, the fashion market which links to demand, prices, and the supply.

5.2.9 PROCESSORS

SAMIL and Stucken play a major role in adding value to the raw material. These functions include the processing of raw mohair, washing, spinning, dyeing and weaving of the mohair, which can either be ready for sale or further value can be added to it making it a by-product that can be used in other products (Edward Dankwart, 29/04/19; William Wales, 29/04/19; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). The processing of mohair includes sorting it into different types or grades and then washing it, and then combing the hair and getting rid of any external matter (Edward Dankwart, 29/04/19).

There are further processes that are carried out in South Africa that include the spinning and dyeing of mohair. The spinning is a specialised process and caters to different needs on the market. Hence the spinning results in yarns of different varieties of thickness, depending on what

the trading partners need at the time (Edward Dankwart, 29/04/19). The general yarn that is produced is a standard variety that can either be used for hand knitting or machine knitting in the market. There are both pure mohair yarns available as well as blends, which are a mixture of mohair and silk, for example. A strong influence on what is made is determined by the end consumers, which shows that the mohair chain is buyer driven in nature (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19).

The other process of adding value is dyeing the mohair once it is a yarn. This takes place in-house. These yarns are dyed according to the needs of customers. There is a dye house on-site that is able to create specialised colours and mixes with lab technicians that are able to create a whole range of colours (Edward Dankwart, 29/04/19). As with SAMIL, these processes all take place under the given organisation and are all in-house. Whereas with Stucken, there is a group and different organisations within the group carry out specialised functions such as combing, spinning and dyeing amongst other processes. This stage of adding value to the mohair is of great importance as it provides specialisation, expertise, jobs and the ability to enhance the value, which is beneficial for the industry as well as the wider economy (Edward Dankwart, 29/04/19).

5.2.10 AGENTS/TRADERS

The agents who are also recognised as traders in some places, play an important role in the industry in that they have connections with existing clients of mohair. Part of the job of a given agent is to bring in potential clients (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). These agents are strategically positioned in different countries and have established themselves in countries such as Italy, Japan and America amongst others that have a demand for mohair; which is often linked to high end fashion industries as that is usually the end market of this product (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). These agents play an instrumental role in establishing a relationship of trust between various buying houses in South Africa and being able to know what type of mohair is available on the market in terms of length, fineness and the micron reading (as this suggests different types of end uses). With this given information such as the quantity, price and quality of mohair the agent needs to present the relevant data to the clients or buyers and be able to negotiate or act as the

middle player between the buying houses and clients. The messages need to be relayed between the two parties and often the difference in language makes it difficult when trying to get an equal footing with these negotiations. Many of these relationships have been built over time and continue to function effectively, these agents play a vital part in the chain and getting the product to the right end users.

5.2.11 CLIENTS

The clients play an important role in the industry too, clients are seen as the final link in the chain. The clients usually operate overseas and are go-betweens between the major fashion houses/final consumers and the agents. Part of the client's job is to be aware of market demands and trends which help to inform the agents on what is available and at what prices, the clients go back to buying houses with the requirements of given products. Clients play a key role in marketing, networking, negotiating, and communicating with different parties to get mohair sold at a competitive rate and meet market needs.

5.2.12 COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives have evolved over time. During apartheid, cooperatives in the agriculture sector would house many aspects of production and were also identified as the governing bodies of the industry (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). On a practical level this meant that functions were often centralised and what happened in the industry was appropriated from the top, giving very little autonomy to the rest of the members of the industry (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). It also meant that various services as well as expertise were provided for all without incurring external costs, many of the producers were taken care of. These services included; providing inputs for the farmers such as feed, medication, marketing and storage of products, and the sale of outputs (Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; John Green, 23/02/19). Farmers were often protected as the cooperatives would act as the middle men and negotiate on behalf of the farmers.

However, cooperatives have changed their role and function in the industry in that they have retracted their involvement over time and are currently carrying out specialised services for the

industry (John Green, 23/02/19). These cooperatives are a branch of the brokers; OVK and BKB hence they are aware of what farmers needs are, particularly when it comes to inputs at the farm level. These cooperatives have branches in various towns and sell inputs such as feed, general accessible medications such as doses, dips, and other treatments for their hair and skin. Other inputs that are provided, include fencing material such as wire, workers uniform and boots (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). They also provide advice and expertise when it comes to goat farming and practices (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). Hence cooperatives are central to what takes place at the start of the value chain.

5.2.13 SAMIL FARMING PROJECT

SAMIL farming has identified the need for greater mohair production and has expanded its operations into the primary stage of production. There are several projects that SAMIL has undertaken, which include the actual farming of goats, thereby adding value to its operations. SAMIL has also acquired land, which it has set up and also has its own goat stud to its name. This is a progressive strategy and came about due to the need for a greater supply of mohair in the industry.

Another project that SAMIL farming oversees is the advancement of partnerships with emerging farmers and commercial farmers (Mark Krige, 29/04/19). This project currently has about 30 clients in 2019 and is looking to keep expanding given the right people are identified. The way in which this partnership works is that SAMIL farming will acknowledge potential partners who have available land but do not have the means i.e the money or capital to source goats (Mark Krige, 29/04/19).

SAMIL will buy the goats which are wethers (male castrated goats) as they have minimal risk and produce great amounts of mohair, for the given project. The goats will then be taken to the farm. SAMIL farming as a body will assist with goat rearing and farming practices in order to get the most out of the goat. Once the goats are on the farm, the partnership works on a 50/50 basis so the profits are shared out on this basis and operates on a contract basis in that the goats

are for SAMIL (Mark Krige, 22/04/19). The partnership is usually for a period of two years and then a review takes place and then decided on again. The head of the farming division of SAMIL has an invested interest in the different projects and partners, so while the projects are functioning, he often comes around to see what is taking place and look for ways of creating more opportunities (Mark Krige, 22/04/19).

5.2.14 ANGORA GENETICS LABORATORY

The Angora Genetics Laboratory (ANGELA) forms an integral part of SAMIL farming and began doing research in 2014 (Mark Krige, 29/04/19; Edward Dankwart, 29/04/19; William Wales, 29/04/19). The research done by ANGELA is not limited to SAMIL farming but has developed research output for the wider good of the mohair farming sector and industry, in order that quality goats and mohair are produced by all. The research is carried out by independent researchers from the University of Barcelona on a given farm in the Eastern Cape. This operates as a partnership by carrying out research that is relevant and is for the advancement of the sector (Mark Krige, 29/04/19). The research looks at various aspects of the actual mohair such as the quality, fineness, length as well as the breeding practices of the goats and developing an animal that is able to withstand adverse conditions such as the current drought. Genetics play an important aspect of developing a goat and its hair, much adaptation is needed and research is going into this to make mohair competitive. ANGELA is unique and plays a significant role in the industry in that it is a given body that is using research expertise to the benefit of all and is free (Mark Krige, 29/04/19).

5.3 MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN: AGENTS

The institutional landscape is made up of institutions (as we have acknowledged in the section above). Within these institutions are given actors that have specific functions in maintaining the chain and the way in which it is run. Nonetheless, we cannot solely focus on institutions, we need to explore the agents that make up the chain too. These agents include farmers, shearers and farm workers who play an instrumental role in the mohair value chain and have formed an

integral part of my research. Below, I briefly explore each of these agents and their role in the value chain.

5.3.1 COMMERCIAL FARMERS

In order for the mohair industry to function effectively there is a need for farmers who are the producers in this value chain to play their part. The role of the farmers is instrumental as we see in the quote: “I want to say that every role player or individual is equally important as you cannot market a product that does not exist so first off you have to produce it on the farm, so you need the farmers to produce and take care of their animals and nurture and develop them so they produce a quality product” (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). These farmers provide the raw material or resource which is mohair which is used in the rest of the chain. In order to understand this chain, one needs to recognise who the farmers are and their role, it is also important to consider the previous context of South Africa as this will further explain the differentiation in farm ownership and how this is being addressed now. There are both white and black mohair farmers in South Africa although the majority of farmers are still white commercial farmers and they make up a significant number of the mohair farming community. There are various initiatives and programs that are playing a role in promoting black farmers as we have seen above.

Currently, there are approximately 800 commercial farmers that provide mohair for the industry and they have farms around South Africa; however prime mohair farming areas include the Eastern Cape, the Karoo and the Western Cape (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). These farms vary in size and the carrying capacity of goats varies according to the conditions of the farm as well as external factors such as the market and demand, weather conditions such as drought and available finances (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). Mohair is seen as a natural fibre and is renewable in its nature as it is reproduced once it is shorn off. Farmers will be analysed in greater detail in the next chapter in relation to LPT and employee voice.

5.3.2 BLACK EMERGING FARMERS

Over the last couple of years there has been a shift and need to expand the mohair farming community both at the primary level of production as well as throughout the industry by adding value (Hope Mitha, 15/04/19). The need to expand goes alongside the need for redistribution from the past according to the law of South Africa and the mission to advance black economic empowerment in all spheres (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). The other reason for expansion is the need for more production of mohair as the current demand is much greater than the supply of mohair, hence this is important at the production and trade level. Various initiatives have started and these are to draw black emerging farmers into the industry which include the Empowerment Trust and SAMIL farming which have been acknowledged above. There are various stakeholders involved in this process in order that the right farmers are empowered and those that are able to catch the vision of the industry to produce a sustainable product which is well sought after.

5.3.3 SHEARERS

The shearers have a specialised and unique skill in the chain, which means that their expertise is in high demand throughout the farming community (John Green, 23/02/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19). The shearers are either South African or from Lesotho and work on a contract basis each season (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). Shearing teams are made up of several individuals, often between four to eight people. These groups of people go around the mohair farms in the shearing season and shear as well as class the mohair clip (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). The procedure is important as mohair is needed and the skill behind how one shears and handles the goat is just as important.

There are two methods of shearing; namely the electric blade which is classified as a shearing machine or by hand which is using sharpened shearing scissors. There are two shearing times a year known as the summer and winter clip. Each shearer is able to shear up to 100 goats a day depending on the number of goats that shearers can be allocated on a given farm for a week, ten days or two weeks. During this period, they will stay on the given farm until all shearing is done

(Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). Thereafter they will move to the next farm essentially they are constantly on the move during the shearing season. BKB and OVK (which also have cooperatives and are brokers) have their own shearing team with field agents and classers which are available for farmers to hire. However, there are also independent shearers.

5.3.4 MOHAIR FARM WORKERS

Mohair farm workers play a crucial role in the value chain as they are the ones that are labouring behind the actual product and seeing that the goats are well-kept. Mohair farm workers are often male and have worked on these farms for several generations which means that they have close links to the farm (James Mila, 23/02/19; Tabo Kota, 07/10/19). They often specialise in agriculture production particularly animal husbandry; many mohair farmers have mixed farming where they have Angora goats (mohair), Merino sheep (wool), cattle and/or game. This means that their work is centred around looking after livestock, making sure they are generally healthy, with the right amounts of food and water. As well as fencing and maintenance, attending to sick animals, and some workers have been trained to shear too (James Mila, 23/02/19; Tabo Kota, 07/10/19). These farm workers generally live on the farm and in terms of numbers are very few (four to ten) but that also depends on the scale of operation (how big the farm is and the available stock). These workers know their skill and trade well. Farm workers will be dealt with in great depth in the next two chapters when we look at LPT and employee voice literature.

5.4 ANALYSIS OF THE MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Above, we identified the different institutions and actors and their primary functions within the mohair value chain (DAFF, 2016; Mohair South Africa, 2018; Bair, 2005:11-15; Bair, 2009:1; Taylor *et al.*, 2015:4-9). With reference to the chain literature in chapter two, we are able to make sense of what is occurring in the mohair value chain in South Africa. I have taken several aspects from the different streams of chain literature and used these to analyse the mohair chain in South Africa. Chain literature has helped form a critical understanding of what is taking place

and is useful in providing direction for a given chain or network as has been the case for this research.

I have used the world systems theory as a foundation to understanding the way in which the mohair chain has developed and is structured. Production and trade of mohair occurs across the globe and is characterised by the global buyers of mohair that create the territorial division of labour and countries (Wallerstein, 1974; Martinez-Vela, 2001:3-4; Bair, 2009:7). Having outlined the world systems foundation, we then go onto GCC, GVC and GPN literature and will use the relevant literature to unpack my findings.

With GCC, we see how the literature sought to understand how the globe operated through links and saw that a good/service went through different stages from the initial raw material to the final product that was ready for sale (Bair, 2009). For mohair to be ready, institutions and actors play a central role and are part of the functioning of the chain, the chain has been governed by lead firms. Institutions play an inherent part of forming a given chain and the processes that take place in moving a good from its raw material state to sales point; in this chapter we have touched on the processes that take place and who does what in the chain to keep it going (Taylor *et al.*, 2015).

We have shown how, together, these institutions have created links within the value chain which have formed an overriding network that operates both within South Africa but also extends beyond the national borders of South Africa. As this chain functions it is directed by global buyers however at the South African level it is led and governed by Mohair South Africa, as we have discussed in section 5.2.1. Due to the nature of the chain functioning in a local South African space it is affected by given geopolitical factors as well as standards that have been put in place by both private and public institutions. Yet, as we have seen above, each institution plays a role in inter-firm governance and does this through relational governance.

With the development of the GVC literature, there were deeper insights into how at each stage of a given value chain, value was being added. In the same way in South Africa's mohair chain we

are able to see the transformation from the raw material into a by-product or final product that is ready for sale. Hence value is being added with each stage, actor and institution. We have looked at value adding examples under each institution in the section above but we will also look at various examples below that will help us to understand the processes that are attached to this chain and where value is derived from. It is interesting to note that many processes are now taking place in South Africa, previously the mohair was sold as a raw material and would be exported directly from the ports around South Africa (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). However now a lot more processes and methods of adding value have been recognised as this also brings in capital and skills. Given standards factorise both the product and processing that takes place in the chain. Currently, standards for the mohair value chain are being reviewed in South Africa in order that there are ethical and sustainable practices carried out throughout the chain and to make sure that the value being added is legitimate.

The mohair chain in South Africa is marked by its competitive edge. In recent times there has been a shift in economic activities with South Africa undergoing various types of economic upgrading. Upgrading is explained as an improvement or betterment of associated agriculture functions within a given value chain (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:19; Humphrey, 2004:9). This can occur in a variety of different ways such as product upgrading which is where the given product is improved or an advancement occurs (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:4). Process upgrading is where there are improvements made in how a product is made for example in a quicker time frame or for minimal costs (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:4). Functional upgrading is where the functions are expanded in order to take on more of the chain for example producing as well as marketing the given products (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002:19). To understand this, we will highlight the different types of upgrading in the mohair value chain.

Product upgrading: throughout the chain we are able to see the way in which this is occurring by improving already available mohair and creating better versions of mohair (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:4). The product which is initially raw mohair from the Angora goat is subjected to various methods of upgrading. Firstly, part of product upgrading is to be intentional about the

feeding, general care of the goats as well as the way in which the goats are shorn, this is of particular importance as this affects the outcome of the mohair and what it is classified under when it is graded. Another way of product upgrading is to better the breeding standards in order that the actual quality of the mohair is improved. Other methods of upgrading the product include various processes such as washing and scouring the mohair in order that the actual product is cleaned and refined to meet quality standards. When mohair is mixed with other materials such as silk, wool, or other fibres there is a process of product upgrading occurring and this is often subject to the market needs and fashion trends of the time (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:4). There have also been improvements made in the available sustainable and ethical standards of the industry.

Process upgrading: over time there have been many ways by which productivity and output have increased mainly through the use of technology (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000; Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002). This has become evident from the farm level right through all the production factories, processing factories, sales points and the exporting process. Increasingly processes are becoming stream lined and more efficient in order that time is not lost along the chain. Many processes in the factories are done using programmed machines with technical teams on sight to monitor that this is all going according to what it has been programmed to do. Communication has improved meaning that orders can be processed much faster and can be monitored along the way (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000). Economies of scale have also been experienced through this. It is important that product costs are kept minimal in order that these goods can remain competitive on the market.

Functional upgrading: there are aspects of this occurring in this chain. South Africa has and does want to keep upgrading its functions in its activities and content in order that it takes on more of the chain and control as such (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000; Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002). The brokers (CMW and BKB) in section 5.2.6 are taking on more in the chain, such that they are the ones that auction and sell the mohair. The brokers are pushing further back in the chain by forming cooperatives too, where they sell farm products to the farmers which gives them more

power. Another area of functional upgrading occurs with the processes of natural fibres such as SAMIL; this company is advancing by expanding its expertise in that it processes these products and has taken a step further in spinning different yarns together. SAMIL has expanded its expertise by going into farming and research processes in order to take on more of the chain and expertise. Mohair South Africa is doing the same (despite being the governing body) they have also gone into farming through the Empowerment Trust. This shows how important it is to continuously expand activities and skill to remain competitive on the global market.

The research highlights how the shift in activities has given South Africa a greater position in the global mohair value chain as well as income. The position, power and income has generally benefited larger organisations as we have seen above. The notion of economic upgrading leading to social upgrading is not direct in this value chain as we will see more clearly in Chapter 7; however briefly we acknowledge that businesses are advancing yet the outcome for workers is not as clear-cut. Some workers have experienced an improvement in their living and working conditions by being a part of this chain yet this is not the case for all, there have also been aspects of social downgrading for periphery workers. In highlighting the role of workers we look at the GPN literature that recognised how important these actors are in how a given network functions.

GPN literature has a strong sense of the broader socio-political context that a given network functions in as well as the actors involved in the network. The network connotation also acknowledges how there is no clear-cut chain but rather a network of relationships that is functioning for a given product or service to advance through the stages of production (however important the notion of network is, for the purposes of this research we will call this a value chain). There are a wide variety of actors that operate in the network but there are also sub-actors that feed into what the main actors do. This is seen in the way in which there is a network that has formed through the relationships between these firms. In order for any network to function effectively there are three instrumental aspects that need to be present which include value where and how is value added both to the given product and processes. Another important aspect is

where the power lies in a given network and how this plays out in the network. The last important aspect is the agents/structures that are involved in the network which have been acknowledged above yet producers and workers will be analysed further below.

The mohair chain has been simplified to a large extent but there are complex international and national networks that feed into different parts of the chain. Hence, we could argue and say that this mohair product is influenced on multiple dimensions and is not linear in its nature (Bair, 2009). There is great coordination and interdependence that occurs in this network and we are arguing from this position as we acknowledge that it is more than just a linear chain of activities feeding into what is occurring on the global mohair scene. South Africa is expanding its position on the global scene and is using it to their advantage; hence, we can say they are securing their position as the global mohair leader in output but also power.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the mohair value chain and the institutional landscape of mohair production and distribution in South Africa. I discussed the different organisations and their powers and functions in the value chain. Together these agents and institutions create the chain and I used relevant chain literature to analyse the mohair industry in South Africa. This chapter highlights the importance of institutions, governance, geo-political factors and the processes of adding value that leads to economic upgrading. As we conclude the first section of our three-part analysis, we reflect on the link between the institutional landscape and chain literature. In the next section, we will analyse the farmers' perspective as producers in the mohair value chain and discuss the ways in which they navigate the institutional landscape as well as the pressures they face as a consequence of their particular position in the global mohair value chain.

CHAPTER 6

FARMERS' CONCEPTIONS OF THE MOHAIR INDUSTRY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the farmers' conceptions of the mohair industry in light of labour process theory (LPT). I do this by examining farming processes, the relationships formed at the farm level as well as the changes experienced in farming over the years (apartheid and post-apartheid). The reason I chose LPT is because I believe that it provides the best conceptual framework to explain the dynamics at the workplace (mohair farms and processing facilities). Farmers own and control the labour process, which can best be understood through middle-range theories such as LPT. Farmers provide the middle-level analysis between institutions and workers.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, we seek to understand farmers as global producers in relation to the mohair value chain that they are a part of. Thereafter, we will study the farm as the initial point of production in the value chain, from a LPT perspective, it is a primary source of value creation in the chain and is concerned with the production aspect of the chain (as opposed to the distribution and consumption aspects). We then assess the production unit by assessing inputs, throughputs and outputs to gain an understanding of the complexities at play in running a farm and how this forms the initial phase of the value chain. Other topics that are covered in this chapter include the changes that have taken place at the farm level from apartheid to post-apartheid and the implications of these changes for the farmers and the industry which allows us to see how LPT plays out in different eras. We use LPT from the perspective of the farmers in analysing control over the work process before moving on to the workers' perceptions of the industry and the impact of their voice in the next chapter.

6.2 FARMERS AS GLOBAL PRODUCERS

In order to understand any value chain, it is critical to examine the main role players and their position as part of a wider chain (Ortmann, 2005). It is important to study and understand the farm and the interaction that takes place here, as a given unit (Ortmann, 2005). Farmers (and farm workers) play a foundational role in the mohair value chain in South Africa as they are the ones that are producing the raw material that is the focus of the entire value chain. In many value chains, farmers have either been overlooked or there is limited available literature on their position in the chain. With contemporary research, there is often a focus on the impact of neoliberalism on South African agriculture (Ortmann, 2005; Cameron, 2006). This chapter seeks to unpack the narrative of mohair farmers and their role as producers of mohair using LPT (Woods & Cheshire, 2012).

On a global scale, South Africa is known to be a leading producer of quality mohair. Mohair is grown by farmers and occurs in the initial stage of the value chain, on a farm. South Africa has the biggest global output with up to 54% of global mohair being produced and supplied by about 800 commercial farmers (Mohair South Africa, 2019; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). Recently, there has been an increase in the number of small producers (there is an estimate that there are about 200 of these farmers) contributing to the country's output, which has expanded the market to some extent (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Mohair South Africa, 2019).

Recently, farming in South Africa has undergone many changes. These changes are influenced by the political, economic, social, cultural and technological environment that these farmers are exposed to and are a part of (Louw, Vermeulen & Madev, 2006; Jordaan & Kirsten, 2008; Bitzer & Bijman, 2014). The nature of farming has shifted: what often used to be a way of life has changed and is increasingly driven by profits and has become business-oriented (Ortmann, 2005; Cheshire & Woods, 2013). Land is a commodity that is linked to power; hence, farmers acknowledge the value attached to land and have responded in this light by making it business-like to receive maximum returns (Cameron, 2006; Cheshire & Woods, 2013).

Farmers are facing great pressure in farming mohair in that the quality and quantity of mohair is of great essence. They need to produce and have their operations run according to very specific needs. There are strict time-oriented goals in place and these are often directed by actors in markets overseas that are recognised as global buyers. Production needs to meet given market needs (Ortmann, 2005). The increased pressure has meant that the way in which farmers operate has been redefined and has needed to adjust accordingly. Other major changes will be unpacked below, however at this point it is important to acknowledge farmers and their lived experiences in the mohair value chain.

6.3 THE FARM AS A SITE OF PRODUCTION IN THE MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN

In this section, I briefly unpack some historical and biographical details of the farmers that I interviewed, which will help us to appreciate them more as individual actors. Thereafter, I will discuss the farm as the point of production by looking at the processes that take place on mohair farms, which will be important when we discuss LPT later in the chapter. As noted in the methodology chapter, I had interviews with various farmers, who were all males. There was a variety of education and skill levels among the interviewees with some going to business school, others going to an agricultural college or taking over the farm after completing high school. Practically, the interviewees had different positions with some being owners of the farm while others were managers who supervised the day-to-day running of the farm.

There was a mix of ages with some being very young, in their early 20s to those in their 50-60s, who were handing over the farm to their sons. With the differences in age comes a variety of experiences. Many of these mohair farmers are classified as generational farmers in that farm ownership has been passed down from one generation to the next. Some of the mohair farmers in South Africa go back five, six or seven generations and have a wealth of experience in handling and rearing goats as well as other livestock (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). This also means that the farming environment is what many of them (farmers and their families) are exposed to from a young age and has become a ‘way of life’ for them (Kirsten, Van Zyl & Van Rooyen, 1994). Many of these generational farmers have the expertise and have formed associations

within the industry that have put them at an advantage when it comes to their operations (Kirsten, *et al.*, 1994; Cameron, 2006).

With the biographical information of the farmers above, we are able to appreciate that each farmer's experiences are different, yet there are also areas of similarity. Some of the farmers that I interviewed were able to speak about farming mohair in the apartheid era and compare it to the present conditions, whereas other farmers have joined the industry more recently and have only been exposed to post-apartheid farming (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). The experience all plays an influence into how farmers view the industry and the mohair value chain. Yet with all the farmers that were interviewed there was such pride that was acknowledged and hope for the future. Farmers showed great determination to keep functioning despite some of the hardships of operating under the current global climate. These pressures are often transmitted down the chain by the global buyers resulting in farmers carrying a great weight of the pressure.

Throughout my research farmers claimed that the mohair industry, particularly at the farming level was made up of community and had built strong relationships. Greg Moore (09/05/19) states that "the industry has gone from strength to strength, we are a small industry but we are incredibly proud industry and we have the best mohair both here and yes we are a small personal industry and the relationship in the industry are good between breeders and with the larger society and things are getting better". Another interviewee responded by saying his relationship is "very good, obviously we are all farming the same product so we are striving to improve especially our need to buy quality ram stock from other stud breeders to improve my flock. So you need to have good relationships" (John Green, 23/02/19). In all my interviews farmers expressed the strength of their relationships and how this was a major determining factor of how the industry as a whole was functioning.

Farmers were also of the view that the industry was about making profits, increasing efficiency, competition, regulation and exploitation. There are also new farmers that are joining the industry and this is increasingly being promoted as there is a need to expand the production of mohair (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; George Step, 02/05/19). Several of these

newcomers have been successful in their start-up operations, which has been beneficial for the industry with the need for increased output of mohair (Bitzer & Bijman, 2014; Hope Mitha, 15/04/19; Xolani Booï, 25/04/19).

Nevertheless, it can be said that farmers as agents are not as influential in the operation and governance of the value chain as the buyers on the market (Ortmann, 2005; Vermeulen, Kirsten, & Sartorius, 2008). There is a division of power, despite farmers owning land and goats they are subjected to the chain and its functions; this means that farmers are subjected to what happens in the chain and cannot function independently as they are relying on the market for direction.

Another common theme that emerged was the idea that these farmers do not solely rely on a given product, in this case mohair (DAFF, 2016; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19). Many of these farmers have diversified their operations as a means of spreading risk associated with the uncertainties faced by the farmers in the current economic and political climate. There is great volatility and uncertainty associated with the market for agricultural products generally and mohair in particular as it is a fashion industry as opposed to staple food (Ortmann, 2005; John Green, 23/02/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). Angora goat farming is often paired with Merino sheep due to their grazing patterns and the docile nature of these animals. Angora goats are recognised as browsers and are well suited to shrubs, twigs and leaves and will often climb and scramble for food, whereas Merino sheep are grazers of short grass at ground level (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). Other animals that Angora goat farmers usually pair their stock with include cattle, which is used either for breeding or slaughtering purposes. Other projects include poultry and/or game farming (Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19).

Due to the seasonal nature of mohair and the income from shearing (summer and winter clip) where possible farmers diversify their operations as we see in this quote: “income is also seasonal. We also farm beef cattle and merino sheep for wool. And I suppose at this stage mohair is contributing up to 40% of the total farming input” (John Green, 23/02/19). “Mohair in and of

itself was not sustainable hence I left the industry” (Richard Emsile, 16/01/19). The seasonal income brings about associated risks and does not sustain farmers throughout the year which is a problem as the goats need constant care. Whereas with these other farming commodities they are relatively more consistent and there is a market and product available throughout the year. Many of these products are mutually beneficial to each other and enable the farmer to gain economies of scale by sharing out processes, products and bi-products (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19).

Mohair farming occurs in different areas across South Africa; this is closely linked to climate and the vegetation of an area. For example, the existing hub of mohair farming is in the Eastern Cape and areas of the Karoo (DAFF, 2016). These areas often have veld for vegetation; this includes short grass and trees. These farms are of different sizes. Some amount to small holdings while others are thousands of hectares in size. The size of the farm is important but even more so, is the way in which the farm is managed. There are different management methods however many of the farmers that were interviewed for this research practice a shift rotation system in which they have anything between 20-60 camps and use either a monthly or six-week or three-month rotation system (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). However, there is variation depending on the farmers, the available vegetation, rainfall, number of goats and the carrying capacity of the land (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; Anthony Preton, 13/05/19).

There is great variation in the numbers of goats on these farms and this varies with the size of the farm as was stated above, management skills as well as management preferences. Some farmers have up to 5000+ goats and some farmers have much smaller numbers such as 250, 400 and 800 goats. With the on-going drought (the past five years) many farmers have had to cut back on the number of goats that they own, purely because they do not have the carrying capacity and the vegetation for the goats to survive. “The reality of the on-going drought has meant that we have had to cut back on numbers, this has been one of the biggest challenges and feed is expensive” (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). Some farmers as we have seen in the quote have opted to sell or

get rid of their goats as they do not have available means to support their goats. Whereas other farmers have opted to buy feed to help their goats survive yet this is extremely costly. With the associated costs there has been a decline in the number of goats and mohair being produced in South Africa, which has been a cause for concern for the industry (Kirsten *et al.*, 1994; DAFF, 2016).

There are various details about Angora goat farming that are important to provide; in order that one has a clear picture of what is being farmed and how farming is taking place in South Africa. Mohair farmers are either involved in wether farming which are male castrated goats, these goats are relatively easier to manage and handle as they are straightforward and require minimal skills (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Xolani Booï, 25/04/19). Start-up farmers usually opt to keep wethers as maintaining their health and well-being is of primary importance (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Xolani Booï, 25/04/19; Hope Mitha, 25/04/19). Once farmers are comfortable with these goats (wethers) they usually expand their operations and have ewes and kids.

Once farmers are settled and want to expand their processes at a farm level, they usually opt to breed their own animals and will have ewes and rams which then mate to have kids (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). Each type of goat has different needs and it is important to know how to manage these differences (Mark Krige, 29/04/19).

There are three important events in a mohair farmers' calendar that include breeding, kidding and shearing (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; John Green, 23/02/19). As mentioned above there is a breeding season and breeding needs to be taken care of, this is in terms of when and where to put the goats, how long to keep the ram in the herds for and given traits that need to be passed down (Mark Krige, 29/04/19). Here, we see that having ewes further complicates processes and one needs to know how to manage such a project effectively, in order that quantity and quality are both being sought after. Next comes the kidding season. It is important that the farmer is present incase there are any complications (Steve Wright, 09/05/19). The new born kids and their mothers need to be carefully watched for the first few days in order that there is a

relationship that is being developed and the mother is looking after her young one (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). Often farmers do not interfere with the relationship, they just keep an eye on to make sure that all is going well and the kid is being taken care of.

The other main event that can also be classified as a social, economic and political process is the shearing season, which takes place twice a year. Farmers pay particular attention to this process as it is the primary source of their income. “Shearing brings in our income hence we take it seriously” (Sean Brown, 10/10/19). There has been increased attention placed on shearing practices and the handling of goats on farms due to the received coverage from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). Farmers usually have their own shearers or they hire trusted shearing gangs and sorters from the agriculture co-operatives known as OVK (CMW) or BKB (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19).

The shearers either use machines or shear by hand using clippers/scissors (Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthon Preston, 13/05/19). With both methods there are benefits and issues but it depends on how they are being used as well. The hand-shearing method is a unique skill in that one needs to know how to operate a pair of shearing scissors; they are large and require great concentration. This links to the time-consuming nature of this method especially when one has to get through thousands of goats at a time. Shearing using an electric blade is quick but it is slightly more expensive and requires a different kind of skill (John Green, 23/02/19). When one shears, there are various categories that this mohair is divided according to and this sells for different prices, which correlates directly with the age of the goat and the quality of the mohair.

Interestingly, many farmers voiced how they would shear their highest value kid mohair and either BKB or CMW (OVK) would do the other goats. The greatest value lies with kids mohair as we see in the quotes below: “so we get shearing teams in from OVK for all my adult goats and then the kids I shear with my own guys as my guys have been trained professionally” (Greg Moore, 09/05/19). “Well for the bulk of the mohair we get the shearing team but for the higher

value kids mohair we prefer to shear and class ourselves which I do with two of my really good shearers” (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). “We get contractors from the agent who shear for us and this is machine based” (George Step, 02/05/19). We see from these responses how many farmers opt for contractors to shear for them, except when it comes to kid mohair as this is where there is great value in the industry and is well-protected by farmers. The value of goat hair is often linked to the age of the goat (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985).

Goats typically have a lifespan of seven to nine years. The reason for this lifespan is that their teeth begin to wear away to the extent that they cannot eat (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). From the birth of a goat to it becoming one year old it is known as a kid. Between the age of one to two years, the animal is regarded as a young goat and from there it is called an adult goat and is able to breed. The age of the goat is important as it influences the type of mohair and its quality (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). There are significant differences in the prices of mohair, as will be seen below.

Currently, kid mohair is recognised as the most sought-after mohair as it has the most value in terms of the price it receives per kilogram (Mohair South Africa, 2019). To contextualise this, the following example is given. In 2018, a kilogram of kid mohair was sold for more than R1,000/kg, which was the highest recorded price for the season (Mohair South Africa, 2019). Kid mohair is much finer and softer; hence, it is sought after by certain fashion houses (Edward Dankwart, 29/04/18). The older goats’ fleece is not as expensive in terms of Rand per kilogram, but the advantage of older goats is the greater weight of their fleece (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). Different buyers want different types of mohair depending on what they are making or who they are buying for. Some buyers, as mentioned above, are interested in the finer kid mohair and others are looking for higher micron readings, which is linked to coarse mohair that comes from adult goats (DAFF, 2016).

Different farmers have different strategies of breeding goats and their mohair depending on the conditions that work for them (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booie, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey

Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile; 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). There has been on-going research on ram breeding programmes to try and get the best genes out of these goats however this does take time. The research is done primarily by the Ram Breeders Association, ANGELA and Grootfontein Agriculture College as well as individual farmers that see what works for them, however this is on a much smaller scale (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19; William Wales, 29/04/19; Mark Krige, 29/04/19).

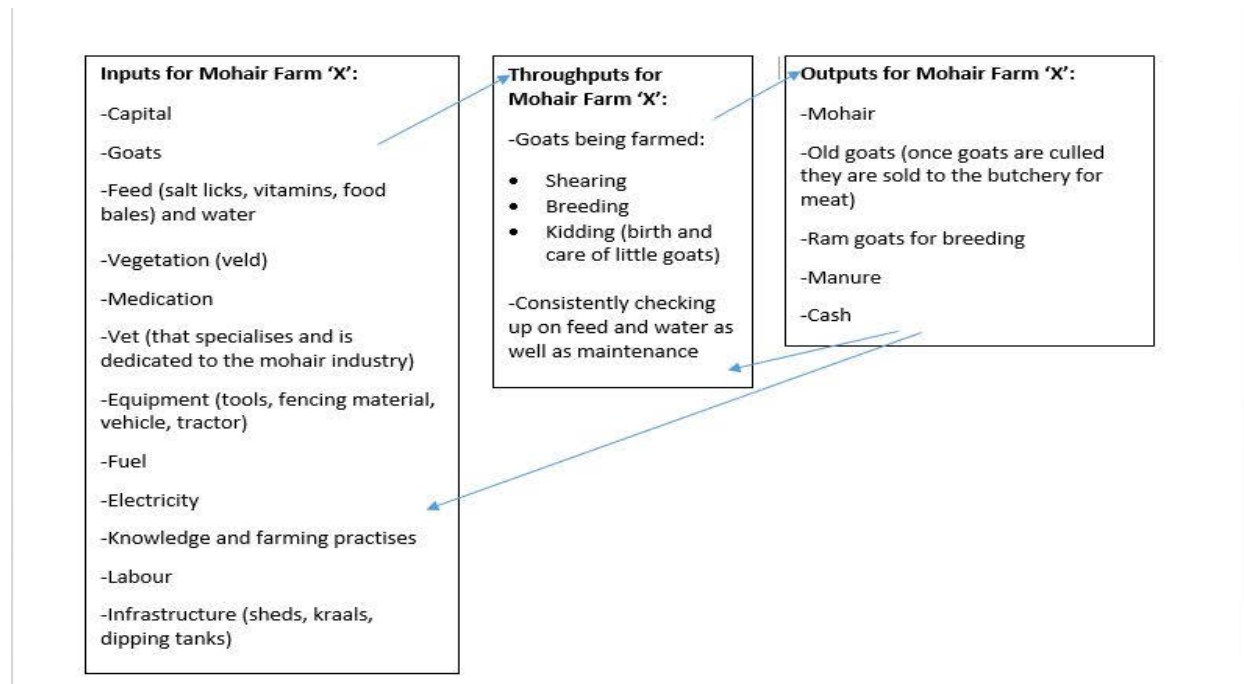
The amount of mohair produced by each farmer varies greatly and depends on a wide variety of factors: firstly, it depends on the number of goats that the farmer has, the age of these goats (kid, young adult or adult goat), the way in which shearing occurs and when it occurs. The associated expertise of sorting the mohair is extremely important, as well as a farmers management plans, as this affects the amount too (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; DAFF, 2016). Farmers produce anything between a few kilograms of mohair each season to those farmers on the other extreme that produce mohair on an extensive commercial scale with several tons to their name each season (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booï, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile; 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19).

6.4 FARM PROCESSES (INPUTS-THROUGHPUTS-OUTPUTS)

In order to understand the farm as a production unit, we will engage with the processes that take place at this level; we will outline the inputs, throughputs and outputs and the way in which each process links different parts of the chain. This section helps build the argument to understand the actual processes that take place at the point of production yet we know that these processes are operationalised by human interaction and relationships. With the processes in mind we will look at the point of production and the relationship between farmers and workers specifically from the farmers perspective later on in the chapter. The workers will be analysed in the next chapter. I have used the waves of LPT literature to help build my argument around what occurs at the start of the mohair value chain.

Below I draw on the findings of my research from Rockland farm, which is a ‘typical’ representation of mohair farms in the Eastern Cape. The figure below draws on the responses obtained during the interviews that formed part of my research. Inputs feed into the farm and assist with the actual farming and associated processes, farmers will look for quality inputs at the lowest price to achieve sustainable farming and keep costs low (DAFF, 2016; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19). Throughputs speak to the associated processes and what actually takes place on the farm, which is the point of production. These often reflect day-to-day activities, turning inputs into outputs. The outputs are what comes out of Rocklands farm, these can either be used as given products or commodities that go through to the next stage of the value chain or are fed back into the farm system. The direction of the arrow shows what is taking place and in which direction the flow of things are.

Figure 6.1: Inputs, throughputs and outputs of a mohair farm



Source: John Green (23/02/19); Xolani Booï (25/04/19); George Step (02/05/19); Steve Wright (09/05/19); Greg Moore (09/05/19); Anthony Preston (13/05/19); Jeffrey Stein (29/04/19); Aaron Ross (07/10/19); Richard Emsile (16/01/19); Sean Brown (10/10/19); DAFF (2017)

6.4.1 MOHAIR FARMING INPUTS

Figure 6.1 above provides a visual representation of the inputs, throughputs and outputs on Rockland farm. There are various inputs that are needed on a mohair farm in order for it to function effectively (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). These inputs include labour; human capital is an important aspect of a farm as many processes are controlled by the workforce (Ortmann, 2005; John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booï, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). The labourers need to know how to handle and look after the goats in terms of how to feed, breed them as well as the general health and well-being of the goat. Many of the labourers are also trained on how to shear the goats so that when shearing takes place they are able to assist with this activity. Workers are also required to maintain the farm by putting up fences, transporting feed and making sure there is an adequate supply of water.

What has been evident throughout the research on mohair farms is that they employ a minimal number of workers and use these workers for a wide variety of activities whether it is animal management or the maintenance of the farm. This means that employees require multiple skills. Many of these farm workers have either worked on farms throughout their lives and have a close relationship to the farming environment. Or these workers may have joined the farming community and have developed a passion for what takes place on the farms and their work. Various responses show the relationship: “I grew up with my farm workers and now they work with me” (Greg Moore, 09/05/19). “Some of these farm workers I have had for 25-30 years and we work very well together” (John Green, 23/02/19). “One of the guys I work with was actually working for 25 years on a farm that was sold off, so he is quite well experienced with farming and specifically Angora goats (Steve Wright, 09/05/19). Based on the views of the employers and mohair industry representatives here is often a close, valued relationship between farm workers and farmers since the former are responsible for the farmers’ property and the latter needs to trust the workers.

Another essential input is the actual goats that are being farmed. Goats are bred and bought according to different characteristics that are desired by the given farmer. Currently, rams (which are male goats) are being bred and are in great demand for specific characteristics that farmers would like. A given example is the genetics of the goat which links to the quality of mohair and the strength of the goat which is able to withstand difficult conditions (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; DAFF, 2016). Preston (13/05/19) acknowledges the importance of a “hardy animal” in farm management. With the drought farmers are getting rid of goats and other farmers are now buying these animals, which means that there is a market for Angora goats although it is not sustainable (Mohair South Africa, 2018).

In order to keep the goats healthy, there are inputs such as medication that is needed. These include medicines for general health such as deworming medicines which may be administered once or twice a year (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). There are other vaccinations that need to be given to the kids (baby Angora goats) to protect them from diseases and assist in their development. There are also other vaccinations that need to be given to older goats to help them stay clear of diseases. Medications and vaccines that are administered every couple of months or once a year are often accessible from the cooperatives BKB or OVK (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19). Other medicines are kept with the industries veterinarian that specialises in Angora goats and their health (Greg Moore, 09/05/19).

Often goats also need supplements and vitamins to help them remain healthy which are often put into goat feed. Feed is important and is another input; some farmers purely provide salt licks in winter months which is accessible to the goats in their given camps. Other farmers provide more extensive feeding programmes for their goats particularly in the winter months when vegetation is limited and less nutritional. Over the last couple of years with the on-going drought there has been a need for alternative feeding options. Farmers have resorted to buying feed where they can although it is expensive and is often expressed as a last resort (George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19).

A further important input that farmers need is natural vegetation and water in order that the goats are able to survive. Water and natural vegetation is a prerequisite for farming goats and needs to be well thought out as it is needed for the long-run and forms a central aspect of a given business (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Mohair South Africa, 2018). The other important influence on goat farming is the weather and climate of a given area. The weather needs to be considered in the practices of the farm for example to acknowledge a period of time when it is appropriate to shear as the goats need to be protected against cold fronts. Farmers need to be mindful and prepare accordingly for these cold spells by providing sheds for the goats to sleep in. Another weather-related aspect of farming is lambing season which ties in with when breeding occurs, with this it is important to plan this as the kids (baby goats) need to be born at a time when they will have the highest survival rate (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). Aspects of farming like this are perfected over time and farmers usually learn on the job and what works best for their specific farm (it is vital for us to recognise that each farm is an individual entity and is very specific in nature, so what works for one farm may not work at all for the farm next door).

Another input to goat farming includes the facilities, machinery, buildings and infrastructure on a given farm (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; Ortmann, 2005). Throughout the interviews farmers acknowledged these facilities and how valued they are to the smooth-running of the farm. This is important for the farmer as there are some facilities that need to be readily available in order to farm goats effectively, which includes kraals or grazing paddocks where the goats are able to roam freely and eat as they like. Another facility would include a handling facility where the goats can come in when they are being dosed or when they need to be checked by the vet. In order that the goats' hair remains clean, and of value goats need to be dipped, some farmers will pour on the dip but if a farmer has thousands of goats it makes more sense to have a dipping tank where the goats go in and get dipped (John Green, 23/02/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19).

In addition, inputs for the dipping tank would be the actual water and dip, dip is accessible from the cooperatives. Often farmers would also need a vehicle or tractor of some sort that can

transport goats in case of ill health or if a goat is giving birth and needs to be monitored. The farmer will also need a vehicle to go around the farm especially for those farms that are of size and check on livestock as well as the fencing (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19).

Another input is the fencing materials that are needed to make the fences; this includes the actual wire or electric fencing or wooden posts (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). These all need to be sourced in order to make the right space for the goats to be kept in. Farmers also need to have a shearing facility which is a shed where all the shearing takes place in an enclosed area in order that the shorn mohair does not blow away and also so the goats are protected while they are shorn (Mohair South Africa, 2019). A shed is also suitable to keep stock such as the medicines, dips, fencing material and feeds for the animals; this needs to be kept away safely (Mohair South Africa Sustainability Guidelines, 2019; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19).

Lastly, and of great importance in terms of inputs, are the shearers, who have a specialised skill and are sought after during the shearing seasons which is January to June and July to December (OVK, 2019; BKB, 2019; John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). These shearers come from the cooperatives and usually operate in groups of between five and seven members and have sorters too. As this is a specialised skill these shearers come to the farms and shear the goats over a week or two. Shearing can be anything between hundreds and thousands of goats hence it is extremely intensive work (OVK, 2019; BKB, 2019; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). There are two different ways in which shearing takes place as mentioned above which is hand shearing using shearers or electric blade machine shearing.

The role of the farmer is extremely important in the way in which the farm functions and how smoothly things operate on the farm. The farmer also plays an important role in determining what type of relationship is established with his or her employees (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). As with all things, experience is of great importance and is beneficial in developing one's preferred methods of farming goats. Some of the functions of farmers include actually managing the farm, overseeing the day to day running of the farm i.e. making sure that the goats are healthy, that there is feed and water available. It is also important for the farmer to make sure that he/she is planning ahead in terms of shearing, breeding and when the goats will have their kids. Other aspects of farming that farmers have to deal with include the administration and book work; this includes goat records, employment issues as well as general day to day expenses of the farm as a business (Ortmann, 2005; John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). It is important that the farmer is also concerned with the relationship that he/she has with the labour - as a happier and fulfilled labour force have a positive impact on how the farm functions as a unit (Ortmann, 2005).

Many of the farmers that I interviewed learned and developed their skills on the job. The older generation of farmers interviewed either went to Agriculture College or worked alongside their father and the farm was passed down. Hence the experience and lessons played an inherent role in how they farm now (Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; John Green, 23/02/19). With the younger generation that are farming now, their responses were similar - they went off to study and have come back now to take over farming from their families. Even with those that studied agriculture farming there is a recurring response that has come with the research and that is that "nothing is as good as learning on the job" (John Green, 23/02/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). Hence, farmers appreciate and value their lessons on the farm and with the goats they farm.

6.4.2 MOHAIR FARMING THROUGHPUTS

The main throughputs include the day-to-day farming of the goats and making sure that they are healthy (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). There is a need to make sure that food and water is provided, fencing is up to standard and facilities/machineries are all functioning accordingly. The other main processes that are instrumental to mohair farming include shearing, breeding and kidding. Other than these things there is always day to day work that needs to take place on a farm in order that it runs effectively and efficiently. “A skill set of a good farmer would be to keep his/her books up to date and make sure that the labourers are also relatively happy on the farm” (Steve Wright, 09/05/19).

6.4.3 MOHAIR FARMING OUTPUTS

We have looked at the inputs and throughputs of farming mohair and now we will discuss the outputs. The farm outputs are of great importance as they feed into the rest of the mohair value chain or back into the farm. With this said, the farm as the point of production is not as clear cut and simple as I have made it out to be, there are other processors and people involved yet for the sake of our understanding, this is sufficient.

The main output of mohair farming is the actual mohair from the goats and this goes to the brokers which then gets prepared and sold on auction. Generally, Angora goats have a lifespan of about seven to nine years before they are unable to live anymore as their teeth are worn out and they cannot eat anymore (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). At this time many of these goats are slaughtered and sold for meat. In South Africa there is a growing market (particularly in Kwa-Zulu Natal) for goat meat and this is associated with various religious festivals (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). Various parties are looking at this opportunity and ways to make this market grow in order that there is constant demand for these animals and their meat.

Other outputs include the goats’ waste but this is used as a by-product to help the veld grow back on the farm. Another one is the goats’ skin also known as a hide which has its own market such as handbags and shoes. The hide is appreciated for its strength and durability. Farmers are also

breeding and producing high quality rams for sale (as an output) with specific traits. Farmers will pay more money for these goats in order that their stock develop stronger genes over time (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). With this, we have a brief breakdown of what takes place at the farm in terms of the inputs, throughputs and outputs. Further on we acknowledge the working relationship between the parties. In this next section we highlight the changes in the farming scene from the apartheid era to post-apartheid and what this means for the industry.

6.5 CHANGES IN MOHAIR FARMING: FROM APARTHEID TO POST-APARTHEID

As noted above, five of the ten interviewed farmers have been linked to the farm for many generations. Two of the interviewed farmers are old enough to have farmed during the apartheid and post-apartheid eras. The experiences of each farmer are different and affect how they perceive and react to varying issues that link to farming whether its goat handling, management, labour, government, or their day-to-day work (Kirsten, *et al.*, 1994; Ortmann, 2005; Cheshire & Woods, 2012). With this said there have been significant changes in the farming sector but also in the mohair farming community from the apartheid era to now, the post-apartheid era. Some of these changes will be addressed below and are recurring themes with the different farmers that were interviewed for the purposes of research.

A response of on-going change has been linked to land ownership and land redistribution (Ortmann, 2005). As mentioned above, under apartheid land, was protected by the government and distributed mainly to white farmers. Various policies and programmes (such as subsidies) were put in place to assist these farmers, which led to a sense of stability and security as they were taken care of by the government (Kirsten *et al.*, 1994; Ortmann, 2005; John Green, 23/02/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19). This has had various effects on the way in which farmers feel, with a general sense of wishing back the support, particularly, as times have been difficult for farmers with the drought and the economy. There has however been a general consensus that

farmers are more independent, which has influenced the direction that the industry has taken, with very little government support.

After apartheid, the structure of government support has been adjusted. There have been changes in laws and policies regarding land ownership and redistribution as well as government support. The only support farmers are receiving is a quota for fuel subsidies (John Green, 23/02/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). Farmers are increasingly feeling the pressure of their independence as they are functioning on their own, in essence. Farmers are experiencing uncertainty in the economy with the exchange rates and volatile markets. The other issue that was spoken about by farmers is the lack of trust, fear and generally not knowing what to expect in the future, which made farmers feel vulnerable in ways that are not beneficial to their job or the industry.

Another change that has been felt by farmers is the introduction of new labour laws (Ortmann, 2005). Labour law in South Africa has widened its scope to (among others) protect workers from unfair treatment, discrimination, victimisation and unfair dismissal. Nonetheless, this has had positive benefits for farm workers as they are protected by the law. However, it means that farmers are facing further challenges with their workers, practical challenges that have been spoken about by farmers include the provisions on unfair dismissal (Ortmann, 2005). There was frustration regarding these requirements in that workers are often not working up to standard and are taking advantage of the protection of the law (John Green, 23/02/19). This has often meant that farmers want to get rid of workers but are unable to do so because of the legal implications and the need to provide evidence against the worker, which has proved difficult (John Green, 23/02/19).

Another issue that came up in the interviews was that workers age, and are not as productive on the job. They cannot be dismissed until retirement age. This has been a contentious issue as productivity is affected. Farmers are now aware of the changes in labour legislation and are being held to a higher account, in addition they have claimed that this has led to a progressive farming community. However, this has also meant that farmers are hesitant to employ workers

because of the legal bearings and costs this imposes on them. Hence, farmers are operating with fewer employees which is a recipe for work intensification for the remaining workers (John Green, 23/02/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile; 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19).

Together with the changes in labour law there has been an increase in inspections by the Department of Labour to make sure that farmers are adhering to the law. More recently, there have also been other guidelines and inspections developed to evaluate farmers against the Mohair Sustainability Guidelines (Mohair South Africa, 2019; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). These are designed to ensure that there are ethical practices on each mohair farm (Mohair South Africa, 2019; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Hope Mitha, 15/04/19; John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile; 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). There are various guidelines that are being implemented, which cover the treatment of the animals (goats), labour, maintenance and infrastructure as well as storage of medication, feed and general farming practices. Once a farmer has passed or received a sustainability rating there are benefits in that he or she is accredited as a 'sustainable farmer' and is able to command higher prices on the auction system organised by the brokers, BKB and CMW (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19).

The other major change that has occurred at the farm level is technological advancement (Ortmann, 2005). The move from hand shearing to electric blade shearing method is one of the advancements that have been made. It saves costs because far more goats can be shorn in a shorter period of time. The other changes include the type of fencing: wire and poles have given way to electric fencing, which increases the protection of the goats (John Green, 23/02/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19). Farmers are also choosing to install cameras to increase the

safety of their goats on the farm, as they are the farmers' productive asset (Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19).

The other technological advancements that are increasingly becoming popular is the use of software, which helps farmers with their farming practices in that they have applications that (among others) monitor water levels and rotation plans for the goats (Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19). These advancements have added a competitive edge to mohair farming. While they have the potential to change farming practices drastically by increasing production and reducing the reliance on labour, they are not cheap.

6.6 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS IN THE MOHAIR INDUSTRY

We have been reminded throughout this chapter that the farm is not an island and only functions as part of a larger value chain. When asked to highlight the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of operating in the mohair industry, both at the farm level and at an industry level, it was a reflective moment for many of the interviewed farmers. Their responses were broadly similar in nature, showing that there is a general consensus among producers in the industry regarding the way in which they view different aspects of the industry.

The highlighted strengths of the industry include South Africa as the global leader of mohair production (DAFF, 2017; Mohair South Africa, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2019). Farmers generally boasted about this: “we are the number 1 producing country of mohair, we are global leaders” (Sean Brown, 10/10/19), “South Africa plays a critical position” (Aaron Ross, 07/10/19). This is an important position and allows South Africa to set the pace and determine the direction of the mohair industry as well as to influence what takes place globally. This also provides South Africa with a competitive advantage. An example is the introduction of the Mohair Sustainability Guidelines, which are being rolled out in South Africa with the hope that these guidelines will become a global standard that all countries adhere to in the near future (Mohair South Africa, 2019; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19).

Another highlighted strength is the way in which the industry functions, inherent to this are the actors and institutions that play a part in creating the industry. Various interview responses highlight this. For example: “we have a very strong body running us, Mohair South Africa; we are a well-run industry” (Greg Moore, 09/05/19). Another response: “the industry is small, so you know if things need to be changed they will and it is easier as it is small and easier to connect compared to the wool industry” (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). Similarly: “We have the best quality and type of mohair in the world and we are the global leaders” (George Step, 02/05/19). According to the farmers who were interviewed the relationships that have been formed in the industry are well-built and seek to advance the industry in a fruitful manner. This is inspired by the amount of experience and the levels of preparedness that these stakeholders have allowing them to foresee and react accordingly (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). However, this is one side of the account, we will engage with the workers response in the next chapter.

As with any value chain it is important to recognise who governs the chain at the national level. In the case of South Africa, this is Mohair South Africa. Mohair South Africa has been instrumental to the way in which the industry functions at a local level in South Africa but also for the wider global industry (yet Mohair South Africa functions with other bodies). Another body that has played an active role are the brokers; the brokers were identified as an instrumental part of the value chain, given their role in the auction system (Yanga Naledi, 22/03/19). The auction system means that South African mohair can compete on a global market (John Green, 23/02/19). On a practical level, the product itself is unique and sold into a niche market. “The mohair product itself is a strength” (Xolani Booi, 25/04/19). The profit margins in this industry are favourable reflecting the nature of the product (Mohair South Africa, 2018; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19). The product stands out as a result of the qualities of the material.

The Angora goat is seen as a hardy animal that is able to withstand extreme conditions such as drought and the cold which means that farmers do not need to stress about animal survival as much as other livestock (DAFF, 2012). Lots of farmers expressed their satisfaction with the

Angora goat and the mohair produced. There were various comments to this effect “Mohair is easy to farm as it comes from a hardy animal...they are very easy animals and they can handle a drought better than any animal I know as their nutritional needs are not that high, they can survive on very little. But if you give them a lot you can see the results and they reproduce amazingly” (Steve Wright, 09/05/19). “There is a lot in terms of profit margins and overrides other small stock” (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). This shows why many farmers are interested in farming these goats as the returns are high and they are relatively easy to look after.

On the other hand, there are weaknesses that have been recognised and these include but are not limited to, firstly there has been an overarching response that there is very little support from the government (John Green, 23/02/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Mark Krige, 29/04/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19). “The context of politics is a threat” (Anthony Preston, 13/05/19). This is at two levels, one being that the government does not recognise the position of South Africa in this chain as well as the role that South Africa plays on the global scene. There is very little recognition and support from the government, nevertheless this may be seen as a strength depending on who acknowledges this (which has resulted in the mohair industry functioning under private institutions which means that there is little bureaucracy involved as such) (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). However for farmers the poor support from the government leaves them feeling unsure of the future of their industry.

The mohair industry has been recognised for how small and intimate it is as well as the awareness of the product through marketing strategies. A given result of this is the need for continuous targeted marketing in order that the sales are progressive and the industry stays afloat, this is said in light of the current price wars taking place with the United States of America and China (House of Fibres, 2019). The other major issue links to the size of the industry, the amount of mohair being produced has declined significantly over time from 12 million tonnes a year in the 1980s to the current capacity of 2.5-3 million tonnes a year (DAFF, 2017; Mohair South Africa, 2018; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). This has been a huge concern for farmers and brokers involved directly with the production and sale of the mohair (Yanga Naledi,

22/03/19; John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). Due to a range of issues (drought, agriculture economy and the market) it does not seem like the levels of production will increase anytime soon.

There are various opportunities and advancements that are being made by the industry which include the move towards developing and upholding black emerging farmers (Mohair Empowerment Trust, 2018; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19; Hope Mitha, 15/04/19). The black emerging farmers are brought into the industry to assist with redistribution through black economic empowerment as well as to boost the amount of mohair that is produced (Bitzer & Bijman, 2014; Mohair Empowerment Trust, 2018). This programme empowers and benefits the industry as there is more mohair coming in while farmers are developing which boosts the economy and industry. This particular programme that is known as the Mohair Empowerment Trust seeks to advance emerging farmers prospects and gain access into the competitive market structure while offering these farmers support (Bitzer & Benjamin, 2014; Mohair Empowerment Trust, 2018; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; Hope Mitha, 15/04/19). The other opportunity is for South Africa to recognise their position of being the global mohair leader and create more possibilities for themselves but also for the global market (Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). This will need great attention and will mean South Africa needs to keep advancing their machinery, farming practices and technology to remain relevant.

Lastly, the threats or fears that farmers identified include “the drought and environmental issues that are beyond us as well as the future of the country” (John Green, 23/02/19). All respondents have recognised that the future of the country and its politics is also a concern which leaves farmers feeling unsettled. “The environment is fragile” (Xolani Booi, 25/04/19), “the political sphere is one of our biggest challenges” (Greg Moore, 09/05/19), “I retired as the future of farming and politics was uncertain and I believe it is worse off now” (Richard Emsile, 16/01/19) and “the industry being contaminated” (George Step, 02/05/19). These are real fears that farmers

are facing and have meant some farmers have given up or sold their farms to look for other work as they are uncertain of their future.

The other major concerns are vermin and theft, which are damaging as the goats are key assets. Farmers are also concerned with the industry shrinking and “dying a slow death”, which causes even more stress for farmers (George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). The notion of shrinking is that the sales will reduce dramatically and the market for mohair is lost. Concerns such as the industry shrinking and dying a slow death can be dealt with by key actors in the chain, in order that the chain does not disintegrate - this can be done through effective marketing.

Farmers expressed their concerns and fears, yet many of the respondents still remain optimistic and look forward to the benefits of being a part of the industry. In concluding this section, there is a general understanding of the mohair value chain from the perspective of the farmers. Farmers recognise that they are the primary producers and initiate value in the chain by farming goats and producing mohair. There are other key players in the value chain such as brokers and several farmers boasted about the efficient auctioning system that has been put in place. Another influential player that farmers boasted about is the governing body, Mohair South Africa. Farmers spoke highly of this institution and the way in which has prioritised forming relationships within the industry. There was a general consensus that farmers are governed by the markets which means they have very little direct influence over their product. Farmers have some form of influence over the functions of their farm yet they are producing for specific market conditions and time frames, which means that farmers have lost some of their autonomy.

6.7 THE LABOUR PROCESS: FARMERS’ PERSPECTIVES

We have formed an understanding of logistics and processes that take place on the farm as the initial point of production in the mohair value chain. Farmers have shown awareness in part of the wider mohair value chain they function within and what takes place beyond the farm level;

farmers highlighted the pressure they face as a result of being part of a buyer-driven chain (Gereffi, 1994:97). Now, we will discuss the interactions and relationships at the farm level using LPT (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:5). LPT shows how the systemic pressures of capitalist accumulation compel employers to continuously enhance their control over workers who, in turn, resist and/or accommodate to these impositions by management.

In this study we have applied the first wave of LPT to look at the farm as a given point of production. At the farm level there is a structured relationship in which the farmer and workers operate under, which is the capitalist system which is essentially motivated by profits. As a result farmers need to make as much profit as possible by reducing costs yet the standard of mohair needs to meet the needs of the market. Resulting in farmers being squeezed on one end between the pressures of the buyers and the needs of the markets, and on the other end satisfying workers' needs, which include their wages and their working conditions. The wages that farmers pay their labour is a vital part of the costs that they face. This was highlighted in the responses from farmers. For instance: "Wages are the biggest cost on my farm" (Greg Moore, 09/05/19). And: "Yoooh, wages by far have been the biggest cost" (George Step, 02/05/19). Despite mohair trading well, the pressure that wages as a cost puts on farmers affects the relationship between farmers and workers; as a farmer wants to keep costs as low as possible in order to make a profit. Hence, the clashes that occur between the parties are an outcome of the profit motive in the capitalist system (Kitay, 1997; Smith, 2012).

Braverman studied the methods by which management is able to control the labour process. The ways in which employers manage the workplace and gain control through deskilling are central themes in LPT (Spencer, 2000). If anything, the collected data suggests that control can take place through specialisation. At the farm level, there are various ways in which control is advanced by management.

Firstly, farmers have the minimal number of workers who are needed and these workers are used on all parts of the farm, requiring a variety of skills. Hence, these mohair farm workers operate in an extensive manner as they are trained with multiple skills and the ability to handle a range of

tasks. “I have farm workers that attend to the different tasks on the farm whether its my goats or cattle, they need to be able to do it all” (Aaron Ross, 07/10/19). As mohair farm workers are trained in this manner, there are benefits for the farmer as it keeps costs low and farmers have control over their workers. Often these relationships between farmers and farm workers are classified as long-standing relationships by the farmer and as a result farmers mention how these workers know what is expected of them.

Another method of control that is used is the provision of housing by farmers for their workers on the farm, meaning farmers can use these services at their discretion. A given example is asking workers to check on the animals at night if they are sick which is above the call of duty and there is a power dynamic at work here (Steve Wright, 09/05/19; John Green, 23/02/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19).

Other methods of managerial control over workers include advancing production processes. Practically, this includes providing workers with the opportunity to shear rather than getting shearing gangs in, yet this is done under very strict rules as farmers want as much value as possible from their clip. Farmers claim that shearing is an internal method of control over an aspect of production and processing at the farm level. “I get my guys to shear the kids as there is great value here” (John Green, 23/02/19), “I shear with my own guys as they have been trained professionally and they are able to do some of the shearing” (George Step, 02/05/19), “I have two guys that I shear and class with” (Greg Moore, 09/05/19). There is an overriding aspect of control by farmers over workers when it comes to shearing and preparing mohair for the market; this is where value is derived in the value chain and more specifically at the farm level.

Another method of control has been the introduction of advanced technology, such as grazing rotation systems, and water-level control in dams as well as introducing drones that act as a security system. In this sense, farmers are able to have direct control from their mobile phones over how the farm operates (Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19). With these advancements in technology, the face of agriculture is slowly shifting. Yet, the farmers reiterated the importance of having labour as goats need to be looked after in terms of grazing, dipping,

checking on their health as well as for kidding and shearing season. “Machines would simply not work for our type of farming” (John Green, 23/02/19). There are great costs and other limits associated with implementing these forms of technology, although they are designed to increase production without a large number of labourers. The notion of control is central to how the farm functions

The second wave of LPT focused on outlining the core features of the capitalist labour process. It sought to understand management control and the demands placed on workers and in turn the way in which workers respond by consenting and/or resisting. Friedman (1977) studied the ways in which management erect structures of control at the point of production as a mechanism of control over (resisting) workers. We are able to see this on a practical level in the way in which the mohair farmers establish rules and structures at the workplace. For example, with the written contract it stipulates how many hours are to be worked and the pay workers will receive which already operates under specific power dimensions. Another aspect of control by management is the reporting structure and the tasks that are set out for each day or season for the workers. Some workers have more freedom in this regard yet they still need to fulfil their duties. Farmers acknowledged how the main form of resistance from workers is bringing up pay related issues with the farmer. Farmers always aim to resolve resistance quickly before it affects production.

Friedman, (1977) identified different types of control that operate at the point of production: simple, technical and bureaucratic control. On the farms that I studied, aspects of both simple, technology and bureaucratic control were evident. Simple and bureaucratic control are understood as control that is associated with a given position. Power is derived from a given organisational structure, in this case the structure of the farm would give power to those that manage the farm which would be management. Many of the farmers in the interviews expressed the basic structure of their farms and the associated power that different positions have. A given example is: “I have one worker who is above the others, how can I say this - he is in top management and the others go under him, then there's me” (John Green, 23/02/19). This shows an established relationship and power in the structure of the farm (Bernstein, 1998).

Drawing on the second wave of LPT, we can apply the four features of the core LPT to mohair farms in this study (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3; Thompson, 2009:100-101). Firstly, farmers need to convert the potential to work into actual work by making sure tasks are completed by their workers. Farmers are in direct competition with each other and are seeking to enhance their position and expand the capital they are able to accumulate (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3; Thompson, 2009:100-101). Hence, farmers are continuously seeking methods of farming that allow them to do so. One method that has become common is the prevalence of mixed farming. Farmers have goats, sheep, cattle, game and crops to maximise their farming experience and to sustain themselves in the capitalist system where there is a need to make profits. Many farmers mentioned that a single type of farming, such as Angora goats, is not sustainable in the Eastern Cape.

Another aspect of the core LPT is the control asserted over production by management (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3; Thompson, 2009:100-101). At the farm level, managers control workers through what they do and there are specific power dynamics at work; the first being the power distance between the farmer and the workers. This is structured conflict at play where labour and capital are in opposition which impacts the worker and farmer relationship (Taylor *et al.*, 2015; Thompson, 2009). We see this with the way in which farmers speak about labour being their major cost. In order for a farmer to function effectively profits need to be made yet workers need to be valued too. Mohair farmers are aware of the link between their goats and the conditions of their workers. Several of them noted that, in order for their goats to do well, they need to look after their workers.

The third wave of LPT goes beyond the point of production, and acts as a helpful reminder of the wider value chain in which these farmers operate (Taylor *et al.*, 2015:3; Thompson, 2009:100-101). There are a number of influences that go beyond the workplace that feed into farming operations. Examples include the political and social climate of South Africa as well as the history of South African agriculture (Bernstein, 1998). Of the interviewed farmers, nine out of ten were white. Hence, at the point of production, there is a power dynamic and a race

dynamic between farmers and workers, which affects their interactions (Bernstein, 1998). Culture also plays a role in these interactions.

We need to remember that workers are also having a shift in their mind set and ideals about work (Visser, 2016). There is an increase in consciousness that is associated with (among others) higher levels of literacy and numeracy, greater awareness of their rights and the increased use of communication technologies (Visser, 2016; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). Workers are able to discuss issues and use their power to resist or consent to work rules, which accounts for the variation in responses from labour. The conditions and agency of workers in the mohair value chain will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

As the researcher I have had a glimpse of what takes place between management and workers at the farm level; using LPT to reveal the dynamics of the employment relationship at the workplace (Thompson, 2009:100-101). We have emphasised the position of management and how often they have the upper hand in the employment relationship as well as at the processes of production (Thompson, 2009). We have seen how the relationship between mohair farmers and farmworkers is shaped by the demands of the capitalist system and how there are pressures at play: farmers face tremendous pressure (cost-profit squeeze) as a result of their position in the global mohair value chain (Dolan, 2004). This, in turn, places a burden on their relationship with their workers and shapes the ways in which they control the workers.

6.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we are able to see that the farmers' role in the chain is of great importance. There are various processes that take place on the farm and value is added even at this stage. Given examples of value being added is how the goats are reared and produce mohair that is shorn for sale. The conversion that takes place on the actual goat where mohair is grown and shorn off is essential and is produced for the global market. Throughout this chapter we have unpacked the narrative of mohair farmers. We have looked at the processes of adding value and how this is done by highlighting the main inputs, throughputs and outputs at the farm level. We have also

seen what impacts and affects farmers who formulate the start of the mohair value chain in South Africa and produce a unique product that is available on a global scale.

Finally, we wrapped this chapter up by applying the LPT to the production point of the farm, mainly through the lens of farmers. In applying LPT to the farmers perspective we were able to acknowledge the systemic pressures they face in the capitalist system which leads them to enhancing their control over workers who, in turn, resist and/or accommodate to these impositions by management. In the research farmers explained how the control was mainly as a result of positional power and the need to produce. In the event that issues arose with workers it would be dealt with quickly in order that production could be maintained as the pressure from the chain could be felt by farmers.

Initially I outlined the institutional landscape of the mohair industry, the actors involved, and the notion of adding value throughout the chain in South Africa. The institutional landscape focused on a macro-scale analysis and looked at how the value chain has been governed. This chapter sought to analyse a given group of actors known as farmers and have an appreciation of what takes place at the beginning of the mohair value chain, the farm, as the initial point of production. In order to do this effectively I studied farmers and their conception of the industry and I used LPT as my theoretical framework to engage with control in the workplace. The farm analysis is mid-level and in the next chapter we look at workers in response to this chapter on farmers; the literature on employee voice assists us to understand the processes that play out in the employment relationship, particularly from the workers perspective. The mohair farm workers and shearers give us insight into their experiences in the mohair value chain, this forms a micro-level of analysis.

CHAPTER 7

LIVING AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS OF WORKERS IN THE MOHAIR SECTOR

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Thus far, the discussion has unpacked the chain literature by looking at the institutional landscape of the mohair industry; this level of analysis is macro as it seeks to understand the chain and its complexities. We then proceeded to look at the farmers' perspectives of conditions on the farms, which is the initial point of production in the chain. In order to assess the farmers' perspectives, we utilised LPT as a mid-level analysis to understand the dynamics in the workplace. Lastly, this chapter draws attention to the workers' narrative of their conditions at the farm level, which is the micro-level of analysis. In order to understand mohair farm workers and shearers, we use employee voice as our conceptual framework for this chapter.

There has been much research carried out on value chains and the way in which they function however this is often a one-sided account which is top-down promoting a given agenda (Bair, 2005). In order to provide a more holistic account I have engaged with both parties, farmers and workers and the way in which they perceive workers conditions and employee voice. As mentioned above there is very little research that has been done on workers and their actual work (Selwyn, 2013:1). It is important to unpack the notion of social upgrading in the mohair value chain; What type of conditions are workers subjected to? What type of living and working conditions workers experience? Are workers seeing an improvement in their conditions? Are workers aware of their rights and the basic conditions of work act and the Decent Work Agenda? Are they able to speak about their issues and how do they do this? These questions will guide our discussion and synchronize the responses we received from mohair farmers as well as mohair farm workers and shearers.

A recurring theme in the literature is the conflict that takes place between capital (economic upgrading) and labour (social upgrading). This is seen with the on-going pressures that are experienced in trying to get goods produced in the quickest time possible and meeting delivery deadlines with the highest quality, for the end market (Milberg & Winkler, 2011). The global context needs to be considered in that these industries are functioning in a competitive environment, at the top there is continuous economic upgrading occurring, yet this does not 'trickle down' to the bottom as we have witnessed in various cases, where workers conditions are deteriorating at a fast rate (Gereffi, Barrientos & Rossi, 2011; Milberg & Winkler, 2011; Gereffi & Lee, 2016; Marcos & Bellhouse, 2016). All too often, this is done at the hands of labour. Labour experience conditions that are seen as inhumane as a result of the pressure that is placed on them to deliver goods and services at given standards leading to exploitation (Marcos & Bellhouse, 2016). Workers are often seen as instruments and tools to be used which takes from their humanity and soft skills.

7.2 MOHAIR FARM WORKERS AND SHEARERS

In order to understand the dynamics of the mohair value chain it is inherent to unpack the chain from the beginning, which is where production occurs at the farm and where great value is derived from. There is much work that is done behind the scenes and is often taken for granted or overlooked in the production of any material. There are both farm workers and shearers that operate at the level of the farm who carry out the primary work. They are similar yet different in their functions (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19; James Mila, 23/02/19; Tabo Kota, 07/10/19).

Farm workers that work with mohair have a more stable type of job and have the skills to look after the Angora goats, which include the ability to check on their general health. Mohair farm workers are able to handle the goats and carry out general maintenance on the farm. Shearers on the other hand, have a more season specific job running between January to May and July to December; however, their skills are in great demand and are needed throughout South Africa.

There is a clear division in workers and shearers and this affects their prospects when it comes to their conditions (Barrientos & Smith, 2007; Barrientos, Gereffi & Rossi, 2010).

Over time the skill of shearing has lost its monetary value yet it is still an esteemed skill, particularly here in South Africa. It has been recognised that younger generations are not interested in jobs such as this because of the intense nature of the job and the associated pay. Interviewees expressed opinions such as “the younger generation aren’t as interested as its hard work hence we get a lot of our shearers from over the border” (Sean Brown, 10/10/19). “It is harder to get the younger generation due to the needed skill” (Edward Dankwart, 29/04/19). Lastly, “we have the skill so we come from Lesotho, they are guys who are staying who are shearing yaaa sheep, goats, so we come this side because its a bit better in terms of money here” (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). Shearing as a skill is still in great demand and as stated in the response above South African pay is better for this skill hence why there is work migration to South Africa.

The mohair farm workers and shearers jobs will be unpacked further and contextualised in order that one can understand their position, their jobs and their daily lives. Shearers and mohair farm workers form differentiated groups with clear divisions among them, these differences will be addressed accordingly (Barrientos, Gereffi & Rossi, 2010). As with all things there are different sides to a given story hence both sides (farmers and workers/shearers) will be given to help understand the start of the mohair value chain.

7.3 FARMERS’ VIEWS OF THE CONDITIONS FACING THEIR EMPLOYEES

Over time mohair farmers and farm workers have formulated a unique relationship that brings together their working and daily living conditions. The relationship is marked by interdependence in that the farmer needs the workers to work, in order that the farm is able to function; however, the workers also need the farmer and their work to get paid and have a given livelihood (Petersen, 2017). Nevertheless, the interdependence formulated between the farmer and farm worker is highly unequal in relation to the amount of power and influence that is

exerted by farmers over workers. This is not made any easier by the intergenerational bond that is formed with farmers and farm workers and their families; hence when one generation moves on, the next rise up and continue in this already established relationship (Visser, 2016). Therefore, it is described as an on-going relationship and is seen through the loyalty to the land and to the farmers. “I see labour as part of the business, an integral part of the business and farm, they are not separate to what you are doing and it is important to acknowledge this” (John Green, 23/02/19). Usually, at the farm level there is a strong sense of community yet this does get strained when issues arise such as a poor work ethic or wage issues (John Green, 23/02/19). In order to understand the relationship further the mohair farmers position will be illustrated below, thereafter the mohair workers.

Farmers generally believe that they have a “good relationship” with their workers which is a unitarist way of thinking (Petersen, 2017; John Green, 23/02/19). Examples include: “my workers and I work very well together” (Aaron Ross, 07/10/19), “as there are very few workers we are very close-knit and if there are issues they come to me” (Sean Brown, 10/10/19). During the interviews with the farmers, there was a general consensus that their workers on the different farms are “happy” and that there is an “open” relationship between the parties, which has been developed over time (George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19). A key feature of mohair farms is that their workforce is made up of the bare minimum number and these workers are often involved in various activities on the farm such as caring for cattle, poultry, game and sheep (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985).

A recurring pattern was that there are between four and ten workers employed on permanent contracts, who work and live on the mohair farms (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booii, 25/04/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile; 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). These are classic elements of a unitarist view of the employment relationship where workers are often regarded as “part of the family” and are described as being “very special” to the farmers.

According to the farmers due to the minimal number of workers working and the ‘trust-based’ relationship, farmers like to keep direct contact between workers and themselves. So, should any issues arise, they are brought directly to the farmer or, on some farms, to a manager who works closely with the workers, and the farmer and acts as an intermediary between these parties (Petersen, 2017). The organisation structure of the farm has influenced the relations between the parties (Visser, 2016). The other important employment relationship dynamic on mohair farms that I studied is that workers and their families often stay on the farm. Hence, there is an on-going working-living relationship with the farmer which is different from other jobs where work and living is separated (Petersen, 2017).

The employment conditions of workers, from working hours to the tasks carried out and the level of skills that workers possess, were described in similar terms by the farmers. Generally, the farmers responded by saying that their workers’ conditions were “very good and are meeting the requirements of the law” (Petersen, 2017; John Green, 23/02/19). Practically, the workers’ main tasks are to make sure the goats are healthy and that they are eating and have sufficient water. Workers are also there to assist with farm maintenance and health care such as dipping and dosing of the goats.

The farmers emphasised how workers worked for eight hours a day and got paid the minimum wage which was R18/per hour, although farmers had different ways of paying this out. An example of daily working hours on a farm was 8am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm five days a week (John Green, 23/02/19). Another farmer mentioned how his workers started work at 6am to 11am and 3pm to 5pm with weekends off (Steve Wright, 09/05/19). Farmers also made mention of how, if any extra work needed to be carried out or there was an emergency on the farm, they would pay their workers overtime for the additional hours that they have worked, although the amount was not stated (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booie, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19).

Another aspect of their employment is training. Many of these workers have grown up on the farm meaning they have constantly been exposed to what the older generation does on the job, by actually seeing them on the job and hearing their stories. Farm workers are often well aware of what the job entails before they start, which gives them a great advantage. Nevertheless, when these workers are formally employed, farmers implement on-the-job training to show the new recruit how the farm is run and, more specifically, how the worker is to treat and handle the goats. These are not high-skill jobs; farmers can easily replace most of their workers given the very high levels of unemployment in the rural parts of the Eastern Cape. This also provides employers with additional power over their workers and is often reflected in the ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ attitude that farmers have towards their workers. Much emphasis is placed on the importance of workers handling the goats, which reflects the sustainability guidelines for the industry (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booii, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19; Mohair South Africa, 2019).

The health and safety of the workers was important to the farmers and clearly stipulated in the law. Farmers provide their workers with overalls and working boots (Petersen, 2017). Farmers also mentioned that they have wash-rooms for their workers, which they are able to use during working hours (John Green, 23/02/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). As farmers, “we are always looking for ways in which we can better our workers conditions and abide by the law as we see the importance of looking after our workers as they are part of our business” (John Green, 23/02/19). Farmers acknowledged the role of their workers on the farm as instrumental but also critical to how the farm functions. With this, farmers desire to “take care of their workers” which is seen as paternalistic and could be somewhat demeaning for workers as it assumes they are unable to care for themselves (Sean Brown, 10/10/19).

Living conditions are an important part of the work contract particularly for jobs where there is an inter-connection between the working and living environment such as farming (Visser, 2016;

Petersen, 2017). Many farmers house their employees on their farms for a number of reasons, which include the nature of work as it often requires workers to work at other times aside from their eight hours each day as it involves livestock. Often the farm is isolated from other settlements or towns making it easier to have accommodation on the farm for them. Another reason is that there is often a strong relationship between the workers and the land as it has been lived on for generations (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985).

The conditions of living and housing vary across farms with some workers living in a fairly comfortable manner with their own housing while others live in dormitories with other workers (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booï, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). Some farmers live near towns and prefer that their workers live in town and receive government housing, which means that housing/living issues are not a matter for the farmer to deal with (George Step, 02/05/19). With this sort of arrangement, farmers will pick their workers up each morning and drop them off after work. These farmers only provide facilities for their workers during the day, which include a resting room with a bathroom (George Step, 02/05/19).

The size of the workers' dwellings vary. Some farmers spoke of their workers accommodation having a bedroom, kitchen/living area and a bathroom (John Green, 23/02/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). Other places of residence have the living and sleeping areas in the building and have a separate bathroom outside. Some accommodation was made in such a way that the bedroom and living room are inside and kitchen and bathroom are outside. The size of dwelling varies but usually has a minimal number of rooms keeping it strictly for immediate family such as a wife (who often works as a domestic worker for the farmer) and children (John Green, 23/02/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19).

There are other buildings that are made into dormitories where all the workers are housed together where they have a bathroom (Visser, 2016). The farmers reported that these buildings have doors, a roof and windows and are made out of brick, which can be described as ‘decent’ housing (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booie, 25/04/19; George Steyn, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19).

Farmers have also made it possible for workers to have access to running water at their place of residence although it is often only cold water, which means that the workers need to make their own plans such as boiling the water outside on a wood fire (Visser, 2016; John Green, 23/02/19). Electricity is provided to some workers and their living areas, yet other farmers have not done this (Visser, 2016). Farmers interviewed made mention of how they are continuously trying to improve their workers’ living conditions as they see the importance of keeping their workers happy. However, it is not always easy as these farmers are facing various pressures and demands in being part of the chain meaning they have to meet quality standards of mohair and given output which can affect other aspects of the farm (John Green, 23/02/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19; Petersen, 2017).

Farmers emphasised the other ‘benefits’ that workers receive by living on the farm, which are often overlooked. These include trips to town. There is also often additional allowances of food or animals given to workers that live on the farm as well as access to some land/fields to grow their own vegetables or have a few of their own animals (Visser, 2016). However, there are also issues that arise with living on the farm, one being that work and living becomes integrated where workers are often called when they are not on duty due to their accessibility; which is beneficial for the farmer but becomes a problem for workers as this is not always convenient (Petersen, 2017). The other issue is that there is a strong dependence on the farmer, which means that workers are unable to have their own way of life.

There have been various changes with living arrangements that the farmers mentioned. These include the idea that only the immediate family could live on the farm. From the 1990s to 2000s

many farm dwellers were moved off the farms to RDP housing in the townships. “This resulted in freed up resources and meant that there were fewer issues on farms” (George Step, 02/05/19). Only those working on the farm at a given time are provided with accommodation and when they cease working on the farm, they need to find a new place to stay, which is convenient for the farmer. However, this arrangement often causes insecurities as workers do not have any other housing or a place to go if they lose their place on the farm (Visser, 2016).

Other arrangements include only allowing the farm worker to stay on the farm thereby compelling his or her family to stay in a township. This means that there will be a place for the farmworker to live in the event that his or her contract is terminated. Previously, schools for the children of farmworkers were provided on farms. However, this has changed meaning that many children of farm workers live in towns with their extended families in order to get an education (John Green, 23/02/19; Richard Emsile, 16/01/19) Farm workers who are unable to afford an education for their children have ended up withdrawing them from school.

The farmers interviewed were confident about the quality of the employment relationship on their farms and the ‘openness’ that they have with their workers. They often used the example of a family where everyone is able to contribute freely in the affairs of the business which is a classic unitarist assumption (Petersen, 2017). Farmers spoke of how workers would come and speak to them with the issues they had, whether it was work-related or home-related (John Green, 23/02/19; Xolani Booi, 25/04/19; George Step, 02/05/19; Steve Wright, 09/05/19; Greg Moore, 09/05/19; Anthony Preston, 13/05/19; Jeffrey Stein, 29/04/19; Aaron Ross, 07/10/19; Richard Emsile; 16/01/19; Sean Brown, 10/10/19). Issues that were raised include wages, working hours and overtime as well as children’s education, improvements to housing and family issues (Visser, 2016). Farmers emphasised how the nature of work on their farms and their small number of employees compelled them to ensure that their workers are ‘happy’ and have access to open lines of communication (Petersen, 2017). Another factor in the farmer-farm worker relationship is that the workers are often not unionised, which means that work-related

issues need to be dealt with directly with the farmer (Petersen, 2017). This issue will be explored below when I discuss employee voice.

7.4 MOHAIR FARM WORKERS' RESPONSES TO THEIR CONDITIONS

In this section, I discuss the ways in which mohair farm workers view their conditions before moving onto an outline of their voice. The farm workers often have strong ties to the farm that they work on, in that their parents or grandparents were often also workers on that farm. Hence it becomes inter-generational and this is the way of life that many of them have been exposed to and are supposedly comfortable with (James Mila, 23/02/19; Tabo Kota, 07/10/19). There seems to be a high rate of employee loyalty to their work with some workers working on the same farm for up to 30 years (James Mila, 23/02/19; Tabo Kota, 07/10/19). The fact that workers stay on a farm for 30 years is not necessarily or only an indication of “loyalty” – it could also reflect the workers’ lack of other skills, very high unemployment rates and the absence of alternative jobs in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape.

People with a range of different nationalities work on farms in South Africa, although those interviewed from the mohair industry were all South Africans. These farm workers are mainly males. This was justified by reference to the idea that the jobs on mohair farms, such as handling the goats and carrying heavy maintenance material and fixing fences, required physical strength (James Mila, 23/02/19; Tabo Kota, 07/10/19).

Mohair farm workers often have a different view from farmers regarding their living and working conditions and the nature of employee voice. The variation in responses from workers reflect the types of relationships that the workers have with the farmers; which links to the levels of trust, the number of years that the relationship has developed over as well as the proximity and the authenticity of the relationship. Another factor affecting workers' views is the issues that have previously been dealt with in the relationship and the outcome of these issues (Visser, 2016). There are other factors that affect the relationship such as power dynamics and the farmer inherently having more control in the relationship because of what they are able to supply, in this

case it would be the money and often workers believe this is the only way to survive (Visser, 2016). Another factor that defines this relationship is South Africa's history, where workers of colour were often taken advantage of and overlooked by those they worked for, white farmers.

The working conditions on South African farms have been described as follows: there are often a very small number of permanent workers who have been working on the farm for many years and have 'good' relationships with each other and the farmer (Visser, 2016). In terms of the working hours, it is said to be eight hours per day but in practice this becomes very subjective due to the nature of their work. On some days, workers have to attend to issues in the night or early morning, which is possible because they live on-site. Other days are shorter and there is less work to do. Workloads depend on the time of the year. When workers work overtime they get bonuses. They are paid the minimum wage, which is R18 per/hour. As one of the workers noted: "When we work overtime, we also get paid and sometimes at Christmas we are given a bonus" (James Mila, 23/02/19). Another worker added: "At our workplace we get a bathroom and kitchen place that we are able to use during our work" (Tabo Kota, 07/10/19). However, there was also mention of how some workers only had a bathroom at their workplace (James Mila, 23/02/19). As one of the workers interviewed put it:

Other work-related benefits that were received include getting working boots and overalls. The other thing that is important is the health and safety in our workplace, but often there is more concern about how goats are treated than us – that's how we feel – and the farmer will make sure for the goat. We get the weekends off and leave during the year, which is paid leave (James Mila, 23/02/19).

Many of the full-time staff or permanently employed staff are housed on the farm meaning they live on the farm. The accommodation varies, some have houses whereas others are housed in dormitories. "The houses have a few rooms; a bedroom or two, a kitchen and living area which are quite small then we have a bathroom outside" (James Mila, 23/02/19). With the dormitory set

up there are rooms where workers sleep, there is a communal area where everyone cooks and has social activities as well as a separate bathroom. In the words of one of the interviewees:

There is access to cold running water in most places and electricity, which helps us but sometimes we have to cook using wood depending on the situation. On some farms, there are communal taps or tanks for the workers to collect water from as the housing is set-up in a community setting with all the staff accommodation in close proximity to each other (James Mila, 23/02/19).

The farmer usually provides transport to town once a week or once a month for the workers to do grocery shopping. If they need groceries before that time, workers will request the farmers to purchase the goods. The farmers will then deduct this from the workers' wages (Visser, 2016). Sometimes, the farmers provide the workers with assistance in certain situations such as medical bills, education bills and funeral expenses (Visser, 2016). Some farmers provide their workers with the basics such as a bag of *mieliepap*, sugar, salt, and tea. Other farmers provide workers with discounted goods from their farm such as meat, milk, eggs or vegetables (Visser, 2016). Some farmers, however, provide very little aside from wages and housing for their workers.

Permanent farm workers on mohair farms generally have more security and satisfaction in their jobs and live in a more comfortable manner than other, especially seasonal and casual, farm workers. One of the primary reasons being that the number of workers is minimal compared to other industries and the money coming in from mohair is quite impressive as it is an elite product. The other reason is that workers need to be provided with decent work and accommodation as they take care of the farmers' prized possession, Angora goats.

There are also temporary workers working on mohair farms, specifically at peak times such as shearing, due to the nature and intensity of work at these times. Often temporary workers, who can be called on at short notice to come and assist, are relatives or friends of existing full-time farm employees. There are usually very few conditions available to them, which would be no formal contract and a minimal salary. Their jobs are strictly for the short-term (James Mila,

23/02/19). In the section below, we contrast the conditions of general mohair workers with those of the shearers who work in the mohair value chain.

7.5 SHEARERS' EXPERIENCES OF THE MOHAIR INDUSTRY

The shearers form a unique group as they are often employed independently or through brokers (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). The shearers are mainly males and they possess a specific skill, which demands them to be strong as they are handling the goats as well as using machinery to shear the goats. The shearing process demands specific skills and there is a need for hand and eye coordination when shearing the goats (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). The shearing machines are dangerous as they are very sharp. There are also manual cutters and these are big scissors with sharp blades that cut the goats' hair. To operate as a shearer, training is required in the form of a short course, once they pass they get awarded a diploma in shearing. Shearing is a sought-after skill by mohair farmers and the industry, yet it is outsourced as it is only needed twice a year (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

The shearers are mainly from Lesotho. They work in these jobs because there are more jobs available in South Africa and they can get higher pay than they would receive from shearing in Lesotho (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mokhele, 23/06/19). However, this 'choice' comes at a huge price as they have to leave their families and homes for extended periods. Once these workers arrive in South Africa, they are trained and undergo an intensive course in shearing for a week or two. They then undergo an examination on their practice and skills if they succeed, they are certified shearers with diplomas and can practice shearing (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). However, in the event that they do not pass the examination they are able to retake the examination. The shearing courses are technical and focus on given skills and require great agility and strength.

The shearing takes place in two distinct seasons every year: one clip is known as the summer clip and is between January and June, and the winter clip is between July and December. There is slight variation in the mohair depending on the season. For example, the winter clip is usually

slightly thicker as it is used as a natural protective layer for the goats (Van der Westhuysen *et al.*, 1985). With the different seasons and clips the shearers are granted yearly work permits to shear and stay in South Africa (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

The shearing gangs are made up of males who work on a rotational basis around the farms depending on the needs of the farmers. The gangs comprise of between five to eight males, and each person has a unique role. It is of great importance that the team work together. Their roles include shearers, sorters/classers and wool/mohair thrower (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). The shearer is the one who actually cuts the mohair off the goat. The sorter classes the shorn mohair into different categories depending on the fineness, length and the quality of the mohair as well as the age group of the goat and where on the goat's body the mohair is from. There is a specific technique that is needed to do this and is based on hand and eye coordination. Another important member of the team is the mohair thrower. This individual is in charge of moving the shorn mohair to a specific place, such as a table, in order that the sorter is able to sort the mohair out as well as clean up the mohair that is lying around (OVK, 2019; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

With each of these different roles in the shearing teams, there are different levels of pay. However, there has been a method used to try and distribute and even out the pay differences (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). The mohair thrower is classified as the job that gets the least pay and less skills are needed to perform this job. In order to compensate and make sure that members in each team are getting similar amounts, the mohair thrower is made to cook for their team (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). Each day they get R21,50 for their cooking services for the team and this makes up the difference in pay. The shearing team works and lives in these teams throughout the year. Consequently, they build strong relationships in each group. The shearing gangs often described their relationship as a family or brotherhood: "we are a team, we are brothers we need to find what works between us, we need peace and then we work. If I am wrong you have to say 'I am wrong' then I will check to make sure" (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). "In the family it seems that it is different when it comes to

working as you can't quarrel with someone at work- you will lose" (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). The relationship aspect keeps the teams intact. These teams are made up of individuals that are of different ages, skills and experiences, and are not directly employed by the farming unit but rather outsourced via an intermediary to meet a specific demand.

7.5.1 WORKING CONDITIONS

Above we outlined the difference between shearers and farm workers and their roles in the mohair industry. We also highlighted the difference in the way in which farmers view their workers' conditions and how workers view their conditions which builds on the previous chapter on LPT on aspects of control and power in the workplace. We also explored the shearers' experience of the mohair industry. In presenting the position of farmers, mohair farm workers and shearers as well as their perceptions we are building our understanding of what is taking place at the start of the value chain. Now we will look into the working and living conditions and tie this into employee voice in the workplace, with a particular approach from the shearers.

In order to understand the responses of the shearers, we must examine the nature of their work by acknowledging the shearing services that they offer which entails shearing goats (OVK, 2019; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). As mentioned above, these shearers are all males and they are from Lesotho. Brian and Siya work for a given organisation and mentioned how there are about 1,400 shearers who are in the same position as them. These men arrive in South Africa on yearly work permits and are placed around the mohair country in their teams who they work very closely with. Once they have received their training and they are certified shearers they are able to practice.

The shearing gangs are called to different farms to either shear goats or sheep. In the case of goats, they shear with targets for each day. For example, workers need to shear between 60 and 100 goats per day (and more if possible) (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). These shearers describe their work as constantly chasing targets, which is "extremely exhausting" and "feels like it does not end and is not clear cut in its nature" (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). These

shearing gangs are working throughout the day and often do not have designated hours for work as they need to keep pushing to meet these targets. Hence there is no clear outline of working hours and pay which becomes a problem in terms of employment conditions.

An issue that was highlighted with shearers work is how they do not have access to their contracts. Consequently, they have nothing to fall back on such as stipulated working hours or the amount that they are paid for reaching their targets. “We don’t have access to our contracts” (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19), “we are unsure of what our conditions are” (Siya Mokhele, 23/06/19). The nature of their work is not clear and the shearers rely on what they are told by their supervisors which is subject to change.

When shearing the goats, the actual shearing takes place either in a shed or outside (it needs to be relatively sheltered). It is important that there is space for the goat to be shorn and for the mohair to be sorted. There are also other conditions that need to be in place such as the availability of electricity (if it is an electrical cutter), accessible water and a source of light (whether that is sunlight or electricity) in order that the shearers are able to see what they are doing (Siya Mokhele, 23/06/19). Shearers reported on how they also need air for ventilation as it often gets dusty from the mohair. These conditions need to be made available by the farmer on whose farm these shearers are shearing (Mohair South Africa, 2019).

The shearers arrive on the farm as a group, commonly known as a shearing gang. Prior to their arrival, they will have to buy and then bring their own tools for the work that they will carry out on each farm. The company that oversees their work provides the shearers with the electrical shearers. Thereafter, it is up to the shearers to buy the cutters and combs which form part of the machine. Shearers noted how they needed to buy several parts as the cutters and combs break easily as the goats’ hair is thick and often has knots in its coat which makes it difficult to shear (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). These products need to be bought before they go to the farm, as the farms are usually far away from the towns where they are able to access these products. There was a recurring complaint about how the burden lies on the shearers to buy these tools in order that they can work (Siya Mokhele, 23/06/19). Over time, they have to spend a significant amount

of their own money to buy these tools, which they feel should be provided by the overseeing organisation itself as these are the tools of the trade (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

Safety is important in any job and there is a need for protective clothing to be worn by workers, especially when the job can be classified as hazardous or harmful. In this case, shearers are supposed to have clothing that they can work in comfortably; which include t-shirts, overalls, working boots, masks that cover their nose-mouth area and protective eyewear as they are working with mohair that is often both dirty and has an intense smell (Visser, 2016; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19).

Shearers have reported how this has not been the case and they have had to purchase their own uniforms for work, which is another cost that has been incurred over time that they believed should be catered for by their employers (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). In addition, the safety equipment that has been prescribed for their work is also a way of protecting their health. However, workers protection and safety has not always been a priority (Visser, 2016). The shearers do not have eye, mouth or nose protection, which has resulted in various things entering their eyes, mouths and noses while shearing that have often affected their respiratory systems. Many of the workers that work with mohair have to visit doctors regularly to check their lungs to monitor their breathing and congestion levels (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19).

Another issue that was reported regularly regarding shearers health and safety concerns is their physical position while shearing (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). The shearers are constantly bending over, which hurts their back and affects their position. Many shearers complain of backache and pain as a result of long hours on the job and staying in these uncomfortable positions to shear these animals. The other concern while shearing are the ways in which to protect the hands and arms of shearers. There are notable concerns on how many shearers get cut or injured by the blade cutters but also by scissors while carrying out their job.

In the event of accidents, they are taken to the local clinic or hospital for an assessment by the doctor and, if necessary, they are given time off to heal. However, reports suggest that the shearers are either demanded back on the job before his wound has healed or that he does not receive any monetary compensation for the injury sustained on the job, which leaves him in a difficult position in terms of supporting himself and being able to recover fully. These issues reflect the type of pressures that are faced at the bottom of the mohair value chain where working conditions are compromised because of pressures to increase production and the need for labour to achieve given output values (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19).

An additional issue that the shearers highlighted are their contracts (Theron & Visser, 2012; Visser, 2016; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). Work contracts are not clear and are not readily available to the workers. Therefore, they do not know what their rights are when it comes to working hours, wages, health and safety and other work-related issues (Visser, 2016; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). This is a problem as the workers feel exploited and do not know what is acceptable in terms of labour legislation. Their working hours are not clearly defined and therefore calculating outstanding wages is not clear-cut. This is compounded by work on Sundays and public holidays not being covered in their contracts (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). As one worker put it: “we often have to work on public holidays as we are pushing to meet deadlines” (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

A couple of issues came up in the interviews which reflect the complexities in their work, such as when there is no shearing but they are not able to go home as they are unsure of when they will be needed again for work. In the words of one of the interviewees: “when there is no shearing there is no pay” (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). On multiple occasions, it was highlighted how unclear or inadequate contracts cause problems as the shearers’ families, who depend on the shearers as their primary provider, are unable to make ends meet (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). This also gives the shearers stress as they do not have any financial stability and job security.

7.5.2 LIVING CONDITIONS

The living conditions of the shearers varied and were dependent on various factors. The latter include the location of their housing site, the size of the housing area, how many employees live on-site and available resources (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). The living areas, which are known as compounds, are pretty similar in nature across South Africa. Although there are small differences, such as the availability of electricity (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). Various aspects of the shearers' living conditions will be outlined below. It is important to recognise that the Basic Conditions of Employment Act clearly stipulates what is acceptable when it comes to the standards of accommodation that is provided by employers to accommodate their employees.

The different teams of shearers from a given area such as Fort Beaufort or Queenstown have permanent compounds that they live in and return to when they are not engaged in shearing on farms. The compounds are seen as their home away from home which forms an integral part of the shearers' lives (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). These compounds are usually on a farm outside a given town, which has land set aside for the shearers. These compounds house the male shearers and have anywhere between 30-50 males living in close proximity to each other. Single-sex compounds for male workers were a key element in the system of influx control and migrant labour during apartheid and have infiltrated into the post-apartheid era.

These compounds are made up of two large shipping containers. If there is not enough space in the containers, the areas between the containers are lined with corrugated iron and the rest of the shearers are housed here. The primary reason for these containers is for the storage and protection of tools. However, over time this space has become a place for the shearers to sleep. There are very basic kitchen, toilet and bathing areas, all in the same vicinity. The areas are usually overcrowded with minimal resources (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). The material that the housing (containers) is made of is susceptible to weather changes, for example in winter the containers get very cold and there is very little warmth provided through

this. In summer, the containers absorb heat and become very hot, which causes great discomfort for the shearers who have to live and sleep inside the containers.

The shearers also have very limited storage space in the containers in that there are eight bunk beds in each container that house up to 16 workers. However, there are usually up to 40-50 shearers in total, which means that the rest of the shearers need to make shelters for themselves between the containers. These are makeshift (constructed with zinc) and are exposed to the elements. These shearers that sleep outside have to sleep on the floor which is also a cause for concern (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

The bunk beds allow for one person on the top bunk and the other on the bottom bunk. The employees need to bring their own mattresses for these beds and they use this for their travels too, which shows how they lack a sense of job security as they have no permanent home and are constantly on the move. When they go back to Lesotho, they leave their mattresses and use them again the next season. The shearers have very little to their name in that they usually come with a bag and their mattresses are kept here. They live very simple lives and have built strong ties within the compound communities which was the case during apartheid too (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

The other resources these compounds get is running water, but this is only cold water from a single tap. The water is used for cooking, washing, drinking and bathing. The water for bathing needs to be transported across the compound in a big 20-litre tub for it to be heated in order that the men can bathe. Since the water is used for cooking, washing and drinking, there are concerns with the quality of the water as well as the way in which the water is disposed of after its use (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

Another defining feature of the compound is that there is no electricity. The shearers have very little light in their containers and if they want to see they need to make use of torches or their phones, which adds an additional cost. The workers are not allowed to buy or bring in candles to light up the place as the associated fire risk is too great. Apart from not having light in their

containers, there is a need for the shearers to cook. They are provided with wood to cook their food. The same fire is used to boil water, which means the workers must constantly add firewood to keep it going. At times, there is no wood available or the wood delivery has been delayed. This has a detrimental effect on these workers as they are unable to have their basic needs met such as eating and bathing. These workers often buy solar inverters to have power to charge their phones or torches. However, this does not work when the sun does not come out (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19).

The issue of electricity in these compounds was a recurring theme. Various compounds around the country that house shearers are now being connected to the electricity grid. An additional issue that was raised is that, while the workers have toilets in their compounds, they never function properly. The available facilities need to meet the needs of the people that live here in order that they can live in a comfortable manner.

Another recurring issue was that of sewerage: there are no drains and sewer channels, which means there is stagnant sewerage not far from their living area. This becomes significantly worse in summer as the heat makes the sewage smell more intense. There are problems with this particularly when it comes to hygiene and related issues as there is no other way of disposing of this waste (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

7.6 VOICE OF THE SHEARERS

I have outlined farmers' perceptions of the mohair value chain and discussed how the position of general mohair farm workers and shearers in the value chain is reflected in their living and working conditions. In light of their conditions, I will now discuss the ways in which employee voice plays out in the employment relationship from the perspective of the shearers. Thereafter, in the next section I will look at employee voice for mohair farm workers as it is a slightly different dynamic.

Employee voice forms an aspect of employees' rights and it is contained in the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. Employees must be able to speak out on issues that concern them. However, what

often occurs is that employees are too afraid to communicate their concerns, which leads them to being frustrated on the job and suffering in silence. Other employees do not communicate in the prescribed manner or to the right person, which also prevents their concerns from being addressed. Each employee has the right to voice their concerns and this should be promoted if the employer wants productive and committed employees and in turn if employees want to improve dynamics in the workplace (Marchington, 2007; Mowbray *et al.*, 2015; International Labour Organisation, 2018). The notion of encouraging employee voice comes with the notion of valuing each employee, their agency and what they do as well as what they are able to bring to the organisation (Marchington, 2007).

Shearers are instrumental in what occurs in the value chain; often overlooking their own unique skills and role in adding value to the chain through their voice (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). Their working and living conditions often echo that of a minimal standard as has been discussed above. There are various lines of reporting such as through their inspectors, through their union, HOTELICA, or through worker representatives who have seen a need in the workers complaints and are taking these up with their employers (Nchabeleng & Manamela, 2011). These lines of reporting are shaped by bureaucratic power dynamics resulting in various challenges. And still the union, inspectors and worker representatives keep fighting for workers' rights and ability to voice their concerns (Nchabeleng & Manamela, 2011).

The shearers could form an instrumental group to raise their concerns in that they do have power through their numbers. However, a factor that works against the shearers is the fact that they are spread out all over the country, which hinders their efforts to unite on particular issues and present their demands collectively. The other issue that often lets these shearers down is that there are differences in conditions between them, which is a cause for concern and leads to internal disputes or misunderstandings that undermine their unity and leads to frustration (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

Another issue of concern is that the shearers were often unaware of the standards that are mandated for their work because they lack knowledge of their contracts and the Basic Conditions

of Employment Act (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). In addition, these shearers are often too afraid to speak up in case they may be reported on by other members of the group and lose their jobs as a result. A common frustration, which angered the shearers, was that nothing was done when issues were reported to the employer. In the interviews, the shearers reported how they have appointed an ex-shearer, who is well-aware of the conditions in the value chain and is trying to assist with work-related grievances with the shearing organisation concerned. However, this process has also been slow but shearers remain hopeful as their appointed leader has been through the system himself (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

A recurring theme is the government's minimal intervention in performing inspections in organisations to make sure that workers' conditions are of an acceptable standard and meet the requirements of the law. Furthermore, one of the major issues that was highlighted during the interviews was the government's minimal role in the mohair industry, which is run mainly by private bodies as a result. If we consider the mohair industry in South Africa, for example, private organisations constitute the bulk of the entities that make up the institutional landscape of the local mohair industry, which are supposed to establish checks and balances to ensure that there is some form of accountability and protection for workers.

7.7 VOICE OF MOHAIR FARM WORKERS

Employee voice (which is recognised as 'social dialogue' under the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda) forms a fundamental aspect of any employee-employer relationship. This relationship operates within specific power dynamics where the employer has power and control over the employee. Often there is minimal interaction between parties, resulting in fear and withdrawal by employees (Visser, 2016). There also is a lack of creativity among farm workers towards their work and this affects their motivation levels and how they perform their jobs (Ackers, 2010). In South Africa, the differentiation in power is often magnified in the employer-employee relationship through race as a result of the country's history (Kirsten *et al.*, 1994; Visser, 2016). Although the dynamics around the relationship are changing, there are still

aspects of the past that reflect in particular realms, such as in the agriculture sector where there are profound power imbalances at play and the relationships between white farmers and black employees (Visser, 2016; Maree, 2016).

Previously, the mechanism of voice was often overlooked as the farmer was seen as the know-it-all figure and the one who would control the farm and its operations. The farmer took pride in his position and the associated power with workers doing as they were told and subjected to strict paternalistic authority. There was very little engagement by workers and work was done accordingly (Edwards, 1990; Visser, 2016; Maree, 2016). The implications of this for the employment relationship was precisely that there was no voice for employees, the workers were filled with fear of challenging the authority of the employer. Workers also assumed (often correctly) that there was no other work for them and that the present job was their only way of surviving and having a livelihood. Hence, they stuck with the job. The other fear they had was that, if they spoke up, they were seen as causing problems, which could lead to them getting fired or being victimised (Visser, 2016). As a result, the workers often just did the work that they needed to without engaging in what is classified as employee voice.

In recent times, there has been a shift with the acknowledgment of workers and their voice. Workers are being recognised for their voice and the way in which they are able to add to the business such as through innovative ideas by promoting the best practice on a given farm. Hence, voice is being promoted which empowers workers, strengthening the relationship between employers and allowing them to feel seen by those they work with (Maree, 2016; James Mila, 23/02/19).

Generally, mohair farmers and farm workers have a special relationship. The farm set-up is made up of very few workers and a given farmer on an isolated piece of land away from other farms creating a strong union between farmers and their workers as well as relationships that continue over generations (Visser, 2016). Farmers are developing and fostering this relationship in such a way that workers are increasingly feeling valued and acknowledged for the work they do; but

also the input they are able to bring through their ideas and knowledge of the farm through the work done overtime (James Mila, 23/02/19).

Interestingly, there has been a mixture of results with employee voice and the relationship is changing between employee and employer at the level of the farm and more specifically mohair farms. Times are changing and there are various adjustments taking place in the political, economic, social, technological realm of society which is influencing the way in which given farms are run. As one would expect it is subjective to who is narrating the story as well as who the employer and employee are. There are a range of findings of the relationships that are present and the way in which interactions take place (Greg Moore, 09/05/19).

There are examples where both parties are in agreement with each other and engage in a mutual relationship such as when the employer trusts his workers and has worked with them for a significant period of time (John Green, 23/02/19). In cases like this, the farmers promote employee voice and place great emphasis on what the employee thinks and ways of adding value to the business. The farmer will build relationships with each of his workers and create open channels of communication in order that they feel safe and able to approach the farmer on any issues. The farmer values the contributions of the workers, as they see the importance of workers and the role they play at this level (George Step, 02/05/19). Hence, they (farmers and workers) acknowledge it as constructive and a mechanism of building. Increasingly this is seen with the younger generations of farmers who are often more liberal in nature and acknowledge workers for who they are and the issues that they have. Workers are also becoming more vocal and will approach farmers if and when they have issues as they recognise how important this is (Maree, 2016). The form of voice that is used is usually direct voice and is one-on-one which is directly between farmer and farm worker. The common use of voice by workers is around the issue of wages.

There is another group that acknowledges employee voice slightly differently. Here, the farmers' relationship to the workers is there to get-by and to make sure that the functions on the farm are being executed such that the Mohair Sustainability Guidelines are being followed. The workers

know who the farmer is yet they are often afraid to exercise their voice as they are afraid of the farmer as he is seen as a paternalistic figure (Visser, 2016; Maree, 2016). The workers would rather remain loyal and have a job than speak out and risk being asked to exit the job as this is their primary source of survival. The engagement changes as the workers are unable to express their concerns directly to the farmer and usually go through the middle-man such as a manager. Even with this they come together to express their concerns as they do not want to be individually identified but rather as a group. The farmer-farm worker dynamic is seen as an accommodating relationship but neither party will go out of their way to make things better, unless workers are desperate, then they will.

Another group of farmers believe that their workers do not need to have a voice and often completely overlook the needs of their staff (Visser, 2016). The farmer governs the farm and its processes, and the workers are seen as a part of the farm. Often where this occurs the working and living conditions have not changed as such and the workers become complacent with very little motivation as they do not feel acknowledged for what they do on the farm. We see the transaction-cost model at play here where farmers are choosing complacency on the farm as there is very little to no scope for voice at all which is best categorised as employee silence (Maree, 2016). This is often not as a result of the employees' choice but rather contextual factors such as South Africa's history and the role of the farmer (Visser, 2016; Maree, 2016).

The idea of unions and their intended purpose is often very different from how unions practically operate in the agriculture sector for various reasons, such as minimal participation and the practicalities of getting employees together. There are also costs attached to being members of a union, which are not seen as viable by the workers when "nothing is ever really changed by the unions; they do not do anything. They just take our money" (James Mila, 23/02/19). The other thing we must acknowledge is the way in which these farms are set-up with very few workers and the distance between farms is very large. Hence there is not much that the union can do that the workers cannot do through their established relationship with a given farmer.

The newer generation of farmers is promoting employee voice and it is increasingly becoming a defining aspect of the relationship at the farm level, with this, there is less of a need for a third party to intervene. Some responses include: “they come to me directly...and look if you want to run a successful business you need to pre-empt your employees’ conditions and needs and address it before it becomes an issue-satisfy them!”(John Green, 23/02/19). “I place great value on my employees and as a result their voice and how to better their conditions” (Sean Brown, 10/10/19). Some farmers recognise how valuable employee voice is and its progressive nature on the farm hence promoting it.

There are mohair farmers who recognise employee voice and the importance of promoting a culture of voice on their farms. Farmers create the space for voice on their farms and generally these farms have progressed as the workers are happy and feel a part of the organisation making them more responsible to their living and working environment. Employee voice is a new dimension to the farm environment. At the farm level, direct forms of voice help to continuously improve the functions of the farm; it validates the farm worker as someone that has valuable insights that may change how work is done as well as the functions of the farm as a whole. On the other hand one of the interviewed farmers saw employee voice as new and said that this was not a part of how they used to function yet appreciated how this could make a difference in making the workers happy at work (Richard Emsile, 16/01/19).

As we have seen, employee voice has been understood and used by different parties differently; many farmers are appreciating how important it is to the effective functioning of the farm and to improving workers and living conditions on the farm. Some farmers were still set in old ways where farmers had their say and workers' voices were not valued. This stems from a paternalistic view of the employment relationship where workers are seen as children that are unable to see eye to eye with the vision of the farm. These views by farmers and the response by workers have implications as to how the farm functions and the conditions that workers are subjected to.

7.8 DECENT WORK AGENDA: SOCIAL UPGRADING AND DOWNGRADING

In the previous chapter, we looked at farmers as global producers and the pressures they face in being part of these chains. Nevertheless, they still experience upgrading and see value for their produce, mohair. In this chapter, I draw on the perspectives of the mohair farm workers and shearers in the mohair industry who see minimal value for the work they do. We have looked at farm workers and shearers and their living and working experiences and linked this to voice. Farm workers who have voices are reported to have better conditions than shearers who have no voice. We now appreciate and link workers' conditions to social upgrading and social downgrading. To do this effectively, I have acknowledged the Decent Work Agenda and will use this as a standard to analyse the workers conditions.

The Decent Work Agenda addresses the idea of having employment, social protection, rights, and social dialogue, which is linked to employee voice. Farm workers and shearers have employment although the standards of employment can be subjectively defined as we have seen in the prevailing conditions. The majority of permanent farm workers have comprehensive employment contracts that are in line with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. There are also workers who are temporarily employed on farms and usually only work during peak seasons. These workers are given fixed-term employment and often do not have proper employment contracts (Visser, 2016). The shearers, on the other hand, explained that they did not have an employment contract, yet they continue to work as they need to survive. The conditions of employment for these shearers are subjective and based on their employers (Selwyn, 2013). This speaks to the division in working and living conditions between workers and shearers in the chain. The differences become a problem as it reinforces inequalities and social downgrading (Pegler, 2015).

The International Labour Organisation promotes social protection, basic healthcare and income security for all workers (International Labour Organisation, 2019). To my knowledge from the interviews, social protection is minimal in that basic healthcare is not easily accessible or affordable for these shearers. For permanent farm workers it depends on the relationship with the

farmer. There are farmers that provide or will assist with basic healthcare by, for example, taking a worker to the local clinic or hospital and paying for these services (Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19; James Mila, 23/02/19). Nevertheless, shearers do not receive basic healthcare and noted the extent to which they are neglected in this regard, for instance, having to go on with work even when injured (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

The other aspect of social protection is having income security in a job. Permanent farm workers do have the national minimum wage, which they receive as a form of security every month; yet to define this as secure and sustainable in terms of making ends meet is not accurate. For the shearers, there is almost no security when it comes to their income as they are unsure what they will receive each month and they do not know how the income is worked out or by whom, which leaves them very unsettled. When there is no shearing (which can be several months), they receive no pay, which leaves them with very little social protection for themselves as shearers as well as their dependants (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19).

In terms of rights, mohair farm workers have rights and are often aware of them. Nevertheless, they do not usually use their rights to their benefit because of the power imbalances that cause fear in these workers. Some farmers have made it part of their method of management to promote these rights. However, with shearers, there is very little to no awareness of rights in the workplace. They therefore tend to take any job that comes their way and, even if they were made aware of rights, there is a belief that “nothing changes as we are far out on the farms” (Brian Swazi, 23/06/19). The notion of social dialogue, which is linked to employee voice for the purposes of this research, will be discussed further below.

There is very little freedom, security, equity and human dignity experienced by mohair farm workers and shearers. Yet, shearers and farm workers would rather be subjected to poor conditions and have work than not have any form of employment. There is much desperation and need among all farm workers, yet there are distinct differences between these two groups at the farm level in the value chain (Pegler, 2015). We are able to see the differences between farm workers, who are employed in stable and permanent jobs, and the shearers, who are unable to

enforce their contracts and have very little stability in their jobs (James Mila, 23/02/19; Brian Swazi, 23/06/19; Siya Mohkele, 23/06/19). These differences cause a division and reflects the difficulties that arise in different jobs and how the Decent Work Agenda is still a difficult standard to attain, particularly at the bottom of the mohair value chain where there is an on-going clash between capital and labour (Bair, 2005).

It is important to mention that the South African government subscribes to the Decent Work Agenda, yet it becomes difficult to enforce this when the levels of unemployment are soaring and there is very little awareness of workers' rights by the workers themselves (International Labour Organisation, 2018). There are some organisations that are creating awareness and doing inspections in line with the Decent Work Agenda and seeing to the basic conditions of employment being satisfied in given workplaces (Skiler, 2018). However, due to the nature of farms it has taken more time to carry out these inspections as farms are spaced out and accessibility to these farms is an issue. The other issue is that it is often hard for these organisations to work against the deterministic nature of capitalism, this is where bribery and corruption have been seen (Skiler, 2018).

Alongside these factors, there are increasing pressures from neo-liberal restructuring on the production process. The practical outcomes of this is that competition has increased across the industry as well as the standards at which goods have to be produced (Smith, 2016). This places greater pressure on employers and means that aspects of production need to be restructured to find cheaper options. The standards for labour are getting worse, and this is as a result of the surplus of labour available in the world. The outcomes of competition and surplus are the inequalities that exist between labourers, with few farm workers who have permanent contracts, and seasonal farm workers and shearers without contracts and desperate for any type of work, resulting in the global standard of labour falling (Pegler, 2015). Shearers are experiencing the super-exploitative nature of capitalism which is a degrading and manipulative system. Shearers are working overtime essentially to meet targets of production (Selwyn, 2013; Smith, 2016).

In essence, it is clear that there is economic upgrading taking place in the industry, yet the farmers receive excessive pressure to produce mohair of a given standard and time schedule with minimal costs. The pressures are then passed onto farm workers but even more so, to the shearers as they are employed indirectly and do not have clearly stipulated contracts. This is a case of social downgrading as living and working conditions are poor and exploitative (Selwyn, 2013; Pegler, 2015).

More recently, a body of literature has developed that identifies these value chains as “global poverty chains” (Selwyn, 2016). This is a realistic analysis of what is taking place at the bottom of these chains for the majority of workers, in our case workers on mohair farms (Rossi, 2013). The cost of survival is increasing yet the wage they receive does not match a given standard of working and living hence there is an increase in poverty (Selwyn, 2013; Visser, 2016). Workers are working harder and for longer hours with given skills, yet this is not seen in their wages or standards of working and living. This is social downgrading (Rossi, 2013; Selwyn, 2013). A cycle of poverty at the bottom of society is perpetuated as a given shearer or farm worker has to support their dependants yet their wage is inadequate to do this. Hence there is a progressive cycle of poverty despite these workers working really hard (Selwyn, 2013).

It is important to recognise that South Africa’s agricultural sector has a minimum wage which may be seen as a control mechanism for poverty that acts as a bottom line. However, the question then arises: does everyone follow the law and pay the minimum wage? The answer is an emphatic no. This is the source of many of the problems in employee relations in the agricultural sector in particular and the South African labour market in general. There are some farmers that are either unable to pay these wages due to financial constraints or other pressures, and there are others who simply do not want to do this which defeats the whole system. If anything, this makes the whole system fall apart and enhances poverty and again leads to social downgrading (Skiler, 2018). Yet with this said, South Africa does have one of the strictest labour laws in the global scheme of things and those caught not subscribing to these laws are potentially under a great risk. It is interesting to see mohair farmers and one of their mechanisms is to keep operations

simple by keeping a minimal number (single digit) of permanent employees with conditions that subscribe to the Decent Work Agenda and the provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

7.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have provided an analysis on mohair farm workers and shearers. Despite, both of these groups occupying the bottom node of the mohair value chain we are able to see the difference in their living and working conditions. With the differences in conditions between these groups we unpack the notion of employee voice and how this plays a role in what type of conditions are experienced by these workers. For the most part, employee voice is increasingly being promoted and becoming part of farm practise. The benefits of employee voice are being experienced by these farm workers. However, shearers lack employee voice and this is seen in their marginal conditions. In wrapping up the chapter we looked at how social upgrading/downgrading has been experienced by mohair farm workers and shearers which is directly linked to the type of work they carry out. Mohair farm workers have experienced a fair share of social upgrading as they are employed on permanent contracts and are seen as core workers who are central to the mohair value chain. Shearers, however have experienced social downgrading and we link this to the lack of contracts and voice as well as a control mechanism used to shift pressure down the value chain.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 RESEARCH GOALS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

In concluding the research, we reflect on the research goals prior to the study. This research was guided by the following primary goal: to understand the way in which the (working and living) conditions confronting employers and employees on mohair farms is the complex outcome of their position in the global mohair value chain, the nature of the labour process and the contours of employee voice (how and why voice). With this we have mapped out the main actors and institutions in the mohair value chain and then proceeded to examine the mohair farmers, mohair farm workers and shearers that contribute to the mohair industry here in South Africa.

We evaluate these goals against the research findings on three levels; the macro level, meso level and lastly the micro level analysis. The chain literature helped in examining the institutional landscape of the mohair industry; this level of analysis is macro as it seeks to understand the chain and its complexities. We then proceeded to look at the farmers' perspectives of conditions on the farms, which for the purposes of this research is the central point of production in the chain. In order to assess the farmers' perspectives, we utilised LPT as a mid-level analysis. We focused on the dynamics at the workplace acknowledging the control farmers have over workers. Lastly, we focused our attention on the shearers and mohair farm workers narrative of their conditions at the farm level, which is seen as a micro level of analysis.

Below I reiterate what was mentioned in the introduction which forms a central aspect of the paper. This research embodies three levels of research and there is reason for this. Firstly, if we only look at it from the level of the value chain which is what a lot of the literature does, we lose sight of what actually takes place at the production site and what pushes the employers in terms of the labour process. We are also unable to appreciate what channels workers use to express themselves. Secondly, if we only analyse the research from the labour process we lose the

broader context of the value chain in which the farmer is embedded and we also lose the concrete mechanisms through which labour is able to express themselves. And finally, if we only look at employee voice we would miss out on the structural processes that are imposed on employers. We would also lose out on the control dynamics in the labour process and lastly we will lose out on the broader political economy of the value chain. We have tried to make sense of the mohair value chain in South Africa by bringing together these three levels of literature namely chain literature, labour process and voice literature; it is how these three bodies of literature interrelate that have helped us appreciate the conditions on mohair farms and the mohair value chain.

Below we discuss each of the secondary goals and the relevant findings from the research. The secondary goals, which are built on the primary research goal, include the following:

- Identifying key historical changes in the mohair industry and developing a clear understanding of the mohair value chain and sub-sector in the Eastern Cape, including the chain structure and key role-players.

Through the research process much insight has been provided into the structure of the chain and the way in which the industry has evolved over time, from the apartheid era into the post-apartheid era. The changes experienced over time have been instrumental to the way in which the industry functions currently, it has been beneficial to interview a wide range of participants who have shared in their experiences of the adjustments in the industry. We have been able to appreciate two significant changes with the shift from apartheid to post-apartheid; one is the deregulation of the market and the other is the increased regulation of the labour market.

We have also been able to appreciate the key role players and institutions that make up the mohair value chain in South Africa (Mohair South Africa, 2018; Mohair South Africa, 2019). The institutions and actors have assisted in creating the structure of the chain from the initial point of production which is the farm right through to the exporting of the mohair product or bi-product overseas. The structure of the chain is based on relational governance and at the core

of the chain is relational interactions that take place between the actors (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2000:16; Gereffi *et al.*, 2005). Mohair South Africa plays the role of lead firm as it oversees and governs the internal affairs of South Africa's mohair value chain (Gereffi, 1994; Lusby, 2008; Johan Cawse, 15/04/19). Mohair South Africa is looking to do the same on a larger scale on the global scene. The chain literature provided a conceptual framework in studying the mohair value chain which has proved to be insightful.

- Exploring the views of the producers (the farmers) as well as the pressures that they faced at the farm level as a result of their (particular) insertion into the global value chain for mohair.

As part of the research, I examined the role of farmers and the broader societal structure that they function within as well as their view on the industry. Farmers are constantly bombarded by pressure from the rest of the chain particularly from buyers as a result of their position in the chain and the need for a quality material that is for the market. The result is that farmers have to find a way of managing these pressures in a capitalist structured society where capital and labour are in direct competition. The relationship between capital and labour is understood through the LPT. LPT shows how the systemic pressures of capitalist accumulation compel employers to continuously enhance their control over workers who, in turn, resist and/or accommodate to these impositions by management. Part of the mechanism of control used by farmers is to employ very few labourers which assists in cutting down costs that are associated with their workers. There is a strong focus on how the pressures are pushed onto workers in the mohair chain, particularly on farm workers and shearers as they form the bottom node of the chain and there is minimal recognition of their jobs in the chain.

- Understanding the mohair industry from labour's perspective, highlighting the challenges and opportunities confronting workers, exploring the ways in which social and economic upgrading or downgrading is experienced, and outlining the mechanisms of voice available to mohair farm workers.

A central aspect of my research was to show how labour perceives the industry. In doing so, I was able to highlight their role as well as their living and working conditions in the value chain. The research suggests that many of the core workers, who worked on mohair farms as permanent employees, received fair living and working conditions, as stipulated by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. However, shearers, who were employed on a part-time basis, were exposed to extreme levels of social and economic downgrading, which was seen in their poor living and working conditions. Shearers' conditions could possibly be linked to their lack of documentation in the form of written contracts as well as their precarious position in the mohair value chain.

Employee voice is an instrumental mechanism that can be used to the benefit of employees in relation to improving their living and working conditions (ILO, 2018:1). Employee voice is centrally concerned with matters that affect the employment relationship such as pay, working hours, health and safety on the job, housing conditions and family issues amongst other things (ILO, 2018:1). Employee voice has been used by mohair farm workers in a direct, one-to-one method with the farmer and is becoming a valued asset in the relationship between the parties. However, with shearers there is very little knowledge and appreciation of the mechanism of voice and how effective it can be. Part of the issue is the lack of awareness which is linked to the outsourced nature of their job as well as having very little knowledge of available structures and who to report to and what issues to take up. Hence shearers are experiencing social downgrading in their working and living conditions.

- Understanding the nature of work in the mohair sub-sector – themes that were explored include the production process, skill formation, working hours, payment methods, employment contracts, forms and levels of managerial control, labour agency on the job, and different forms of accommodation and resistance.

The nature of work in the mohair sub-sector highlights key dynamics in the industry and its functions in South Africa as well as part of a global value chain. The research shows the way in which the production of mohair takes place from field (which is the farm level) right through to the exporting stage and the different actors and institutions involved in these processes. The farm

was pinpointed as the initial phase of production and I outlined the farmers' and workers' understanding of work by looking at the employment relationship; I highlighted the employment contract by exploring employment conditions, such as the number of hours worked, skill development and pay structure. I acknowledged that there are different forms of managerial control and linked them to the agency of workers on the job, which was characterised (mostly) by accommodation ('getting by') rather than resistance on mohair farms.

Hopefully, this research allows for a greater appreciation of the complexity of the mohair chain and the intricate links between actors and institutions. We are also able to appreciate the role of farmers and workers in providing the raw material, mohair, which 'feeds' the rest of the chain meaning and constitutes its basic source of value. We looked at how employers and employees were subjected to the pressures of the chain and how this was reflected in their conditions of work and ability to voice. Part of the research was to synthesise three bodies of literature: value chains, LPT and employee voice in order to form a deeper understanding of the mohair value chain in South Africa.

In closing, I acknowledge that my research can be improved and I have suggested relevant ways that this can be done. Thereafter, I engage with exciting future prospects of research for the mohair industry, which is still comparatively under-explored. There is a wide range of potential research avenues, which will help in building the available body of literature on the industry.

8.2 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

Having had time to reflect on my work there are several lessons and ways in which I could have possibly improved this research. Potential areas and ways in which this research could be improved include, firstly, access to the industry. Initially, it was very difficult to access participants, specifically farmers and farm workers. There was great resistance from both parties due to the recent PETA report, which painted the industry in an extremely negative light. I then proceeded to contact Mohair South Africa, who eventually provided consent to study the industry and gave permission to do the research; in doing so, they provided the relevant contacts.

Another area of improvement would be to increase the number of research participants and have a variety of participants from each institution. This will assist in giving a more concrete and holistic understanding of the mohair industry as well as the fine print detail on particular aspects of the chain. With a range of participants there is likely to be greater validity and applicability in terms of the research findings. One other area of improvement would be to have more time with the participants in visiting their production sites and seeing how each institution or actor functions.

8.3 FUTURE AREAS OF RESEARCH

With this research we have unpacked the South African mohair value chain, we have gained an appreciation of the main actors and institutions and their role in the functions of the chain. We have also been able to look into the labour process as a theoretical framework by drawing on the relationship between farmers and farm workers at the farm level. Linking the relationship between farmers and farm workers we have been able to acknowledge that there are pressures pushed down throughout the chain and these pressures are felt particularly at the farm level by farmers, but more specifically it is seen in the living and working conditions of the mohair farm workers and shearers. This research is foundational to future areas of research.

There is a wide variety of topics and possible areas of research that have been highlighted throughout my study which are evident gaps in the available literature. These areas of research were further echoed through the interactions that took place with participants while carrying out my research. Some of the highlighted areas include: firstly, to have a deeper understanding of the different institutions and actors in the chain by carrying out individual case studies which help us to realize who each actor is and what they do.

There are various studies that can take place when one acknowledges workers in the mohair value chain such as the gendered nature of the chain and whether there is a link between gender and the type of work that is carried out in the chain. In my research, the mohair value chain in South Africa was acknowledged as primarily male dominated this can be examined further.

Another potential area of research could look into the migration patterns and practices of shearers, as most of them come from Lesotho. There are various studies that can be formed around migration of workers and the effects this has on families, the economy, acknowledging deeper social, economic and political issues that surround the migration of workers. An additional area of potential study is the link between employee voice and the labour process in a given organisation, and the effects it has on those that work in the firm.

There are a wide variety of options and possible areas of future research, which is exciting as the body of research is being built and expanded. The mohair industry has great promise for the South African agriculture sector and economy as well as for scholars wanting to understand how the complex articulation of value chain governance, labour process dynamics and contours of employee voice shape the production, distribution and sale of a global commodity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMATION LETTER FOR POTENTIAL RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Appendix A: Participant Information Letter
Arisa Oka Heald

The South African Mohair value chain : Understanding the institutional framework as a form of governance, management's perceptions of the value chain and how labour experience the value chain



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Information Letter: Potential Participant

Dear potential participant

I am doing research at Rhodes University in Industrial and Economic Sociology and have received ethical clearance to do my research. I am going to be researching the mohair industry but will also be seeking to understand the perspective of businesses farmers and farm workers; I'm seeking to understand the narrative of the mohair value chain and pressures that are faced as a result. The research will be based in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. My hope is to try and gain a scientific-based analysis and understanding of what is experienced at the primary level of production and preparation of mohair in relation to the broader mohair value chain. My research is strictly for academic purposes and is to understand the nature of this unique value chain.

In order to carry out this research effectively I am writing to you, as a potential participant and request you to be a part-of my study. Should you wish to participate in my research I will need your informed consent which will stand as an agreement between you as the participant and me as the researcher. I will also make you well aware of the ethical issues involved in this research and your protection as a participant is of utmost importance to me and will be at the fore of my research. With this said, ethical issues include your ability to withdraw at any given time in the research, anonymity and confidentiality- you will receive pseudonyms and pseudonyms for your organisation too which will be for your protection.

In you agreeing to be part of my research I will conduct a semi-structured interview with you to engage in issues that relate to mohair production, the institutional landscape as well as your experience in the mohair sector. The interviews and data collected are strictly for research purposes only and each session will be recorded with a recording device. This will be disposed of after the research paper has been published. Once the research paper is compiled findings of the research will be shared with you the participant.

With this said, I am looking forward to engaging with you through the interview and gaining further insight into the mohair sub-sector. Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in my research.

Best Regards,
Arisa Oka Heald
078 9727692
arisaheald29@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Arisa Oka Heald

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Participant Consent form (Interviews)

Name of researcher: Arisa Oka Heald

Brief description of the research topic: To identify with the mohair industry from the perspective of businesses, farmers and farm workers as well as to understand the narrative of the mohair value chain and pressures that are faced as a result. The research will be based in the Eastern Cape, South Africa and will be linked to a Global Value Chains literature.

Declaration

1. I confirm that the purpose of the research is strictly for academic purposes and the nature of my participation have been explained to me verbally or in writing.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason - however I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur, or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.
3. I understand that data collected during the study, will be used by the researcher and that my personal details gathered during this research, especially my name or identity as well as business, will be kept confidential.
4. I agree to be interviewed and to allow audio recordings and transcriptions to be made of the interview.
5. I have been informed by the researcher that the tape recordings will be erased once the report is written.
6. I have been made aware that the researcher will keep all data for the duration of a year while the research paper is being written and thereafter will dispose of it. Thereafter, if there is any reason for the stored data to be used for any other research or research publication by the researcher I will be contacted directly and made aware of this.
7. I understand that once the research has been carried out and has been compiled I will be made aware of the findings and the Sociology Department at Rhodes University will also receive a copy of the findings.

APPENDIX C: MOHAIR INDUSTRY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Section A: Demographics & Biographical Information

1. Interview date.....
2. Place where the interview was conducted.....
3. Company name.....
3. Respondent's name.....
4. Respondent's current job title.....
5. Respondent's age range.....
6. Respondent's educational qualifications and work experiences.....
7. Respondent's email/telephone number.....
9. Number of years employed with the company/farm.....

Section B: Mohair Business Background and Mohair in South Africa

10. Tell us about your business:
 - 10.1 When were you founded? History?
 - 10.2 Please give us an overview of what do you do as organisation 'x'? Your role in the industry? Vision? Projects? Major developments in your organisation over-time?
 - 10.3 What is your scale of operation and how has this changed over-time? What has driven these changes?
 - 10.4 Future prospects for your organisation? New developments-innovation?
11. Mohair Industry- South Africa:
 - 11.1 Please provide insight into this industry
 - history of the industry
 - size of the South African industry and major stakeholders/institutions in the chain and their roles?
 - how many farms process mohair? where are they located? how many workers do they employ on average? what are the different tasks linked to mohair? what job categories exist for this type of work? what is the composition of the labour force? how many women and men and what work do they do? how are workers recruited? What is the wage and what wage systems exist?
 - activities that take place in South Africa- conception till they're exported (all processes)
 - how much mohair is being produced annually? Grades? Price? Major buyers? Where is it being exported and major uses of mohair?

- what is your role in all of this?
- where does power lie in the chain and why? Would you say the mohair chain is buyer or producer driven- why?
- what particular pressures are faced in the South African mohair value chain?

11.2 How has the industry changed over-time and the effects of these changes? (particularly with reference to market deregulation and increased labour laws?)

- Has there been an increase in pressures faced in the industry and by who?
- What are these pressures?
- What is being done about them?

11.3 Where is it now:

- SWOT analysis
 - *Strengths of industry:
 - *Weaknesses of industry:
 - *Opportunities for the industry:

*Threats of the industry

- What impact does this have on employment and the labour force, have there been any changes to the labour force in recent times – explain in detail and explain the factors that led to these changes

- Has the industry diversified and if so, how?

- *value adding mohair and processes
- *previously disadvantaged groups -strengths of this and challenges

12. Farmers play an instrumental role in mohair production in South Africa:

- How do you view the conditions of mohair farms in South Africa?
- What are the major pressures that they face?
- What associations can they be a part of?
- What type of workers work on these farms? Skills?
- Which labour laws have been identified as particularly challenging and hard to implement? Why do you think this is?
- Your views on the new national minimum wage? Ethical and labour standards, such as GlobalGap

Section C: Global Mohair

13. Describe the global mohair industry to us:

- Describe how the mohair industry is structured- from conception to final products/use (in order that a holistic understanding of mohair is provided)
- Who are your major competitors and how do you stay leading the industry?
- What are the major processes that take place in the chain? Detail the different agencies involved in the different stages in the chain – who are they? What do they do? How long have they been involved in the industry?
- Who are the major buyers of South African mohair and how do they influence the processes and production, and the price for mohair?and the quality or standards of mohair? What impact does this have on the labour force and employment matters?
- Locate South African mohair for me within the global value chain? Why is South African mohair highly regarded globally (we can safely assume this)?
- How or what does South Africa do to influence the mohair industry? What is South Africa's contribution to global mohair production?
- What specific pressures are faced with South Africa being a part of the global mohair industry and how are these pressures transmitted down the chain (to farmers and farm workers)?
- Market influences? price that mohair fetches in the market? How is the price determined and worked out? who determines the price? what the input costs? expenditure in the different stages of production – compare labour costs with input costs

14. Institutional Bodies: Checks and Inspections (Local and Global):

14.1 Institutional Landscape: Describe the institutional landscape of the mohair industry? (plain paper- who goes where and the links). Describe the organisations and bodies that do inspections in South Africa as well as on a global scale? What areas are inspected? Are there inspections in terms of labour standards?

- What checks are in place? What are they for? At the point of exporting mohair what are the requirements in place and the available corporate codes of conduct?
- Who does them and how often?
- If there are issues are there disciplinary bodies available to deal with this?

14.2 PETA: what were your views on these reports and what impact did they have on your industry?

15. Alliances and partnerships (Local and Global):

- What are the different bodies in the industry and what is your relationship with them?
- Are people joining the industry, has there been an increase in the formation of partnerships and alliances as mohair is seen as a sustainable product

Section D: Conclusion

16. Future of industry? Will SA still be a major role player? Do you see South Africa taking up more of the chain and power in the chain?
17. How do you see the value chain changing over the short-term and the long-term?
18. Any final comments?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FARMERS

Section A: Administrative Purposes

Recording.....
Interview date.....
Interview name and pseudonym.....
Farm name and pseudonym.....
Position or job on farm.....
Tel no/email or other contact details.....

“Before we begin with this interview, I’d like to say very few people are aware of the difficulties and challenges that farmers undergo in being part of a given value chain hence I’d appreciate your input in helping us all to realise how value chains operate particularly from your position”

Section B: Demographics & Biographical Information

1. Can you give some background about yourself?

1.1 Name

1.2 Age/ age range

1.3 Education or skill level

1.4 What is your position/job/job title on the farm?

1.4.1 Practically what does this position mean?

1.5 How long have you worked on this farm and what are your ties to the farm (i.e. has this been a family farm that’s been farmed on for generations)

1.6 Is this your main source of income/livelihood?

(yes/no--->why?)

1.7 Is there progress on the farm and in your job?

(explain and give examples e.g. an increase in animals or workers, or improving workers conditions)

1.8 Do you stay on the farm or off the farm and how does that affect your work?

(how does this affect your work? your relationships with your farm staff?)

2. How long have you worked in the mohair industry with the goats;

2.1 Provide some details about your specific work- what you do

2.2 Provide details on your work experience with mohair

2.3 Highlight particular changes in the mohair industry since you joined it

2.4 What does your daily work look like (what do you practically do on the job)

2.5 What do you do in the different seasons?

2.6 Are you aware of the industry at large-or what occurs after mohair leaves the farm?

2.7 Who are the key role players and what do they do in the mohair value chain? And how do they influence your farm and the way in which mohair is produced on your given farm?

2.8 Are you aware about what happens in other mohair farms and how does this affect you or your processes?

2.9 Do you work relatively separately or as a 'collective' of farmers depending on what it is?

2 What are some benefits or enjoyable moments on the job or about this job

(give details and examples)

2.1 Benefits about this farm

2.2 Benefits of the mohair industry

3.What are the issues that have arisen with this job

3.1 What are some of the major issues that affect your farm

3.2 What are some of the major challenges within the industry

3.3 Are there any worries or fears you face on the job, if yes what are these issue

4. Describe the type of employment you provide for your workers (I.e core or temporary)

4.1 Describe your relationship with your workers

4.2 Describe your relationship with your managers

5. Have you experienced 'changes' on the job such as technology and how has this impacted on your operational functions and the way in which the farm functions

- 5.1 Has it affected your workers and the way in which they do their job
- 5.2 Have you had to get rid of some of your workers as a result of these changes
- 5.3 Is it cheaper or quicker way of functioning for you and the farm
- 6. Have you experienced changes in the conditions/parameters within your industry which have changed the way you do work and what are these (ask for examples and details)
 - 6.1 How has this affected you and your farm
 - 6.2 How has this affected your workers
- 7. Have you experienced changes in laws particularly with your workers and what are these
 - 7.1 How has this affected you and your farming methods
 - 7.2 How has this influenced your workers and who you employ
 - 7.3 Have you had to get rid of any workers or change their conditions

Section C: Global Value Chains

- 8. Value chains are understood as “the range of activities from conception to final use and occur on a local and global scale”.
- 9. In terms of this mohair product what occurs-at the farm level?
 - 9.1 And what do you know about this product or where and what it is being produced for (the final destination and usage)
- 10. Could you give a broad outline or the nature of the mohair value chain from conception to final use
- 11. What are your major inputs and outputs from the farm
 - Where do you get these from (inputs)
 - Where does the outputs/final product go from the farm?
 - Are you more driven by the quantity or quality of products?
- 11.1 And after the farm what happens with the product, where is the final destination of this product and what is its usage
- 11.2 Are you aware of any links in the chain or important NGOs, stakeholders that play a role in this chain on a wider local or global scale/ awareness of trade channels

11.3 When one speaks about 'value' within this chain do you experience any of this value and depending on this where do you think all the value of the chain goes to?

12. What changes have occurred in this industry or chain over time (apartheid era and post-apartheid)

12.1 Farming practices; technology

12.2 Markets

12.3 Labour (contracts, hours, wages)

12.4 Laws on land

12.5 Checks or inspections and if so by who and for what?

12.b). Overtime there has been the deregulation or opening of markets and this has led to global competition- what has been the impact of this on the way you practice mohair farming?

12.c) There has also been the notion that there has been an increase in the regulation of the labour market-increase in labour laws and policies-how has this impacted you and your mohair farming work? What are some of these laws?

12.5) What changes have you experienced in line with the industry over-time (i.e. more production, higher quality levels, amounts, checks and inspections, etc.)?

12.5b) Has this led to more or less pressure on you as a mohair farmer? (And what type of pressures are these)

13. In any value chain there are backward and forward linkages-what type of firms are involved at the farm level such as supplying inputs to the farm and what inputs are needed for this farm or job you do

13.1 With this where are the products or goods from this farm being supplied to? Are you aware of the quality and price this is sold at? And how does this occur-do people come and pick up the produce or is loaded and sent off from the farm?

14. Are you aware of any major role players (governance) in the mohair sector in South Africa or on a global level

14.1 How do they influence or affect the production of mohair at the farm level and the industry

Section D: Labour Conditions (Living and Working Environment)

14. Describe your workers working environment and conditions

14.1 Their actual work

14.2 Their hours

14.3 Their pay

14.4 Their training either on the job or for the job

14.5 Their contracts

14.6 Their health and safety on the job

14.7 Is their 'work' seen as collective or in a group and are do you divide them into different categories such as the shearers and sorters and general farm workers

14.8 Is any aspect of your farm work out-sourced (people come into work) and how does this affect you and the way in which work is done on the farm.

15. Over the years (or while you have worked here) have you tried to make improvements in your farm workers' jobs, if yes what have these improvements been, if no, have your workers made this known to you and what were their demands

16. What is your relationship with the farm workers and management

16.1 Overtime has your relationship with workers changed and if so why and what has this relationship been affected by?

16.2 How have you attended to the workers needs and how do you make sure that your workers feel valued?

16.3 How much autonomy do your workers have on their job?

16.4 What is your relationship with your management and how does this affect your relationships on the farm?

16.5 How much autonomy do you give to your managers- are they able to drive the farm and how things operate on the farms?

17. Do your workers live on the farm and if yes, what are your living conditions like, how long have they lived on the farm for on average?

17.1 What is the space or size of their dwelling

17.2 Do they have access to water and electricity

17.3 Who do they live with

17.4 Do they receive any benefits by living on the farm and what are these

17.5 Do they have any issues that relate to living on the farm that you are aware of?

17.6 Have their living conditions changed over time and how would you assess this?

17.7 Do these workers regard this as their permanent home or what are their living arrangements

17.8 Do you have any plans of moving your workers from their homes or off the farms and why would this be (what are your reasons for this)

18. What are your social networks or relationships like on the farm with your workers as well as off the farm with other farmers and the mohair industry at large?

18.1 What is the farming community like in this area?

18.2 How and what is your relationship with other mohair farmers and other mohair stakeholders?

Section E: Employee Voice

19. What do you understand by the notion ‘employee voice’ or when one asks if your workers have a ‘voice’ in relation to their work

19.1 Employee voice refers to ‘how and why’ an employee voices their concerns or needs on the job

- Who do your workers mainly voice to or with? (which links with)
- How do your workers ‘voice’ (what are the available channels)
- Why do they ‘voice’/ what are the main issues that have arisen overtime and how have these been dealt with

19.2 Do you think that your workers have been able to ‘voice’ issues; if yes how? If not, why not? Have you been responsive to the issues that have been brought forward

- 19.3 How or who do your workers go through if there is an issue on the farm that relates to their work? Are they aware of these channels?
- 19.4 Relating to issues that have come about are your workers a part of any group (informal or formal such as trade unions) on the farm and off the farm? And how has this/these groups assisted in dealing with issues
- 19.5 As a result have your workers experienced any changes in their living or working conditions when they voiced their issues
- 19.6 With the idea of employee voice becoming an important and defined part of the ILO has there been changes seen in this area and are you taking this on specifically on your farm
20. Do you workers have formal representation such as through trade unions, NGO's, church societies or government associations
- 20.1 What issues have arisen or been discussed in these meetings (work or living conditions)
- 20.2 How often do they meet- do you give them time or does this have to be done outside of given 'working hours'.
- 20.3 Have workers conditions changed at all
- 20.4 Have your workers ever gone beyond voicing issues and actually protested
21. Do you have informal representation such as workers groups on the farm
- 21.1 Who leads this group and how did this come about
- 21.2 How did these groups form
- 21.3 Do you give permission for your workers to meet and if yes how often do your workers meet
- 21.4 What issues are brought forward or made aware to you
- 21.5 Have you brought about changes on the farm and what are they
22. What are some of the issues or fears you have in allowing your workers to have a 'voice' on the farm
- 22.1 Are there prejudices from other farm workers or managers or the farmer
23. What are some of the benefits you have experienced from giving your workers voice on the farm and with issues that concern them?

24. What or how would you explain the type of relationship you have with your farm management (if you have one) if not could you explain the farm setup in terms of staff and their positions

24.1 What is the set-up?

24.2 Has this relationship changed over time

24.3 As of now is it, steady and a good relationship or distant and not a good relationship and why is this?

24.4 What are the major issues or contentions you have with management or the given structure of your farm?

24.5 What are the major benefits you have with management or the structure of your farm?

25. What is your ideal way for employees to voice their concerns and once they have done so how will you bring this change about.

Section F: Concluding Remarks

26. Provide a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of:

26.1 your farm/farming

26.2 the mohair industry

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MOHAIR FARM WORKERS

Section A: Administrative Purposes

Recording.....
Interview date.....
Place of interview.....
Interviewee pseudonym.....
Farm pseudonym.....
Tel no/email or other contact details.....

Section B: Demographics & Biographical Information

1.Can you give some background about yourself:

1.1 Name

1.2 Age

1.3 Sex

1.4 Education or skill level:

-did you go to school? and up to what grade?

1.5 Job on farm:

-what job do you do? i.e. a general worker

-what do you do?

-tell me what you do on a given day from wake-up to sleeping time?

-what happens in the different seasons (i.e. shearing who does it and where do they come from if it's not you?)

-how many workers are employed on this farm? do they sort and shear wool on the farm?

-how many women and men? What work do the men do and the women do?

1.6 How long have you worked on this farm (farm history and job):

-months or years? (in the case that it is a very long time- I'll ask for farm history)

1.6b) Tell me about how your work-(what you do) and how this has this changed over time:

- the amount of work, type of work
- how many goats you look after, dip, feed, take to field
- pay, hours, freedom while doing the job (choice or autonomy in how you do work) -ownership of farm, who you report to co-workers
- living space
- education for your children, transport, tuck-shop

1.7 Do you live on the farm or off the farm:

- why?
- how do you get to work?
- how does this affect the work you do?
- how about the other workers, where do they stay?
- if you had the choice to stay on or off the farm where would you?

1.8 Is this your first time working with mohair:

☐ Yes-then what did you do before this and how did you find this job?

or

☐ No-how long have you worked with mohair? On this farm or other places too?
explain

- how do you find the work you do? easy-hard? good pay or bad pay? Do you like it or don't?
- why?

- how many seasons do you work and how long does your employment last in each season?
- how and where are workers recruited from and by whom?
- who do you report to at work and who tells you what needs to be done when you get to work?

2. Do you know what happens after the mohair leaves the farm:

- where does it go?
- who takes it?
- why?
- do you know who buys the mohair?
- how much is it bought for?

** FOLLOW UP: Do you know that some of the mohair gets exported (goes very far, like Europe) for lots of money-what do you think about this?**

3. Do you know what happens on other mohair farms:

- how?
- Do you have friends or family on other farms?
- How do they work?
- Do you see them? where? when?
- Do you talk about work issues?

4. Tell me about the other workers on this farm that work with you for the mohair sector:

- How many of you work with mohair on this farm (numbers)?
- What jobs do they have? general workers, shearers, sorters etc?
- Are they males or females?
- have these other workers worked with you for a long time?
- Do they live on the farm or off?
- Do they have families?
- Do you work together or alone?

5. Tell me what you like about your job and why (give me examples):

- working with the goats?
- the money?

- the hours?
- the machines?
- where do you live?
- other benefits-schooling for kids? food? other forms of support from farmers?
- fellow workers? friends/family?
- the farmer or manager?

6. Tell me what you do not like about your job and why:

- long hours? (no time to see family)
- hard job?
- bad pay or no pay?
- deductions?
- bad relationship with other workers or farmers? (shout at you? abuse you?)

6.1 What other problems have arisen on the job or farm and how does it make you feel:

(sad, angry, frustrated)

6.1.1 As a result, have you ever tried to speak to someone about these issues?

- why or why not (ask for explanation and examples)
- Did anything change?
- has anything happened in the past that made you scared of speaking out (shouted at, beaten, threatened to be fired, other workers were fired?)

6.1.2 Have you ever thought about leaving the job:

- why or why not? (explain reasons)

6.2 Are you scared of anything else on the job, if yes what are these things (explain and examples):

- changes in the way you work or how much work you have to do?
- losing your job to machinery or other workers?

- the boss? (does he shout, not give you your pay?)

7. While you have worked on the farm have you seen 'changes', what are these changes:

- machines (is it good or bad, why?)
- your working conditions? (is it good or bad, why?)
- hours? pay? safety? training? leave? over-time?
- your living conditions? (is it good or bad, why?)
- home? water? electricity? toilet?
- staff on the farm (numbers of people, contracts-temporary to make it cheaper)

8. Do people come and check the farm (inspection officers? or who are they?-from the government? NGOs? farmers friends?):

- is it good or bad when this happens, why?
- what do they check?
- how many times have they been coming?
- do they speak to you or the farmer?

Section C: Global Value Chains

(Value chains are understood as “the range of activities from conception to final use and occur on a local and global scale”) → simplified → value chain: you have goats on the farm that you take mohair from then it gets sold and goes far away so people can buy it both in South Africa but all over the world.

9. What do you think about this?

10. Do you know that there is a big mohair industry and South Africa makes the most mohair in the world:

- yes/no? What do you think about this?
- or do you only see it at a farm level?

11. Has the farmer told you who or what you are making mohair for:

- why do you do what you do on the farm (i.e product has to be good so it can be sold on market, certain rules i.e quality, why do you think this is?)
- where does mohair go from the farm?
- for what?
- for how much is it sold?
- who picks the mohair up from the farm?
- what is mohair used for?
- and do you know where the final place it goes to?
- have you been to any mohair or agriculture shows or sales, where? and what did you learn?
- where do you think all the money goes? and why do you think that? (value in chain)
- do you think you receive any benefits from these sales?

12. Have you seen any changes on the farm-with the goats:

- how you look after goats?
- what you feed them?
- how they get sheared?
- any other changes that relate to the goats or way of farming?
- **--do you know why all of this is done? (refer to the industry and chain pressures)**

13. What pressures do you face on the job:

- to work harder?
- to work faster and get more goats sheared?
- why do you think this is?

14. With the chain we have spoken about, do you think the farmer also faces pressures:

- yes/ no? why?

-what pressures do you think they might have?

15. Do you know where the farmer gets the farm inputs: ((linkages))

-feed?

-medicine?

-shearers?

-do you know if they are expensive?

-what other things are needed to run the farm apart from workers and the climate and water?

16. Do you know any important/big people in the mohair farming world in the Eastern Cape and South Africa: (governance))

-yes/no?

-what do you know about them?

-what do they do?

-do they tell the farmer what to do?

-do they come to the farm?

-for what?

Section D: Conditions (Living and Working Environment)

17. Describe your working environment and conditions:

17.1 your actual work

17.2 hours

17.3 pay

17.4 training

17.5 contract

17.6 health and safety in your job

17.7 is your job done with others or alone

17.8 are you divided into different categories such as general workers, shearers and sorters

17.9 is any work on the farm done by casual labour:

-how does this make you feel

-does this affect the way in which your work is done?

-do you know their conditions- are they better or worse than yours (pay, hours, how long they come and work - i.e. weeks or months, where they live and how they come to work?)

18.Over the years (or while you have worked here) have you experienced improvements in your job:

-if yes what have these improvements been?

-contract

-working hours

-wages

-other benefits

-job security

-if no, have you made this known and what were your demands?

19. What is your relationship with the farm management:

19.1 do you feel the farmer cares for your needs?

-if yes how?

or

-if no what would you want to see?

19.2 do you feel the manager cares for your needs, if yes how? If not, what would you want to see?

19.3. Do you have friends/family that you work with? Is this good? or bad? why?

20. Do you live on the farm:

YES:

-how long have you lived on the farm for?

-what are your living conditions like?

20.1 space or size of your dwelling?

20.2 water, electricity?

20.3 ablutions?

20.4 Who do you live with? How many are there that live in the same house?

20.5 do you receive any benefits by living on the farm, what are they?

20.6 do you have any issues that relate to living on the farm, yes, what are they? would you rather live off the farm?

20.7 have your living conditions changed over time?

20.8 do you own this home?

20.9 How far is it to your work and how do you get to work?

20.10 do other workers live near you? how near? (community)

20.11 how do you communicate with other workers?

20.12 Do you have any fears of being moved from your home or off the farm?

20.13 when you stop working do you have to leave the farm and find a new home?

NO:

-have you always lived off the farm?

-how did you find out about this work and start working here?

-would you want to move and live on the farm?

-what are your living conditions like where you live now?

20.1 space or size of your dwelling?

20.2 water, electricity?

20.3 ablutions?

20.4 who do you live with?

20.5 do you receive any benefits by living off the farm, what are they? (i.e transport to and from work)?

20.6 do you have any issues that relate to living off the farm, yes, what are they? would you rather live on the farm?

20.7 have your living conditions changed over time?

20.8 do you own this home you live in?

20.9 How far is it to your work and how do you get to work?

20.10 do other workers live near you? how near? (community)?

20.11 How do you communicate with other workers?

20.12 Do you have any fears of being moved from your home?

20.13 when you stop working will you stay where you live now?

Section E: Employee Voice

21.What are the main issues at work and when you have an issue at work: (e.g. if needed, working issues such as pay):

-what do you do?

-why do you do this (speak or not speak)?

-who do you speak to or with? (do you have someone who represents you on the farm or off the farm-NGO's, church association, trade unions)?

-do other workers feel the same way about this?

-have you ever protested because you were not happy about work?

-have things changed with the issues that you have reported? (examples)

-has this been a good or bad experience for you?

-have you been shouted at before? insulted? beaten? sent away?

21.1 Are you a part of any group on the farm and off the farm that relates to your work:

-what groups are these?

-what is it for?

- what type of things do you talk about?
- how has this/these groups assisted in dealing with work issues?
- do you feel comfortable to share your problems? or are you scared?

22. Do you have formal representation such as through trade unions, NGO's, churches, government bodies:

22.1 what issues have come up in these meetings (work or living conditions)?

22.2 How often do you meet?

22.3 where do you meet?

22.4 who can attend these meetings?

22.5 does the farmer know you are part of this? And who speaks to the farmer about your issues?

22.6 has anything changed at all in your work or living space?

23. Do you have groups on the farm such as workers groups where you can speak about problems and can take these to the farmer/management? (informal representation):

23.1 How did these groups form?

23.2 How often do you meet?

23.3 where do you meet?

23.4 who is part of this group? Can anyone join?

23.5 what do you talk about?

23.6 do you trust the leaders of the group?

23.7 with things that have been brought forward have you seen changes? (examples)

23.8 are you scared to say things in this group?

-yes/no? why?

24. What type of relationship do you have with the farmer and farm management:

- is it good or bad (why)?
- Do they take care of you/ help you?

- Do they listen to you?

24.1 has the relationship between you and farmer changed over time (explain)?

24.2 What other ways or things can be done to better the relationship between you and the farmer?

25. Do you know if there is a disciplinary or grievance code at work?

-if yes, what is it? please explain

-how do workers deal with grievances and issues at work?

Section F: Conclusion

26. What do you want to see in the future:

26.1 for yourself and for the farm? (ask for examples and why)

27. Any other comments: