

Gendered livelihoods and social change in post-apartheid South Africa

Dr. Jennifer Keahey | School of Social and Behavioral Sciences | Arizona State University

Email: jennifer.keahey@asu.edu

ABSTRACT

This article employs gendered livelihoods analysis and participatory methods to examine the politics of development among small-scale rooibos tea farmers in a rural coloured area of southwestern South Africa. Differentiating between sources of conflict and cohesion, I discuss how communities navigated resource scarcity, unstable markets, and shifting relations. While patriarchal dynamics informed livelihoods, with males and elders enjoying greater access than females and young adults, women took advantage of relatively fluid female roles to enter into agriculture and commerce. In contrast, rigid male roles and unattainable expectations of manhood isolated men, engendering destructive behaviors among young men in particular. Communities maintained social cohesion through democratic arrangements, and a politics of identification enabled research participants to relate to differential interests. In addition to providing situated and relational insight into the identitarian aspects of rural development, participatory gendered livelihoods analysis offers a critical means for deconstructing power and decolonizing knowledge.

Keywords: gender; development; postcolonial feminism; identity; social change; South Africa

Introduction

South Africa ended white-minority rule in 1994, setting the stage for multiracial democracy. In addition to incorporating racial and gender justice into its legal and policy frameworks (Seidman 1999), the post-apartheid state has combined a trajectory of neoliberal growth with investments in social welfare (Ferguson 2010). It is unclear whether this development model has worked, particularly in rural South Africa where agro-food system disparities have reinforced poverty among those living in apartheid-era homelands (Greenberg 2015). Small-scale farmers have less access to land and resources than do commercial estates, but local power dynamics remain understudied and there is a need to query rural agency. Feminist research offers the means for investigating complex intersections of power, identity, and change (Marchand and Sisson Runyan 2010). As research can reify inequity by reducing complexity and essentializing difference, scholars are calling for more qualitative and participatory approaches that allow local people to define themselves and challenge stereotypical assumptions (Chilisa, Major, and Khudu-Petersen 2017).

I address these issues in crosscutting ways. First, this article advances knowledge of rural livelihoods and coloured racial identity via a case study of Wupperthal, a rural coloured area comprised of small-scale rooibos tea farmers. Focusing on the local politics of development, it employs gendered livelihoods analysis to examine the material and ideological dimensions shaping household and community occupations (Oberhauser, Mandel, and Hapke 2004; Oberhauser 2016). Second, it engages postcolonial feminist theory to elucidate the impacts of patriarchy, colonialism and globalization on development activities, connecting these structural influences with ‘the micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle’ (Mohanty 2003, 501). Third, my use of participatory and ethnographic methods meets demands for scholars to

decolonize the production of knowledge (Janes 2016). Co-investigators included local residents who were elected by their communities to engage in training and research.

Wupperthal is located in the Cederberg Mountains of South Africa's Western Cape Province. As a mission station, this rural coloured area remains under the jurisdiction of the Moravian Church, and its inhabitants share a common religious identity. Figure 1 depicts the numerous settlements of Wupperthal. The mission is remote and rugged, with communities scattered across rocky escarpments and low-lying valleys. Although farmers are involved in international rooibos markets, development projects, and tourism ventures, they have minimal contact with whites who largely live along the more arable western slope of the Cederberg where the town of Clanwilliam lies, and virtually no contact with blacks who have little presence in the region.

[Insert Figure 1 Here]

Comprising nine percent of the national population, coloured South Africans are the majority racial group of the Western Cape (Lehohla 2012). The term 'coloured' encompasses indigenous Khoe and San peoples as well those who comprise a mix of Khoe-San, South Asian, European, and Xhosa or other African ancestries (Adhikari 2009). Tracing their origin to Dutch colonial rule, which began in 1652 with the founding of the Cape Colony at Table Bay, coloureds primarily speak Afrikaans and possess a shared identity forged from a history of conquest, slavery, segregation, and resistance. Many participated in the black consciousness movement in protest of apartheid and the term 'black' broadly signifies all disadvantaged racial groups. Yet coloured people experienced differential privilege under white rule. Placed above blacks but below whites in a national racial hierarchy that was codified under apartheid, coloureds have

‘occupied an ambiguous position within the South African polity’ (Erasmus 2000, 71). The ambiguity surrounding coloured identity has continued into the post-apartheid era, with coloured people commonly stating that they are neither black nor white enough for recognition (Adhikari 2006). The question of rooibos heritage illustrates the precarity of this racial position. White and coloured producers both claim cultural ownership of this indigenous plant to assert their rightful belonging to the Cederberg. Whereas white accounts of heritage ignore the presence of coloureds who often do not own the land upon which they reside, coloured accounts emphasize connection to the plant itself and express the hopes of a dispossessed people for a more prosperous future (Ives 2017).

Little is known about the localized power dynamics informing livelihoods in rural coloured areas. I address this gap and more broadly inform postcolonial feminist scholarship by providing a dialectical and intersectional analysis of structure and agency that unpacks local sources of conflict and cohesion. First, I demonstrate how a racialized trajectory of underdevelopment and neoliberal market ventures engendered struggle in Wupperthal, exacerbating poverty in general and hindering opportunities for women and young adults in particular. Second, I examine how inhabitants navigated post-apartheid shifts, showing how fluid female and rigid male roles engendered differential experiences with uncertainty and change. Third, I share the codes of conduct that communities employed to ensure social cohesion, including what Sa’ar (2005) has termed a ‘politics of identification’. Structural forces shaped hierarchies of power and access to resources, but community relations were equitable. It was through social connection that inhabitants recognized the challenges of others, enabling identity to be negotiated. Not only did research support local dialogue, but the cultural knowledge provided by my co-investigators ensured situated understanding. Our work suggests that participatory gendered livelihoods

analysis offers a complementary framework for deconstructing power and decolonizing knowledge in rural research communities.

Political economy, rurality, and rights in post-apartheid context

The South African state has united neoliberal policies with social justice politics. By the mid-1990s, the incoming government had moved to deregulate industry and liberalize trade in an effort to revitalize the national economy and improve its position in global markets (Peet 2002). This neoliberal agenda represented a shift away from anti-apartheid politics, which advocated in favor of redistributive justice through a democratic socialist framework of needs-based reconstruction. However, the state also sought to address social issues by investing in welfare; and in recent years, social spending has substantially increased in response to the ‘widening inequality and very high rates of employment’ engendered by neoliberal policies and practices (Ferguson 2010, 175).

Despite two decades of political and economic restructuring, racial inequality in rural areas has yet to be addressed. Four-fifths of rural South Africans live below the national poverty line (Lehohla 2014), with most of these residing in former racial and ethnic homelands that have been systematically underdeveloped (Mazibuko 2013). During the colonial expansion into South Africa’s interior, Protestant Churches assumed authority over coloured lands. As part of a broader thrust to extend and legally codify racial segregation, the apartheid state classified these mission stations as rural coloured areas; and in the post-apartheid era a number of these areas have remained under Church jurisprudence (May and Lahiff 2007). In the Cederberg, where rooibos tea is produced, indigenous and ex-slave populations were limited to the dry eastern slope when white farmers appropriated the richer lands of the western range. To date, the state

has failed to secure major land reforms, with more than 80 percent of national arable land still under the control of whites who represent less than 10 percent of the population (Chikulo 2015).

A growing body of evidence suggests that market-based development may be exacerbating rather than ameliorating rural poverty. Large firms that are better prepared to assume market risks have disproportionately benefitted from neoliberal development strategies like product upgrading (Ponte and Ewert 2009). As a result, agricultural profits have become increasingly concentrated (Aliber and Cousins 2013). In an effort to address combat poverty, social justice interests have invested in ethical trading networks that seek to embed an ethic of responsibility into business practices (Hughes, McEwan, and Bek 2015) National groups have aligned with international certification systems such as Fairtrade, which provides producer organizations with access to global buyers who agree to meet minimum pricing standards and pay social development premiums for certified purchases (Raynolds and Greenfield 2015). While the state has incentivized the formation of small-scale producer cooperatives, commercial estates dominate South African Fairtrade as the national movement has prioritized securing better conditions for farmworkers (Keahey 2015).

In regards to gender, the state has formalized the rights of women. Not only has it encouraged female leadership via the establishment of economic empowerment protocols that support the entry of black and coloured women into positions of commercial leadership (Linton 2012), but it also has mandated equal pay, criminalized rape in marriage, and strengthened penalties for violence against women (Dworkin et al. 2012). These changes have been accompanied by national efforts to address implications for masculinity, including the formation of HIV and antiviolence programs that help men and boys explore assumptions about manhood

and develop healthier relations with women. Of scholarly interest is how these political shifts are translating into everyday life.

Gendered livelihoods and postcolonial feminism

Gendered livelihoods analysis aligns a feminist materialist and postcolonial framework to disentangle the complexities impacting the rural global South. Similarly to conventional livelihoods research, it ‘provides a means to link macro-level processes to micro-level outcomes and responses’ providing insight into ‘how people are coping with or adapting to economic restructuring’ (Oberhauser, Mandel, and Hapke 2004, 206). It extends conventional analysis by considering the local power dynamics shaping access to household and community occupations and by examining identitarian influences on social roles, relations, and experiences.

Postcolonial feminism is compatible with livelihoods analysis as it offers a theoretical foundation for examining nuanced and shifting power dynamics in an unequal world. It is similar to intersectional feminism in that it addresses multiple axes of oppression; yet as a distinctly Southern tradition, postcolonial feminism employs a historical and transnational lens to explore the intersections and impacts of patriarchy, colonialism, and globalization on subaltern populations (Kerner 2017). Scholars note that colonial practices have given rise to a globalized system of control that continues to classify and subordinate people according to Eurocentric norms (Quijano 2000; Mendoza 2015). In contrast to conventional Western feminism, which replicates the colonial power structure through the categorization of identity, postcolonial feminism challenges fixed and universal assumptions by asking scholars to develop a more situated and dynamic understanding of power (Mohanty 1984). Attuning to the dialectic of

difference, postcolonial feminist inquiry seeks to ‘replace an essentialist and limited politics of identity with a politics of identification’ (Sa’ar 2005, 696).

In the African context, scholars are documenting the fluidity of identity (Oyěwùmí 2002) and examining efforts to align an African-based relational paradigm with participatory methods that enable subaltern people to speak and be heard (Chilisa, Major, and Khudu-Petersen 2017, 326). As research can reinforce segregation by failing to acknowledge the relatability of different social groups, Ratele (2001) urges intellectuals to find points of connection with the poor. Noting that identity is negotiated in practice, he argues that postcolonial feminism represents an opportunity to radically renegotiate power. This is achieved by deciphering meaning through deep listening and the pursuit of relational awareness.

Methods and positionality

Over the course of 2010, I conducted research with small-scale farmers as the field researcher for a rooibos livelihoods project. Developed in tandem with participating communities, this broader initiative combined research, training, and networking activities into a year-long farmer leadership program. This arrangement enabled small-scale producers to investigate livelihood concerns while gaining production and market knowledge and seeking better representation in industry and trade networks (Keahey et al. 2016).

Five of the seven participating groups were located in Wupperthal, where roughly 60 percent of South Africa’s small-scale rooibos farmers resided. At project outset, I and a South African partner made several visits to local communities. Providing training and networking services, this predominantly white partner firm was female-owned and staffed. Over the course of one month, we knocked on doors and spoke with as many inhabitants as possible to determine farmer

interests and develop an initial plan of action. While we originally intended to work through existing producer organizations, Wupperthal farmers were experiencing cooperative turmoil and wanted to develop a community-based leadership network. Women also stated the importance of ensuring their involvement.

We responded by facilitating community workshops in five areas of Wupperthal. Residents advised us to select locations based on local topography; thus the workshops were accessible to the inhabitants of remote hamlets and we encouraged all adults to participate. A total of 189 people attended workshops, each of which culminated in democratic elections for male and female leadership teams, with 10 residents elected into the leadership role. One of the five female leaders was unable to fully participate in the program due to her employment as a cleaner in the village. The leaders resolved this issue by selecting a sixth woman to replace her, but both of these women were involved in fieldwork. More broadly, the election process ensured that the leaders comprised people of both sexes residing in communities across the mission. Apart from one young male who worked for a rooibos cooperative in the central village, none of the elected leaders previously held any positions of authority since workshop participants largely chose to nominate and vote for peers who were uninvolved in local power structures.

In addition to engaging in industry training and networking activities with our South African partners, the leaders and I comprised an independent research team. We conducted fieldwork in four steps. The first of these involved research design, a process that was started during leadership workshops held in a regional town approximately one month after elections. The second step involved semi-structured livelihood interviews with Wupperthal farmers and rooibos cooperative staff, and these were conducted over five weeks at project midterm. Interviews primarily focused on livelihoods, resources, and decision making, but also covered aspects of

identity and asked respondents to differentiate between challenges and opportunities. After the leaders completed a census of their communities, we generated a random sample stratified by sex, adult age cohort, and hamlet. Because each leader first acted as a respondent during the research training process, 37 of the 48 livelihood interviews conducted in Wupperthal derived from the stratified random sample. Having received research training, the leadership teams attended interviews in their area, where they translated from Afrikaans to English as needed. After watching me lead initial interviews, co-investigators took turns assuming the role of lead interviewer. Their involvement proved critical. Not only did respondents often ask the leaders if I could be trusted, but they also eagerly discussed livelihood barriers as they understood that research findings would be shared with industry networks.

The third step comprised semi-structured interviews that I privately conducted with each of the leaders to capture their perceptions about power and identity. These sessions occurred after completing livelihood interviews in each area, for a total of 11 sessions. Similarly to our everyday communication, we spoke a mixture of Afrikaans and English, although questions were posed in Afrikaans. These sessions enabled my co-investigators to reflect upon livelihood dynamics while providing them with a safe space to establish their own voice. Having collectively determined power dimensions for inquiry during initial research design, the leaders knew they would explore issues related to race, class, gender, and age, as well as those related to bureaucratic and democratic processes; however, they were not involved in developing specific questions to ensure unrehearsed responses. The dialogues that began during these sessions were extended during the fourth step, which consisted of theoretical training, informal discussions, and analytical workshops as depicted in Figure 2. Training broadly differentiated between theories of power, enabling my co-investigators to examine issues from different perspectives;

and a process of reflexive dialogue and consensus building helped us develop integrative understanding.

[Insert Figure 2 Here]

As a non-religious white American woman, I clearly diverged from the other members of the research team and their communities. In seeking to find points of connection, I found that my working-class upbringing in a rural and religious western state facilitated my connection to the values governing everyday life in Wuppertal. While it is important not to conflate our experiences given the complex intersections of class, race, geography, and education as well as the cumulative effects of these on life chances, I could relate to the insecurity of having to scramble to get by or not having access to basic needs like affordable health care. Yet my gender politics were at odds with dominant local values, requiring me to unlearn assumptions of a way of life that was both similar to and different from the world from which I had come. I navigated power asymmetries by: 1) residing almost entirely in coloured Afrikaans-speaking households throughout my stay in South Africa; 2) sharing knowledge and resources; 3) actively assuming the roles of learner and facilitator; and 4) committing to frank and open-minded discussions about power and privilege.

My co-investigators were a fairly heterogeneous representation of their communities. Half were woman and most were young adults, although a few were middle-aged and one male was retired. Apart from myself and a white male who had married into his community, the research team was coloured. All the leaders self-identified as working class, although the retired white leader stated that he had once been middle class. Most leaders experienced periods of poverty but

their circumstances ranged from the extreme insecurity of near homelessness to the greater security of steady income and accrued resources. Apart from myself and the white male, the research team possessed a similar economic and educational background as the majority population of their communities; and as the residents of a Moravian Church mission, all of my co-investigators professed this faith.

The remainder of the article focuses on the Wupperthal case study. After providing an overview of livelihoods, I examine sources of conflict, weaving in findings related to assets and household decision-making. I then consider sources of cohesion, covering governance protocols and codes of conduct that promoted equitable relations. To ensure situated understanding, my analysis incorporates the differential voices of my research team, with pseudonyms used to protect individual identities.

Wupperthal livelihoods

Subsistence activities remained essential to survival, but inhabitants sought to take advantage of political reforms by diversifying their livelihoods. Respondents self-identified with the following occupations: 1) vegetable gardening and animal husbandry; 2) Fairtrade and organic certified rooibos tea production; 3) small-scale enterprise and tourism; 4) vocational work; 5) formal and intermittent employment; and 6) household work and childcare. As this section discusses, rural coloured livelihoods were gendered and women encountered greater barriers than men.

However, age and minor class differences also informed access, and some occupations were more gendered than others. While the participation of women in production and enterprise was illustrative of shifting gender norms, male roles were rigidly enforced.

First, vegetable gardening and animal husbandry filled household larders and served as an occasional source of income. Men comprised three-quarters of those involved in these traditionally male occupations. Not only did notions of manhood center on the role of provider, but gardening symbolized masculinity. Envisioning his future life as a married man, David stated his preference for 'traditional gender roles'. When explaining his view of these roles, David invoked his garden, stating 'I don't want my wife to step foot in unless maybe bringing food...the garden is a man's space'. Some women and men preferred what they termed 'modern' roles and most females in Wuppertal were involved in some form of income generation; yet subsistence activities largely remained a man's affair and single women without access to a male provider experienced heightened food insecurity.

Second, rooibos was an essential crop as it grew well in its native Cederberg environment, and most respondents were tea farmers. According to one cooperative manager, tea production was 'the only possibility for economic survival' because 'there is less rain here and less land, so land must be used optimally'. The biological characteristics of rooibos enabled women to enter into production as dry tea plots were more plentiful than vegetable gardens, which required irrigation. A third of the respondents in this traditionally male occupation were female; however, the level of women's involvement in rooibos varied. While female heads-of-households were active producers, others paid men to work their plots. As Olivia explained, 'women must work by the house, caring for the kids and doing the cleaning, so women don't have time to work the tea land themselves'. Most farmers hired neighbors to assist with seasonal harvesting, but women who did not work their own land encountered higher labor expenses because they had to pay for routine farm management as well as seasonal costs.

Third, small-scale enterprise was prevalent. Women comprised nearly 60 percent of this group and many female entrepreneurs were single. According to Johan, ‘you don’t get single fathers around you, only single mothers and if you don’t get welfare or men to support you, you have to enter into the man’s role to bring money in the house’. Women often did so by saving money to establish home shops and bakeries. In the central village, six entrepreneurial women operated a small cosmetics firm that provided high-quality rooibos skincare products for national and German markets, the latter of which was accessed through Moravian networks. In contrast to women, men who owned trucks or donkey carts provided transportation services; and a team of elderly men made boots at a historic shoe shop that was located in the central village. Both sexes collaborated to develop tourism. Some married couples co-managed guesthouses, and in one area, a community-based tourism project provided inhabitants with access to income as women rotated food and cleaning responsibilities while men provided transportation and maintained infrastructure. Finally, both women and men participated in development projects that paid for work. In one area, a local female was leading a campground construction project and in another area, women worked alongside men to improve roads.

Fourth, 15 percent of respondents listed vocational livelihoods and this group was wholly male. Elderly men were more likely to identify as roof-thatchers while younger men were plumbers, welders, and electricians. Income was scarce so these men traded work for favors and assisted those in need. In one area, a single mother rented a small cottage with no toilet or water, but a neighbor was building her a home with plumbing and electricity without charging for his services. Young adult males with vocational skills lacked the resources to develop their vocation, but dreamed of possibilities. A young man with training as a welder said ‘I can use my welding

experience to make things to sell to tourists here. I haven't got all the tools I need, but now that I'm working with [tourism project] I can save'.

Fifth, inhabitants sought formal and intermittent employment. Some were employed in the central village where the Church and the mission school were located. Small staffs of men and women processed rooibos at cooperative-based tea courts, but apart from one female treasurer, cooperative management was comprised of males; and more broadly, formal employment was scarce. Most households, and in particular those located in more remote hamlets, survived on subsistence goods and income from temporary jobs, government support, and remittances sent by city-dwelling children. Given the dearth of local opportunities, youth flight was prevalent; in Frank's words, 'they have wives and lives elsewhere, so I don't know what will happen to this place in the end'. Youth who stayed were frustrated and boredom was gendered. Young women typically were occupied with housework and childcare, but young males had little to do. These played rugby and soccer, and one passed the time on his 'self-made golf course'.

Finally, whether working, married, or single, women routinely used the term 'housewife' to describe their primary occupation and female-headed households were common. Not only did young women retain custody of their children and remain with parents until they established households or married, but few people married young and many did not marry at all. Women of all ages were less interested in marriage than men although married women tended to experience greater prosperity. During livelihood interviews, young women with boyfriends were most likely to say that they 'maybe want to marry but not for a few years'; yet single women often lacked interest, with a young female bluntly stating 'I like living alone' and an elderly woman saying 'I never in my life wanted to get married and now I'm too old'. In contrast to women, only one young male, who resided with an elderly grandmother, mentioned involvement in housework.

Men who performed women's work were derided by their peers. According to Anton, 'if I'm cleaning my house and a friend comes by the house, he says many things—that I must get married or get a girlfriend'. Women also pressured men to conform. In Bernadine's words, 'a man has no respect if he is doing traditional female roles—he must provide'. Expressing frustration with these norms, one male stated 'the roles are more rigid for me'.

Sources of conflict

Wupperthal was not immune to the 'coloniality of power' that has resulted in a world system predicated upon social hierarchies and the relegation of production to markets (Quijano 2000, 216). This rural coloured area was struggling to emerge from a history of underdevelopment. Responding to neoliberal influences, farmers entered into global rooibos markets, but with less access to land and financial reserves than commercial estates, their involvement was fraught with risk. Patriarchal influences also informed access to local resources, with elders and males more able to acquire subsistence assets. Female-headed households were most likely to experience food insecurity, but women of all ages were involved in commercial activities and some had entered into positions of authority. The relative fluidity of female roles contrasted with rigid male norms. Pressured to avoid women's work, many men also lacked the resources needed to establish livelihoods and had little to occupy their time. Young men were the most likely to express anxiety about their prospects as well as to engage in destructive behaviors.

Resource scarcity

Wupperthal lost significant tracts of arable land under apartheid, at which time an influx of displaced coloured people swelled the local population (Bilbe 2009). In addition to uncovering

acute land shortages, our research found that arable plots were not evenly distributed. Eighty percent of farmers grew less than two tons of rooibos per year. As a point of comparison, an industry report classified small-scale farmers as those who produce less than 10 tons of rooibos per year (Kruger and Associates 2010). With hundreds of inhabitants seeking access to farmland, the Moravian Church governed usage by renting small plots for nominal fees. Most residents felt this system supported more equitable access than would privatization, but right of usage often passed through families and waiting lists were long. As Johan noted ‘older people are established with land but middle and young adults are not established’. Due to the concentration of tea lands in more arable areas of the mission, a few farmers had larger plots and secured significantly higher yields. Four percent of respondents produced more than five tons, with one producer yielding nine tons and one cooperative manager farming between 14-15 tons. Females produced nearly the same volumes as men and were as likely as men to be high-volume producers. Among the few inhabitants who had vehicles and savings, these high-volume farmers invested in additional livelihoods and sent children to college, suggesting the emergence of a local elite.

Gender disparities were more prevalent in relation to subsistence resources as access to produce from vegetable gardens and livestock generally flowed to women through men. While widowed women often maintained assets inherited from their husbands and young women who lived in familial households had access through their fathers, among single women who managed their own households, only one possessed livestock and two had gardens. Women who headed their own households were most likely to talk about food insecurity, and those with children faced even graver challenges as their occupational mobility was curtailed. Discussing how the burden of childcare reduced women’s life chances, Olivia said that women ‘don’t have quite the same opportunities because we have to look after kids or find someone to do this’. Not only did

Olivia see this as a problem for women, but she also felt that it was a family issue ‘because the father must also be involved’ with childcare.

Development projects were a critical livelihood resource as these offered vocational training or paid participants to work. Less-established young adults were particularly eager to participate; yet funded projects were scarce giving rise to gendered conflicts. Young men who were struggling to meet expectations of manhood felt more entitled to access, but women also needed income and sought involvement. Some females encountered sexual harassment. According to David, ‘women tend to quit projects more because the men may make sexist comments or hit on women or make sexist jokes’. In the case of the leadership project, all areas of Wupperthal chose to follow our suggested policy of electing male and female leadership teams. However, in one area, some men actively opposed female involvement during leadership nominations. Elder women disagreed and nominated a young woman who won the election. Over the course of the project, this female leader had vocal supporters of both sexes; but she endured harassment from a few young men who had desired the role for themselves.

Unstable markets

Cooperative membership was a critical resource, but rooibos markets were unstable. Possessing the capacity to ferment, dry, and transport tea in bulk, Wupperthal’s producer organization could negotiate higher pricing and secure certifications that enabled direct access to international buyers. Yet a failed product upgrading initiative reified poverty and led to strife. In the mid-2000s, the cooperative went into debt to participate in a Fairtrade packaging venture that was managed by a white male entrepreneur who collaborated with two producer organizations to institute an export packaging firm in Cape Town. This scheme fell apart in 2009 after an industry

collapse in tea pricing and sales (for further information, see Keahey 2017). Lacking the reserves to pay its farmers for tea they had delivered, Wupperthal's cooperative failed an audit, resulting in the loss of certifications and buyers. By 2010, some members had left to form a smaller cooperative, but this group was awaiting initial profits. Nearly all respondents said that household savings were decimated. With less access to subsistence livelihoods, single women were more dependent on rooibos income and struggled to get by. An older woman said 'my son's wife buys some food for me to survive...but I could save if I had been paid for rooibos all these years'.

Both the struggling and newly formed producer cooperatives were democratically organized, but the market turmoil negatively impacted relations among the first group. As this larger organization struggled to navigate the financial crisis, member meetings were contentious and often ended before voting could occur. A number of women saw female leadership as the solution, with Bernadine arguing that 'men don't talk about problems—women get advice...but men bottle things up, they don't communicate'. Some men expressed an interest in bringing women into management, including the head of the newly formed cooperative who said that gender equity was a priority (this organization had a female treasurer). Yet most males and some females felt that women required more training as it was commonly assumed that men 'have more knowledge about management'. There was no time for the leaders to work with management to improve communication as events were fast moving. Aligning with an external organization, a network of predominantly male farmers planned to take over the struggling cooperative; in an attempt to delay this move, management responded by shutting down farmer meetings. This resulted in legal proceedings and the larger cooperative was liquidated in 2011.

Shifting relations

Social change is an interactive process that involves reconciling traditional arrangements with modernizing influences (Moghadam 2013). In Wupperthal, traditional roles were predicated upon a Christian worldview that was both a product of mission-based colonialism and an essential facet of local identity. In terms of gender, patriarchal tradition called for men to provide and for women to nurture, but this was an ideal that few could afford. Not only did women historically work outside of the mission as farmworkers or servants, but a number of women and men stated a preference for what they termed ‘modern’ roles. While respondents typically framed women’s roles as a matter of choice, females who entered into traditionally male spheres encountered greater obstacles and costs. In addition to resource disparities, underlying beliefs encouraged women to stay away from more physically demanding work, with Bernadine stating that ‘Church rules are not discriminatory but the vibe is that women cannot do what men can do’. Working women also were burdened by what Hochschild and Machung (1989) have termed ‘the second shift’. In Mariette’s words, ‘when a man comes home from work, he is tired and can rest. The woman is also tired but must continue to do her work as the wife’.

Despite these challenges, women tended to perceive social change as a freeing of options. Those who embraced modern roles, either out of necessity or desire, did not feel that this shift threatened traditional values. Indeed, respondents often invoked a historical interpretation of Moravian scripture by stating that men were suited to the physical labor of biblical times, but that women were adept at the mental work of modernity. This belief was fairly widespread and materially impacted everyday life. As Table 1 shows, women across the mission were more likely to manage finances than were men. Young adults paid part of their income into household accounts, but only one young man was involved in decision making whereas young women

tended to co-manage finances with their mothers. Married couples often made decisions together; but while findings suggest that men assumed responsibility as they aged, a number of elder respondents stated that women have gained greater control over household affairs in the post-apartheid era. Alcohol abuse also was cited as a factor for female control. According to Helen, ‘older men, if they are respectable, make decisions about money, but women take over if their man is drinking’.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

In contrast to women, men did not experience a freeing of roles and struggled to meet social expectations. Similarly to other studies on South African masculinity (Ratele 2008), the research team found that rigid male norms confined men in Wuppertal to narrow avenues of expression. Men could not obtain a respectable adult status without becoming familial providers, but most men lacked the resources to marry until well into middle age. As Church rules prohibited unmarried couples from cohabiting, men became unmoored from family life. Due to patriarchal norms, men faced fewer social consequences for consuming alcohol and drugs than did women who were busy with housework and childcare. With little to occupy their time, young men were most likely to abuse substances and engage in acts of violence. Domestic abuse was an occasional occurrence, but my research team concurred that male-on-male violence was more common. Discussing the reality of men’s lives, Estelle said ‘men’; and when explaining the prevalence of single mothers in his area, Johan bluntly stated, ‘many men here pass away—they drink and smoke a lot more than women’.

[Insert Table 2 Here]

Finally, age relations were impacted by political shifts. In 1994, the state mandated primary education and began providing child support grants to poor families of all races (Case, Hosegood, and Lund 2005). As Table 2 shows, educational attainment in Wupperthal differed by adult age cohort rather than by sex. In addition to completing primary school in the central village, a number of young adults had attended secondary school in regional towns and girls were as likely as boys to continue their studies. Education was highly valued among mission youth. In Rochelle's words, 'older people got more work in the past without an education. In today's times, you must have education and training'. Elder and younger inhabitants were generally supportive of one another, but age-based tensions did arise. Reminiscing about his own youth, one elderly man bitterly stated 'young people then had more respect for their parents and elders than now because young people today are modern'. In contrast, young people like Johan stressed the importance of reciprocity, saying 'if old people don't respect younger people then the youth inherently won't respect the elder'. Although most of my co-investigators were under the age of forty, my research team broadly agreed that the potential loss of elder authority was of greater threat to traditional values than were shifting women's roles.

Sources of cohesion

Inhabitants relied upon three sources of social cohesion when addressing scarcity and conflict: 1) Moravian Church leadership; 2) democratic community forums; and 3) a politics of identification based upon an ethic of generosity and mutual respect. While Church leaders governed Wupperthal, community-based democracy enabled people to voice their interests in everyday

life. Not only did social codes of conduct serve to redirect resources to those in need, but these also provided people with a sense of agency and belonging.

The Moravian Church was a traditional legal authority. It provided a similar function as African chiefs in rural black areas by regulating resources, preserving cultural tradition, and facilitating conflict resolution (Ubink 2008). As a resource regulator, the Church approved business licenses and building permits, and rented buildings and plots of land. To preserve mission traditions, it mandated Moravian membership, prohibited cohabitation outside of marriage, and revoked rights when residents broke laws. Finally, the Church provided conflict resolution services via a local network of male elders who provided spiritual guidance in cases of household or community strife. Although some of my co-investigators were critical of the bureaucratic and patriarchal nature of Church governance, the research team collectively agreed that this traditional authority maintained a fairly equitable land management system and helped ensure peace in a region marked by systemic scarcity.

Personal independence was valued and communities were democratically organized. Inhabitants had a voice in mission politics via community forums where issues were discussed and decisions were determined by majority vote as depicted in Figure 3. Adult citizens of both sexes and all ages attended meetings, but informal rules framed engagement. As Bernadine explained, ‘elders are expected to share their wisdom, middle-aged adults make a plan, and younger adults are expected to listen and learn’. Decisions included voting for representatives to lead collective projects and deciding how community resources were to be used. According to an elderly woman who was active in local politics, those who were displeased with majority vote could continue to agitate their positions by convincing others to change their mind and calling for a revote.

[Insert Figure 3 Here]

An ethic of mutual respect enabled Wupperthalers to maintain a politics of identification. My research team espoused diverse perspectives in relation to identity, but their analysis of research findings was undergirded by situated and relational awareness. During private interviews, co-investigators often emphasized the concerns of inhabitants least like themselves. Having completed secondary school, David juxtaposed his life chances with those of less-educated people, stating ‘I have the education to get a better job, but all they can do is physical labor’. Although Anton lacked the resources to establish himself, he invoked his male privilege to explain women’s barriers, noting ‘I play rugby, make friends, travel, and see places, but young women stay here doing what they must, looking after the kids, cooking for men’. Rather than focusing on her problems as a single mother, Estelle talked about the harsh treatment that men faced; and despite his background as a middle-class white man who grew up under apartheid, Frank identified with his coloured community, saying that he did not like to leave the mission because ‘some whites hate whites who mix’.

In connection with mutual respect, an ethic of generosity enabled poorer residents to access resources for everyday survival and extended familial ties helped reduce local class disparities. With her husband out of work, Rochelle’s family resided in a one-room shack without water, electricity, or toilet. Unable to access tea land, she secured occasional income by farming for extended family. Rochelle’s in-laws provided her with access to survival resources while her community supported her desire for livelihood training by electing her as farmer leader. As she discussed, ‘community is a greater family who you can go to for help...if you want to do

something to better yourself, the community support will always be there'. Extended familial ties and close community relations meant that people had avenues of support to turn to during times of crisis.

These forms of social connection provided Wupperthalers with a sense of belonging and agency. According to David, who had spent time living in Cape Town:

We are raised to accept that we have everything we need. We are raised to look after one another. If a household is struggling, everyone in the community is expected to help out. So even the poor have basic support...we have little, less than people in the cities, like supermarkets and liquor stores, but actually we are happier than they are. They say to us, you have nothing and we say, yes, but are you happy and they say no. We accept more than they do. We can live with a problem and keep working on it. We accept that things won't change overnight.

The dual sense of belonging and agency enabled inhabitants to negotiate identity within their communities. My co-investigators and other respondents often said that identity 'matters but it doesn't' as people were defined by the value they brought to their community and their efforts to better themselves. This emphasis on personal behavior represented an ideal view that obscured local disparities, but it nevertheless informed everyday relations. The expression 'staan saam' or 'stand together' was used by men to welcome women into leadership, by women in support of men's concerns, by elders who sacrificed for youth, and by relatively prosperous people who helped those in need. My research team concluded that equitable social relations were essential for combating underdevelopment. In Bernadine's words, 'if the community practices the equality that already exists with their hearts then they can improve their community as a whole'.

Discussion and conclusion

These research findings illustrate the paradoxical complexities of post-apartheid development. First, Wupperthal struggled to surmount land and resource scarcity wrought by the racialized trajectory of colonialism and apartheid. While patriarchal influences further reduced women's access to livelihoods, exacerbating food insecurity among female-headed households in particular, rigid male roles and unattainable expectations of masculinity unmoored men from family life, fueling destructive behaviors among younger and less-established men. Further research is needed to explore the breadth of subsistence abuse and male-on-male violence; however, my research team concurred that these issues negatively impacted male health and their communities as a whole. Such findings substantiate postcolonial claims that 'women in the South do not necessarily consider their agendas to be opposed to, or separate from those of men in similar circumstances' (Radcliffe 2015, 39).

Second, Wupperthal was negatively impacted by neoliberal development as a large rooibos cooperative collapsed subsequent to a failed product upgrading scheme. At the same time, participation in agriculture and commerce enabled women to assume positions of relative authority. Not only did most women manage household finances and pass down control to their daughters, but by actively negotiating their entry into development initiatives, some women were able to attain leadership roles. Third, colonial missions played a central role in establishing the foundations for racial segregation, but Christianity was essential to local identity. Despite some disgruntlement with Moravian Church governance, mission inhabitants felt that resources were managed in an equitable manner and appreciated the Church's peacekeeping role. Similarly to other postcolonial feminist scholars working in the southern African context, my research team found that power and identity were neither static nor universal, but rather were negotiated

through complex social relations that were situated in place and time (Chilisa, Major, and Khudu-Petersen 2017). Democratic community forums and egalitarian codes of conduct enabled Wupperthalers to voice their interests, access resources, and negotiate difference.

Feminist scholars have noted that participatory research offers the means to ‘move toward an implicated, embodied, reflexive and responsible participative inquiry’ (Janes 2016, 75). In the case of Wupperthal, local knowledge proved vital in terms of unpacking sources of conflict and cohesion. Like other Northern scholars who have worked with Southern populations, I found that participatory methods supported the connection of local and expert knowledge, but that a vigilant sensitivity to power was necessary in order to prevent a process of recolonization (Schurr and Segebart 2012). By demonstrating a willingness to listen and learn, I enabled the research team to establish the trust-based relations needed to investigate sensitive topics. My co-investigators and other participants likewise taught me that a spirit of generosity and mutual respect is essential if communities of research and practice are to genuinely connect with and learn from difference. These local and relational insights may inform strategies for addressing the material and ideological divisions impeding development on a more global scale. Indeed, the time for building a politics of identification has never been more important than now.

Notes on contributor

Jennifer Keahey PhD is Assistant Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Senior Sustainability Scholar at Arizona State University. As a development sociologist with expertise in agriculture and trade, she studies power in relation to rural livelihoods, market-based sustainability, and stakeholder participation. Committed to the principles of feminist praxis,

Keahey connects development knowledges by reuniting social theory with empirical observation and by integrating methods for research and practice.

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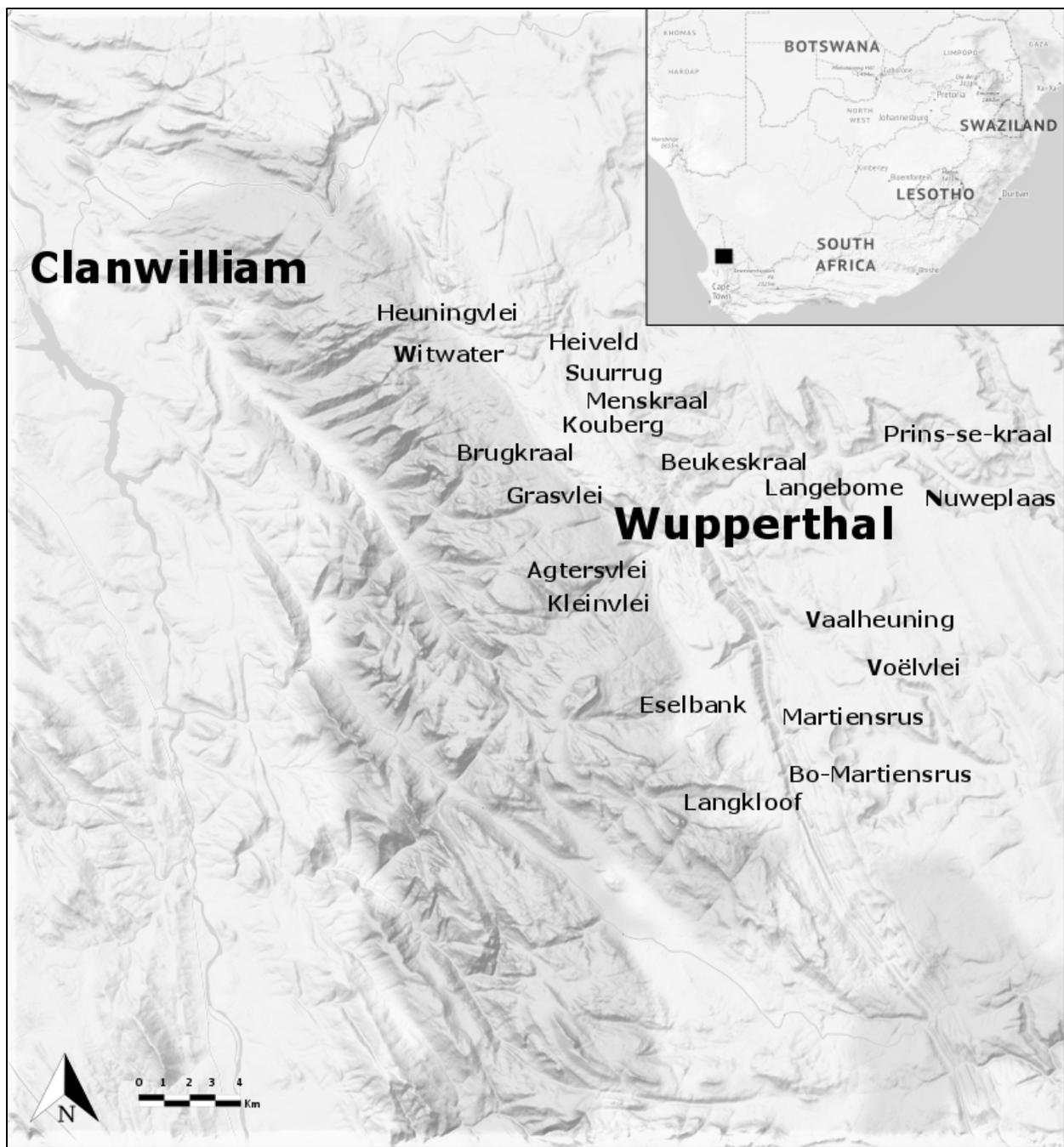


Figure 1. Wupperthal communities.

Note: Distances are approximate.



Figure 2. Co-investigators analyze research findings.



Figure 3. Community decision-making.

Table 1. Involvement in household financial decision-making by sex and age (N=48)

	Female				Male			
	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-59</i>	<i>60+</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-59</i>	<i>60+</i>	<i>Total</i>
Yes	3	11	7	21 (87.5%)	1	4	7	12 (50%)
No	2	1	--	3 (12.5 %)	5	5	2	12 (50%)
Total	5 (21%)	12 (50%)	7 (29%)	24 (100%)	6 (25%)	9 (37.5%)	9 (37.5%)	24 (100%)

Table 2. Years of formal education by sex and age (N=48)

Sex <i>Age</i>	Female				Male			
	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-59</i>	<i>60+</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-59</i>	<i>60+</i>	<i>Total</i>
0-4 years	--	--	3	3 (12.5%)	--	--	2	2 (8%)
5-9 years	1	10	4	15 (62.5%)	1	5	7	13 (54%)
10-12 years	4	2	--	6 (25%)	5	3	--	8 (33%)
Tertiary	--	--	--	--	--	1 ^a	--	1 (4%)
Total	5 (21%)	12 (50%)	7 (29%)	24 (100%)	6 (25%)	9 (37.5%)	9 (37.5%)	24 (100%)

Note:

a. Sole white inhabitant.