

Farm Bank: The Leveraging of Capital on a Limpopo Citrus Farm

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Abstract : This paper applies a Bourdieusian lens to a Limpopo Citrus farm referred to as Malapeng in order to understand how conflict and authority are reproduced in Malapeng in the larger context of the South African agricultural industry. The South African citrus industry is an export industry, with South Africa being the second largest exporter of citrus in the world. Agriculture in South Africa has undergone extensive liberalisation since 1994, and many historical patterns, such as the racial divide in agriculture and the exploitation of black workers, are still continuously reproduced on farms in South Africa. This chapter looks at the institution of the 'farm bank' on Malapeng, which provides loans to workers whose livelihood strategies have been otherwise limited both by the larger agricultural context they are a part of and by the owner of Malapeng. By discussing the role of farm banks in a conflict between two permanent workers, the chapter illustrates how various oppositional discourses are strategically emphasised or de-emphasised at different times by the actors on Malapeng depending on their immediate goals. Farm bank proves to be a nexus of various discourses on Malapeng as the actors on Malapeng all construct farm bank in different (and often contradictory) terms in order to explain their influence and responsibility on Malapeng. The findings of the paper are based on data collected during fieldwork for an MA dissertation and are based on observation and semi-structured interviews conducted in 2021.

Keywords : agriculture, South Africa, capital, labour

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