The goats are my friends, my children, my everything!

– A study of remote farmers and farm workers in Botswana and their attitudes to their goats

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Acknowledgments

Abstract

Through offering a variety of funding programmes, in recent years the government of Botswana has made an attempt to promote goat production, partly with the aim of alleviating poverty among the resource-poor rural population. Goat production is also emerging as an alternative for the non-poor, as the goat market is expected to grow and as goats are perceived as a good complement or alternative for cattle, as they are better adapted to the more frequent climate change-induced droughts expected in southern Africa. In this thesis, I explore how animal owners and farm workers perceive goats in different ways. Using an analytical framework drawing on political ecology, I place goats in the centre of the narrative in this thesis, with emphasis on how the participants of this study manage their goats. I also investigate how unequal power relations between animal owners and farm workers are described and reproduced. The concept of passive resistance proved useful when exploring how farm workers find ways to resist unjust labour control from their employers and the concept of power in examining the asymmetrical relationship between animal owners and farm workers. Empirical data for the analyses were collected, using a variety of qualitative research methods, during field work in rural Botswana in early 2017. Using the method of sensitising concepts within the grounded theory approach, I began analysing the empirical data already in the field. The results showed that farm workers are often underpaid, exploited and mistreated by their employers and that this unjust treatment of farm workers has negative spillover effects on goats. Overall, this study shows that it is crucial to critically evaluate the social processes involved in goat production in order to improve social justice among humans and improve animal welfare among goats.

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1   Introduction

The Botswana livestock sector has long been dominated by a large-scale cattle industry, with larger ruminants such as cattle often being prioritised in the political agenda. Due to the dominance of cattle production, which is a domain reserved mostly for men in Botswana society, small ruminants such as goats have been more invisible – both in the political sphere and in society at large. However, in recent years the government of Botswana has begun to promote goat production and now offers a variety of funding programmes for those eager to start their own goat business. In this study, I explored how goat owners not living on their farms (in Botswana referred to as "remote farmers") and their farm workers (in Botswana referred to as "herd boys") relate to each other and their environment. I used a framework grounded in ideas from political ecology to explore how ecology and politics constantly impact upon each other. My main interest was to determine how these actors, in different ways, perceive goats in their everyday lives. In addition, I focused on unequal power relations, drawing particularly on Luke's (2005) understanding of power and Scott's (1985) conceptualisation of passive resistance as one form of reaction to oppression. In particular, I examined the relations between remote farmers and farm workers, and farm workers' reactions to their frequently perceived unjust treatment by their employers. Although both male and female goat owners were included in the study, small ruminants such as goats are often more associated with women, since both women and goats tend to have lower social status and are at the margins of Botswanan society. However, women have been specifically targeted by several recent Botswanan government programmes for starting up goat production. As the focus in this thesis was on power relations in goat production, it is relevant to acknowledge how (power) relations between farm owners, farm workers and animals are affected by the farmer being female (none of the farm workers found were female). To better understand how women are perceived as famers and, more specifically, as goat producers, I used the analytical tool of intersectionality to examine how the social constructed categories of gender and non-humans (in this case goats) intersected with each other. I also used intersectionality when examining how age, nationality and class intersected with the low-status job of farm worker. This qualitative study was based on field work in two villages in rural Botswana, sites where there were plenty of goats and goat keepers.

1.1   Aim and research questions

The overall research question I sought to explore when conducting this research was how remote farmers and farm workers relate to each other and their surrounding environment (in particular their goats). Specific research questions examined in the study were:

How are unequal power relations reproduced and described by remote farmers and farm workers?

How do farm workers and remote farmers, respectively, perceive goats and goat production?

To answer these questions, I needed to understand the complex set of dimensions included in these relations. I therefore used the analytical approach of intersectionality to explore how gender, nationality and class intersect and affect the relations between different actors involved in goat management.

2 Methodology and methods

This field study in rural Botswana was carried out between 13 February and 28 March 2017. Throughout the entire process of collecting data, I was guided by qualitative research methods that are described in more detail in this chapter. When seeking to gain in-depth knowledge about specific contexts, in this case remote farmers and farm workers, qualitative research methods are preferable (Conroy, 2005), since they can provide a good understanding of how people perceive their own lives and circumstances (Russell, 2006). Together with the interpreters, I organised focus group interviews, village mapping and wealth ranking exercises in both field site villages. This was followed by individual interviews during farm visits. The field work ended when I had collected enough data to answer my research questions, as prescribed by Kvale & Brinkmann (2014).

In both villages, I first held formal meetings with small livestock officers at the Department of Animal Production, to introduce myself and the aim of this study. Before starting village mapping and wealth ranking exercises, as well as the individual interviews, I told all informants that it was voluntary to participate in this study and that their real names would not be included in this thesis. Anonymising the informants was important, not least since some topics were perceived by them as sensitive, such as farm workers' experiences of being exploited by their employers.

Using different methods enabled me to explore goat management both through a group perspective and through an individual perspective. In other words, by using a variety of participatory and qualitative methods (Conroy, 2005), I was able to get a fuller picture of the participants' lives. In addition, using a variety of methods to explore relations between remote farmers, farm workers and goats was a way to increase the validity of the findings (Gillham, 2000).

2.1 Selection of topic, field sites and informants

On arriving in Botswana, my overall research questions were rather broad to begin with. I only knew that I was interested in gaining more knowledge about the goat sector. During the first day of field work, I met a middle-aged farmer who had started goat production one year earlier. He guided me around the farm, showing his two houses, and then we reached a fire place where an old man and his wife were sipping cups of hot tea. The old man readily described the tastiness of the tea, containing fresh goat milk that he had obtained from the goats that morning. Eager to start off the first interview, I began to ask questions of the middle-aged farmer, who explained how he started his goat business through government funds. Just before we were about to leave, the old man at the fire started to share his lifelong and rich experience of livestock management. Ever since he was a little boy, he had been involved in farming and was now spending his olden days on a farm, taking care of another man's goats. In subsequent weeks of farm visits, I started to realise that this was a common set-up on farms, with the person owning the livestock living in a larger village or city and a worker living on the farm full-time. In Botswana these farmers who do not reside on their farms and often (but not always) have the farm as an additional income or hobby, alongside more lucrative work in town, are commonly referred to as 'remote farmers'. I continued meeting farmers who resided on their farm, and often had farming as their main income, and so-called 'remote farmers'. However, I gradually realised two things: i) Since remote farmers often spend a limited time on their farm, it is generally not the farmer, but rather their farm worker, who does the day-to-day work and has more everyday dealings with the goats and ii) many remote farmers were reluctant to let me speak with these farm workers, and both farmers and officials in the agricultural sector considered farm workers' opinions on goat management to be rather irrelevant. This made me eager to explore how remote farmers and

their farm workers relate to each other and how they perceive the goats. Therefore, the research topic emerged from what I explored during farm visits and was thereby adapted to the local context. When referring to farm labourers in this Master's thesis project, I used the term "farm workers", even though the informants consistently used the term "herd boys". Using the term herd boys when referring to farm labourers is not something neutral or unproblematic in Botswana, as it is part of a structure that diminishes their role and status in society. Using the name herd boys to label farm workers shows how it is socially acceptable to refer to grown-up men as (incapable) boys. This said, I used the term farm workers instead of herd boys, with the aim of showing these farm workers respect.

The field work was conducted mainly in two villages, one situated approximately 30 km from the capital, Gaborone, and the other situated about 40 km from Gaborone. Before starting to visit the individual farmers, I first met the livestock officer (responsible for sheep and goats) in each village to describe the purpose of the study. My local supervisor at Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (BUAN), together with a researcher from the Department of Agricultural Research, helped me to establish contacts with officers at the local Department of Animal Production in both villages.

The livestock officer for each village chose the informants for this study, based on my request to meet farmers involved in goat management, working on either subsistence or commercial level. Furthermore, I was eager to meet both female and male farmers, in a variety of ages, to broaden my understanding of goat farmers and how they describe goat management. The selection of farm worker informants was based on including both Zimbabwean and Batswana[1] workers, whom I met through remote farmers during farm visits.

Since I was dependent on the local livestock officers when selecting informants, as they contacted the farmers, there was an obvious risk of under-representation of particular groups. For example, farm workers were not considered by the livestock officers to be relevant informants in this study and therefore they were not invited to the group exercises, so important insights about farm management may have been lost. However, through establishing relationships with the remote farmers, I also got to know farm workers and was then able to include their perspectives in this study.

2.1.1 Description of informants

This section provides some information regarding the farmers and farm workers interviewed. Within these categories of informants, ages and nationalities varied. In total, I conducted approximately 35 individual interviews, varying in length and depth. I met all informants on the farms they either owned or worked on, which enabled me to see how they were involved in different farm tasks. I was able to visit some informants more than once and spend more time with them, while I only had the chance to interview other informants briefly. Therefore some informants had the opportunity to express their views more extensively than others. In the analysis, the depth of the information provided by various informants was taken into account in my judgement about the kinds of conclusions that could be drawn. A number of more informal conversations with different actors regarding goat production also took place during my time in Botswana, but these are not included in the total informant number.

Despite my focus on remote farmers and farm workers, I also decided to include the farmers I interviewed who lived on their farms and who did not employ a farm worker. I hereafter refer to these as 'present farmers', to distinguish them from remote farmers. While it can be noted that neither present nor remote farmers are homogeneous groups, overall (and of relevance to this study) remote farmers had less interaction with their goats than present

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[1]Batswana (plural) refers to a group of people originating from Botswana, and Motswana (singular) to an individual person originating from Botswana.

farmers. Moreover, as seen in the wealth ranking (section 5.1.3), remote farmers were on average wealthier than present farmers. My main reason for including present farmers in the study was that it provided me with a richer understanding of the varieties of goat production in Botswana. It also became evident during interviews that the present farmers often had ideas about farm workers which resembled ideas held by the remote farmers, which indicated that farmers' ideas of farm workers are part of a wider discourse or ideological structure in Botswanan society that cannot be solved simply by saying that remote farmers are to blame for the oppression of farm workers. Furthermore, I found interesting similarities between present farmers and farm workers, who spend more time with the goats, and contrasts between these and remote farmers, which enabled me to have a discussion about geographical distance affecting human-animal relationships.

I interviewed 15 remote farmers, five of whom were women and the majority of whom had not received any funding through a government programme. All remote farmers had external incomes, either from jobs or pensions, and resided for most of their time in a larger village or in a city. They were all fluent in English, often rather well educated and most had previous experience or knowledge of farming. For example, some of the remote farmers had grown up on farms themselves and were therefore knowledgeable about livestock management. All informants who hired at least one farm worker were categorised as being remote farmers in this study. Furthermore, compared with present farmers, remote farmers were better off financially. Most remote farmers had at least 100 goats, which meant that in most cases they had larger production units and better kraals (paddocks in which the goats are kept on farms) than present farmers. The main difference between remote and present farmers was that remote farmers employed farm worker(s), whereas present farmers did not.

During the field work, I also interviewed 10 present farmers, seven of whom were women. Despite the overarching research question concerning relations between remote farmers, farm workers and goats, I found it relevant to include these present farmers in the study, as determining their situation gave me a fuller understanding of the range of conditions for goat production in Botswana. Interviewing present farmers also helped me in analysing the perspectives and situation of remote farmers, by being able to compare their perspectives and situations with those of present farmers. The present farmers stayed full-time on their farms, although some of them took temporary off-farm jobs, and they often worked together with family and neighbours in the goat production. I categorised informants as present farmers when they did not have any farm worker working for them. A few present farmers had previously employed a farm worker, but most of them had never been able to do so because of their financial situation. The majority of the present farmers interviewed had received funding and training through one of the government programmes. They were often less educated and had less money and farm equipment than remote farmers. Moreover, most of the present farmers were new to goat management and were often engaged in several agricultural activities, such as poultry production and crop production for household consumption. Most were not fluent in English and therefore preferred to speak in Setswana. Regarding the size of their production unit, the present farmers I met owned less than 100 goats, but in most cases more than 20 goats.

Finally, I interviewed 11 farm workers, six of whom were from Zimbabwe. Some of them had previous knowledge of livestock management through earlier farm worker positions on other farms. Some of them had grown up on farms in either Botswana or Zimbabwe. In my understanding, the Zimbabwean farm workers had less previous experience of farming than the Batswana farm workers. According to the remote farmers, farm workers were expected to work and stay full-time on the farms, but some of them also took small jobs outside the farms to increase their income, although they did not always inform the remote farmer about this. Of the farm workers I met, only one was fluent in English and the Zimbabwean farm workers had differing levels of fluency in Setswana. Due to their rather low income from

farm work, they were in most cases less well-off (in financial terms) than both remote farmers and present farmers. Few farm workers owned their own livestock, but some farm workers were paid in livestock instead of money and therefore had some own livestock.

2.2   Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Before explaining the participatory mapping and ranking methods used in this study, I provide a brief introduction to the broader approach and method of participatory rural appraisal (PRA). A fundamental component in PRA is the understanding that participatory approaches can enable local people to share and analyse their own knowledge and life conditions (Chambers, 1994). Visualisation techniques, such as community mapping and wealth ranking, that rely upon local people producing knowledge are often associated with PRA. Semi-structured interviews (presented in more detail in section 2.2.4), in combination with various visual techniques such as village mapping (section 2.2.1) and wealth ranking (section 2.2.2), were used in this case. One advantage of using visual techniques when collecting data is that it can encourage local people to actively engage in the research process, through sharing their knowledge and discussing different issues with each other. In addition, visual techniques are ongoing processes where people have the chance to add and correct information along the way (Conroy, 2005). Furthermore, combining different PRA methods is useful for so-called methodological triangulation, which involves the researcher cross-checking information from several sources, to ensure that the findings are correct and that not only dominant individuals are able to share information (Gillham, 2000). In this case, I used triangulation in several ways, both through asking the informants the same questions to ensure that I got correct information from several sources and through cross-checking information with my local supervisor and interpreters. However, it is not possible to triangulate all information, such as people's subjective experiences and opinions. For example, I was able to cross-check information on the formal structure of advisory services, but not the informants' feelings or personal experiences since these varied between individuals. Here, triangulation helped me understand the variety of perspectives on an issue, rather than simply accepting the dominant perspective. Furthermore, in PRA it is crucial that local people are those owning the knowledge. In practical terms, this means that people coming from the outside – in this case the interpreters and I – should be humble, relaxed and take on the role of learner. Therefore, it is important to hand over control to the informants and be self-critical of how one is influencing the situation as a researcher (Conroy, 2005). In my role as facilitator, I therefore had to constantly ask who owned the information, who was steering the process and who got the opportunity to speak during the different exercises. In line with Conroy (2005), it was then important to always respect the skills and knowledge of all the remote farmers and farm workers I met.

2.2.1   Village mapping

Village mapping, a method used within PRA, is one of several visual methods that can enable people who normally do not perceive themselves as well educated to explain complex relationships and issues tangible in their everyday lives. One of the advantages of doing a village mapping is that collective knowledge about a place can be generated through several people working and discussing together. In addition, exercises such as village mapping can allow people who are often politically weaker and poorer, who normally tend to be excluded from such events, to be included in analysis and discussion (Pretty *et al.*, 1995).

In both villages, the field work started off with a group of informants drawing a map of their own village. With the help of the interpreter, I briefly introduced the aim and procedure of making a village map, underlining that I wanted to understand the place they live and work in, rather than raising expectations that this exercise was going to improve the community. This was to avoid creating false expectations and give a realistic picture and thereby the

informants could choose for themselves whether they wanted to be part of the exercise or not (Conroy, 2005). My aim was to let the participants take as much control over the situation as possible. They started to make a visual picture of their village and, whenever they got stuck in the process, I asked questions such as: Where do you find water for your animals? Where do children go to school? Where do you let the goats out on grazing? I did not determine more specifically what they should include in the map (Pretty *et al.*, 1995). Thereafter, the informants continued to draw whatever they wanted to include in the map and the different resources they perceived as being important for them in the village.

During the exercises, the interpreter and I tried to take a step back and listen carefully to the information that the participants shared with us. However, during the first village mapping, we faced a challenge when one participant did not seem to be willing to engage in the exercise, something that affected the rest of the group. This participant left before the exercise was finished and the village mapping then continued in a smoother manner. When visiting the farmer who left early, she explained that she was going through some personal struggles and therefore had found it difficult to engage in the group exercises. During this first village mapping, I believe that we as facilitators did not hand over control sufficiently, but became too engaged ourselves since it was a challenge to get everyone involved. In the second village, it was easier to carry out the exercise, since all participants seemed very excited and engaged in the task of visualising their village.

Village mapping in this specific study was helpful in several ways. First, since I was not familiar with the villages previously, the visualisations provided lots of information about the physical place and about what the informants perceived as being important for them in the places where their farms were located. Second, the village mapping helped when navigating to the farms, since the farmers often lived in scattered places and the driver could not always find the way otherwise. Finally, the exercise worked as a form of ice-breaker when visiting the farmers for the individual interviews, as we had already met and had started to build trust.

2.2.2   Wealth ranking

Participatory wealth ranking can be described as a tool that captures differences in standards of living as perceived by the informants themselves, thus making it possible to gain insight into relative social stratification (Chambers, 1994). In both villages, I carried out wealth ranking exercises (results presented in section 5.1.3) with a group of remote farmers and present farmers. The ranking started off by the informants reflecting and discussing about what wealth meant to them. Through everything they shared, it was possible to get a better understanding of how they understood and measured wealth and well-being (Pretty *et al.*, 1995). Based on this discussion, they agreed upon three different wealth categories present in their local context, namely poor, medium-rich and rich. During the second stage of the exercise, they categorised themselves and their farm workers in the wealth ranking and described in more detail what this meant for them. Since farm workers were not present during the wealth ranking exercise, I conducted individual wealth ranking exercises when visiting them on the farms and included the findings in the final result.

2.2.3   Focus group interviews

According to Conroy (2005), group discussions and focus group interviews can be a helpful way to gain an understanding of the general context where the field study takes place. Focus group interviews can also be a useful method to complement individual interviews and it is suggested that they take place in the beginning of a research project (Conroy, 2005). At both field sites, I therefore started off by first meeting a group of remote and present farmers, to explore how they perceived goat management. The focus group interviews were conducted in connection with the community mapping and wealth ranking exercises, to first get a more

general picture of opportunities and challenges in goat management. These focus group interviews helped me to better understand the informants' priorities and their differing situations on farms (Pretty *et al*., 1995).

2.2.4 Semi-structured interviews

All interviews were based on a semi-structured interview (SSI) approach, where I had prepared some general themes and open-ended questions relating to goat production, before meeting the informants. SSI is included in the participatory methods and can be characterised as being neither a random everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire. This means that SSI differ from structured interviews in being less formal and more conversational in character (Robson, 2011). The basic themes focusing on goat management that guided every interview situation in this study aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the informants' own perceptions of farming and how they understood their own lives. To make sure that my themes seemed relevant in the local context, I first elaborated on different themes with my local supervisor and the interpreters, before starting the actual interviews. One of the advantages of using SSI, which was apparent during my field work, is that the informants had an opportunity to freely express their own thoughts and opinions about their own lives. In order to allow them to express their own experiences, I had to take a step back and not take too much control over the direction of the interview (Conroy, 2005). In line with what Robson (2011) argues, the SSI approach helped me to keep an open mind during the field work and to focus the study on what the informants emphasised as being most important to them. One crucial aspect when conducting SSI is to be self-critical and aware that the interviewer may affect the interview situation. For example, specific interview questions may shape how informants choose to answer and, perhaps even more importantly, the researcher can have an impact on how the informants choose to answer these questions (Pretty *et al*., 1995). Despite all the advantages of using SSI, it should be clear that the interviews were not conversations between equal actors, since the informants were not involved in deciding interview themes or when the interview should start or end, and had limited control over how their answers were interpreted (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014).

2.2.5 Participant observation

In addition to all the methods presented above, I also used participant observation, as I carefully observed how people managed their animals, what farm tasks different people were involved in and the surroundings in which the informants lived. Observations like these revealed aspects that were not explicitly stated during interviews and exercises and aspects that were beyond verbal descriptions and words. Through observations, I was able to see how farm workers took on their daily chores, how women worked in the fields, who cooked meals over the fire, how farmers milked their goats and how the informants interacted with each other. The participatory element may be lacking in this, but what is important is for the researcher to get involved in everyday practices, as a way of learning and taking the perspective of the farmer (Conroy, 2005). Thus for example I involved myself in farm tasks such as milking goats, cooking traditional food over an open fire, collecting eggs in poultry houses, treating goats' feet with thick grease, harvesting sugar cane in the fields and feeding dogs with boiled goat intestines. Including participant observation as a method was important in several ways. It helped me to get a better understanding of relations between remote farmers and farm workers and how farm activities are carried out, and worked as a tool for finding new questions to ask the informants.

2.3   Literature review

In addition to the qualitative research methods used, as described above, I also complemented the qualitative data with relevant literature in this research field. Conducting a literature

review helped me gain a better understanding of what earlier researchers had already found regarding goat production in Botswana and gave me a fuller picture of the context that I wanted to study. In this sense, the literature review helped me to "*identify, locate and analyse documents containing information related to the research problem*" (Gay & Airasian, 2003:16). Furthermore, the literature review revealed that very little research had been done on farm workers' situation in animal production in Botswana, which gave me an even greater motivation to carry out this specific study and pointed out its relevance for the broader research community. In the literature review, my main focus was on material that could help me in the process of "*designing, conducting and interpreting the data obtained in the study*" (*ibid*: 28).

2.4   Field notes

Throughout the entire process of conducting the field work, I consistently took notes on everything that could relate to the topic I was exploring (Southwold-Llewellyn, 2002). Thus I made notes in supervisor meetings, in small talks with animal science students and during the interviews, participatory activities and daily reflections. In the field notes I included detailed descriptions about the people I met, the surroundings, my feelings and everything that appeared relevant to me during the farm visits. Furthermore, I took many photos and recorded all the interviews with my voice recorder, to remember as much as possible from the field work. Writing detailed notes during the field work was important for several reasons. Not only did it help me to remember the farms and informants in greater detail, but it also helped me to start the analysis of the empirical data already in the field.

2.5   Limitations during field work

2.5.1   New to the cultural context

I had never been to Botswana before and this was clearly a limitation in that I did not know much about what could be potentially sensitive topics or subjects to discuss with the informants. Therefore, it was very valuable to work together with the two local interpreters, who not only translated the interviews, but also explained the cultural context and made it easier for me to be sensitive to the local conditions. Before, during and after meeting the informants, I was always able to freely ask the interpreter whenever something was unclear. Understanding a new culture and why people act in certain ways is not something that takes place overnight. For me, time was probably the most limiting factor and greatest obstacle to penetrating deeper into the cultural context and fully understanding how and why people do things. Therefore, it was a disadvantage that I did not have the possibility to conduct a longer period of field work.

2.5.2   Dependence on interpreters

During the field work, I worked most of the time with the same two interpreters, with a few exceptions. Both interpreters were Master's students at BUAN, studying animal science, and therefore had a rich knowledge of livestock management, both theoretical and practical. This proved to be very valuable, since they could easily establish relationships with the informants and both felt at ease on the farms we visited. The interpreters translated the interviews, helped clarify responses after the interviews and answered any context-specific questions that I had. Still, not everything can be easily translated, as things sometimes go too fast. For example, it was challenging for the interpreters to translate all details during the group exercises. This was a disadvantage for me compared with carrying out a qualitative study in my own cultural setting and in my own language. Here, I want to clarify some aspects of the languages used during the interview situations and how this may have affected the quality of the data. With

few exceptions, the interviews were held in Setswana or in a mixture of Setswana and English. I was therefore reliant on the ability of the interpreters to translate the answers correctly. Since I got to know and build relationships with both translators, I was confident that the answers they translated for me during the interviews were reliable. Furthermore, the fact that most interviews were held either in Setswana or in a mixture of Setswana and English means that the majority of the responses reproduced in this thesis (see Chapter 5) should not be taken as literal quotes. Moreover, I only use quotes that I believe truly reflect the message that the informants wanted to impart during the interviews.

Conducting field work in a context where the language spoken is not one's mother tongue involves some obvious limitations. There is constant uncertainty in how the interpreter translates questions, for example if the translated interview questions were posed in academic language, it might have created barriers between me and the informants. In Botswana, young people are usually comfortable in speaking English, but in the villages I visited both young and old people seemed to prefer speaking Setswana. It was important for me that they had the opportunity to choose the interview language themselves and this would not have been possible without the help of an interpreter.

Working with an interpreter came with some challenges. Misunderstandings occurred and we did not always agree upon how to do things, but still it was very enriching and I would never have been able to conduct this field work without all their help. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2014), the most important consideration is to work with an interpreter who is culturally accepted and who does not take control over the interview situation. Here, it is important to emphasise that neither of the interpreters had any previous experience of interpreting and had not received any training in this. The most challenging aspect when working with interpreters was probably that we did not agree upon how to approach the informants during the interviews. For me it was important to take a bottom-up-approach, where I was the learner and the informants owned the knowledge. Therefore, I did not correct their answers or take on the role of expert. In contrast, the interpreters were part of a hierarchical structure, where they as Master's students saw themselves as being experts in relation to the often resource-poor farmers. They often corrected the informants, gave advice and sometimes stated that our time was more important than the farmers' time. Having differing views on this created some tensions between the interpreters and me, while at the same time as it was a good basis for interesting discussions. In the end, I believe that we all learned a lot from working with each other and the fact that we could openly share our experiences with each other made the work very enriching.

2.6   My role as a researcher

During one of the first farm visits, the interpreter pointed out to me that the informant was referring to me using the Setswana word '*lekgoa*'. In English, this word means 'foreigner' or 'white person' and it is often used in Setswana when addressing a rich and powerful person. In my attempt to take on the role of learner, it was a struggle to remain in that role when the informants often approached me as an expert and expected me to advise them on how to manage their goats. I had to reflect and be self-critical of how I came across in the different settings during field work. For example, the fact that I had received a scholarship that enabled me to travel to Botswana may have created a distance to the informants, who in most cases perceived themselves as poor. This meant that I had to be aware of, and sensitive to, the dynamics in the relations between me and the informants. Travelling to the farms in a four-wheel drive car and having a driver probably did not help to reduce the distance to some of the informants regarding class. However, due to flooded roads and the limited time during field work, there were few other options of transportation.

2.7   Ethical considerations

Before the focus group interviews and every individual interview, I took time to describe my aim and purpose with the study to every informant. Similarly, when I carried out participant observation, I ensured that they understood that I wanted to learn more about goat management and their lives on their farms. In my more informal talks with researchers and staff at the university, the people I talked to knew my reason for being in Botswana and that I was there as a student. During all interviews, I asked for permission to record with my voice recorder and kept my notebook visible, so that the informants were aware that I was a researcher. Not hiding my purpose for coming to Botswana was an important aspect when building trust with the informants (Place *et al*., 2007). All informants were promised that their real names would not be included in this thesis, and therefore I use pseudonyms for all informants. At all stages of the work reported in this thesis, my aim was to remain respectful of all informants and try to understand their perspectives.

2.8   Analysing the empirical data

In line with the PRA approach, I started to analyse my material and my role in the research process already in the field (Pretty *et al*., 1995). When transcribing the interview responses, in the evening after the field work, I always took the time to write some short reflections. I reflected upon how I might have affected the situation and whether I could recognise any common patterns from the farm visits. In that sense, the analysis of the data started already in the field. The process of analysing the data was highly inspired by the research method and approach of grounded theory, which involves a constant interplay between collecting the empirical material and analysing the material (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Doing so starts the creative process of theorising and trying to find some common patterns in the collected data. This avoids a situation where the data are forced into some fixed theories and, instead, the analytical process begins with the empirical data. In the present case, the work proceeded as follows: I collected data, analysed the data already in the field and related the results to relevant theories – and then collected more data related to the theories (see Patton, 1980). In more formal terms, this could be described as sensitising concepts, which Charamaz (2005: 259) describes as follows: "[sensitizing concepts are] *those background ideas that inform the overall research problem*". Sensitising concepts are part of the grounded theory approach and the method helps find a direction during the research process. In this case, I based my theory in the findings that emerged during the data collection, and then went back to collect more data to continue the process of analysing the material. However, in line with Gilgun (2002), it is crucial to understand that sensitising concepts make one aware of some specific aspects in a situation – with the risk of missing out on other important aspects in the context being explored. Therefore, I also involved other people, such as my supervisors, in discussing my results and helping me see things that I did not spot immediately, while also relying on sensitising concepts for directing my analysis.

3 Background

This chapter provides background information on the historical and current situation of the agricultural sector in Botswana and information regarding goat production. Thereafter, I briefly describe some government funding programmes of relevance to this thesis, gender in relation to different animal species and finally ethnicity in the Botswana context. My aim was to describe the context in which remote farmers and farm workers work and live, in order to better understand the opportunities and challenges they may face in everyday life.

3.1 The agricultural sector in Botswana

3.1.1 Historical and present situation

Since Botswana claimed its independence, in 1966, the agricultural sector has gone through some major changes. During colonial times, when the UK occupied the land, Botswana was one of the poorest countries in the world. Valuable minerals had not yet been exploited and the agricultural sector was the main contributor to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). However, shortly after independence, the agricultural sector decreased in importance due to the discovery of diamonds and other minerals (Seleka, 2005). Agriculture has declined in importance ever since. In 1966 the sector contributed almost 43% to GDP, compared with less than 2% in 2016 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). Not only are fewer people involved in farming today compared with pre-independence, but research shows that yield levels have also declined dramatically in recent decades and Botswana has become increasingly dependent on importing food from other countries (Seleka, 2005). Still, many people are involved in a variety of farm activities today and most people living in rural areas depend on agriculture for a living. Today the cattle industry dominates the agricultural sector and Botswana is an important beef exporter to the European Union. Cattle production is prioritised nationally and much investment has been made by the government when it comes to marketing, management and access to advisory services in cattle production (Hellyer *et al*., 2015).

3.1.2 Production systems in farming

To clarify some central concepts in this thesis related to livestock production, this section summarises the agricultural production systems studied and what distinguishes them from each other. Broadly speaking, goats can be kept in different production systems, where the largest percentage of goat production globally is classified as extensive systems on subsistence level (Escareño *et al*., 2011). This is reflected also in rural Botswana, where most farmers operate in an extensive system and where very few are commercial farmers. Most goats in Botswana graze on communal land, where the farmer has limited control over breeding, spread of diseases and the nutritional value of feeds. However, some producers work on a commercial and semi-commercial level. Those systems are more intensive in character, often with more advanced technical equipment available and the focus is then to generate a larger surplus from production. In Botswana, the goat sector is dominated by subsistence farmers, the majority of whom are women living in rural areas. Over 80% of all subsistence farmers in Botswana own small ruminants and approximately 70% of these farmers own goats (Hellyer *et al*., 2015).

There are some obvious challenges when working in an extensive agricultural system. Beside the obstacles mentioned above, the struggle for a sufficient and stable water supply is a major challenge for subsistence farmers. According to an International Livestock Research Institute report from 2013, goat farmers in Botswana struggle with water supply and some must travel

long distances to ensure a water supply for their goats. Drilling a borehole close to the farm is often too costly for resource-poor farmers and not having a secure source of water can cause much suffering for goats during the dry season (Bahta *et al*., 2013). However, it emerged during the field work that the informants had often found their own solutions to ensure a water supply for their goats. Some used a neighbour's drill hole, others collected rainwater from the roofs of their houses and some remote farmers brought water from the city.

3.2 Managing and valuing livestock

3.2.1 Value of livestock

Having small ruminants, such as goats and sheep, is often very important both financially and culturally for farmers operating in a small traditional farm system. Botswana's total goat population was an estimated 1,259,000 in 2015 (Statistics Botswana, 2016). Statistics show that 99% of all goats in Botswana are owned by subsistence farmers, most of them women living in rural areas (Hellyer *et al*., 2015).

There are various reasons why small ruminants are so important for subsistence farmers. Much research and policy has focused on the economic value of livestock to a household; selling meat, milk and other livestock products can be a way out of poverty. Beside, livestock can be described as a *liquid asset*, which means a resource that can easily be liquidised into cash in times of need (Hossain *et al*., 2004). Owning livestock also provides easy access to food, thereby reducing hunger in a household. However, research shows that resource-poor farmers in Botswana rarely consume meat from their own goats, with only about 14% of resource-poor farmers availing of this option (Aganga *et al*., 2005). Thus, dimensions other than economic value and food are clearly important reasons for livestock keeping, as shown by several previous studies (see *e.g*. Petitt, 2016). This was also evident in my interviews with informants in rural Botswana, who often ascribed traditional value to their goats. For example, most of the informants used their goats during cultural and traditional ceremonies, such as during weddings, funerals and when paying dowries. According to several informants, the ability to manage goats is also something that improves their social status in society. Therefore, I believe that it is important not only to look at the potential economic benefits of managing livestock, but also to include other values that people can attach to animals.

Furthermore, as was also evident during my field work, starting up a livestock production enterprise can be a strategy for households to spread livelihood strategies, as a way of building household resilience. Having livestock can serve as a backup in the event of loss of harvests due to floods or droughts. In dry climates, such as in Botswana, crop yields can vary from year to year, so livestock-based production can be perceived as more stable when facing droughts, compared with only having crop-based production. The income generated from livestock production, *e.g*. selling milk or meat, can then be a valuable strategy to improve living conditions when experiencing poor crop yields. Most subsistence farmers in Botswana are involved in both crop and livestock production (Aganga *et al*., 2005). Finally, goats are also valued for their ability to control bush encroachment, which is a rather widespread problem in Botswana (Government of Botswana, 2011a).

3.2.2 Goat breeds

Since almost every informant I met discussed goat breeds in relation to how tolerant they are in harsh climate conditions, in the following paragraphs I briefly describe the most common

goat breeds on the informants' farms. The two goat breeds that dominated on the farms I visited were Tswana and Boer goats. Tswana is the indigenous breed, dominating flocks on farms owned by present farmers. Despite the importance of Tswana goats for many smallholders, limited research has been performed on this breed and thus there is limited information available on their productivity (Aganga *et al.*, 2005). Most of the informants said that they prefer Tswana goats, not only because they tend to be cheap in price, but also because they are perceived as being tolerant to harsh climate conditions. Tswana goats can select a relatively high-quality diet from the variety of feeds available on communal grazing lands. Although Tswana goats can produce relatively high milk yield per unit live weight, research shows that very few farmers in Botswana choose to milk their animals and, if they do, it is mostly for household consumption. The main reason for not milking the goats is because farmers want to promote growth of the kids (Devendra, 1981, *cit*. Aganga *et al.*, 2005).

The Boer goat originates from the neighbouring country of South Africa and is the result of cross-breeding indigenous and European goat breeds (Snyman, 2014). It was originally introduced to Botswana to improve the indigenous goats (Hellyer *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, Boer goats have a higher twinning rate than Tswana goats. This is often explained by the environmental conditions in Botswana, since Tswana goats have evolved in the harsh arid Botswana climate and are perceived to have adapted to produce single kids to reduce the demand for milk. The Boer goats are therefore often perceived as less favourable in terms of both survival and productivity. However, there are also some challenges in the indigenous Tswana breed, not least when it comes to mortality among kids. Tswana goats born in the winter or during the dry season can weigh less than 2 kg, which strongly impairs their chances of survival (Government of Botswana, 2014). In contrast, Boer goat kids can weigh around 6 kg at birth, which means they often survive better than Tswana kids (Van Niekerk *et al.*, 1988). Furthermore, Boer goats are often considered to be better meat producers than Tswana goats (Owen *et al.*, 1978). However, it is important to note that all informants included in this study were restricted to grazing their goats on communal grazing land. To be sure of having a particular goat breed, the farmer must invest in a goat that has been bred on a farm where those goats are not mixed with other breeds, but according to the informants this is often perceived as being too costly. However, despite most of the informants' goats being mixed breeds, they still categorised their goats as either being Tswana or Boer goats, often based on the colour of the coat. There were some examples of remote farmers who had invested in more expensive breeding males imported from Namibia and South Africa.

3.2.3 Farm incomes and farm workers

In Botswana, most farmers engage in a wide range of economic activities to secure their income. According to surveys, almost 30% of farmers run small businesses beside their farm production, such as selling goods in shops, and about 15% sell traditional beer to supplement their income. Due to the high age of farmers in Botswana, pension is a common income and a vast number of farmers also receive payment from employment outside their farms (Annual Agricultural Survey, 2014).

In a historical perspective, farm labourers in Botswana have often experienced exploitation, unjust labour control and harsh treatment by their employers. The low-status job of being a farm worker is a role that has been common over an extended period. Therefore, expectations on farm workers, such as that they should work all day long with little in return from their employers, is not a problem unique to the farm worker informants in this thesis (Good, 1993). Rather, working from early morning to dark night, without any legal protection in the forms of a written contract, has often been and still is perceived as the norm for farm workers (Wazha, 2007). Furthermore, as Wazha (2007: 349) explains, "*workers' rights among agricultural wage labourers have been most politically neglected, in comparison with other*

wage labourers, in colonial and postcolonial times". It was not until 2006 that a proposal for a minimum wage for farm labourers was made in parliament (*ibid*.). Irrespective of the specific term used to label farm workers, such as bushman or herd boy, these terms all have negative implications in their surrounding communities (Good, 1993).

Almost 20% of farmers in Botswana employ a farm worker, either full-time or during the most work-intensive months of the year. Most farm workers originate from Botswana, about 92%, followed by approximately 7% from Zimbabwe (Annual Agricultural Survey, 2014). However, since not all Zimbabwean farm workers have received formal work permits or have legal rights to reside in the country, these statistics may be misleading and there are no official statistics on how many undocumented Zimbabweans work on farms in Botswana today (Campbell, 2006). Despite the Zimbabwean farm workers being fewer in number than Batswana workers, below I focus on Zimbabwean workers, since most of the farm workers I interviewed come from Zimbabwe. Under Botswanan law, Zimbabweans are legally allowed to enter Botswana for visits, for a period of 90 days in each 12-month period. However, Zimbabwean citizens are not allowed to take employment during such visits. These 90 days can be used at different times throughout the 12-month period, or in one visit. As migrant workers, many Zimbabweans perceive this 90-day permit as a temporary resource to facilitate their mobility as a livelihood strategy (Galvin, 2014).

Galvin (2014) reflects on the problems of using the term 'illegal immigrant' when describing Zimbabwean workers in Botswana. The migrants she interviewed argued that it is unfair to describe their way of working and earning a living as illegal. In an in-depth study of working conditions for Zimbabweans in Botswana, she found that they often view themselves as being marginalised and looked down upon by Batswana people, despite perceiving themselves as being more skilled, educated and hard-working than their Batswana counterparts (*ibid*.). Since undocumented Zimbabwean farm workers are not protected by Botswana's labour laws, their working conditions are totally controlled by their employers (Willen, 2010). They have very little say when employers refuse to give them salaries or choose to call the police and have them deported at the end of the month (Galvin, 2014). Not having a formal work permit can create a lot of anxiety among Zimbabwean farm workers. They face the threat of not knowing if they will receive any payment at the end of the month, if they will be paid the amount they agreed with the remote farmer or if the employer will report them to the police. From Galvin's work, it is evident that Zimbabwean workers are aware of the broader structures of exploitation and injustice they face in their everyday lives, but they have no power to change these broader structures. Defining people as illegal immigrants means they have very few rights and very limited power to change their circumstances. The risk of being deported is often very stressful, but it does not prevent Zimbabweans from entering Botswana and trying to make a living there (*ibid*.).

Here, it should also be underlined that it is not only workers who experience themselves as being exploited by insufficient work conditions, low payments or mistreatment. Even remote farmers tend to be exploited by being underpaid by people purchasing their livestock. Through having very limited options, since there are no well-organised market for selling goats, farmers are often forced to sell animals to people offering very little money (Mabiletsa, 2010). In this sense, both farm workers and remote farmers are living within a large-scale system over which they have little control, and from which they have limited scope to break free.

3.3   Challenges and opportunities in goat production

Livestock production takes place in a semi-arid climate in Botswana, which brings certain advantages and challenges for goat keepers (Hellyer *et al*., 2015). Drought is a rather

common natural phenomenon in Botswana, causing major problems for farmers, since buying costly supplementary feeds is often essential during the driest months. Farmers who have little savings cannot provide their goats with the necessary feed and therefore many goats die during the dry season. During the rainy season, floods are a major problem in Botswana and mean that remote farmers cannot always reach their farms and that goats housed in wet kraals can be affected by foot root disease, which decreases productivity and reduces sale prices (Pezzanite *et al.*, 2009).

Another challenge is the lack of an organised market to enable farmers to sell goats in rural areas, which means that farmers have limited possibilities to sell animals and run the risk of buying sick animals through the lack of control of animals at market. In this regard, the geographical distance between the farmers situated in rural areas and the consumers living in larger villages or cities is also a problem. The live animals then need to be transported to the buyer and this can sometimes be too costly for farmers. Instead, farmers must sell animals to dealers living close by, who do not always offer the best price (Hellyer *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, mortality in goat flocks tends to be very high, for several reasons. Predators cause up to 30% mortality among goat kids, which could be prevented by providing better housing for the animals. Moreover, many goat keepers in Botswana are rather old, which means that they are not always able to herd their goats in a proper manner. This means in turn that predators can take goats while outside the kraals when not monitored by the herder. Animal disease also causes many problems and raises the level of mortality among goat flocks in Botswana (Anganga *et al.*, 2005). In this regard, the lack of access to advisory services among goat producers is a problem. Moreover, Conroy (2005) argues that both private and official advisors focus mostly on large ruminants and target farmers working in intensive systems. Thus livestock owners living in remote areas, especially managing small ruminants such as goats, are reached by state veterinary services to a lesser extent (Conroy, 2005). However, while considering all these challenges, it should also be emphasised that there are great opportunities in goat production. For example, compared with larger livestock such as cattle, goats require less inputs of feed, water and medicines. Goats are also easier to manage and more tolerant to harsh climates than many large ruminants (Nsoso *et al.*, 2004).

3.4 Government initiatives to promote goat production

In recent years, the Botswana government has focused more on the goat sector and has promoted goat production as a way out of poverty. People with an interest in starting up their own goat production can apply for funding and, if accepted, receive financial support from one of the government programmes. The programmes relevant for this thesis, *i.e.* those in which the informants participated, are introduced in this section. A common feature of all programmes is the objective to alleviate poverty, improve livestock management and promote food security (Ministry of Agriculture, 2010).

The Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development Programme (LIMID) is one of the largest funding programmes for goat producers in Botswana. There is no age limit to receive this grant and the maximum grant for small stock is BwP 12,000 (approximately 1150 USD). Farmers investing in 10 or fewer of goats get a full grant, but investing in more goats means that the farmer must make an own investment of 10%. All applications must be submitted to the Department of Animal Production (DAP), which also provides training for those receiving the fund (Government of Botswana, 2011b). Applicants not older than 35 years old can also receive funding through the Youth Development Fund. Compared with LIMID, this programme aims more towards promoting commercial livestock production and the maximum grant is BwP 100,000 (approximately 9800 USD), half as a loan and the other half as a grant (Government of Botswana, 2011c). In addition to these two programmes, there

is also a financial assistance policy provided by the government, providing grants up to BwP 25,000 (approximately 2400 USD). This programme is aimed especially at women who want to start their own livestock production (Hellyer *et al.*, 2015). Government involvement in the goat sector stretches beyond the direct payment of grants. In Botswana, the government purchases large numbers of livestock, with the purpose of supplying animals to beneficiaries of funding programmes related to youth empowerment, poverty alleviation and regional development (FAO, 2013).

3.5 Gender relating to animal species

Since women dominate goat production in Botswana and, at the same time, since several informants had the perception that women are not capable of managing goats, this section focuses on women's role in agriculture, to give a broader explanation of how such perceptions can arise. According to Hovorka (2012: 875), men and women in Botswana are positioned on different and unequal terms within the social, economic and political realms. Women in Botswana live in a male-dominated culture, where they often have less access to education and resources and can seldom achieve higher leadership positions in society (Giddings & Hovorka, 2010). Women often experience external expectations connected to gender roles, *e.g.* that women should take care of children, cook food for their families and keep the house clean at all times (Suggs, 2001). This means that women tend to be marginalised in the public sphere of Botswana society and often depend on their male relatives when starting up businesses and requesting a loan from the bank (Machacha & Alexander, 2010). Hovorka (2012) makes an interesting connection between gender and non-humans, as she links different animal species to different genders in Botswana, which is relevant to the research topic in this thesis. Hovorka explains how cattle are associated with men, while poultry and small ruminants, such as goats, are associated with women. Men are associated with cattle because cattle represent power, economic growth and wealth. Likewise, linking women to small ruminants is not a coincidence, but rather symbolises women's lack of influence and marginalisation in the society at large (Hovorka, 2012). Connecting gender to specific animal species reflects their different roles and status in Botswanan society. Men, women, cattle and small ruminants are valued on different terms. These roles come with certain restrictions and consequences, such as when women in goat production have little access to, and control over, land compared with men who own cattle (*ibid.*).

Not only are women culturally connected with small livestock, but this is also materially reinforced, as women's socioeconomic status in Botswana society means that they can seldom afford cattle and therefore are left with no choice but to rear small ruminants if they want to start livestock production (Zwarteveen, 1997). Women are also structurally marginalised in their goat production, since cattle owners, who are mainly men, are favoured in Botswanan water policy and thus tend to have better access to water, whereas women are often left out of decision making over water resources. Moreover, resource-poor women involved in agriculture are often particularly marginalised and only have access to communal land, which can limit their opportunities to increase production scale (Fehr & Moseley, 2017). Ardener (1989) contributes an interesting reflection on women and indigenous groups, and similarities between these groups. Some women and some indigenous groups can be found in the same structural position in society and both groups tend to have little formal power. In order to express their interests and opinions, they are often forced to use the language of the superordinate groups. Both women and indigenous groups can be taught by the surrounding society that their social identities are fixed and both can be taught that their social identity is biological. Therefore, both groups can believe, just as other people can believe, that their status of being subordinate is "natural". Both groups can be told that they have nothing of

value to give to their communities and therefore they should remain subordinate (Hylland Eriksen, 2010).

3.6   Ethnicity in Botswana

Before moving on to the next chapter, I mention ethnicity as a category for analysing power and possibilities for people involved in the agricultural sector in Botswana. Focusing on ethnicity in Botswana provides more knowledge about the context in which the informants live and how ethnicity impacts upon the opportunities they have in society. To begin, it can first be helpful to consider how ethnicity can be defined. Hylland-Eriksen has spent much time on exploring the concept of ethnicity and explains it as follows: "*the term* [ethnicity] *refers to aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive*" (Hylland-Eriksen, 2010: 5). In this social anthropological way of perceiving ethnicity, it is viewed as a form of social process, where people communicate cultural differences between each other (*ibid.*) In other words, when using this definition, ethnicity should not be viewed as "*an inherent characteristic shared by members of a group*" (Petitt, 2016: 44). However, ethnicity in everyday language tends to refer to a specific group of people to which an individual can belong, and from which they can be excluded. For example, Zimbabwean or Motswana is then something that a person *is* (*ibid.*).

As regards ethnicity in the context of Botswana, Francis B Nyamjoh's article '*Ever diminishing circles: the paradoxes of belonging in Botswana*' in the book *Indigenous Experience Today* (De la Cadena & Orin Starn, 2007: 3) looks at tensions over privileges, cultural *purity* and belonging and exclusion among ethnic groups in Botswana. In one of the official languages in Botswana, Setswana, an ethic group (a tribe) is commonly referred to as *morafhe* (*ibid.*). In Botswana's national anthem, *morafhe* symbolises the glue required to integrate the around 20 different ethnic identities in Botswana into one united Botswana nation-state (*ibid.*). While every Botswana national can claim legal and political citizenship within the framework of the modern nation-state, some people are perceived by others as being less authentic. Among the majority population of Batswana, there are often distinctions made between those considered to be insiders and outsiders in the nation, where some have greater opportunities than others based on ethnicity (Durham, 1933; Nyamjoh, 2006). Batswana tend to perceive themselves as the owners of the country, and make a distinction between people depending on whether they are considered to belong or are perceived as "*outsiders*" (De la Cadena & Orin Starn, 2007: 4). Setswana, which is the common language of nine Tswana groups (tribes), has been the dominant language in Botswana for centuries. This is partly because Tswana tribes were perceived, by the European colonisers, as surrendering to the current colonial administration and evangelisation (MacGaffey, 1995). Tswana groups and the Setswana language were then more visible, since they interacted more than other tribal groups with the colonisers and missionaries present at that time. Today, English and Setswana are the official languages of Botswana and, as consequence, languages of ethnic minorities are more invisible to state institutions and public businesses (De la Cadena & Orin Starn, 2007). While Tswana tribes are not a homogeneous group, they assert their authenticity over all other groups as being the "*founders*" of Botswana (*ibid*: 8). In Botswana, having the status of indigenous group is a matter of power relations, with some are perceiving themselves as being "*more Batswana than others*" (ibid: 9). In legal terms, every national (singular Motswana, plural Batswana) can claim to be an ethnic or civic citizen, but some are still considered less authentic citizens and are often believed to have more in common with "*total outsiders*" (De la Cadena & Orin Starn, 2007: 15). Here, I want to mention the term *makwerekwere*, which refers to African immigrants from countries that face economic hardship. The more dark-skinned an individual is, the more likely they are to be defined as *makwerekwere*, especially if they are not fluent in Setswana (Nyamjoh, 2006).

This can be relevant not least when discussing the role Zimbabwean farm workers play in Botswana, as they are often perceived as being the outsiders and coming from a country that went through an economic breakdown. However, when the nation-state of Botswana emerged, the government deliberately encouraged its citizens to identify with the new nation through establishing policies of racial and ethnic neutrality (Tlou & Campbell, 1997). However, according to Solway (2002) and Werbner (2004), in practice the official neutrality meant that access to education, healthcare and public sector jobs depended upon one's status as a citizen, whereas education and other jobs depended on one's qualifications. People were still discriminated against based on their ethnicity and language, but the official state neutrality helped to reduce such negative impacts by downplaying the role of ethnicity (Solway, 2002). Despite the attempts to treat all citizens as equal, which Nyamjoh (2006) interestingly describes, the post-independence nation-building of Botswana has resulted in "*the privileging of majority groups over minority groups*" (De la Cadena & Orin Starn, 2007: 18). Furthermore, some Batswana are concerned by not being identified as nationals. Some people can perceive themselves as being *too* modern to be defined as indigenous, for example elites who spend some of their time in workplaces in the city and some of their time in their home villages at the cattle posts (Werbner, 2004).

Finally, I include a short reflection on the problem of focusing too much on ethnicity and that of not including ethnicity at all. Hylland-Eriksen (2014) argues that people often tend to be too concerned about ethnicity in research, which can prevent them from viewing social systems in other ways that can also be relevant. Sometimes people can fall between groups, where it is not always clear "*who is a member of a group and who is not*" (Hylland-Eriksen, 2014: 137). Hylland-Eriksen suggests that it might be more constructive to think about the social world in terms other than ethnicity. For example, a wider term such as *social identification* might be a truer description of the fluid and complex ongoing social processes. Since people tend to have many different roles in society, it is not always accurate to refer only to their citizenship (*ibid*.).

4 Conceptual and theoretical framework

4.1 Political ecology

When exploring the overall research question in this thesis of relations between farmers and farm workers and their environment, I used political ecology as the broad analytical lens to scrutinise the empirical findings. Using political ecology as an analytical framework can potentially reveal how politics is always ecological and ecology is always political (Robbins, 2012). The local ecological environment in which the informants are living and working is thus affected by politics, often in ways that individuals have little possibility of controlling or fully comprehending.

Since Frank Thone first introduced political ecology back in 1935, the field has gone through many shifts and phases and there is no consensus on how to define it among scholars today. Political ecology is a transdisciplinary field, including scholars from different scientific backgrounds, although perhaps the most prominent are anthropologists, geographers and historians. Despite the lack of a clear definition, most scholars using political ecology in research today can agree upon some basic components that should be included in political ecology, and it is therefore possible to discern some characteristics of this field. The definition that most scholars use today emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, due to anthropologists and geographers seeing a need to incorporate political economics when studying environmental change. Political ecology enabled scholars to fill the evident gaps between environment and politics, by bringing environmental perspectives into the study of politics, and *vice versa*. The attempt to integrate multiple perspectives when exploring environmental issues was, in other words, present already from the beginning of political ecology research (Robbins, 2012). Not only do the definitions vary, but also the theoretical orientations among political ecologists, with a range from Marxist historical materialism to poststructuralist discourse analysis. Political ecology, as a scientific field, has grown and developed in recent decades, but has also received criticism. One of the main criticisms is that political ecology research tends not to pay sufficient attention to ecological factors, but rather to mainly emphasise economic and political perspectives (Walker, 2005).

In political ecology, the aim is to explore the relationships between political, social and economic factors within environmental issues (Robbins, 2012). In other words, addressing the way society and economy relate to the environment is fundamental. The most obvious difference from 'apolitical' ecology' (*i.e.* the subject of ecology in its traditional form) is that political ecology includes a political perspective when exploring environmental issues and phenomena. 'Apolitical' ecology is also more concerned with biophysical and technical aspects of the environment, whereas political ecology involves a broader perspective and includes how human and non-human activities impact on, and are impacted by, the surrounding environment. Common to all definitions and theoretical directions within political ecology is the perspective that politics and ecology are not isolated units, but connected and deeply affect each other (Forsyth, 2003). Therefore, the human world is tightly connected to the non-human world in political ecology. The interest lies in exploring how politics shape environmental problems and how different power relations shape knowledge about the environment. Political ecology also emphasises that local environmental problems are embedded in large-scale systems, which means that small-scale struggles are dependent on institutions and policies formed outside the local community (Robbins, 2012).

There are some important perspectives in political ecology that I will now try to explain. First, political ecology research is often concerned with humans' attempts to adapt to their surrounding environment. Second, despite most people having deep knowledge about the environment in which they live, they are not always able to adapt to shifts and transformations

taking place in their surrounding environment, *e.g.* droughts caused by climate change or environmental degradation caused and driven by large-scale systems. This means that political ecology is often concerned also with looking at the larger systems, to avoid blaming local communities or societies for environmental degradation (Paulson & Gezon, 2005). Third, power relations and the search for greater equality are key in most political ecology research. This means that power relations shape how humans relate to the environment, and some actors will always have more power than others to control natural resources and establish environmental policies. Political ecology researchers thus often have a normative goal with their research: to empower disadvantaged social groups, at the same time as they seek to contribute to sustainable resource management (Zimmerer, 2000). Finally, non-humans are also part of shaping the environment. It can be noted, however, that although non-humans are said to be important actors to include in political ecology research (Robbins, 2012), there are comparatively few political ecology studies in which non-human actors take a central role. An exception is the research performed by Hovorka and colleagues (*e.g.* Hovorka, 2006). This thesis is also an example where animals (in this case goats) have a more central place in a political ecology study.
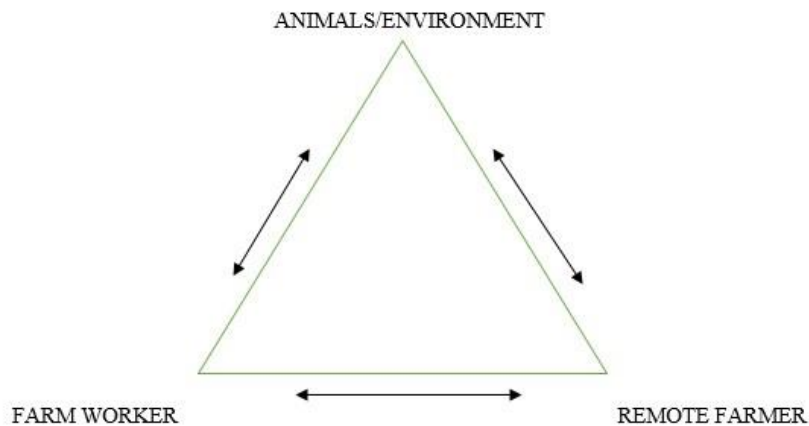
Figure 1. An analytical model: the focus of analysis in this thesis is the relations between farm workers and remote farmers, and their respective relations to animals and the environment (non-humans).

4.2   The concept of power

As mentioned above, analysis of power is central in political ecology. However, there is no one way of conceptualising and using power within the broad field of political ecology. Plenty of scholars have contributed to an general understanding of power, *e.g.* as Gallie puts it: "*the concept of power involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users*" (Gallie 1955-6: 123). For reasons of brevity, here I mainly focus on Steven Lukes' interpretation of the concept of power and, more specifically, his three-dimensional view of power.

Power is found both in formal and informal settings, but what does is really mean? According to Lukes (2005: 37), at its most fundamental level "*A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interest*". By this definition, Lukes indicates that power can be exercised in a conscious, unconscious or indirect way, whenever actor A prevents actor B from realising their real interests (Lukes, 1974). Leaning on this definition, we can now move further into the concept of power and explore the three-dimensional view of power that Lukes

presents. At its core, the three-dimensional view of power is a critique of the common behavioural focus of power. First, the focus is on decision-making and control over the political agenda. Second, both visible and hidden power is understood to be important since, according to Lukes (2005: 63), power is "*most effective when it is least observable*". Third, Lukes is interested in uncovering "*subjective and real interests in conflict*" (*ibid*: 29). How can we then determine what is objective or subjective interests in a conflict? Lukes leans on the Marxist thought of unconsciousness when describing this, and asks a relevant question: How can power be exercised if the actor is unaware of their own actions? There are several potential explanations for this. For example, the actor can be unaware of "*how other people interpret their actions and how the actions may affect others*" (*ibid*: 53). However, this raises the problem of whether *e.g.* remote farmers can be said to exercise power over their employees if those remote farmers are not aware of how their actions affect farm workers. Still, according to Lukes people can exercise power over others "*even though they have no clear motives or intentions behind it*" (*ibid*: 136).

When exploring the concept of power in terms of intentional and unintentional actions, I also want to reflect on how power can be at work on a structural and cultural level in society. As I have already mentioned, actors can exercise power over others without having clear motives to do so, and thus it is important to look at the larger structures within which people are acting. Exercising power may then be something people do not intentionally, but rather because they are part of larger structures and assigned a superior position within those structures. Morris (2002) argues the importance of evaluating the context where power is exercised. When looking at power in a society, where some are powerful and others powerless, he believes one must evaluate the society "*rather than praising or blaming individuals in that society*" (Morris, 2002: 40-42). For example, if the social structure in Botswana were to change in a way that improved the status and situation for farm workers, this would change their relationship with remote farmers. Thus one must look at the social structures to better understand the workings of power.

Locke's (1975[1690]:111) definition of power states that: "*Having power is being able to make, or able to receive, any change*". Lukes (2005: 69) develops this definition by adding that "*having power also includes the actor being able to resist it*". Therefore, power is a potential and not an actuality (*ibid*.). This means that when remote famers have the means of power, it is not the same as saying that they are always exercising power over farm workers. Rather, they have the capacity to exercise power over their employees if they want to do so. In the social structure in Botswana, remote farmers may be in a position where they can potentially exercise power over farm workers, but this does not mean that they always choose to affect farm workers' interests negatively (*cf*. Lukes, (2005: 70). However, the fact that farm workers are generally marginalised and looked down upon in Botswana society also means that it might take more of an active choice for a farmer not to exercise power over his farm worker in a destructive way, as this implies going against what is expected and sanctioned by the wider social structure.

Power works in society to a significant extent through categorisations (Bacchi, 2009). Through categories, people are included and excluded, portrayed as victims, heroes or villains in particular discourses about environment and development (Adger *et al.*, 2001). These categories (or subject positions) enable and constrain people in various ways. *e.g.* constructing farm workers as lazy in order to make it difficult for farm workers to be taken seriously in farm management.

The most commonly theorised category in social science research on power might be that of 'women'. Lukes (2005: 137-138) highlights how women are "*often socially conditioned to be dominated by men*". This means that women as individuals are both portrayed as, and socially conditioned into, roles and practices that are considered to be natural for them in the

social and cultural context. Not only do these socially constructed categories become objective in the eyes of others, but Lukes also points out their self-disciplining effect, as the roles and practices might even be perceived by the women as something they have freely chosen for themselves. Girls are taught at a young age to believe that they are primarily intended to help others, to submit themselves to men and to take on opposite roles to men (Mill, 1989). The socialisation of women means that they are often not permitted to learn the same skills as men, and instead they often learn skills that are associated with lower social and cultural status (Nussbaum, 2000). Here, it is interesting to reflect on the connection between power and knowledge. How are distinct kinds of knowledge valued in society? Knowledge can be used as a means of power, in the sense that powerful actors can make their own knowledge more valuable than that of those who have less power (Haas, 1990).

Furthermore, the concept of power also connects to the role of ethnicity (as examined in section 3.6) in Botswana society. When I conducted my field work, I was constantly told that ethnicity and tribes had long since played out their role in Botswana society. My interpreters repeatedly told me that all people in Botswana were equal, with the same opportunities in society, no matter how roles had been before colonial times. Even though ethnicity is clearly not the only, or even the major, way people identify themselves and others in Botswana society, it still seems as though people have different rights and face different degrees of discrimination, depending on how they are categorised ethnically. Therefore, I considered that it was not possible to totally exclude the analytical category of ethnicity from this study, even though it was not my main focus when interviewing the informants in rural Botswana.

Finally, I took account of the category of class when analysing power and how class matters as regards the possibilities different informants have within goat production in Botswana. Class is a common category for analysing power and Savage (2002) argues that class is most powerful when we are least aware of what role it plays in relations. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the role class plays in the context of goat production, which I did through including the wealth ranking exercise presented in section 5.1.3.

4.3   Intersectionality

Intersectionality has been widely used as an analytical tool within feminist theory. The term originally emerged from an interplay between feminist theory, post-colonial theory and black feminism (Crenshaw, 1995). Intersectionality often seeks to analyse how power relations and social hierarchies interact and create inclusion and exclusion based on institutionally constructed categories, such as gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age and race (Lycke, 2005). In this way, intersectionality can be described as a power theory, where socially constructed categories are broken down, to view power relations in more complex and dynamic ways. Intersectional analysis can help see how such categories construct and interact with each other. Intersectionality is often associated with analysing gender but, with inspiration from Petitt (2016) and Hovorka (2012), I use it for another purpose in this thesis. When exploring goat production in Botswana, my goal was to gain a deeper understanding of how remote farmers and farm workers, in separate ways, benefit from, use and value goats. Intersectionality as an analytical tool can then uncover how certain people experience possibilities and disadvantages based on several institutionally constructed categories (mainly ethnicity and class in this case, but also to some extent gender), as these categories intersect with each other.

Most fundamental in intersectionality is the notion that social categories never operate in isolation, but instead depend on and interact with each other. This means that an intersectional analysis can aim to emphasise how humans and non-humans experience and produce power relations (Petitt, 2016). Intersectionality unravels how people can experience subordination

for multiple reasons and on the basis of intersections of several categories (Crenshaw, 1989). How people see themselves and how they relate to others is embedded in continuously ongoing social processes, so social categories should not be perceived as something fixed or stable (West & Fenstermaker, 1995). Furthermore, as shown by *e.g.* Petitt (2016) and Hovorka (2012), intersectionality not only includes an analysis of socially constructed categories in relation to humans, but can also be of help when analysing relations to non-humans, as in this thesis.

4.4 Passive resistance

The concept of passive resistance was developed by the political scientist and anthropologist James C. Scott in the context of peasants and their opposition to their superordinate actors. Passive resistance is best described as hidden, informal and non-systematic in character. In Scott's own words, "*passive resistance makes no headlines and has neither a name - nor a banner*" (Scott, 1985: 35). This informal way of protesting against unjust forms of power is also labelled by Scott as 'everyday resistance' and has the same goal as more public and organised forms of resistance, namely to act in a way that opposes the oppression of superordinate classes. Thus 'passive resistance' is explained by the fact that subordinate classes are often left with very few options when it comes to expressing their dissatisfaction about how superordinate classes treat them and relate to them. Small actions, even though the acts themselves might not appear much to the outside world, are often the only choice for subordinate classes to express dissatisfaction or improve their status and position in society (Scott, 1985). Philosopher and anthropologist Andrew Hartnack provides an example of how a marginalised group in Zimbabwean society (displaced farm workers) used small actions of passive resistance to increase their agency. In in-depth observations and interviews, their experiences of being oppressed by superior farm owners emerged. The displaced Zimbabwean farm workers reported performing acts of everyday resistance to stand against the unjust treatment by farm owners, *e.g.* stealing small quantities of vegetables grown in the farm garden or foodstuffs intended to be sold to other people. Since farm owners tended to underpay their employees, passive resistance in the form of stealing was both a way to enable the workers to save up some money and a way of opposing unjust exercise of power (Hartnack, 2009).

How the weak choose to act is highly dependent on the current forms of labour control and their own perceptions of potential outcomes of resistance. Large strikes or loud open protest might come with huge risks. Performing work tasks in a slow manner (a typical form of passive resistance) may then be preferable. The superior employer can also find it challenging to make sanctions and note such misbehaviour, even more so if the employees work without constant monitoring. Furthermore, for peasants, who are often scattered in rural areas and have difficulties mobilising themselves in large-scale protests, passive resistance is often more suitable. Despite the lack of strong leaders and a formal organisation, passive resistance can still be described as a social movement, even though passive resistance movements are rarely noticed by the surrounding community and therefore given little or no social recognition. However, everyday resistance is not only about actions, but here Scott makes a clear division between actions and beliefs in passive resistance. Even if acts of resistance and thoughts about resistance are constantly corresponding with each other, the intentions of the weak are not tied to the material world as tightly as actions are. For example, the weak can dream day and night about justice, perhaps even more so when it is not practically possible to act upon these dreams, but that does not change their mindset. This means that, in times of hardship, people can hold onto distant dreams of a just world, despite all the obstacles preventing these dreams being transformed into reality. Still, dreams of justice should not be undervalued, since it might be possible to act on them at some time in the future (Scott, 1985).

Farm workers, who are central to this thesis, are not the only ones dreaming of a brighter future in Botswana. In recent years, shops offering customers cheap Chinese goods have become a more common sight in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana. The Chinese merchants who own these shops often employ young local people to be their shop assistants – young people who might dream about finding a better occupation in a near future. These local shop assistants are often dissatisfied with their jobs, due to the low wages they are offered and because the Chinese merchants often mistreat them. Still, the Chinese merchants are dependent on local assistants to run their businesses and could not manage without their help. Researcher Yanyin Zi explored how shop assistants use passive resistance for expressing their discontent towards the Chinese merchants. Tension is a common ingredient in the relationships between shop owners and their assistants (Zi, 2015). Chinese merchants often perceive local assistants as lazy, unreliable and incapable of performing work tasks in a satisfactory manner. Local assistants, on the other hand, tend to perceive Chinese merchants as harsh and constantly yelling at them and, as a reaction, they *e.g.* fail to show up at work, steal goods from the shop or work at a slow pace. Zi interpreted this as forms of everyday, or passive, resistance performed by the local assistants. This form of passive resistance, when local assistants are unwilling to follow the instructions given by the Chinese merchants, can be a way of opposing unjust work conditions. Since shop owners do not want to offer their employees higher wages, they might not respond to these acts of passive resistance. The problem is that, since the local assistants use these 'weapons of the weak' – such as stealing and misbehaviour – the Chinese merchants do not believe that their employees deserve better treatment or more payment (Zi, 2015).

Finally, Scott (1985) claims that, to understand everyday forms of resistance, we need to understand the language and ideas of people who practise it. In line with this, it is therefore important to take the perspective of those who see themselves as oppressed and to listen carefully to their description of the position they have in society. Passive resistance is used in this thesis as a concept for interpreting how farm workers express their way of resisting power from their superior employers. Scott's framework of passive resistance can be relevant here, since farm workers often have little or no ability to act on their dreams of having their own farm or owning their own livestock. Even though the passive resistance from farm workers is not always explicitly outspoken, I found small signs of everyday resistance on the farms in rural Botswana, where farm workers have no other choice in expressing their discontent with being exploited by the employers but to use strategies described in this framework. Having presented the conceptual and theoretical framework, I now move on to presenting the findings of my investigations.

5 Empirical findings and discussion

How remote farmers and farm workers relate to each other and to their surrounding environment is the major question I explore in depth in this chapter. The theoretical and conceptual framework (presented in the previous chapter) helped me to analyse the empirical material I collected during my fieldwork in Botswana. The empirical findings relate to the research questions listed in section 1.1.

5.1 Farm workers and remote farmers

5.1.1 The concept of remote farming

Before moving to more specific themes connected to the research questions mentioned above, it can first be helpful to provide an introduction to how farms are normally set up in Botswana. On starting my field work in the selected villages, I was confused about who the actual farmer was. When I met the remote farmer informants, whom I believed managed the goats, I was surprised to find out that most in fact lived far away from their farm and let someone else take care of their goats most of the time. Remote farming is a common farm set-up in Botswana. Remote farmers reside in a city or larger village, but still define themselves as being farmers, since they own farms, cropland and livestock in rural areas. Remote farmers often spend a limited time on their farms, and have the farm either as a hobby or as a source of income in combination with other occupations. However, remote farmers depend on other people (farm workers) to manage their livestock and fields whenever they are not present on their farms. These farm workers have two main responsibilities on farms; to manage livestock in the daytime and to work as security guards during the dark nights. Farm workers receive a monthly salary from remote farmers but, depending on how satisfied the remote farmer is with the worker, the wage can range between 500 and 1300 BWP/month (approximately 45-125 USD/month). In addition, farm workers are often provided with food and housing by the remote farmer. However, the private sector often exploits their workers immensely, to the extent of only paying about 500 BWP or less per month, or just giving food and accommodation on the farm for free and charging it as wages. The government has set a minimum wage for farm workers working in the private sector of 550 BWP/month (approximately 50 USD/month), while on government farms the rate is around 3000 BWP per month (Government of Botswana, 2015).

Most farms have two houses, one mud or brick house and one more modest house made of metal sheeting. Farm workers are often required to stay in the metal house, which becomes very hot during the dry season, and live a more austere life than their employers. Farm workers are supposed to stay full-time on farms, in most cases without access to electricity and running water. Most farm workers lack higher levels of education and have little formal training in agriculture. Due to the increased migration from Zimbabwe, there are many Zimbabweans farm workers in Botswana today. The wealth ranking exercise presented in section 5.1.3 shows that farm workers are perceived by others and by themselves as being poor. In contrast, remote farmers are categorised as either being medium-rich or rich. Present farmers described themselves as medium-rich. In this sense, remote farmers' position in the wealth categories differs from that of present farmers, who can rarely afford to hire a farm worker.

Figure 2. Example of housing for a remote farmer.

Figure 3. Example of housing for a farm worker.

5.1.2   Ability to hire farm workers

Within the concept of remote farming, the question is who can hire a farm worker and what motivates farmers to do so. There was a common perception among the informants that the size of the goat herd determines whether a farmer can hire a farm worker or not, with the minimum herd size in that regard being 100 goats according to several informants. Still, some

farmers employed a worker despite having less than 100 goats, *e.g.* through having a family member investing in the production with money earned off-farm. Gorata, a remote farmer who usually hires a farm worker during the most work-intensive months of the year, explained this as follows:

> *I would need at least more than 100 goats before I could hire a worker. Now, there is no profit. My husband must invest in the business. In the future, my dream is to become a big woman – like the big farm men– and have many, many goats. Then I could also have several herd boys working for me.* (Gorata, female remote farmer)

However, present farmers who struggle and are unable to make profit on their goat production rarely hire a worker. An example of this is a middle-aged widow Kathy, who instead of hiring a farm worker relies on neighbours in times of need:

> *I really wouldn't mind having someone working for me. If a herd boy could clear the goat kraal of all the dung, I would be more than happy. But it is hard, I couldn't pay a salary to a herd boy now. I barely survive on the goats myself.* (Kathy, female present farmer)

With the help of farm workers, it is possible for remote farmers to ensure their income by taking jobs outside the farm. Most of the informants do not make enough profit on their goats to depend only on the income from selling animals or milk. Therefore, remote farming is a preferable farm set-up, since it makes it possible for farmers to earn money outside the farm. Hiring a farm worker also enables farmers to hand over less enjoyable farm tasks to the worker, and goat production then becomes more of a hobby, while living a modern life in an urban area. Remote farmer Nathan, working full-time outside the farm, depends on having a farm worker to manage his goats while he stays in the city. Even though it costs him some money, he receives a far higher salary from his full-time job in the city than he can earn from his goat production;

> *I have more than 200 goats and since I work full-time in the city, I must have a herd boy protecting and managing the goats. He gets about 900 BWP* [approximately 85 USD] *each month, beside the housing and food of course. It's a lot of money, but there is no other option, I must support my daughters with my salary.* (Nathan, male remote farmer)

The concept of remote farming can reveal something about the differences between socio-economic groups in the Botswana society. First, remote farming can be interpreted as a reflection of the increased rural-urban migration in Botswana (Silitshena, 2008). According to several informants, living a modern life in a city is more desirable than living a simple life in a rural area, not least among young people who often long to find a job or pursue an academic career in the city. Second, being a remote farmer is not an option for all farmers in Botswana. It requires economic capital that few present farmers have, and therefore the concept of remote farming can also reflect the differences between social classes in Botswanan society.

5.1.3   Relative poverty and wealth

In both villages, I started the field work by gathering a group of informants to conduct focus group interviews and wealth ranking exercises, (see Chapter 2). These exercises enabled me to determine how the informants define wealth and where they rank themselves and others in the different wealth categories. During the wealth ranking exercises only remote and present farmers were present, and these categorised themselves as either being medium-rich or rich (see Table 1). Since no farm workers were present during the group exercises, I asked them in the subsequent individual interviews to describe wealth (what it means to them) and how they categorise themselves in the wealth ranking. The results revealed differences

between remote farmers, present farmers and farm workers. In contrast to remote and present farmers, farm workers consistently described themselves as poor. When visiting remote farmers and farm workers during my field work, it was not difficult to see which was the farm owner. Remote farmers tended to be well dressed, fluent in English and often arrived at their farms in rather fancy four-wheel drive cars. In contrast, farm workers often wore tattered clothes, had limited English skills and had few personal belongings on the farm. It was also clear that farm workers had little or no ability to escape poverty. This might be a central difference in experiences of poverty and wealth between them and remote and present farmers, who to a larger extent believe that they have the possibility to move between wealth categories and are not destined to stay in one category throughout their life. Remote farmer Tapiwa defined herself as now being medium-rich but if she loses many goats due to droughts she may suddenly become poor again:

> *You know, herd boys are born without a vision, they cannot become rich. He is poor and I am medium-rich. I can buy clothes in the city and enjoy myself, since I have the goats. Still, you never know what happens, these categories are not stable. When facing natural disasters, heavy rains or droughts, I risk moving to the same category as my herd boy. If my goats die, I can become a poor woman again, so you are never guaranteed to stay in one category. This is the problem with goat production, you can never rely on getting a monthly salary. Sometimes you need to sell animals to pay your herd boy or to get cash in your hands, but you can't sell animals every month.* (Tapiwa, female remote farmer)

Table 1. Informants' perceptions of wealth

Wealth indicator	Wealth category		
	Poor	Medium-rich	Rich
Livestock	Poultry, small goat herd or taking care of another person's livestock.	Owning less than 100 goats/sheep, having 1-3 cattle, may have large poultry production.	Owning 100+ sheep/goats, owning cattle, donkey, chicken/ducks.
Agricultural training	No or little formal training in livestock production, may have practical experience.	Has received basic or further training in livestock production, sometimes a diploma.	Often has a diploma or higher level of agricultural training/education.
Employees	No ability to hire workers.	Can hire farm worker(s) if needed, either full-time worker or during periods of heavy work load, *e.g.* during harvest.	Can hire more than one farm worker, train a worker to become the manager and make a well-planned schedule for the workers.
Income	Covering basic needs, sometimes less, often depending on government funds/or income from temporary jobs.	Able to sell animals in times of need, off and on employment outside the farm, starting to/or making profit on livestock.	Salary from well-paid job outside the farm or large livestock/crop production that generates a good income.

Access to advisory services	Advisory services from government, sometimes hard to access depending on where the farm is located.	Advisory services from government, and contact with people who have experience in livestock management.	Can afford to use private veterinarians, can also bring the advisor to the farm by car if needed.

According to all informants, farm workers are defined as being poor and without any possibility to leave that category. Doing so would require the ability to build up financial capital, but since they receive such low salaries, they rarely have any possibilities to do so. Additionally, since few farm workers have gone through higher education, few informants believe that they can find more well-paid jobs outside farms.

As regards the difference between remote farmers and present farmers, present farmers are rarely or never able to hire a worker, whereas remote farmers obviously can. This means that present farmers must spend more time on their farms and therefore they do not have much time to take jobs outside their farms. Without any stable income, besides goat production, they can therefore experience themselves as being more at risk during the dry or rainy season. Still, wealth meant something beyond economic wealth to several informants. For example, present farmer Sella described moving from the category of being poor to medium-rich as resulting from greater meaning in life. Since he started to manage goats, his life has become more meaningful and therefore he feels wealthier:

I am happy now. Before I was unemployed, I had nothing to do and couldn't make a living. Now I have something meaningful to do, so I don't feel poor anymore. If the droughts and diseases would go away, I could go far in life, I might even have the chance to become a rich man one day. (Sella, male present farmer)

The position the informants had in the wealth ranking also seemed to relate to how they envision their future. Several remote farmers I talked to dreamed about becoming rich. Farm workers, who often have little prospects of another future, still reported clinging to distant dreams of one day having their own farm and a goat herd. Kennedy, an old farm worker living in a metal house, claimed that he has a good life in a traditional way. Despite not being able to make long-term plans, he has food for the day and everything he needs on the farm:

Everything is good for me here, in the traditional way, I live a good life. Sometimes life is hard, animals die and you go hungry from time to time. I am too old to get a salary now, but I have food for the day and take care of the goats that I love. I have relied on my parents my whole life, so when they passed away, life got hard. But I manage, from day to day, I manage. (Kennedy, male Motswana farm worker)

Several present farmers connected their goat production with a shift in identity, which had increased their sense of wealth in life. Through starting goat production, present farmers moved away from the identity of being *nothing* towards *becoming a real person*. Managing goats was not only a matter of earning money, but also of becoming someone, increasing their self-esteem and sense of self-determination. Labang described, with a big smile on her face, how she is now someone in her own eyes and in the eyes of others:

Livestock production has improved my life. I have moved from the place of being poor to the middle. Before the goats, I was nobody, I had nothing! My life was poor, but now I can dream about my future, one day I can become a rich woman. (Labang, female present farmer)

5.1.4 Good and bad farm workers

Finding a suitable farm worker is often a challenge for remote farmers. Since they are not able to monitor their farm workers during the week, they must find a trustworthy and reliable farm worker who knows how to manage their goats. Remote farmers often define farm workers as either being *good* or *bad*. In more practical terms, good farm workers are considered to be serious about their work tasks, they report sick animals to the remote farmer and they have either previous practical experience of farming or some basic training in livestock management. This means that the remote farmer can entrust them with more advanced tasks, such as treating sick animals. Furthermore, good farm workers come to work on time, work independently and do not complain about their salary. Remote farmers reported that they often feel lucky when they find a dedicated farm worker. Tony is one of those remote farmers who, after hiring several bad farm workers, finally found a good one. Over the last years, Tony has made big investments in his goat production and therefore believes that he is even more dependent now than before on having a good farm worker. When you have a good farm worker, you have everything, Tony claims:

> *I have had several herd boys before, but none as good as this one, I have had about eight or nine herd boys before, all of them were naughty. I was determined to get this specific herd boy. He works hard, lives on the farm with his family, so he is very responsible both for his family and the goats. Also, he doesn't drink alcohol. He knows how to take care of the animals, he is dedicated and has experience in the field from before. When you have a good herd boy, you have everything you need! A good herd boy stays on the farm full time and dedicates his whole life to the animals.* (Tony, male remote farmer)

In contrast to Tony's farm worker, bad farm workers were reported to be those who drink alcohol, sometimes spending their whole salary on buying liquor from local bars or in shops in the city. Bad farm workers do not provide the goats with enough feed and water, they steal dairy products, they are lazy, physically mistreat the animals and even leave the goats out on the grazing land overnight. They lack the passion that is required to manage the goats and, in the worst case, they sell the whole flock and leave the farm with the money in their pockets. When I met the young remote farmer Samuel, he became very agitated when I asked him about his perception of farm workers, who he referred to as "cowboys":

> *I call him cowboy instead of herd boy. He often drinks a lot of alcohol. I know of herd boys who just take the salary, leave the farm to buy drinks in the village or the city. If you are lucky, your herd boy returns a couple of days later, but sometimes he has just left. Then you never see the guy again.* (Samuel, male remote farmer)

Remote farmers often had had many different farm workers working on their farms. Some stayed just a month or two, but if things worked out well a farm worker could stay his whole life on the farm. The risk of hiring a bad farm worker created anxiety amongst several remote farmers I talked to, who claimed that they can never be sure, when they hire a worker, whether he is good or bad. Remote farmer Rako describes this problem to me:

> *I have had a lot of problems with herd boys. I have had about nine different herd boys. They often struggle between farm needs and household needs and don't distinguish between what is most important. They tend to prioritise the household and things outside the farm, they just don't realise that they have a full-time job on the farm. Most of them are too lazy.* (Rako, male remote farmer)

On listening to all these perceptions about farm workers, it appeared to me as though most remote farmers see farm workers as lazy and as not being fully dedicated to the farm tasks. Several remote farmers underlined that passion is the most crucial ingredient to succeed in goat production, and therefore that the ideal farm worker should be passionate about goats.

Remote farmer Norma appeared very passionate about her goats. Therefore, she became very upset when describing how her farm worker does not share her passion:

> *To me these animals are my heartbeat, my everything, but he* [the farm worker] *doesn't care. He doesn't love the goats like I do, he is just lazy and doesn't have the right passion.* (Norma, female remote farmer)

All these reported experiences of having good or bad farm workers can reveal important aspects of the relations between remote farmers and farm workers. How remote farmers choose to treat their workers seemed to affect how farm workers act and how they manage the goats. Thus when farm workers viewed themselves as being mistreated or exploited by their employers, they tended to be more unwilling to follow their instructions. The relations between remote farmers and farm workers also had different spillover effects, depending on whether they were functioning well or involved lots of tension. Ricky, a passionate Zimbabwean farm worker, was perceived as being a good farm worker by his employer Tapiwa. Even though Ricky did not know much about farming before coming to the farm, the trust Tapiwa shows in him makes him eager to prove to her that he is worthy of this trust. In Ricky's mind, being a good farm worker means that you love the goats and work hard:

> *You can't throw stones at the animals, I know that some herd boys do that, but you need to love them, pray for them so no thieves come and steal them. The goats are my family, so I have everything I need, I stay with my family here. You must be responsible, organise your life, there is no off* [time]. *It is just work, work, work.* (Ricky, male Zimbabwean farm worker)

The different perceptions the informants had about good and bad farm workers seemed to relate to Scott's concept of passive resistance. The so-called *bad* farm workers could be interpreted as using the weapons of the weak described by Scott (1985), as their way of expressing discontent when mistreated or underpaid by remote farmers. In this case, farm workers can perform acts of resistance such as taking jobs on other farms, working in a slow manner or sometimes even stealing from the farm. Donald, a remote farmer, described his experience of having farm workers take chickens and eggs without his permission;

> *I have had in total eight herd boys in the last two years. The problem is, some eat the chickens we have on the farm and take a lot of eggs. I said, "it's OK if you take some, but not six eggs every day". Some of them didn't treat the goats well and some complained a lot about the payment; that the salary was too low. They shouldn't complain, it's just about some hundreds plus or minus.* (Donald, male remote farmer)

Many farm workers were perceived as being lazy, but if the payment farm workers receive barely covers their basic needs, why should they work harder? Listening carefully to the experiences farm workers shared, I realised that they often feel ignored and looked down upon by their bosses. For farm workers living in scattered areas, far away from friends and family in Zimbabwe, for example, visiting a local bar in the village might be one of the few things they could do to relax after a long working day. After one specific farm visit, I was in the car in the company of two remote farmers. Darkness had just set in and we passed the bar in the centre of this village, which was crowded with men, Zimbabwean farm workers according to the informants, enjoying a couple of beers after finishing their work on surrounding farms. In this instance, I believe that passive resistance is a useful concept for analysing farm workers' actions and perceptions about their different situations on farms and their relations with their employers. Drinking alcohol, prioritising their own needs before those of the remote farmer needs or leaving the farm without notice could be taken as signs of farm workers using the weapons of the weak. Farm workers resisting the unjust forms of labour control and employing the weapons of the weak against their employers conforms

with the passive resistance presented in both Zi (2015) and Hartnack (2009). This is not to legitimise behaviours such as stealing, mistreating animals or leaving farms without notice. The frustration remote farmers can feel about the so-called bad farm workers should be acknowledged, but I argue that such behaviour could be the result of how remote farmers tend to perceive, exploit and mistreat their employees.

Figure 4. The farm worker walks in the bright sun, on his way to the grazing land, where the goats are residing this time of the day.

5.1.5 Perceptions of farm workers based on nationality

Due to political instability in Zimbabwe, there has been an increase in the number of people migrating to Botswana (Galvin, 2014), and some of them are hired as farm workers on farms. Even though they may be well educated, all are in desperate need of finding a job and some turn to farmers in the hope of being hired. The informants in this study had different opinions on whether Batswana or Zimbabwean farm workers are preferable. Some informants claimed that Zimbabwean farm workers tend to work harder, since they are at greater risk of being fired and do not have the same legal protection as Batswana farm workers do. Remote farmer Norma described her perception of farm workers based on nationality:

> *Herd boys from Botswana are no good. They are too protected by the law. It is hard to fire these herd boys, even if they do a poor job or mistreat the goats. When you try to fire him, he can just claim his legal rights. So, I prefer the Zimbabwean worker we have now, even though he is also very lazy, but he can't claim any legal rights. He doesn't really care about the animals. We hire him illegally, so he doesn't get much money, but at least it's better for him than having nothing.* (Norma, female remote farmer)

It is interesting here how Norma regards the legal framework for farm workers as a threat or a negative aspect, as she believes that Batswana farm workers tend to misuse their privileged position compared with Zimbabwean workers without any legal protection. Several remote farmers agreed with Norma that Zimbabwean farm workers cannot claim any legal rights and have a limited ability to negotiate for a higher salary. Zimbabwean farm workers who are not given a work permit are easier to fire and therefore they must work harder than their Batswana counterparts to keep their jobs as farm workers. Several informants believed that Batswana farm workers are lazier than Zimbabwean farm workers. Local people are believed to be

unwilling to take on small farm tasks, such as those farm workers are required to do and, if offered a position in the city, they are more likely to move to an urban area than to live an austere lifestyle on a farm. Remote farmer Tony explained this to me:

> *People living around here don't want to do the small work tasks. So, I have been forced to hire Zimbabwean herd boys, but they don't always know how to do things properly. They are lazy and just don't care about the animals*. (Tony, male remote farmer)

When remote farmers stated that they prefer Zimbabwean farm workers, this tended to come with certain reservations. Zimbabwean farm workers were not preferable in the sense that they are *not* lazy, but rather that they are not *as lazy* as Batswana farm workers. Thus according to the informants, both Batswana and Zimbabwean farm workers are perceived as being lazy and unengaged in farm tasks. However, Zimbabwean farm workers can often perceive themselves as being in the position of having little or no agency in relation to the remote farmer. Thaban, a remote farmer, even beat his Zimbabwean farm worker when he did not perform well:

> *Really, he* [the Zimbabwean farm worker] *didn't care about the goats. Sometimes I even used to beat him, he was not reliable and didn't have the right qualifications to get the job in the first place. I couldn't leave the Zimbabwean herd boy alone, I had to monitor him all the time, otherwise he would have left for a job on another farm* (Thaban, male remote farmer)

In a scenario like this, where a remote farmer beats the farm worker, Zimbabwean farm workers are in a particularly vulnerable position. Zimbabwean farm workers have no possibility to contact any legal agency to complain about unjust work conditions, at least not without the risk of being deported when they do not have a work permit. Remote farmers are the party responsible for applying for a work permit, which is often perceived to be a time-consuming and costly procedure. Therefore, it is common to hire the worker illegally. This means that Zimbabwean farm workers cannot complain about their work conditions and must accept whatever happens on the farm. How remote farmers then choose to treat their employees often depends on how they perceive their work and their character. Remote farmer Donald had several Zimbabwean farm workers in the past, but had then found a Motswana farm worker from the area in which he grew up and, since he is pleased with his work on the farm, he treats him as a brother:

> *He comes from my own village, so we treat him as a family member, he is quiet and hard working. I like him.* (Donald, male remote farmer)

Several remote farmers would prefer to hire a Motswana farm worker, but they are often more demanding and ask for a higher salary than Zimbabwean farm workers do. Allan was one of few informants who articulated how Zimbabwean farm workers are exploited on farms and the problem in not giving them decent working conditions:

> *The problem with the Zimbabwean herd boys is that they don't dedicate themselves enough when managing the goats. They don't use their eyes when they work. Not recognising sick animals, what they need to prioritise during the day, so it is hard for them to work without us monitoring them. They do what they must do and then they rest. But it is harder to find Batswana herd boys and they often demand a higher salary. Zimbabweans have suffered a lot in their home country, and I think they are not treated well here either, people tend to treat them very badly.* (Allan, male remote farmer)

Against this background, I was interested in exploring whether farm workers themselves experience differences depending on their nationality. Motswana farm worker Poloko described how he sees the difference between Zimbabwean and Motswana farm workers:

> *There is a difference between these people* [Batswana and Zimbabwean farm workers]. *When Zimbabwean herd boys come to work on farms, they don't expect it to be hard work, they want to relax. They don't work hard enough and don't give as much effort as Batswana herd boys do* (Poloko, male Motswana farm worker)

Several informants agreed with Poloko that Zimbabwean farm workers are less reliable than Batswana farm workers. Therefore, they must constantly prove themselves to the remote farmer, working harder than their Batswana counterparts and winning their employer's trust. Zimbabwean farm workers constantly face risks, such as being fired and deported back to Zimbabwe:

> *Sometimes I think Zimbabwean herd boys are better than Batswana workers. The Batswana herd boys tend to relax too much, Zimbabwean herd boys work hard, they must do their best, so they don't get fired. But not all Zimbabwean workers are like this, you can't always rely on them, one day they might have left without letting you know.* (Tumelo, male Motswana farm worker)

On consulting a number of informants, it was obvious that there was no consensus on whether Batswana or Zimbabwean farm workers are preferable. On one hand, since Batswana farm workers have more legal protection and have a greater chance of finding jobs elsewhere, they are not preferable. On the other hand, Zimbabwean workers are regarded as less trustworthy and often lack the skills required for goat management. Tapiwa, who had a Zimbabwean farm worker, explained how the first two Batswana farm workers she employed just left the farm with the money they received from her. Her Zimbabwean farm worker, who still works on her farm, takes more responsibility for the goats:

> *The first three months we didn't have a herd boy. Then we employed a Motswana herd boy, but it didn't work out well for us, he just took the salary and went away from the farm. The same with the second one, who was from another village close by. He got the payment and left. The third one, the Zimbabwean, he lives here and takes much responsibility for the goats.* (Tapiwa, female remote farmer)

Nathan reported that it is not really a question about what nationality the farm workers have and that some Zimbabwean farm workers are good, some are bad, and the same goes for Batswana farm workers. He claimed that they should be judged on how hard they work, and that can only be done after seeing them in action, when they are managing the goats. He gave a more balanced view, one could say, on the role of nationality in determining whether a farm worker is good or bad:

> *Some boys are lazy and some are not. Some don't take long before they leave, take the money and buy alcohol. Just leaving the animals behind. You must take a chance, he will show you over time if he is good or bad. I prefer Batswana herd boys, they are more reliable, but most don't want to work on farms - they just want to live the modern life in the city* (Nathan, male remote farmer)

Applying the analytical tool of intersectionality revealed several aspects of how the socially constructed category of nationality can be an advantage for some and a disadvantage for others. Zimbabwean migrants often experience being looked down upon by Batswana people (Galvin, 2014). In my field work, some Batswana informants described how they felt threatened by Zimbabwean migrants. Unemployment in Botswana is high and Zimbabwean

people are perceived as taking Batswana farm workers' jobs. As mentioned in the background chapter, the Setswana word *makwerekwere* refers to African immigrants coming from countries that undergone economic collapse, as is the case in Zimbabwe. Nyamjoh (2006) reported that an individual is more likely to be defined as *makwerekwere* if they cannot speak Setswana fluently. In my meetings with the Zimbabwean farm workers, most of them struggled to communicate with their remote farmers in Setswana. This can be a disadvantage for Zimbabwean farm workers, since their inability to speak Setswana intersects with the socially constructed categories of "outsiders" and "insiders" in Botswanan society. Those unable to speak Setswana fluently can be considered to be outsiders, and can then experience social exclusion. Furthermore, Zimbabwean farm workers depend on their Batswana employers to get a work permit, since without this permit they are at constant risk of being deported and are excluded from legal rights that Botswana farm workers normally have. Being a farm worker, a job considered to have low social status, combined with being Zimbabwean means that socially constructed categories interact, resulting in a double disadvantage for Zimbabwean farm workers. Batswana farm workers, on the other hand, may face other forms of discrimination and inequality in relation to remote farmers, aspects that reinforce their subordinate position in relation to remote farmers. Similarly to the description of farm workers in Petitt (2016: 128), the Batswana farm workers participating in this study were affected by socioeconomic relations that have developed over a long period. These sometimes unequal relations between remote farmers and Batswana farm workers can therefore be perceived as natural, since this is "just how things are supposed to be". In this sense, Batswana farm workers might be more aware of what is expected from them in relation to their employers and what role they should step into as farm workers.

5.1.6 Power relations between remote farmers and farm workers

In this section, the focus is on power relations between remote farmers and farm workers. During one farm visit I interviewed an old Motswana farm worker, Kennedy, who referred to his boss as *lekgoa*, which is the same word used to describe a white foreigner. Kennedy explained that some farm workers call their boss *lekgoa* because he is the higher-ranking one, *i.e.* rich and prosperous. Thus the remote farmer can make long-term decisions on production, and can decide whether to keep the farm worker or fire him. Kennedy's way of relating to the remote farmer as the superordinate reappeared in interviews with several other farm workers. The hierarchical structure in the relations between remote farmers and farm workers is often perceived as natural, as part of the society at large. This structure might not always be problematic in itself, but it becomes problematic when remote farmers misuse their superordinate position and exploit their workers, something that several farm workers in this study had experienced. Throughout my field work, farm workers repeatedly described how they feel exploited by remote farmers, who pay them low wages, frequently threat to fire them, ignore them and sometimes even beat them. When standing in a goat kraal with a middle-aged Motswana farm worker, Botho, he shared his experience of being seen as nothing in the eyes of his boss:

> *The supervisor does not even see us herd boys. We are invisible. In the morning, he just passes us in his big car, not even saying hello, to him we are nothing really. He doesn't listen to us. There is no real relationship. I just do whatever he demands of me, I just do what I am told. Even if I would like to manage the goats in another way, in a better way, I know I must do it his way. Even if the animals suffer from that. To him I am just an uneducated man, I am nothing.* (Botho, male Motswana farm worker)

The story reported by Botho contains important indicators of why the uneven power relations can in some cases be so negative for farm workers. When Botho says that there is no real relationship, he means that there is no mutual friendship and no trust between him and the remote farmer. The way in which Botho is ignored by the remote farmer also reveals how

such relations can affect the way in which humans relate to animals. In this case, the remote farmer, being the one in charge, gives Botho no say about how to manage the animals in the best way. I saw similar cases on other farms, although there were also remote farmers who listened carefully to their farm workers regarding how the goats should be managed and could see the advantages of trusting the judgement of the farm workers. The outcome in this instance seemed to depend on the characteristics of the uneven relationship between the boss and worker, rather on the uneven power relation itself. In cases of negative uneven power relations, it often meant that farm workers' agency was limited and that they were stuck in a position of being subordinate. Farm worker Richard, who has worked his whole life in farming, has tremendous experience in livestock management. However, since he lacks formal education and has very little savings, he is unable to invest in his own livestock business. He is therefore dependent on the salary from the remote farmer and has no other option than to assist him:

> *To me, the biggest challenge is that I only help other people out, instead of having my own animals, I take care of my boss's animals. He demands a lot, but I get nothing in return. Sometimes, my boss benefits a lot from me. It's a problem, that I only support him and do not have the possibility of supporting myself. Having my own farm would make me more motivated. I can barely live on what I get from my boss here, but what choice do I have?* (Richard, male Zimbabwean farm worker)

During my field work, unequal power relations were not always explicitly stated, either by remote farmers or by farm workers. This relates to the statement by Lukes (2005) that power is most effective when least observable. Even though it was sometimes difficult for me to recognise what power struggles are at work between remote farmers and farm workers, I found some traces of how the inequality in these relationships is played out. During interviews, both remote farmers (and the interpreters) sometimes tried to silence the farm workers by answering in their place or refusing to translate my questions to them. As an example, during one specific farm visit I was just about to wrap up the interview with a young remote farmer when the farm worker appeared and I asked if I could talk to him. At first this did not seem to be a problem so I started to ask the farm worker about his work on the farm. However, the remote farmer did not want my interpreter to translate the questions from Setswana to English, but wanted to handle this by himself. In the beginning of the interview he translated my questions and the farm worker answered, but when it started to become obvious that the farm worker was describing not being treated well on the farm, the remote farmer stopped translating and answered in the farm worker's place:

> *You shouldn't ask him* [the herd boy] *questions. He is not educated and can't give you any good answers. He should work instead.* (Benedict, male remote farmer)

Similar situations arose on other farms and sometimes my interpreter was not keen on letting me interview farm workers. The explanation given was that this could be perceived as an offence to the remote farmer, although sometimes the farm worker was viewed as having nothing of value to share about farming. At other times the remote farmer hesitated about leaving the farm as I was about to interview the farm worker and, since I also wanted to respect the integrity of the remote farmer, I had no choice but to leave the farm before finishing the interview with the farm worker. When I was allowed to listen to farm workers, I gained important insights into how they experience injustice in everyday life and how these experiences of uneven power relations shape their beliefs and actions when working on farms. The dynamic of remote farmers being superior and farm workers being subordinate creates anger and frustration in many farm workers. Still, they emphasised that they would not like to harm the animals and, since they lived closest to the animals, they wanted to manage them in a safe way:

You never have the freedom of choice in this work. The one on top decides everything. You just follow whatever he says. He [remote farmer] *is high and I am low. The only time he talks to us, is when he wants to decide over us. The Motswana manager steps on us* [visualised by stepping on the ground in the kraal], *he crushes us! Before I had a better employer, he was a foreigner. If someone were to visit the farm then, they wouldn't have been able to recognise who was the manager and who was the herd boy. But now we are oppressed by the Motswana farm manager. We get angry, and in a sense, you stop caring about the work, you just feel like giving up.* (Poloko, male Motswana farm worker)

Poloko describes an aspect that I want to emphasise, namely that the asymmetry between remote farmers and farm workers does not always play out in an oppressive way, as he reported how his old employer treated him with respect. The asymmetry in relationships between remote farmers and farm workers should not be perceived as exclusively bad, but rather a structure that can sometimes be good for both parties and can sometimes lead to exploitation. Poloko's old boss had the power, just as his current boss does, but chose to treat Poloko in a different and more equal way. However, through observations during farm visits it became clear that most farm workers are expected to follow the instructions by the remote farmers at all times. In one example of this, a remote farmer became angry with a farm worker who had not cleaned the kraal for a week: "*Stop playing around Brian, come on!*" The remote farmer then became more and more frustrated and started to shout at the farm worker, who stood silently in the kraal, almost apathetic, not making any response. He kept his eyes focused on the dung covering the ground in the kraal, while the remote farmer kept shouting. "*Use your eyes, please. You must work now, stop fooling around and start to understand that we lose money if you don't take this work seriously. We really don't require much of you, but we can't keep you here if you don't start to be serious around here! What is this laziness about?*" The remote farmer had previously fired this farm worker for being too lazy, always listening to the radio and relaxing when the remote farmer visited him on the farm, but since there was no other candidate for the position, he decided to give him a second chance, but claimed he would fire him again the next month if there were no improvement. When I sat down and talked with farm worker Brian, he reported that he had other dreams in life than to become a farm worker, but this was the only option he had to provide for his children back home in Zimbabwe:

I never thought about becoming a farm worker, I was not so interested in animals or in farm work when I first came here. But I was desperate for money. I must send something to my small children that I left behind. I just needed an income, but this was not what I was dreaming about. This is just a job for me, I do what is required, nothing more. (Brian, male Zimbabwean farm worker)

Charles, a very old farm worker, had received little or no monetary economic payment from his employer in recent years. He is provided with housing, staying in a metal sheeting house that he described as extremely hot during the dry season, and gets food from his remote farmer every week. Before, when he was younger, he received some payment, but because of his age he says that he cannot be a real farm worker anymore. I did not ask Charles his actual age, but all citizens in Botswana over the age of 65 have the right to a pension payment (Government of Botswana, 2017a). It may be the case that Charles has not yet turned 65, but that his body is worn out and he cannot perform to his employer's satisfaction and therefore does not get paid properly anymore. I met several elderly farm workers who, like Charles, explained to me that they no longer received proper payment as they were too old. None of these farm workers mentioned receiving any pension payment (and as I was not aware of that possibility at the time of the interviews, I did not ask about their age or whether they received a pension). It might also be the case that Charles and his fellow farm workers, who represent a marginalised group in Botswanan society, living in remote places and highly dependent on their employers, do not know about the possibility to receive the old age pension. Regardless

of the reasons behind the lack of payment to Charles and his peers, this example highlights the extreme vulnerability and dependency of Batswana farm workers who are partly invisible to the public sphere in Botswana. Charles also provided an example of the hierarchical relationship between a farm worker and remote farmer, something other farm workers described in similar ways as being under or lower than the remote farmer:

> *I have no education, it means that I am lower than my boss, I am under another man's responsibility. I would like to rest now, I am an old man, but I must follow the rule of my boss.* (Charles, male Motswana farm worker)

This kind of inequality seemed to be an expected and natural aspect of relations between remote farmers and farm workers. That is just how things are, according to several informants. The remote farmers make all the crucial decisions over the production; how the animals should be managed and what the farm workers should prioritise. Still, since they do not monitor the farm workers every day, they are not able to decide on a detailed level what the farm workers should do on the farm or how they should spend their time. However, there is still the perception that farm workers must surrender themselves to the will of the remote farmers:

> *The main difference between us* [remote farmers] *and them* [farm workers] *is that we can demand things from them. We make decisions and they must follow our instructions. They have no choice but to follow our will*. (Thaban, male remote farmer)

On examining the underlying power relations between remote farmers and farm workers through the framework of intersectionality, some aspects were revealed. One was how being a Zimbabwean or Motswana farm worker to some extent affects their possibilities. Batswana farm workers have some advantages compared with their Zimbabwean counterparts, not least when it comes to the process of applying for the position, where remote farmers should in the first instance hire local farm workers before considering Zimbabwean workers. When a farm worker position is advertised, for the first 14 days only Botswana citizens can apply (Government of Botswana, 2017b). If they do not find a suitable Motswana farm worker, the remote farmer can hire a Zimbabwean farm worker, although this requires that the remote farmer to apply for a work permit. This is often considered to be both a costly and time-consuming process, which means that most remote farmers (at least in this study) choose not to do so. All these obstacles to hiring a Zimbabwean farm worker mean, in practical terms, that most remote farmers would prefer to hire a Motswana farm worker rather than a Zimbabwean. The fact that many Zimbabweans must work on farms without a permit also makes them significantly more vulnerable and dependent on the good will of their employers than Batswana farm workers, who have some protection under Botswana's labour laws. However, both Batswana farm workers and Zimbabwean farm workers may experience discrimination. As in the example of Charles, it is likely that the low level of education of many farm workers leads to a potential lack of knowledge about their rights and available state support, which reinforces Batswana farm workers' vulnerability and dependence on the good will of their employers. The widely acknowledged low social status of farm workers in Botswana in a way also sanctions the discriminatory treatment of farm workers by their employers as 'the norm'. Such experiences of discrimination, where farm workers feel ignored and invisible to the remote farmer, clearly shape the power relations between employer and employee. This also extends to intersections with non-humans. In Botswanan society, managing goats is considered less demanding and less valuable than managing large ruminants such as cattle (Hovorka, 2012). Young farm workers interviewed in this study, who do not even own small ruminants, then have even lower social status than older farm workers who own small ruminants or farm workers who manage cattle instead of goats. Further intersections of class and age in farm workers also became visible during the field work. For example, when farm workers reach a certain age, they are often not paid in money

any longer. Some of the farm workers I interviewed received livestock instead of money, and could slowly increase their cattle or goat herds. As described above in the example of Charles, the intersection between age and class in this case also comes with certain disadvantages for Batswana farm workers. Furthermore, when exploring underlying struggles for power between remote farmers and farm workers, I started to ask myself whether there are good and bad remote farmers. Some remote farmers seemed not to realise that their way of treating their employees has certain consequences. However, when farm workers feel acknowledged and respected by their bosses, they tend to be more willing to follow instructions and perform well. It is difficult for farm workers to change the structures in which they are embedded and to change their uneven power relation to their employers. Therefore, it is important for remote farmers to also reflect on their positions and how farm workers perceive them – as being either good or bad bosses. As regards "*power potentiality not actuality*" (Lukes 2005: 69), remote farmers can be said to have the means of power, conferred by their position within the agricultural sector. However, 'good' remote farmers might not misuse their powerful position in relation to farm workers, but rather try to make decisions more in line with farm workers' interests. Following Morris (2002: 40-42), it is also important to look at the social structure in society as a whole and not be too quick to judge individuals. Remote farmers may not reflect over their own behaviour towards farm workers because, on a structural level, it might be considered natural to employ workers at low salaries, house them in hot metal shacks and 'lord over' them.

5.2   Women and men in goat production

Questions of power are not only relevant in the case of the relationship between farm workers and remote farmers, since gender is clearly pertinent for how a farmer is perceived and treated in Botswana. Today, the Botswana government offers a wide range of funding programmes, some directly aimed at supporting women in farming. However, during my field work I found that women were commonly perceived as less capable of performing farm tasks than men. Statistics show that female farmers operate at subsistence level more often than men and are often more resource-poor than their male counterparts (Hellyer *et al.*, 2015). Almost every informant I met had rather clear opinions about tasks that are more suitable for women in farming. In this section, I describe how women involved in agriculture can experience both advantages and disadvantages, based on gender and nationality. Samuel, a young remote farmer, explained to me that women are not capable of managing livestock. First, he referred to how women traditionally are better at feeding children than managing ruminants. After a while, he shared his perception that women do not have the physical or psychological capacity to manage animals:

Women do not have enough muscles to handle animals, neither do they have the right mind, so they are not suitable to manage either cattle or goats I think. (Samuel, male remote farmer)

As described by Hovorka (2012), being a woman and a farmer often means that two socially constructed categories intersect, which leads to disadvantages in a double sense. The role women traditionally have in the larger Botswana society reflects the role they are often determined to have in farming. Women are expected to focus on nursing children, washing clothes and cooking tasty meals for their families. Women are subordinate to men, who are the head of the household and should provide for the family through their income. This makes it problematic for women to enter the male-dominated sector of agriculture. If a man is present on the farm, the woman is relegated to taking care of the household and working in the field, tasks that are often considered to require less muscle power and come with less status than *e.g.* managing cattle, a task deemed suitable for men. During one farm visit I met a group of five women who had mobilised themselves through creating a women's syndicate,

a deliberate strategy to strengthen each other in the male-dominated farm sector. Remote farmer Mmolainyane described the advantages of cooperating with women, how they understand each other and how they share same values when managing the goats:

> *Men are cocks! When they are around, conflicts arise. So, we don't want to include men in our syndicate. Men, they know the colours of the goats, but we don't see colours – we count the goats individually every day. Also, men drink a lot, it just causes problems. In this syndicate, we understand each other since we all are women, if a child is sick we stay at home. Men don't understand things like that.* (Mmolainyane, female remote farmer)

However, several women I met work independently in goat production, the majority being present farmers. They often viewed themselves as disadvantaged in relation to their manly counterparts. Women often described themselves as being at risk, in several ways, when working on their farms situated in scattered rural areas. One female farmer explained how she does not want to stay on the farm during the dark nights, when the only other person present is her farm worker, and this is the main reason for her not staying full-time on the farm. Other informants reported that the wilderness surrounding farms is a dangerous place for women, where they are at risk of being attacked or raped. However, managing goats often involves spending time in the wilderness, *e.g.* when letting the goats out on grazing land or when moving them back into the kraals at night. Bella was one of the women who did not want to walk in the wilderness by herself. She was afraid of being attacked, perhaps by someone hiding in the bush, but must walk the long distance from the bus stop to get to the kraal every day:

> *I must walk the long way from the bus stop to get to the kraal. I don't have a driving licence, so I can't reach it by car. I am afraid when I walk in the bush. I might be attacked by someone. But I can't drive my husband's car, so there is no other choice.* (Bella, female remote farmer)

Both male and female informants voiced the perception that women are more at risk when residing on farms. However, if women stay with their families on the farms they are at less risk of being attacked. The creation of the women's syndicate can represent another option to avoid risks to female farmers. Mido, one of the members of the women's syndicate, explained that she feels safer now that she works together with other women in the goat production:

> *I agree that men are just cocks. We are all women who manage this goat business, we love working together. We always work as a team and help each other when we struggle. The only man here is the herd boy. We don't want to stay with him alone on the farm, that might be dangerous, but if we are together we are not afraid.* (Mido, female remote farmer)

The example of Mido reveals interesting aspects of the complex power relations between remote farmers and farm workers. Despite being a remote farmer with the means of power in relation to the farm worker, Mido still experienced a loss of power based on gender. This example, as well as other examples from the farm visits, thus indicates that gender has effects on the relationship between farm owner and farm worker. This can be expected, as women overall have lower status than men in Botswana society, although at the same time farm owners have more power and higher status than farm workers. Thus the conflicting effects of the intersection between gender and class are visible, for example in the case of Mido who said she does not dare stay overnight alone on the farm with her farm worker. Female remote farmers are therefore dependent on their male relatives in order to remain in a position where they have the means of power in relation to farm workers and to avoid the fear of being attacked or raped on their farm. Another difference between remote farmers, depending on

gender, is how they regard their goats. I found that female remote farmers tended to express more negative feelings as they became geographically distant to their goats, once they had hired a farm worker, than their male counterparts. However, I must stress that not all female remote farmers had the same experience. One explanation could be that most of the female remote famers included in this study had started their goat production on a small scale, where they had a strong initial bond to the goats, which was broken once they increased the size of the goat production unit and moved away from the farm. Another explanation could be that women in Botswanan society are socially conditioned into the role of caring mothers and therefore they tend to relate to their goats in a motherly way, which means that they can experience deep feelings of loss when they are not living close to them anymore. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, in Botswana society cattle have higher status than small ruminants (Hovorka, 2012). The fact that it is accepted that women can manage goats or chickens jointly reinforces the lower status of these animals and of the women, and also serves to limit the possibility to earn any significant money on farming, which is possible with cattle (*ibid*.). Small livestock such as poultry are viewed as less demanding and therefore such animals are perceived as preferable for women, as remote farmer Tony explains:

> *Women should take care of children, the fields, the home. It is just our tradition. Men know how to manage livestock, women don't know that, but they can feed the chickens.* (Tony, male remote farmer)

According to the informants, cattle production is not something women can or should do. Already at an early age, boys and girls in Botswana are socially conditioned into different tasks related to agriculture. Boys are traditionally trained to take care of cattle and therefore from the beginning of life boys and girls are already linked to specific animal species (Hovorka, 2012). Even though more women are involved in goat production than men, not all of the informants in this study were convinced that women have the skills required to manage goats. Several informants argued that women are most able to take care of poultry and crop production. However, Nathan was one of the farmers who believed that women are capable of managing goats:

> *My wife and the herd boy manage the goats, I work in the city and go to the farm whenever it is possible. Goats are much easier to manage than cattle, this means women can manage goats by themselves. Managing cattle is too labour-intensive for women, still they can rear cattle, but it is better for them to manage goats. Women can employ someone to manage cattle, otherwise they can't do it, they are not strong enough.* (Nathan, male remote farmer)

Even female farmers seemed to have the perception that cattle production is reserved for men. However, I must emphasise that this might not be a representative view, since there obviously are women who own and manage cattle in other areas in Botswana (see Petitt, 2014). When I met remote farmer Tapiwa, she was very proud of her goat production. She owns the business and is an example of a woman who received funding through a government programme:

> *Women are good at cooking, they must take care of the house, wash and look after the children. Only men should take care of the cattle, but women can manage goats by themselves.* (Tapiwa, female remote farmer)

When I asked remote farmers whether they ever hire female farm workers, they responded by laughing and I realised that they perceived this as a rather strange question. Women are not able to take a position as a farm worker. Legally, it would be no problem, but according to the informants it is a position traditionally intended for men. In that sense women are excluded from the opportunity of being hired as farm workers. Zimbabwean women are

perhaps even more excluded than Batswana women from being involved in farming. Batswana women can receive government funding for starting up a goat business, Zimbabwean women, when residing in Botswana illegally, are not able to do so. The only opportunity for Zimbabwean women to be involved in farming is if their husband or partner is hired as a farm worker. In such cases, the Zimbabwean woman is expected to take responsibility for the household and the fields. Present farmer Apollo believes that women, whether Batswana or Zimbabwean, are not suitable for working as farm workers:

> *I've never heard of any woman being hired as a herd boy. They are not suitable as herd boys really, I don't think anyone would like to hire a woman to be a herd boy. It would be too dangerous for them, she should focus on the household instead, maybe work as a maid in the city instead. They shouldn't stay on farms by themselves, they need to always be protected by a man. The wilderness is a dangerous place for women.* (Apollo, male present farmer)

Before moving on to the topic of human-animal relations, I present some reflections upon on how men and women are associated with different animal species in different ways in Botswanan society. Obviously, men's intersection with large ruminants such as cattle gives them higher status in society. The fact that women are associated with smaller animal species such as goats and poultry reinforces their lower social status. So, when associating women with goats instead of only poultry, can this be seen as an improvement for women, or does it rather disfavour them in farming? Compared with cattle, goats are often perceived as being easy to manage and not requiring much skills. Thus when women are involved in goat production, it might just confirm their already low position in farming and not really increase their social status. This raises the question of whether women must be involved in cattle production to receive the same social status as men, or whether women could reach this status simply by increasing the size of their goat production enterprise. Here, it can be relevant to include perspectives from the concept of power that links to gender. First, in many societies women are still socially conditioned to be dominated by men (Lukes, 2005), which seems to be evident in the relations I saw during farm visits. For example, several female informants were socially conditioned into the roles of being responsible for cooking, nursing children and managing the fields. Both female and male informants perceived women as being more capable of managing small livestock (poultry) instead of goats or cattle. Therefore, it is perceived as natural for women to be restricted to the household and take care of small animals, both by the women themselves and by the men they are surrounded by. In the social and cultural context where these female farmers live, they are socially conditioned into these roles throughout life, and may believe they have actively chosen their roles by themselves. Since they rarely learn skills such as working with cattle at a young age or the same skills as boys, they often learn skills that come with less social and cultural status compared with men's tasks (Nussbaum, 2000). This affects power relations between women and men and also the degree of power one has depending on what animal species one manages. I believe that, in a similar way as farm workers must constantly prove themselves as good workers to remote farmers, women in farming must constantly prove themselves to men as being successful farmers.

Figure 5. Women, often associated with low-status animals such as chickens, here a female farmer selling a chicken to a neighbor. The driver and one of the interpreters are standing to the left. Through a government funding program, this female farmer started her own goat business, and combines this with poultry production.

5.3   Human-animal relations in goat production

One of the research questions examined in this thesis was how remote farmers and farm workers relate to each other and the environment, and the answer lies in the different ways they relate to the goats. My findings indicate that the fact that remote farmers are geographically distant to their farms creates an emotional distance to the goats and the environment. This was revealed through some clear differences in the material regarding how remote farmers and farm workers talked about their attitudes to the goats. Remote farmers often expressed a sort of distance to the animals, indicating that part of the close bond that they may have had when they first started small-scale production might be lost as the herd grows and they move away from the farm. Farm workers, who live physically close to nature and the goats, described the goats and the surrounding environment in different terms than remote farmers. Farm workers described the goats as being "their children and their friends". They often also reported that they feel that the goats are able to share emotions with them. This is one example of how humans and non-humans can be deeply connected with each other (Robbins, 2014). When interviewing and observing the informants managing the goats, it was apparent to me how the farm workers and present farmers often treated the animals as their children or friends, describing themselves as being mothers and fathers to the animals that they love. Some even described the goats are being tightly connected to, and deeply rooted in, their hearts. In contrast, remote farmers often described how the goats represent economic value to them and loss of livestock is more of an economic loss than an emotional loss. In this regard, production unit size and geographical closeness or distance to the animals appeared to matter. Present farmers, who live close to the animals, described similar ways of relating to the animals as the farm workers. Mbise, a Zimbabwean farm worker, called himself *father* when describing his role for the goats in the kraal and explained how the goats relate to him:

They smile at me. When I come close to the kraal, I see that the goats are smiling, they really like me. The goats know me, if a stranger comes to the kraal they walk away, but when I come close to the kraal they are happy to see me. (Mbise, male Zimbabwean farm worker)

Farm worker Ricky's attitude to the goats had several similarities to Mbise. Ricky describes how he cares for his goats and they care for him:

They are not afraid of me. They know me and they love me just as I love them. They know my smell, they feel safe with me. If they are hungry, they just start to cry. If they are thirsty, they complain. They know that I will help them and give them what they need. They all have different personalities, look at that one for example [pointing at a buck]*, I call him the boss, he is the leader of this flock, he is stubborn and has strong leadership qualities. When the owner sells, or slaughters a goat, I become very sad, it is like losing what I love the most.* (Ricky, male Zimbabwean farm worker)

Figure 6. The farm worker opens the kraal to let the goats out on grazing.

It is interesting here how Ricky describes the remote farmer selling or slaughtering goats as a loss to him. In contrast, selling or slaughtering goats makes remote farmers happy, since they make profit and can make further investments in production. I must emphasise, however, that it is not always a painless process when remote farmers become more distant to the animals and the environment. It often includes a period of grieving, since that initial bond is lost. Gorata began as a present farmer and initially managed everything herself, but as the flock increased she hired a farm worker. When the farm worker arrived and she moved away from the farm, something changed in her reaction to the goats. During her first years of goat production she took it very personally whenever a goat died, she grieved and was sad. To her then, it was like losing a child, but when she loses a goat today it basically means that she loses money:

Before, when I only had a few goats, I was very attached to all of them. I took it very personally when a goat died. Now I have come to realise, in the end of the day, it's just a business. You can't grieve every time you lose an animal, it's just part of life. (Gorata, female, remote farmer)

When remote farmer Tapiwa and I were standing beside the goat kraal, she started to describe how the farm worker's and her attitude to the goats differed. Since she spends most of her time in a larger village, she does not see the goats every day, and this means that they are more connected to the farm worker. Her way of relating to the goats illustrates how remote farmers tend to perceive the goats and how they sometimes struggle between valuing them as friends and as the cornerstone of their business:

> *They don't know me as they know the herd boy. I am not here all the time. It creates a distance between me and the goats. They know him* [the herd boy] *better than they know me. But still, if a goat dies, it is like losing a part of my own body. It breaks my heart. It means that I am losing my money.* (Tapiwa, female remote farmer)

As mentioned earlier, something happens when farmers move away from their farms and employ a farm worker to stay with the goats. The initial emotional attachment to the animals seem to be transformed into purely economic value. This in contrast to present farmers, who normally are restricted to having a small production unit and thereby remain close to the animals and the environment. Lerato, who started her goat production through one of the government funding programmes, is operating at subsistence level. She described the goats as her children, whom she wants to protect, and she even avoids taking part-time jobs outside the farm since she is afraid that someone might come and steal her goats:

> *I can't take a job outside the farm. I want to be close to my animals all the time. Otherwise someone might come and steal them. I need to protect them day and night. They are my joy and my children.* (Lerato, female present farmer)

Animal-human relations in Botswana often tend to include spiritual aspects too. Religion is not considered to be a private aspect of life. Rather, religion and faith is included in the public sphere of society, as I realised during the first focus group interviews. At the end of the meeting, and during several farm visits, I was asked to pray for the farmer and the goats. In both villages, the group exercises ended with holding each other's hands and jointly saying the Lord's Prayer. Farmers not only care for their animal's physical needs through providing water and feed – managing goats is also a matter of praying for them. Present farmer Kgalemo described how he prays for his goats every day:

> *They are my friends, they are my children, they are my everything! I really love them. I pray for them every day. In the morning, I pray for them. When I let them out to graze, I pray that God will protect them. When I go out and search for them, I also pray for them.* (Kgalemo, male present farmer)

Having healthy goats can be interpreted as a blessing from God, such that if a farmer has enough faith and find their strength in God, the business will have a greater chance of succeeding. Several informants explained to me that the two things required for success in goat production are to have a passion and to trust in God. Here, it is also important to emphasise how not only the farmer's and farm worker's interaction with the goats affect the animals, but also how the goats affect the humans. Farm worker Ricky reported that the goats have made him more responsible, how they have changed him as a person:

> *When I started to work with the goats, something changed in me. Before I drank a lot of alcohol, I was not a responsible person, I only thought about drinking and of life in the city. But the goats have changed me. Now I need to take care of them. I must be responsible. Both to the goats and to my boss. You need to grow a love for them, to create unity between you and the goats, then the rest will flow out of that.* (Ricky, male Zimbabwean farm worker)

When farmers and farm workers live close to the goats, they feel attached to the animals and show a deep empathy for the animals. They give them names, care about them and grieve over those that are lost:

> *I feel so happy about my goats. The goats are like a part of myself, they are a part of me. When I see that a goat is sick, I feel very sad, and it is always hard when a goat passes away. Last year it was so dry here, over 30 kids died and it was very hard losing all these animals. Also, it was bad for my production. I know my goats. I know them inside out. I give the bucks names, I named one after my favourite prophet[2]. I love this buck very much.* (Bone, male present farmer)

Bone's way of interacting with the goats and the way he sees them contrasted with how remote farmer Benedict described his goats as his friends, but also, since his deepest motivation in goat production is defined by economic value, as his bank:

> *The reason why I keep goats is to make money. In some ways, they are also my children, my friends and my everything – but most importantly; they are my bank. Without these goats, I wouldn't be able to have my bank card.* (Benedict, male remote farmer)

The choice and possibility of hiring a farm worker seem to be two-fold. On one hand, it enables the farmer to live a more modern life. Without running water, internet access and electricity, some informants feel shut off from the surrounding world while staying on farms in rural areas. On the other hand, city life can be experienced as noisy and stressful. Remote farmer Tapiwa explained how the positive aspects of hiring a worker outweigh the negative aspects:

> *I can't live on the farm myself. I must have electricity and buy food and clothes. On the farm, there is no internet, so I can't use Facebook or watch the television. It is better to have a herd boy then, even if it costs a lot of money.* (Tapiwa, female remote farmer)

Some farm workers, when treated well by the remote farmer, enjoy the solitude and freedom on the farm. Being a farm worker means that they live close to nature, while not owning the animals means that they do not have to worry about obstacles such as marketing the goats. Ricky, who grew up in a city, finds meaning in living in close connection to nature and the goats. When he was younger he dreamed about owning fancy cars and succeeding in life. His connectedness to the goats has surprised him and made him aware of things within himself that he did not expect:

> *I love this kind of life, you are stuck to the simplicity in life here. I was used to life in the city before. Here, in the wild, there is no noise, I need no time schedule, there is no competition with other people, I stay here in the jungle. I cook food on a real fire, everything here is natural, it is different from living in the city. I don't miss the people there, if I only have food and water – and medicine for the animals – I have no problems in life. The nature and the animals give me freedom, I am a free human here!* (Ricky, male Zimbabwean farm worker)

In this section, I explored human-animal relations among remote farmers, present farmers and farm workers. When listening to the informants' stories, I began to see some common perceptions and ways of how the informants relate to goats and the environment. Remote farmers, who live farther away from the animals, often tend to be more emotionally distant from the goats and the environment compared with present farmers and farm workers. Those

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[2] The informants used the word *prophet* when referring to the leader, preacher or pastor of their local churches.

living closest to the goats, farm workers and present farmers, describe their relationships to the animals as being more mutual. The goats can recognise their smell, can share joy and sadness with them. In this sense, it might not be an entirely positive thing to move away from the farm, since the initial bond to the goats can be broken. Furthermore, when remote farmers value and benefit from the goats financially, they can experience a higher degree of stress. The emotional bond initially associated with friendship and parenthood can take another direction, since losing goats can create feelings of stress from losing income. However, remote farmers often described how they feel more relaxed and at ease when on the farm compared with their everyday life in the city. On the farms, there is no noise, they can just listen to the wind and sometimes they wish that they could stay full-time on the farm. Including animal-human relations in this study revealed that remote farmers seem to relate to the goats quite differently from present farmers and farm workers. The coming section, considering the informants' perceptions of diseases and treatment of sick animals, also focuses on human-animal relations, even though the main concern is how uneven power relations have different spillover effects on goats.

5.4   Perceptions of diseases and treatment

Prevention and treatment of diseases is crucial in livestock production. One of the reasons why I deemed it relevant to include the informants' perceptions of diseases and treatment in this study is that uneven power relations between remote farmers and farm workers are put to the test here, since these asymmetrical relationships can sometimes result in negative impacts on goat health. Remote farmers bring the medicines and vaccines to the farm. They know where to buy medicines, how to transport them (some medicines need to be transported in a cooler bag) and have the right contacts to people who can give them medical advice. According to the informants, remote farmers often have more formal knowledge about animal diseases and treatments than farm workers. In most cases, remote farmers have some basic training in goat management and know the names of medicines and diseases. Yet, it is often farm workers who recognise the first signs of sickness in animals, who take care of them from day to day and are emotionally touched when finding a goat in a bad condition. Farm workers know every goat in the kraal, either by colour or by number. It is often the farm workers who name some of the goats, and can easily spot sick animals. One day during field work, Allan drove me to his farm, where farm worker Brian was taking care of the goats. Allan explained to me why farm worker Brian cannot be responsible for the medicines:

> *He doesn't know how to take care of sick animals, he lacks both the right knowledge and training in that. So, we bring the medicines and vaccines ourselves. It is too much responsibility to give to him and the medicines cost us a lot of money.* (Allan, male remote farmer)

Figure 7. The remote farmer applies grease on the foot of the goat, infected by footroot disease, with assistance from the driver.

When I listened to Allan and the informants who shared their perceptions of animal health, I asked myself why farm workers are not entrusted with medicines. Is it because they do not have the knowledge required? Or is it rather a question of remote farmers not trusting them? During my field work, several remote farmers could not reach their farms by car, due to the heavy rains. If remote farmers were to hand over more responsibility for the animals, and train farm workers how to treat sick animals, I believe that suffering in the goats could be reduced. Additionally, if farm workers were to be entrusted with more responsibilities, like managing vaccines and medicines, they could potentially grow in their role as farm workers. Since farm workers are often perceived as being lazy and unreliable, remote farmers tend not to want to hand over treatment of sick animals, not least because medicines are a costly input in goat production. Farm worker Ricky described the struggle between lacking the right knowledge in animal health and willingness to take care of sick goats:

> *To be honest, I don't have much knowledge about different diseases and I am not always sure what to do when goats are sick. I would like to help them, I suffer with them when they are sick, but I learn more and more. Now my boss takes care of vaccines and medicines. I need to report sick animals to my boss.* (Ricky, male Zimbabwean farm worker)

When farmers get funding through one of the government programmes, they receive a short training course in livestock management before they can start up their business. This course also includes some training in animal health. Several informants complained about not knowing enough about diseases and how to treat sick animals, despite having gone through the introductory course. In their opinion, there is a gap between the theoretical knowledge they gain from such courses and practical implementation of such knowledge. For example, Bone, who started goat production with funding from the government, does not have much formal knowledge about animal diseases. He asked a salesperson in the closest agri-shop and was told to put some thick grease on the foot to treat footrot in the goat:

Something is wrong with the foot. I don't know what it is. But I put some grease on the foot, once a day, and I hope and pray that the disease will go away. (Bone, male present farmer)

Bone's understanding of animal diseases seemed to be rather representative of that in the informants I met. Several informants reported being bewildered on realising that animals are sick. They do not know what is wrong or what to do about it, and even if they know what is wrong they cannot always afford to buy the medicines required. Present farmer Sella lost about 40 goats last year. The funding she received from the government programme did not cover the all costs:

Small kids died last year, I lost 40 of them, there was no rain. During the drought, I couldn't afford to buy enough feed for my goats. It's too expensive. The money I received from the grant did not cover all the unexpected costs during the dry season. How can I afford all the feed and medicines I need, when buying the animals costs so much? (Sella, male present farmer)

When discussing animal health with the informants, several of them mentioned a spiritual dimension, moving beyond the formal knowledge presented by veterinarians and advisors. I visited remote farmers Norma and Allan and their farm worker Brian. Norma has instructed Brian in how to spray the goats with holy water that brings in a small spray can. The can is filled with anointing water, blessed by the prophet in her church. She prays for every goat intensely as the holy water is sprayed on them:

You know, medicines are important, but even more important are your prayers. You must pray for the goats, show them love, to let God bless them and protect them from sickness. (Norma, female remote farmer)

How people understand and think about diseases affects how they act on finding a sick goat in the kraals. Sometimes the understanding of diseases involves forces that the farmer cannot control, *e.g.* present farmer Bone described disease as the devil:

Many diseases have attacked my animals. The devil killed four goats last year. They ate something, their stomach just got big, and I found them dead. Some diseases you can cure, but this I couldn't do anything about. It was the devil. (Bone, male present farmer)

Furthermore, farmers tend to have little agency to change the larger structures of advisory services in Botswana. Remote farmer Tony was one of the informants who described the problem of not having access to veterinary assistance. Sometimes he tries to call someone working in the Department of Agriculture, but the officer is either out of office or has no transport:

The problem is, you can't rely on veterinarians to help you out. I think this was better before. Sometimes the officers or veterinarians who are supposed to help you have no transport. So, you must pick them up with your own car. Sometimes when I go to the office to meet them, they are not there. I need to rely on other people who have knowledge about diseases. (Tony, male remote farmer)

Tony makes an important point here: Farm workers are dependent on their bosses (remote farmers) when facing sickness in the goat flock, but remote farmers are dependent on external help to treat animals, and have limited access to advisory services. The large-scale decisions concerning access to advisory services, which are made outside the farmers' and farm workers' local context on the farms, affects the experience of both types of informant of having little control over treatment of sick animals and general welfare among the goats.

Therefore, it is important not to blame the individual informants who struggle with treatment and prevention of animal diseases, but rather address the problematic large-scale policies regarding access to advisory services for those involved in goat production (Robbins, 2012). Farm workers' knowledge about animals is often ignored by remote farmers. Not all remote farmers I met had received training in livestock management and not all had any earlier practical experience of managing goats. Still, due to the hierarchal relationship between remote farmers and farm workers, the remote farmer often wanted to decide over the production and influence how the goats should be managed. Botho, who has worked as a farm worker his whole adult life, knows much about goats but must follow the instructions given by the remote farmer, even if he does not believe this is the best way to do things:

> *Even if I would like to manage the goats in another way, in a better way, I know I must do it his way. Even if the animals suffer from that. To him I am just an uneducated man, I am nothing.* (Botho, male Motswana farm worker)

The uneven power relations between remote farmers and farm workers affects treatment of sick animals, and thus the welfare of the animals. Overall, there seemed to be a knowledge gap among the informants when it comes to understanding different animal diseases and their treatment. However, it is important to ask whose knowledge counts. Can diseases be understood in other ways and in other terms than only through the medically correct names? It is interesting to relate this to knowledge as a means of power. The powerful remote farmers can make their own knowledge of goat management more valuable than that of their farm workers (Haas, 1990). Despite farm workers' often rich practical knowledge in goat management, remote farmers have the power to control their goat production and the employment situation of their farm worker and can downplay farm workers' knowledge and make decisions over the production against their employees' will. The way in which remote farmers use their means of power to reinforce their knowledge of animal diseases over that of farm workers can be viewed as a form of oppression. The tendency among remote farmers to downplay farm workers' knowledge in this area, combined with the lack of opportunities for farm workers to receive formal knowledge in animal diseases through training and courses, is a very clear example of the interplay between power and knowledge, and how the powerful (remote farmers, advisors, veterinarians) may use their power to claim that they have truer or better knowledge than the oppressed (farm workers) (Lukes, 2005). It was particularly striking in the present case how the political ecologies of this knowledge oppression not only limited the possibilities and sense of self-determination for farm workers, but also had direct implications on the welfare of the animals. By increasing knowledge of animal health, both among farm workers and remote farmers, the goat sector could potentially be improved. However, as this study indicates, paying more attention to farm workers' existing knowledge is equally important in improving animal welfare. By decentralising the present hierarchical way of managing animal health, where veterinarians and advisors, who have the formal knowledge, are often based far from these farms, the important knowledge of how to treat sick animals could transferred to farms, where it is most needed. In this sense, both remote farmers and farm workers are living within a broader system where neither of these actors has much agency to change the structure for accessing advisory services.
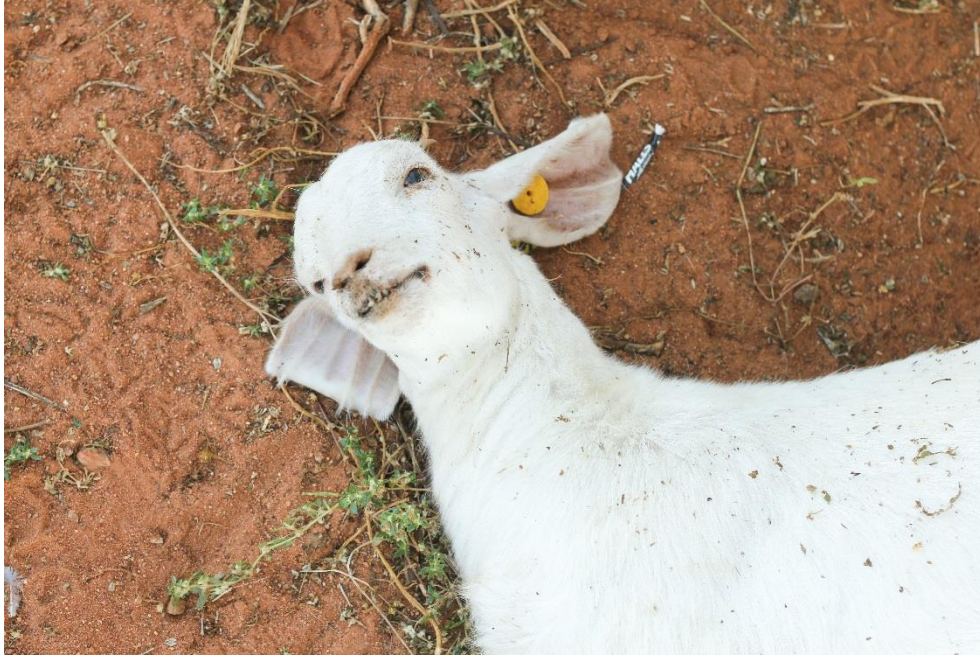
Figure 8. The farm workers recognized sickness in this goat and reported it to the remote farmer who is responsible for the medicines. However, the remote farmer could not reach the farm in time and the goat died a couple of days later.

5.5   Large-scale structures affecting goat production

In this section, I focus on the incidence and impacts of droughts and floods, a subject that seemed to engage almost every informant I met. Losing livestock due to heavy rains and droughts is an inevitable part of livestock production in rural Botswana. Farmers must find local strategies to handle these local environmental dynamics (Robins, 2012). However, even though farmers and farm workers may find useful strategies to adapt to their local environment and thereby avoid negative environmental impacts on goat production, they often find it difficult to withstand the harsh impacts from droughts and floods. As Curry puts it (*cit*. Good, 1993: 74): "*droughts not only hit the small hardest – but also keeps him* [her] *small*". In this regard, it might be important for large-scale structures, concerning policies and decision-making on goat producers in Botswana, to take greater account of all the struggles small-scale goat producers face on a local scale. However, these struggles are not equal for every farmer. For example, since little animal feed is produced in Botswana, several informants described how they have to purchase expensive animal feeds imported from South Africa. Resource-strong farmers can thus purchase imported feed when needed, but many subsistence-level present farmers can rarely buy sufficient amounts of supplementary feed in times of droughts. Several informants described how problems with drought are exacerbated by overgrazing, which is partly caused by policies on land ownership, where most farmers are restricted to letting their goats out to graze on communal land. The increase in the total goat population in Botswana in recent decades (Sigwele & Orlowski, 2014), which can partly be explained by the government's promotion of goat production through different funding programmes, has increased competition for the communal land. Among other things, this causes problems with overgrazing:

> *When it's dry, there is not much grazing for the goats, but they must eat what is available since I can't afford extra feed.* (Lerato, female present farmer)

The informants often seemed to have deep knowledge about the environment in which they live, such as where to find branches and water for the goats during droughts. However, political decisions made by external actors affect farmers in their everyday lives. Lack of investment in infrastructure can sometimes prevent farmers from even reaching their farms during floods. Thus, despite local knowledge and practices that are well adapted to tackle environmental challenges, these local possibilities of handling environmental problems are not enough. Therefore, when considering the informants' experiences of how the climate affects their production, it is important to stress that large-scale structures affect the local context. Politics and environment are tightly connected and constantly influence each other (Robbins, 2012). When the dry season came during present farmer Kathy's first year of goat production, she struggled and could not afford to buy the supplementary feed required:

> *I was aware that the droughts would come, but I never thought that the drought would kill so many animals, in the first year I lost 31 goats of the 50 I had from the beginning. Then, I lost 11 during the drought last year. I am very disappointed really and how should I be able to pay back the loan I have from the youth fund? It makes me very worried. I can't afford to buy all the extra feed and the goats become too thirsty.* (Kathy, female present farmer)

Several other informants described how they are not able to handle the impacts from droughts and that they tend to lose many goats during this season. On visiting the informants on their farms, it became evident that they often spend most of their money on stock, instead of holding back some for operating costs. Especially present farmers, who were often new to goat production, felt uncertain how to prioritize their finances when starting up the production and therefore realised too late that they had spent most of their money on bying stock. As a result, they had too little money saved for operating costs and goats died due to sickness or starvation during the dry season. However, some informants had found useful strategies to adapt and continue goat production in their environment. Through advice from neighbours and advisors, farmers can find new ways to avoid losing animals the next time the drought comes. Tony was one of these farmers who had started to produce his own animal feed to be more resistant to future droughts:

> *Last year I learned a lesson. During the dry season, we faced feed shortages. So I bought a chopping machine, to make my own feed from the crops in the fields. It was expensive, but it will help a lot next time the drought is here.* (Tony, male remote farmer)

This is yet another example of how the environmental dynamics can be more easily tackled if a farmer has the resources to make investments. These kinds of investments are not possible for everyone, however. Farm workers seemed to be less worried about impacts from droughts and floods than present or remote farmers, perhaps because they are rarely involved in the planning of goat production and carry less economic responsibility for the production. Motswana farm worker Kennedy believed that natural disasters are part of the production and unavoidable and that losing livestock is just the rule of God:

> *About 50 goats were lost last year in the dry season, all because of the drought, I couldn't give them the feed they needed. So, they were hungry all the time. I am used to losing goats, it is the rule of God, natural disasters, and there is not much you can do about it.* (Kennedy, male Motswana farm worker)

Present farmers, who are more directly affected by losing animals, tended to relate environmental risks more to the economic risks. Present farmer Neo explained how she tries to manage through the dry season:

Every year I need to sell animals to be able to afford the expensive feed and medicines. Last year I didn't have enough money and I couldn't sell the goats at a good price, many goats died in the hot climate. (Neo, female present farmer)

Several animal owners described how they must adapt and find new production paths when droughts come. They must find ways to reduce the harm caused by droughts and floods. Selling animals when there is little feed available can be one strategy that farmers use to reduce the risk of losing many animals. In some cases, informants described how the challenges during the dry seasons were too overwhelming and the only way out was to change their production. Present farmer Kgalemo wants to focus only on sheep production in the future, since he believes that sheep are more tolerant to harsh climates than goats:

What to do about global warming? It's a big problem! I face a lot of challenges in the dry season, I must buy supplementary feed, to afford that I must sell some of my animals, otherwise they would all die. The goats die too easily, so in the future I want to focus on sheep instead, they adapt better to the hot climate here. (Kgalemo, male present farmer)

Farmers' choice of goat breed matters, since different goat breeds have different possibilities of surviving in the Botswana climate. Breeds that are well adapted to the local climate and breeds that are easy to market are preferable. There was no consensus among the informants about which goat breed is best, but in interviews it seemed that most informants prefer Tswana over Boer goats. Tswana goats tend to tolerate harsher climates than Boer goats from South Africa:

Last year, I spent a fortune on feed for my goats, I had to sell some to feed the others. I bought pellets from South Africa, it was too expensive. Tswana goats survive the best, I only want to have Tswana, before I had other breeds also, but they died as soon as the climate became hot. (Ofentse, male remote farmer)

Local struggles are embedded in large-scale structures. In this case, policies and climate conditions were large-scale structures that often lie outside the informants' sphere of control. The Botswanan government's policies and funding programmes for promoting goat production (see section 3.4) are one form of structural reaction to this increased climate uncertainty and a way to help farmers adapt to changing climates. However, at the same time, large-scale social and political structures in Botswana which result in limited access to advisory services for those keeping small ruminants still persist. Policies and decision-making within the Botswana livestock sector have long been biased towards cattle production. Thus, while goats might be a good option for adapting to the structural ecological changes following on from climate change, the societal dimension in the form of lack of functioning infrastructure and organised markets for selling goats currently works in the opposite direction. A political ecology framework reveals this by demonstrating the simultaneous reinforcing or counteracting effects of social and ecological dynamics and structures (Robbins, 2012). The examples presented above of the struggles that individual goat producers face in their everyday lives make it clear that there is a need for large-scale changes in the political support for goat farming, including advisory services, marketing channels *etc.*, if these individual actors are to be able to draw on goat production as a means of adapting their farming to climate change.

6   Conclusions

In this chapter, I present the main conclusions that can be drawn from the results and the lessons learnt from investigating relations between remote farmers and farm workers and their treatment of goats. I also highlight some specific reasons why the social dimensions of livestock production should be considered. Through exploring how animal owners and farm workers relate to each other, issues that normally tend to be less visible (such as misuse of power and exploitation of farm workers) can suddenly emerge. Commonly shared experiences of poor working conditions and exploitation by employers, expressed by several farm worker informants in this study, must be dealt with to achieve greater social equality among humans. Note that not all remote farmers included in this study exploit their employees or misuse their power over farm workers, but they are part of a larger structure where it sometimes is perceived as natural to treat farm workers with little respect. This relates to the broader analytical framework of political ecology, where the emphasis is on how local struggles are embedded in large-scale systems. However, on examining relations between remote farmers and farm workers using the concept of power, three important aspects emerged: 1) Remote farmers have the power to control a significant part of farm workers' lives. 2) Some remote farmers exercise power over farm workers contrary to the farm workers' interests. 3) Exploitation and mistreatment of farm workers is often perceived as the norm in these relations; confirming the claim that power is most effective when least visible, remote farmers who have the means of power barely reflect upon how they sometimes mistreat and exploit their employees.

These hidden workings of power are not apparent when considering only how individuals behave towards each other, so it is important to consider the larger structure that remote farmers and farm workers form part of, where their thoughts and behaviours are so common that they are seldom questioned, by themselves or others. The fact that power is only partly controlled by the individual also indicates a need for a larger shift in society, where the focus is on changing larger structures enabling unjust work conditions rather than on blaming individuals acting (and trapped) within these structures.

Some large-scale changes have taken place in Botswana, *e.g.* in the case of ethnicity, where the government has actively worked on reducing the negative impacts of ethnicity in the society at large and has given all citizens the same right to education. This gives hope that top down enforcement of new behaviour in remote farmer-farm worker relations could in fact play a significant role in changing this.

This study also showed that farm workers may react to mistreatment by their employers by using 'the weapons of the weak'. While this is one of the few ways available to the oppressed to express their frustration, without resisting unjust labour controls to an extent that would be to their disadvantage, this study showed that it is not enough to change the situation for farm workers. Rather, when farm workers use passive resistance, it tends to reinforce and reproduce the negative perceptions held by their employers. For example, when farm workers resist remote farmers' misuse of power against them by working more slowly, this reproduces the perception that farm workers are lazy and unreliable. Other examples of negative uneven power relations between employer and employees show that the use of passive resistance seldom leads to any long-term improvement for oppressed workers. The fact that the weapons of the weak are not a sufficient strategy to improve the situation for farm workers in Botswana again points to the need to look beyond individual actions and target the structures that allow oppression.

The way in which remote farmers choose to approach and treat their employees can also have positive or negative spillover effects on the goats. For example, when remote farmers neglect farm workers' knowledge of goat production, there is a risk of the goats suffering. Today, remote farmers tend to take control over treatment of sick animals, not entrusting farm workers with the responsibility for vaccines and medicines, although farm workers are

often the first to recognise sickness in the goats. Thus the goat sector would benefit from educating farm workers in how to treat sick animals and from listening to their rich insights into animal production. My own experience during farm visits was that farm workers were often marginalised and silenced by others during my attempts to interview them. Similarly, one can assume that they have limited opportunities to express themselves to advisors. This is a pity, since farm workers' insights into goat production could help to improve the goat sector and the general welfare of the Botswanan goat population. Another problem was the hierarchical structure among actors involved in animal health in Botswana. I noted during farm visits that remote farmers', present farmers' and farm workers' perceptions and knowledge of animal health all tended to be neglected by external actors. This is also apparent in the relevant literature, where farmers are described as having *false* perceptions of diseases and generally described as ignorant. While the informants may not always have used the *correct* medical terms when describing sickness in animals, they still had much knowledge about the condition of their goats and such knowledge should not be ignored. Another animal welfare issue is whether the government should keep offering funding programmes without providing enough advise and support for those new to goat production. In a sense, the government then pays for goats that basically end up starving to death, since goat farmers realise too late that they did not save enough money for operational costs. When spending almost all funding on stock, farmers do not have money to buy medicines or supplement feed, which is a necessity during the dry season. The lack of sufficient advice and support for new goat farmers points to the need for a large-scale change, where goat farmers are not only provided with financial resources but also get advice on how to strategically set up their new businesses. This structural problem causes financial stress among goat farmers and affect animal welfare negatively.

The results also showed that female animal owners' (remote farmers' and present farmers') knowledge and abilities in goat production are often ignored or downplayed by others, based on perceptions of gender in relation to livestock production. In work on improving the goat sector in Botswana, it is crucial to critically evaluate the oppressive larger structures that negatively affect women's opportunities in livestock production. Women's fear of being raped and attacked when involved in goat production are also issues that must be taken seriously. The overall conclusion from this study is that the social processes at work in livestock production should not be disregarded, but rather investigated in depth, when seeking greater social equality and improved animal health.

7   Final reflections and some suggestions

Some time has now passed since I met all these warm, hospitable and friendly farm owners and farm workers in rural Botswana. While performing the field work, my mind was occupied by different goat breeds, animal feeds and stories. When I returned to Sweden and started the process of writing this thesis, I was able to begin reflecting on what I had seen and experienced on all these farms. In this closing chapter, I will give suggestions for policy and future research, and share some personal reflections of my experience from conducting this thesis.

First, I believe that there is an urgent need for more in-depth research on the situation of farm workers, who work hard and often receive little in return for all the effort they devote to goat production. Very little research is available on farm workers' situation and their general impact on the livestock sector in Botswana today. To improve work conditions for farm workers, I suggest that they be provided with more training in animal health, that they be given a decent salary by their employers and that they be given more credit for their often rich knowledge in livestock management. In this qualitative study, I found that Zimbabwean and Batswana farm workers experienced exploitation in their everyday lives, both physically and mentally. Farm workers' sense of self-determination, agency and performance could potentially be improved by providing them with better working conditions. It is particularly important to pay more attention to Zimbabwean farm workers and their vulnerable position in goat production. Remote farmers commonly do not apply for work permits for their Zimbabwean farm workers, which creates much anxiety and uncertainty for these Zimbabwean workers.

Second, research should be linked more closely to the people it concerns. From the beginning of my field work, farmers expressed disappointment about not getting feedback from previous researchers. It is important to maintain the trust that exists between researchers and farmers and to prevent resource-poor farmers from feel ill-used and ignored by those conducting research on their farms. My own role as a researcher is problematic here, since I do not live in Botswana and face some obvious obstacles to sharing the information from this study face to face to those who contributed.

Third, I believe that there is a need for reducing the gap and sometimes negative uneven power relations between people working in advisory services and farmers. In this study, I demonstrated how farmers and farm workers can perceive advisory services in everyday life. I believe that the goat sector could be improved if external actors, *e.g.* veterinarians and animal department officers took a bottom-up instead of top-down perspective. During my field work, I worked closely with an interpreter, who is a Master's student in animal sciences and in farm visits, while talking to the often resource-poor farmers, some tensions came up between me and the interpreter, *e.g.* we had different ideas on how to approach farmers and what role we should play when coming to their farms. The interpreter took on the role of advisor and started to correct the farmers, which seemed to discourage them from sharing their perceptions and knowledge freely. During one of my last days in Botswana, the interpreter and I sat down and described our different experiences from the field work. He was surprised that I listened so carefully to the farmers and farm workers, that I did not correct them or tried to take on the role of expert. To him, this was a new approach and he reported that it made him think about how well-educated people tend to approach farmers in rural Botswana, on how he normally relates to farmers and how he wants to relate to them in the future, which is to empower people by acknowledging them and their important insights on livestock production. This demonstrates the importance of listening to all the insightful voices of farmers and farm workers, who often have life-long experience, and of reducing the gap between officers, researchers and those who spend time with the goats from early morning to dark night.

Finally, some concluding remarks. On a personal level, I experienced an ethical struggle in sharing these findings from rural Botswana and still respecting and honouring all the remote farmers and farm workers I met during field work. What I saw on some farms was not flattering for remote farmers, who sometimes yelled, threatened, complained about and underpaid their farm workers. However, sharing these findings gave me the opportunity to highlight the vulnerable position of farm workers, with the hope that their work conditions one day will improve – while there may be many challenges in the goat sector in Botswana today, perhaps there are even more opportunities.

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