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Labour relations that influence the militancy of farm labourers.

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Abstract

This study investigated whether high quality Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationships between farmers and farm labourers reduce the level of militancy that labourers will adopt during labour strikes. The study was conducted in the aftermath of the farm labour wage strikes which occurred between August 2012 and January 2013 in De Doorns in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, in which three labourers lost their lives.

Purposive sampling was used to conduct semi-structured interviews across a spectrum of farmers and managers in De Doorns to construct eight case studies of the same event. The interviews were transcribed and analysed in order to test the propositions that were developed during the literature review.

This study confirmed the existence of LMX relationships between farmers and labourers. The study further found that: labourers who enjoy higher quality LMX relationships with farmers may be less militant during labour strikes; trust is a critical factor in developing and sustaining high quality LMX relationships; the quality of LMX relationships influences the time required to restore the work relationships after a crisis situation; and the social context in which leaders and members are embedded will influence the quality of the LMX relationship. These findings have applications for the management of labour intensive industries in South Africa that could benefit from reduced militant behaviour during labour strikes.

Keywords

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

Leadership

Agriculture

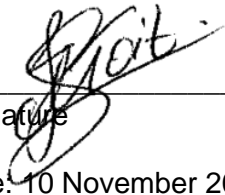
Militancy

Labour strikes

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry this research out.

Name: Jan-Louis du Toit



Signature

Date: 10 November 2013

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1. Chapter 1: Definition of problem and purpose

On the 27th of August 2012, the first farm labour strike involving approximately three hundred labourers began on the Keurboschkloof farm near De Doorns (Christie, 2012). These strikes escalated further, on a demand of a 52% wage increase, into three consecutive strikes galvanizing more than 9,000 farm workers in the area (Christie, 2012). Wage negotiations collapsed after Agri SA [a federation of agricultural organisations] and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) announced that they were walking away from the negotiations, resulting in striking labourers clashing violently with police on numerous occasions. Three labourers lost their lives during these strikes (Davis, 2013).

This study focused on Farmer-Labourer relationships in a labour intensive agricultural setting and determined whether particular leadership and management strategies applied by farmers lead to a reduction of militancy of the farm labourers on the specific farm. More specifically, the study focused on grape farmers and their relationships with their labourers in De Doorns in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The theoretical framework of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) was selected to investigate these relationships.

The existing LMX research, which is reviewed in Chapter 2, clearly indicates the existence of in- and out-groups relationships between farm labourers and the farmers, which paves the way for the application of LMX theory as a framework through which to investigate these relationships.

The purpose of this research was therefore to determine whether farmers apply LMX principles in their labour relationships and whether the quality of LMX relationships have influenced the level of militancy by the farm labourers during the De Doorns strikes.

1.1. Why was this problem selected?

The loss of human life over a wage dispute seems like a needless loss of life and prompts the question: could better farmer-labourer relationships have prevented this tragedy? The purpose of this study was to use LMX as a framework through which to gain insight into Farmer-Labourer relationships in De Doorns. From an LMX perspective, insights were sought on the individual dyadic relationship (Milner, Katz, Fisher, & Notrica, 2007) between supervisors or managers and each of their subordinates, specifically in the area of commitment (Gerstner & Day, 1997) and citizenship (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007).

As well as the existence of in-groups and out-groups of labourers on the various farms and whether these relationships influenced the level of militancy experienced during the strikes on the farm.

1.2. What is the relevance of this topic to business in South Africa?

Primary agriculture contributes about 3% to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) and about 7% to formal employment. However, there are strong linkages into the economy, so that the agro-industrial sector comprises about 12% of GDP (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2013).

In addition, for the past five years, agricultural exports have on average contributed about 6.5% year on year to the total of South African exports by value. Exports of agricultural products increased from 5% in 1988 to 46% in 2009. The largest export groups are wine, citrus, maize, grapes, sugar, apples, pears and quinces (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2013). Table grapes and citrus are grown in the Hex River Valley and therefore De Doorns, which is situated in the Hex river Valley, is a critical agricultural area for these export groups. These figures make it clear that agriculture plays a critical role within South Africa's economy and that a disruption in this sector could seriously harm the country's economy and international investment ratings.

According to Moseley (2006), commercial farming in the Western Cape has undergone an enormous transition since the African National Congress (ANC) took power in 1994. These transitions include the removal of some government tariffs and subsidies; exposure to intensely competitive global markets due to the lifting of international sanctions on South African products; and the strong value of the South African Rand which reduces the Rand value of exports and makes foreign agricultural producers more competitive in the South African market (Moseley, 2006). (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005) note that with the coming to power of the ANC, a veritable slew of legislation was passed providing for a wide range of labour, social and land rights, ranging from the Basic Conditions of Employment Act in 1993 to the promulgation of minimum wages in 2003.

1.3. What evidence corroborates the identification of the problem?

The Western Cape farm labourer

Western Cape farm labourers have historically been drawn from the “Coloured” demographic group (Moseley, 2006). Most permanent farm labourers are male and live on the farm in housing provided by the farmer, for which they may or may not be charged rent. A much higher proportion of seasonal labourers are female. These women may be the spouses or family members of the permanent male labourers or come from the surrounding areas (Moseley, 2006).

(Moseley, 2006) further states that despite the common perception of farm labourers as an unskilled labour force, they often possess highly technical and specialised skills. Despite these skills, labourers often have a limited understanding of the broader farm operation and usually have had little to no exposure to the business side of farming (Moseley, 2006).

Farmer-Labourer relationships in the Western Cape

(Du Toit, 1993) describes the historic farmer-labourer relationship by viewing the historic discourse of these relationships. He describes the historic hegemony of traditional authoritarian paternalism, as well as the revolution of the Farm Management Movement and early phases of unionisation of farm labourers. He further notes that the figure of the farmer has been removed from the centre of the paternalist world, and substituted by the figure of the labour union.

This initial research is further motivated by (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005). They state that until the 1980s, labour arrangements on South African wine farms were characterised by racially hierarchical and authoritarian paternalism inherited and adapted from early Cape slave society. The authors further state that the relationships between farm-owners and labourers have not been simply exploitative but were shaped by the discourse of paternalism. According to the authors, the notion of farmers as benevolent but firm protectors and disciplinarians of a grateful and appreciative population of farm labourers has been an important part of the self-conception of farmers in the Western Cape and elsewhere in South Africa since the eighteenth century.

According to Du Toit (1993), an analysis of the discourse of wine farm labourers and owners in the Western Cape shows how paternalist discourse marginalises and excludes the workers voice – but also shows how workers can challenge the employer’s power. He

continues that traditional paternalism is distinguished by an 'organic' conception of the farm as a family, with the farmer occupying a central position of unchallengeable authority. Because of this position that the farmer occupies, agricultural workers depend on the farm for every aspect of their material survival including money, housing, water, electricity and often even food and drink (Du Toit, 1993). This leads to labour relations that are not easily separated from broader social relations as they might be in town life, therefore obligations between worker and farmer extend far beyond the labour-wage nexus (Du Toit, 1993).

Ewert and Du Toit (2005) further elaborate on this point by discussing the Rural Foundation of the early 1990s. According to the authors, the Rural Foundation was a rural welfare and social development initiative funded by the apartheid government, conservative overseas donors and farmers themselves, with programs to address alcoholism, other forms of 'social pathology', skills shortage and labour relations. They conclude that the efforts of the Rural Foundation were not successful and instead created a 'neo-paternalism' – a hybrid formation in which elements of modern and paternalist farm management existed, sometimes uncomfortably, side by side.

With the coming to power of the ANC, a wide range of legislation was passed providing for labour, social and land rights, ranging from basic conditions of employment in 1993 to the promulgation of minimum wages in 2003 (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005). Ewert and Du Toit (2005, p. 324) list the most important pieces of legislation applicable to farm workers as:

- the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1998
- the Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993,
- the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act of 1993,
- the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995,
- the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998,
- the Skills Development Act and Skills Development Levies Act,
- the Extension of Security of Tenure Act 62 of 1997 and
- the Unemployment Insurance Act

According to Ewert and Du Toit (2005), these labour laws have significantly disrupted the institutional order of the paternalist labour management style but have not decisively transformed it. They continue that farm labourers are now more aware of their rights, but find that insisting on their rights can be a dangerous strategy and know that maintaining patronage relationships with the farmers may be just as important.

Legal industrial action on the part of the farm labourers first became a possibility with the passing of the Labour Relations Act of 1995, through which farm labourers have the explicit right to strike and access mediation services (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005). However, according to Ewert and Du Toit (2005), unionisation in most parts of the rural Western Cape has been rather slow and piecemeal with less than ten percent of the permanent labour force being part of a union. Some reasons for the slow unionisation of farm labourers include vehement opposition to central bargaining by the farmers who employ them; thinly stretched union resources due to distance and isolation; and the poverty of their organisational base. The authors further add that the strategies employed by trade unions themselves may be ill suited to organising agricultural labour.

One alternative, and perhaps much more ambiguous intervention into the power relations between labourers and farmers than trade unionism, is farm worker equity share schemes (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005). Ewert and Du Toit (2005) argue that these schemes can bring significant benefits to farm labourers in the long run and, to the extent that they turn management decision-making itself into contested terrain, may contain significant opportunities for change to the highly authoritarian, racially hierarchical management practices of traditional paternalism.

“Although labour law has curtailed their power, farmers have retained their ability to restructure their businesses on their own terms. This results in trends that could make labour law irrelevant in important sectors – and pose important challenges to traditional forms of worker organisation” (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005, p. 325).

According to Du Toit (1993), since the time of slavery, the world of the farm has been one that binds workers and farmers together in a complex and intimate relationship. It is clear to see that the political, economic and social changes in South Africa over the last two decades have significantly disrupted and changed the agricultural environment in South Africa. With this new environment comes the need for modern leadership and management techniques.

1.4. Research objectives

This study had five primary research objectives. These were to:

1. Investigate whether LMX exists on farms in the De Doorns Valley and whether the size of the farm and labour force influences the quality of LMX relationships.
2. Determine whether the quality of LMX relationships could influence the labourers' militant action.
3. Identify leadership traits that farmers could apply to improve their LMX relationships with labourers, thereby reducing the likelihood that labourers will become militant.
4. Investigate whether the quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with the workforce influences the time required to rebuild the relationships after militant action takes place.
5. Establish whether the social context in De Doorns, alongside external influences, influence the quality of LMX relationships the farmer has with his workforce.

1.5. Outline of the research report

This research report is laid out in the following sections. Chapter 1 provided a brief introduction to the research problem, why this problem was selected and its relevance to business in South Africa. A literature review in Chapter 2, will attempt to provide rich insight into the relevant theoretical constructs under review. The research questions informed by the literature review will be set out in Chapter 3. The research methodology, Chapter 4, will explain how the data gathering and interpretation took place in order to address the questions raised in Chapter 3. In Chapter 5, the results are presented and in Chapter 6, the results will be discussed. The report concludes with Chapter 7, where limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, and additional findings are considered alongside the applications of LMX within the context of improving the working environment and organisational output in labour intensive industries in South Africa through case studies in the table grape agricultural setting.

2. Chapter 2: Theory and literature review

2.1. Leader-Member Exchange Theory

2.1.1. History

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory emerged from Vertical Dyad Linkage research (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975) and has a long tradition of more than 35 years of research that cover this area. According to Schriesheim, Castro and Cogliser (1999), Vertical Dyad Linkage subsequently evolved along two very different lines of development. The first branch of development appears to be most commonly called the “Leader-Member Exchange” model. The second branch has been the more recent “Individualised Leadership” model, which is quite different from the LMX approach (Schriesheim et al., 1999). The individualised leadership model falls outside the scope of this study and will not be discussed further.

According to Schriesheim et al. (1999), LMX research has been quite fruitful, as LMX has been significantly correlated with such variables as increased subordinate satisfaction, increased subordinate performance, enhanced subordinate career outcomes and decreased propensity to seek alternative employment. Jha and Jha (2013) echo this position by stating that outcomes related to LMX, such as performance improvement; overall satisfaction; organisational citizenship behaviour; commitment; innovation; creativity; team spirit and engagement not only generate positive employment experiences, but also augment organisational effectiveness.

It is clear that a labour strike is definitely not a “positive employment experience” and therefore the strikes and militant behaviour that occurred in De Doorns could be related to the quality of the LMX relationship between the farmer and his employees. Two of the propositions that will be discussed in the following chapters of the study are therefore: whether the quality of LMX relationships between the farmer and his employees could influence the level of militancy the employees display during a labour strike; and whether the quality of LMX relationships between the farmer and his employees influences the time required to restore the LMX relationship after the strike occurred.

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) suggest that LMX theory has passed through four stages with each stage building on the stage preceding it. Stage one research found that leaders

developed differentiated relationships with their subordinates. The second stage focused on the characteristics of the different relationships the leader had with various subordinates within the work unit and their organisational implications. During stage three, the emphasis was moved from the leader's differentiation of subordinates to how the leader can work with each subordinate on a one-to-one basis to build and develop a partnership with each of them. The most recent fourth stage explores how dyadic relationships are organised within and beyond the organizational system (Schriesheim et al., 1999).

Avolio, Walubwa and Weber (2009, p. 433) state that LMX literature has evolved from focusing exclusively on the consequences of the LMX relationship to both antecedents and consequences of the LMX relationship. They also discuss some additional areas of focus in terms of high- versus low-quality LMX relationships which include the context under which those relationships have developed. According to Avolio et al. (2009), recent research has moved beyond examining LMX in terms of antecedents and consequences and now examines the quality of the leader and follower relationship as a moderator and/or mediator of performance.

2.1.2. LMX Theory

Leader-Member Exchange focuses on the individual dyadic relationship between supervisors or managers and each of their subordinates and emphasises the differences in the manner in which a supervisor behaves toward different subordinates (Milner et al., 2007). Because leaders often function under time pressures, they establish special relationships with a small group of their followers (Graen, 1976). Whilst with the rest of the work group, the leader will rely mainly on formal authority, rules and policies to ensure adequate performance (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). It seems possible that farmers might often function under similar pressure as they strive to cope with the changes in their industry as discussed in the previous section. It would be logical to assume that farmers will likely treat their labourers in a similar fashion as that described by Graen (1976) above.

According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991), LMX relationships move through three phases: the stranger phase, the acquaintance phase and the mature phase. In the stranger phase, both parties ascertain and build their roles. Favours and exchanges are expected to be reciprocated immediately. As reciprocation occurs, trust and information are exchanged.

Ultimately, the relationship can develop into the mature phase where no timeline for reciprocation exists (Major & Morganson, 2011).

Leader-Member relationship development is described by Dienesch and Liden (1986) and Liden, Sparrow and Wayne (1997) as a series of steps that begins with the initial interaction between the members of the dyad. This initial interaction is followed by a sequence of exchanges in which individuals “test” one another to determine whether they can build the relational components of trust, respect and obligation necessary for high quality exchanges to develop (Uhl-Bien, Graen, & Scandura, 2000). Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001) draw from Dienesch and Liden (1986) and Uhl-Bien et al. (2000) in stating that “If the reception of an exchange behaviour (e.g., delegation) is positive and the party initiating the exchange is satisfied with the response (e.g., the subordinate made an appropriate decision), the individuals continue to exchange. If the response to an exchange is not positive (e.g., is not reciprocated or fails to show competence) or if the exchanges never occur, opportunities to develop high-quality exchanges are limited, and relationships will likely remain at lower levels of LMX development” (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001, p. 698).

Major and Morganson (2011) draw from Bauer and Green (1996) and Liden, Wayne and Stilwell (1993) in describing LMX theory in a similar vein. They state that during the initial stages of working together, the role making process begins. “Supervisors provide opportunities for subordinates to complete both in-role and extra role tasks. Subordinates can choose to complete all of these tasks or only those that are formally required. Those subordinates who put in extra effort differentiate themselves in the eyes of the supervisor and assume the role of a trusted workgroup member (Major & Morganson, 2011). In such a social exchange, the subordinates stretch themselves to accomplish outcomes anticipated by their supervisors even if the tasks fall outside their job descriptions and responsibilities and they have to work beyond office hours or outside of the work place (Jha & Jha, 2013).

In exchange for the subordinate working beyond the minimum requirement of the job description, the supervisor provides the subordinate with resources and opportunities that may be used to satisfy their work-life balance needs (Major & Morganson, 2011). According to Graen (1976), this interpersonal exchange relationship influences the role that the subordinate will play within the work unit, and mutually benefits both parties involved.

2.1.3. LMX differentiation

A major tenet of LMX theory is that supervisors do not develop identical relationships with all of their subordinates (Major & Morganson, 2011). In fact, a unique feature of LMX is its emphasis on differences in the manner in which a supervisor behaves toward different subordinates, thus stressing the quality of the exchange relationship (Milner et al., 2007).

Henderson, Liden, Glibkowski and Chaudhry (2009) define LMX differentiation as a process by which a leader, through engaging in differing types of exchange patterns with subordinates, forms a different quality of exchange relationship with each of them. The quality of leader-member exchanges is divided into two basic categories: the high quality “in-group” - which is characterised by high trust, interaction, support and formal or informal rewards, and the low quality “out-group” - which is characterised by low trust, interaction, support and rewards (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

Bauer and Green (Bauer & Green, 1996) state that a manager with ten subordinates will have ten distinct LMX relationships. Because of various factors such as time and resource availability, some of these relationships will evolve into high quality exchanges typified by high levels of mutual trust and respect and others will be of lower quality and based primarily on the formal employment contract (Bauer & Green, 1996).

Henderson et al. (2009) further this notion by stating that as group size increases, it becomes increasingly likely that group members are more diverse in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities, demographic characteristics, values and similarity to the leaders. As these differences accumulate, it may become difficult for a leader to expend the time and effort necessary to meet the unique needs and desires of all group members. This could motivate the leader to expend his or her time or effort in building social exchanges with those subordinates who are perceived as more similar to him or her (Henderson et al., 2009).

The above statements by Bauer and Green (1996) and Henderson et al. (2009) prompts the question whether the number of subordinates reporting to one manager influences the quality of LMX relationships within that department. Therefore a further proposition that will

be discussed in the following chapters of the study is whether the size of the farm and the labour force influences the quality of LMX relationships.

Henderson et al. (2009) further found that transformational leadership is positively related to LMX quality, indicating that highly transformational leaders may form more high quality LMX relationships within their work groups than is true of less transformational leaders. On the other hand, because servant leadership behaviours focus on engaging all subordinates through practices that surpass tit-for-tat transactional exchanges, they may be more likely to develop high quality LMX relationships in their work groups (Henderson et al., 2009). Henderson et al. (2009) contends that there is a positive relationship between group size and LMX differentiation, this effect may be more likely for leaders who exhibit low levels of transformational or servant leadership behaviours.

According to Du Toit (1993), there is clear evidence that farm workers fall either into or out of favour with the farmer, therefore an in-group and out-group of labourers are likely to exist on the farm. Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, and Sparrowe (2006) state that LMX differentiation mattered little to individuals in high quality LMX relationships, but increases in differentiation were associated with increases in performance for individuals with low quality LMX relationships.

Ewert and Du Toit (2005) further support this notion in that there are workers who have been retained as members of the permanent core labour force on the farm and those that have been retrenched or fallen victim to externalisation and casualisation. They also found that the Rural Foundation, as discussed earlier, “created a new layer of black supervisors, insecure in their power and caught uncomfortably between the resentment of rank-and-file workers and the demands of farm management” (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005, p. 319).

Henderson et al. (2009) state that contingent employees, such as those who work part-time or on a short-term contract basis may be viewed by leaders as contributing less to the performance of a work group than full-time employees. This may be partly due to the fact that leaders tend to be more involved in the selection of full-time employees than contingent employees. When involved in the selection of employees, similarity and liking may influence hiring decisions and subsequent expectations for evaluations of group member contributions. In organisations with labour practices that include hiring both full-

time and contingent employees, a greater mix of these differing employment contracts within a group may lead to greater LMX differentiation (Henderson et al., 2009).

Contingent employees may differ in a critical way. Some like contingent employment because of the flexibility it provides in terms of non-work pursuits of work-life balance, whereas other contingent employees view contingent work as a stepping stone to full-time employment. The latter employees may try especially hard to make a good impression upon the leader so as to increase the chances of being presented with the opportunity to join the full-time ranks (Henderson et al., 2009).

2.1.4. The four dimensions of LMX

Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001, p. 699) state that “Dienesch and Liden (1986) and Liden and Maslyn (1998) proposed four dimensions of LMX relationships labelled *contribution* (e.g., performing work beyond what is specified in the job description), *affect* (e.g., friendship and liking), *loyalty* (e.g., loyalty and mutual obligation), and *professional respect* (e.g., respect for professional capabilities)”. The research by Liden and Maslyn (1998) has produced measures of these constructs and demonstrated the validity of these dimensions. Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001) state that because LMX relationships may consist of one or more of these factors, examining the various dimensions of LMX might help us to further understand efforts toward relationship development by managers and subordinates.

Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001) state that supervisors seek more work-related currencies and subordinates seek more socially-related currencies. By using the dimensions, a more work-related currency is contribution, whereas the more social currencies would include affect, loyalty and professional respect (Liden & Maslyn, 1998).

2.1.5. High and low quality LMX relationships

Milner et al. (2007) state that in-group exchanges are characterised by the supervisor showing influence, support, trust, respect, and liking beyond what is expected in the employment contract. These exchanges are called leadership exchanges (Milner et al., 2007).

Henderson et al. (2009) draw from Liden and Graen (1980) in stating that leaders form low quality exchange relationships in which interpersonal interactions are largely restricted to fulfilling contractual obligations. In such low quality LMX exchanges, the supervisor relies more on the formal power of the position to influence the subordinates (Milner et al., 2007). These dyads are labelled “supervisory exchanges” and are characterised by unidirectional downward influence, role-defined relations and significantly less of the positive dimensions characterising high quality leadership exchanges (Milner et al., 2007).

Henderson et al. (2009) state that leaders form high quality LMX relationships that comprise social exchange patterns which transcend contractual obligations. In these exchanges, leaders may offer mentoring, sponsorship of subordinates in social networks and empowerment in exchange for higher levels of subordinate organisational citizenship behaviours and task performance (Henderson et al., 2009).

Tingirala, Green and Ramanujam (2007) empirically demonstrated that followers engaged in high quality LMX relationships perceive greater support from the organisation and identify more with the organisation when their leaders themselves enjoy high quality LMX relationships with their immediate superiors.

Employees in low quality LMX relationships are at a distinct disadvantage, both in terms of their own career development as well as in their potential to contribute to organisational outcomes (Liden et al., 1997). According to Kacmar, Zivnuska and White (2007), understanding how to create an environment in which individuals in low quality relationships are willing to exert effort is particularly important, yet has rarely been studied.

Gerstner and Day (1997) state that in low quality relationships, members receive less access to the supervisor, fewer resources and more restricted information, potentially leading to dissatisfaction in the job, lower organisational commitment and higher employee turnover (Bauer & Green, 1996). Tingirala et al. (2007) echo this sentiment in that followers engaged in low LMX relationships perceive less support from the organisation and identify less with the organisation.

Research by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) has shown the value of high quality LMX relationships in organisations. According to Gerstner and Day (1997), leaders and followers in these high quality LMX relationships often report positive outcomes such as

enhanced levels of satisfaction and effectiveness, mutual influence, more open and honest communication, greater access to resources and more extra-role behaviours.

High quality LMX relationships develop when individuals on either end of the dyad agree on key relationship variables (Jha & Jha, 2013). Dunegan, Uhl-Bien and Duchon (2002, p. 278) state that high quality LMX subordinates receive more attention, nurturing and support than their low quality LMX counterparts do.

Kacmar et al. (2007) state that it is possible that employees in a low quality exchange relationship with their supervisor may perceive less chance of being given credit for their own performance, or of receiving valued rewards related to their performance due to the low quality of the relationship with the supervisor. The authors further note that the extent to which employees in high quality exchange relationships with their supervisor will be motivated to exert effort is related to their perceptions of access to the resources, feedback, support and communication (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975) necessary to be successful and that they have been rewarded with higher quality exchange relationships with the supervisor (Kacmar et al., 2007). However, Kacmar et al. (2007) note that a perceived lack of a quality relationship with the boss and the corresponding perception of loss of control may result in less effort by those in a low quality exchange relationship.

As discussed earlier, given the motivation for contingent employees to secure full time employment, these employees may exert considerable effort to develop a high quality LMX relationship (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001). Henderson et al. (2009) echo this sentiment by stating that workers with no desire to obtain full time status should be less motivated to pursue a high quality relationship with the leader.

The study by Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001) found that effort made by dyad members is related to the quality of relationships that develop, but that effort by the dyad partner appears to be the critical factor associated with higher quality relationship formation. Their findings show that managers and subordinates in higher quality LMX relationships reported both greater effort by the dyad partner and higher levels of met expectations (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001). Their findings also show that individuals in lower quality LMX relationships reported that the relationship did not develop as they had expected, suggesting that the relationship was a disappointment to both managers and subordinates engaged in such relationships (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

A key component in building a high quality LMX appears to be the development of interpersonal trust within the leader-member relationship that goes beyond the formal employment contract (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). According to Bauer and Green (1996) it follows that a key aspect of LMX development must be factors that would theoretically be linked to trust building within the leader-member relationship and that high quality LMX relationships are seen as evidence of successful trust building over time.

2.1.6. Factors that influence the quality of LMX relationships

Milner et al. (2007) state that “while it has been well established that different types of exchange or in-group and out-group exchanges exist between leaders and different groups of subordinates”; what is still not clear is exactly “what takes place between a leader and subordinate that results in a particular type of exchange” (Bauer & Green, 1996, p. 1539). Many theorists have proposed that leader and member characteristics such as gender, socio-economic identity, age, and education influence the leader-member exchange relationship (Milner et al., 2007, p. 319).

Although leaders may meaningfully differentiate among followers with respect to intangibles such as emotional support, task guidance and career mentoring, tangible resources are also critical to the development and maintenance of leader-member relationships (Henderson et al., 2009). The amount of resources available to leaders influences the degree to which LMX relationships benefit followers (Graen, Cashman, Ginsburgh, & Schiemann, 1977). Leaders with few resources simply would not be able to offer to followers the level of support required for the development of high quality LMX relationships and that conversely, leaders who have plentiful access to resources have the luxury of being able to support multiple high quality LMX relationships (Henderson et al., 2009).

Coupled with the availability of resources, Henderson et al. (2009) further state that followers may also benefit when their immediate leaders are central in advice networks in the organisation. Thus, not only does the amount of resources available to the leader positively influence LMX quality but the amount of information to which they have access also further increases the quality of the LMX relationship (Henderson et al., 2009).

Dunegan et al. (2002) found that role conflict, role ambiguity and intrinsic task satisfaction have been found to influence the relationship between LMX quality and subordinate performance. They state that low levels of intrinsic satisfaction and high levels of ambiguity neutralise the relationship between LMX and subordinate performance and that high intrinsic satisfaction and high ambiguity are conditions that enhance the relationship between LMX and subordinate performance (Dunegan et al., 2002). They further state that differences in LMX quality are associated with differences in performance, with higher LMX scores correlated with higher subordinate performance (Dunegan et al., 2002). According to the authors, low role conflict enhances the quality of LMX and subordinate performance; while high role conflict does not act as a total neutraliser but rather as a constraint, whereby the strength of the connection is diminished - but not entirely negated.

Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001) found that for both managers and subordinates, higher quality LMX relationships were reported and expectations were met when the other member of the dyad expended effort into relationship development. "One's own higher effort coupled with lower effort by the other was associated with a lower quality LMX relationship" (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001, p. 697).

Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001) also found that a subordinate's intentions to exert future effort toward relationship development were most notably a function of the interaction between dyadic tenure and relationship quality. "Subordinates who established higher quality LMX relationships and had been with their managers for the longest time showed the greatest intentions of putting forth effort in the relationship in the future. Employees with lower quality relationships reported lower intentions to exert future effort, seemingly regardless of tenure in relationship" (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001, p. 706).

Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001) state that this has an important implication for managers and subordinates in lower quality LMX relationships. They draw from Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard and Werner (1998) in stating that because subordinates in lower quality relationships are less likely to make an effort to change their status, the manager may need to be the catalyst for change and initiate the steps necessary to build the quality of the relationship. However, if subordinates do not respond to this attempt by demonstrating reciprocal effort back to the manager, the relationship will likely not improve, and respect for one another will deteriorate. In these cases, the organisation must endure sub-par relationships and the resultant negative organisational consequences associated with

them, including lower productivity, less job satisfaction, fewer extra-role behaviours, and so forth (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Gerstner and Day (1997) found that leaders and followers in high quality LMX relationships often report enhanced levels of satisfaction and effectiveness, as well as mutual influence, more open and honest communication, greater access to resources, and more extra-role behaviours.

Kacmar et al. (2007) explored the extent to which the environmental characteristics of supervisor competence, decentralisation and workplace politics impact the degree to which an individual employee in a low quality LMX relationship perceives a reason to exert effort in the workplace. The results of their study indicate that these characteristics all moderate the relationship between LMX relationship quality and employee work effort (Kacmar et al., 2007).

Employees who perceive their supervisor to be less than competent may experience more control over their work and may encourage a stronger work effort from such an employee who might otherwise exert only minimal effort (Kacmar et al., 2007). Similarly, individuals in low quality LMX relationships who work in decentralised environments feel more control over their job, and because they can make decisions about what they do and how they do it, may be more willing to exert effort than their low quality LMX counterparts in centralised environments (Kacmar et al., 2007). Kacmar et al. (2007) conclude by stating that if the work environment is without politics, work effort from those in low quality LMX relationships may be greater than those in low quality LMX relationships who work in a politicised environment.

2.1.7. Trust

A key component in building a high quality LMX appears to be the development of interpersonal trust within the leader-member relationship that goes beyond the formal employment contract (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). According to Gerstner and Day (1997) and Graen (2003), trust has long been considered a cornerstone of the LMX relationship. Empirical research by Scandura and Pellegrini (2008) links LMX and trust.

Major and Morganson (2011) draw their definition of trust from Mayer, Davies and Schoorman (1995, p. 712): “Trust is the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability of the trustor to monitor or control that other party”.

According to Major and Morganson (2011), successful role-making exchanges provide the opportunity for the leader and member to develop trust. They continue that “As trust develops, a leader provides a subordinate with increased job latitude and greater influence in decision-making in exchange for the subordinate’s enhanced expenditure of effort and commitment to the success of the supervisor’s unit. The leader trusts the subordinate’s dependability, and the member trusts that the leader will recognize and reward contributions. Thus, although the member is making an investment of performance, the supervisor provides the subordinate with sufficient incentive to ensure that the performance will continue” (Major & Morganson, 2011, p. 129). A further proposition for this study would be to confirm that trust is a critical factor in high quality LMX relationships.

2.1.8. Criticisms of LMX

Avolio et al. (2009) state that LMX theory and research have been targets of criticism over the years. Some criticisms of this literature include: failure of measurement (Schriesheim et al., 1999); failing to conceptualise the social context in which leaders and followers are embedded (Avolio et al., 2009); focusing only on the dyadic level with very little work examining LMX work at group level (Hogg, Martin, & Weeden, 2004); the assumption that people simply evaluate their own LMX relationship in an absolute sense without reference to their perception of other’s LMX relationships (Cogliser & Schriesheim, 2000; Yukl, 2006); and that most LMX literature is based on correlation designs (Cogliser & Schriesheim, 2000).

In order to address the criticism by Avolio et al. (2009) with regards to the social context in which leaders and followers are embedded, a final proposition for this study will be to determine whether the social context in which the De Doorns farmers and labourers were embedded influenced the quality of LMX relationships during the labour strike.

2.1.9. Conclusion

The characteristics of low- and high-quality LMX relationships and the possible outcomes of these relationships were briefly discussed as well as some of the factors that could influence the quality of the LMX relationship.

Major and Morganson (2011) conclude that LMX has numerous positive outcomes. Gerstner and Day (1997) echo this sentiment by stating that subordinates in quality relationships have higher organisational commitment, greater job satisfaction and report lower intentions to seek alternative employment than subordinates in low LMX relationships. Organisations also benefit in that high quality LMX relationships are associated with increased organisational citizenship behaviour (Gerstner & Day, 1997). It is clear that any organisation, including De Doorns farmers, could benefit from higher quality LMX relationships.

This research aims to determine whether the outcomes of LMX, particularly the commitment and citizenship behaviour, are relevant in the farmer-labourer relationships in De Doorns and whether these outcomes could influence the quality of the LMX relationship. More specifically, this research aims to determine whether the quality of LMX relationships affects the degree to which militant action was undertaken by the farm workers during the strike.

According to Schyns and Day (2010), research by Naidoo, Scherbaum and Goldstein (2008) shows that much of LMX research focus has been concentrated on antecedents and outcomes of LMX at the individual or dyadic level, but recently has advanced to the team level. This is an area of theory to which this research could contribute, specifically by investigating LMX theory in a team level environment. In this instance, farmers and their workforce in De Doorns will be studied as taking place within a team environment.

An additional area of theory to which this research will contribute is to extend the literature on LMX in conceptualising the social context in which leaders and followers are embedded, addressing some of the criticisms expressed by Avolio et al. (2009).

The literature reviewed indicates that most of the research on LMX has been focused on formally structured organisational environments. It would seem that very little LMX research has been done in more “informal” organisational environments such as farming

operations. This identifies another area of theory to which the research will contribute namely investigating LMX theory in the relatively informal environment of farming organisations.

3. Chapter 3: Research questions and propositions

3.1. Research questions

This study considers the following research questions:

1. Does the quality of the LMX relationships between farmers and labourers affect the level of militancy shown by labourers during a labour strike?
2. Does the quality of the LMX relationships between farmers and labourers affect the time required to restore the working relationship after militant action and labour strike action?
3. Does the social context in which leaders and members are embedded influence the quality of the LMX relationships?

3.2. Research propositions

The following propositions stem from the literature in Chapter 2 and the research questions mentioned above:

- 1.1. The size of the farm and labour force influences the quality of the LMX relationships.
- 1.2. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with his workforce determines the level of militancy the labourers will show and hence will impact the severity of the strike on the farm.
- 1.3. The critical factor in high quality LMX relationships is trust.
- 2.1. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with the workforce influences the time required to rebuild the relationships after militant action takes place.
- 3.1. The social context in which leaders and members are embedded, including trade union presence and peer intimidation, influence the quality of the LMX relationships the farmer has with his workforce.

4. Chapter 4: Research methodology and design

4.1. Methodology

The study was approached with a qualitative exploratory design. Exploratory research is about discovering general information about a topic that is not initially clearly understood by the researcher (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). During this study a well known leadership theory, LMX, was applied in a context to which it has never previously been applied, namely the farmer-labourer relationship in South African agriculture. Therefore, the possible findings and outcome of the research are not known and could lead to new insights with regard to LMX theory within informal organisations.

Saunders and Lewis (2012, p. 110) go on to state that “The most usual ways of conducting exploratory research are: searching academic literature, interviewing ‘experts’ in the subject, and conducting interviews”. It is clear that these methods of data collection fall under qualitative methods, which was the method of choice employed by this study.

Saunders and Lewis (2012) define case study research as a research strategy that involves the investigation of a particular contemporary topic within its real-life context, using multiple sources of evidence. This study was conducted during the aftermath of the farm worker strike which occurred between November 2012 and January 2013 in the small town of De Doorns in the Hex River Valley in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Case study research was therefore the most appropriate strategy with which to conduct this research.

The process of building theory from case study research as developed by Eisenhardt (1989) was used as a framework within which the research was conducted. Eisenhardt (1989) broke this framework down into the following eight steps:

1. Getting Started – Definition of research question. Possibly *a priori* constructs.
2. Selecting cases – Neither theory nor hypotheses. Specified population.
3. Crafting instruments and protocols – Multiple data collection methods. Qualitative and quantitative data combined. Multiple investigators.
4. Entering the field – Overlap data collection and analysis, including field notes. Flexible and opportunistic data collection methods.

5. Analysing data – Within-case analysis. Cross-case pattern search using divergent techniques.
6. Shaping Hypotheses – Iterative tabulation of evidence for each construct. Replication, not sampling, logic across cases. Search evidence for “why” behind relationships.
7. Enfolding Literature – Comparison with conflicting literature. Comparison with similar literature.
8. Reaching Closure – Theoretical saturation when possible.

Eisenhardt (1989, p. 539) further states that “The process of building theory from case study research is a strikingly iterative one. While an investigator may focus on one part of the process at a time, the process itself involves constant iteration backward and forward between steps. A key feature of theory building case research is the freedom to make adjustments during the data collection process”. These adjustments can include the addition of cases to probe particular themes that emerge during the study.

According to Saunders and Lewis (2012, p. 109), “Inductive reasoning moves from specific observations to broader generalisations and theories”. This research was therefore approached in an inductive manner by analysing observations from the De Doorns case study in order to broaden the application of LMX into a new field.

4.2. Population and sampling

A population, sometimes referred to as the ‘universe’, is the entire set of people or objects of interest (Weiers, 2012, p. 6). For this study, the population was defined as every grape farmer in the Hex River Valley in the Western Cape Province of South Africa.

Saunders and Lewis (2012, p. 133) define a sampling frame as “the complete list of all members of the total population”. For this study, the sampling frame was not known and therefore only non-probability sampling techniques were used. Non-probability sampling comprises a variety of sampling techniques for selecting a sample from the population under study when one does not have a complete list of the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p. 134).

Eisenhardt (1989, p. 537) describes the goal of theoretical sampling as “to choose cases which are likely to replicate or extend the emergent theory”. From the list of non-probability sampling techniques, purposive sampling matches Eisenhardt’s (1989) description of theoretical sampling and was therefore used to gather data for this research. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher’s judgement is used to select the sample members based on a range of possible reasons and premises (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). In the case of labour relations in De Doorns, possible premises included the following:

1. A spectrum of farmers based on their relationships with their employees. For example farmers with excellent relationships with their labourers, farmers with average relationships and farmers with poor relationships with their labourers.
2. A spectrum of labourers based on their relationships with their employers. For example labourers with excellent relationship with their employers, labourers with good relationships, labourers with average relationships, labourers with poor relationships and labourers with appalling relationships with their employers.
3. Farmers who had extensive damage to their operations during the strikes and farmers who had very little or no damage to their operations during the strikes.
4. Farmers who recovered to full production shortly after the strikes and farmers who required more time to reach full production after the strikes.
5. Experts in the field of agricultural labour relations in the Western Cape.

The researcher used a combination of purposive sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling to sample farmers in the De Doorns valley. Snowball sampling is described by Saunders and Lewis (2012, p. 139) as “a type of non-probability sampling in which, after the first sample member, subsequent members are identified by earlier sample members”. The same authors describe convenience sampling as “a type of non-probability sampling in which the sample the researcher uses is those who are easy to obtain rather than because of their appropriateness” (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p. 140).

The researcher contacted the chairman of the Hex River Table Grape Association (HTA), to seek permission to conduct the interviews in the valley. After explaining the premises that needed to be covered, the chairman granted permission and suggested a number of farmers that could be contacted. The researcher also contacted an acquaintance who farms in the De Doorns valley to obtain the contact details of more farmers that fall within

the premises. The chairman of the HTA and the researcher's acquaintance was not interviewed as part of this study.

After carefully considering the premises that needed to be covered and the number of farmers available, eight farmers were selected and contacted for interviews. The researcher asked each farmer that agreed to an interview if they could suggest another farmer that would be willing to conduct the interview. Each interview was conducted on a new farm.

4.3. Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the major entity that was analysed during the study (About.com, 2013). The unit of analysis for this study was the relationship between individual farmers, farm managers and their employees in the De Doorns valley.

4.4. Justification of questionnaire

The research propositions that were developed from the literature in Chapter 2 and refined in Chapter 3 were used as the basis of the questionnaire. During the proposal phase of this study a consistency matrix was used to ensure that the questionnaire would cover the relevant literature and enable the researcher to extract the relevant information from the interviewees.

More specifically, the consistency matrix linked each of the questions in the questionnaire with the relevant proposition, literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the type of analysis that would be conducted on the information obtained during the interview. Appendix A contains the questionnaire that was used to structure the interviews with the farmers.

4.5. Data collection

Saunders and Lewis (2012, p. 151) define a semi-structured interview as "a method of data collection in which the interviewer asks about a set of themes using predetermined questions, but varies the order in which the themes are covered and questions asked. The interviewer may choose to omit some topics and questions and ask additional questions as appropriate". Data collection for this study was done by means of semi-structured in-depth interviews.

4.6. Data analysis

With the interviewee's consent, an audio recording of each interview was made in order to ensure that all of the possible data were collected. Eisenhardt (1989, p. 538) states that "a striking feature of research to build theory from case studies is the frequent overlap of data analysis with data collection" and that "field notes, a running commentary to oneself, are an important means of accomplishing this overlap". The researcher therefore made extensive use of field notes compiled after each interview in order to record impressions that occurred during the interviews. This led the researcher to react to the data immediately rather than trying to sift out what seemed important later on, because it is often difficult to know what will/will not be useful in the future (Eisenhardt, 1989). According to Eisenhardt (1989), a second key to successful field notes is to push thinking in these notes by asking questions such as "What am I learning?" and "How does this case differ from the last?". Eisenhardt (1989, p. 540) notes that there is no standard format for "Within-case" analysis and that the overall idea is to become intimately familiar with each case as it "should accelerate cross-case comparisons".

After all of the interviews were conducted with the guidance from field notes, the recordings were transcribed into documents. Specific categories, which were based on the existing theory and research questions and propositions, were identified and each of the categories received a unique code. The categories were the existence of LMX; LMX differentiation; the size of the farming operations; militancy or damage experienced on the farm; time required to restore the relationship; and social contexts and influences as identified through the LMX theory discussed in Chapter 2. The transcribed interviews were analysed according to each of these categories. Thereafter, the data from all the documented interviews were grouped together according to these categories. A second cross-case analysis tactic was conducted by selecting pairs of cases and listing the similarities and differences between each pair. This tactic forces researchers to look for the subtle similarities and differences between cases (Eisenhardt, 1989).

5. Chapter 5: Results

The following chapter will describe the data obtained by following the research design and methodology as described in the previous chapter. The study was approached with a qualitative exploratory design. A literature study was conducted and the relevant literature and shortcomings of existing literature were discussed and highlighted in Chapter 2.

Purposive sampling was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with farmers and managers in De Doorns to construct eight case studies of the same event. The interviewees included a spectrum of farmers and managers. Interviewees ranged from a farmer whose operation was outside of the valley and who was therefore not affected by the strikes, to farmers who had to fire warning shots on their farms to disperse militant striking labourers. Several managers were also interviewed including lower level managers, the manager of an empowerment farm [a farm which encourages empowerment of previously disadvantaged farmers through ownership and profit-sharing] and a chairperson of Agri SA in the Western Cape. The interviewees were of mixed races, educational backgrounds, age and experience and due to the sensitivity of the events; their identities will be kept anonymous.

The data obtained in these eight interviews were grouped according to the research questions and propositions as listed in Chapter 3. All eight cases were analysed for the same research question and proposition before moving on to the next research question and its propositions. The analysed data is discussed below.

1. The quality of the LMX relationships between farmers and labourers affects the level of militancy shown by labourers during a labour strike.

The farmers were asked to describe their relationships with their workers as well as recall the events that took place during the strike. The Chairperson gave a quick overview:

“Everybody took part in the strike on 6 November 2012, they lit more fires and the intimidation started. They ran into the farms and called out they would kill the people who do not join the strike. That was when many of the farmers closed their farms for the safety of their workers” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

“Concerning the leadership roles, we continuously urged the farmers to talk to their people and guide them through this whole process. I got my workers together every morning. I

told them what the situation was, what they would hear over the radio that day. To listen carefully for words such as this or that and do not be misled by it, keep a look out for people and be careful, they can hurt you. If your people were not informed they could easily have been misled” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

“There were a few of the younger ones, you will always have them, who tried to join the strike and got charged up and I don't have a problem with that, they have to learn somehow” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

According to the Chairperson the people are very proud of the farms they work on. “It is like rugby teams everything is done with your farm in mind. So when they saw the first farm trucks starting to collect workers from the township they realised those farms are harvesting and their farm not yet” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

1.1. The size of the farm and labour force influences the quality of the LMX relationships.

The Chairperson's permanent staff comprises seven members; one manager, three section leaders, two irrigation men and a general worker. When asked whether he had better relationships with certain workers than with others, he stated “Oh yes, as I mentioned I am not always here, so obviously I don't have contact with all the workers every day; but I do have contact with the leaders and with my manager I speak at least four to five times a day. That is the only reason why I have a better relationship with them and not so much with the labourers themselves. It is a working relationship and not a social one.” (Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

Farmer 1 had a much larger operation and permanent staff with a managing director, four directors looking after 10 different units on the farm. There is a middle manager, a tractor driver and a waterman for each unit and between 250 and 300 permanent labourers. “During peak season these numbers increase to 85 per unit so you have a work unit of 1,000 workers” (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

“I am in the lucky or unlucky situation where I don't see all the workers on a daily basis. I work mostly with the top structure because I just do not have the time to see every single worker. So obviously, I see some people more than others and therefore have a better relationship with them. I believe I would have had more confidence in the others if I saw

them on a daily basis as well but time spent with them is the issue here” (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013). Farmer 1 stated that it in the top supervisor group, the labourers would come with suggestions and plans of their own (Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

The lower level manager has eight men and eight women reporting to him, but this number can double during peak season. “Some work in the vineyards, others on the field and another group on the citrus part of the farm” (The lower level manager, Interview 3, June 12, 2013). On his farm, there is a managing director with two directors and a manager from whom he gets his instructions and he in turn relays them to his subordinates (Interview 3, June 12, 2013).

The lower level manager seems to be under less time pressure and makes an effort to treat all subordinates equally. “I am a very easy going person; I have an even and equal way with all people. In the position I have, I cannot favour some and not the others, it would make my work very difficult. The people know I get along with everybody the same way. If I am strict with one I am strict with everybody, if I am nice with one I am nice to all. I refrain from putting more pressure on some than on others, to me all is equal” (The lower level manager, Interview 3, June 12, 2013).

He continues “It was a difficult time for me; I had to get out of bed every morning and put on my strict jacket, it was the first time in the history that I had to be that strict and it was not satisfying for me to be like that, but now the relationships are back to normal again (The lower level manager, Interview 3, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 2 did not disclose the size of his operation or the number of permanent employees on his farm. Due to the fact that the interviews were conducted in person on the farms, the researcher estimated that Farmer 2 employs between 20 to 30 permanent employees, inferred from the size of other comparable farms that were interviewed.

When asked to describe the structure of his farm and the relationships he has with his workers, the empowerment farm manager answered “I am the manager and I have 2 production assistants and about 20 permanent workers, and during the peak season we make use of seasonal workers as well. They live in the squatter camp just next door to this farm. When I started here on the farm there were a lot of disruptions, the farm was sold

and the people were shaken. I had to start building relationship with them; I had no other choice. Because I understand the people, I could go into their homes and address their needs. The relationship between us was really good and that is why they did not see a need to join the unions, because they can come to me with problems. Especially the two assistants, we talk on a daily basis and we handle the issues as they arise. I told the labour consultant yesterday I don't need any disciplinary hearings, we sort our problems out together and we try to maintain a good relationship" (Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

The empowerment farm manager continued to explain how his production assistants developed: "The production assistants are in production so their main or primary responsibility is executive, meaning they are team leaders, working with a group of people, towards goals that need to be accomplished. They get their orders from me and they execute it with their teams under their supervision. When we came to the farm in 2010 they already were in leadership positions. We give them further training by allowing them to do courses and learnerships to uplift them. By doing this, we allow them to improve their knowledge and move up in the management and soon they will be able to be production managers. The workers and I have a very good relationship. I do not communicate with all the workers on a daily basis. I talk to the two production assistants and they communicate with the workers daily. If urgent matters need to be discussed with the workers, I will do it. I try to establish the role that the 2 assistants need to play and give them opportunity to stand out as the leaders, the people learn to respect them and if I do it all I don't need them or to pay them for it and they could then just as well be ordinary workers" (The empowerment farm manager, June 12, 2013).

When asked whether the empowerment farm manager had better relationships with some workers than with others, he highlighted that the language barrier complicated the relationships (Interview 5, June 12, 2013). "Concerning that matter there is more Xhosa speaking people than Afrikaans people on the farm that causes problems and with regards to understanding verbal communication. Every person has his own managing style; some are rigid and want their commands to be carried out exactly the way he wants it done. My style is more of such a nature that I give people scope. There will be times when I make the decisions and give the instructions how exactly they should do it. But mostly I will try to empower them. That is my way of managing; they decide where they want to be in the end" (Interviewee 5, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 3 described his farming operation as follows, “This is a family business, has been in our family for 100 years, from my great grandfather, then my grandfather, my father who now stepped down for me and my brother to take over the farm. My brother and I have 50% shares in the business and we make all the decisions, we are the top structure of the business. We have five managers with teams under them of about 23-35 people, and we started implementing junior management, students, especially during harvest and packing time. We also train someone throughout the year and we have two Coloured junior managers as well. They are under the five managers and mostly in the packing stores working with the people there. During peak season we employ up to 450 workers, but in the off-season we have 120 people who work on the farm” (Farmer 3, Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

When asked whether there are employees with whom he has a better relationship than with others, he replied: “For sure! All our permanent workers stand out amongst the rest; they are like my own family. If you want a healthy business, you need to handle your workers correctly and do the correct things yourself as well. You have to look after your workers and not only after yourself - those days are in the past” (Interviewee 6, Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 4 describes his farm as follows, “I have 30 hectares of table grapes, not all as one piece of land; it is a distance apart which makes the management more complicated, but I have a white manager and supervisors who works under him in the different sections” (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013). He continues to describe the seasonal fluctuation of his labour, “I would say 60 permanent workers and 120 during the peak season, sometimes we use only 40 extra depending on the season (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 4 confirmed that there are employees with whom he has a better relationship, “Yes, history shows you who you can trust with what. You can trust one worker with money but not the next one. Yes definitely; but in general I think I have a good relationship with my workers, with some perhaps a bit better than with others, but there is no group with whom I have a bad relationship (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

He continues, “Some years ago, we had a much smaller set-up with less table grapes and we were able to establish relationships with the workers over a long period of time. Many

of our workers are families that have been on the farm for two or three generations, like my family as well. Then when things get bad, you have a long-term relationship on which you can count. It is not like you only know a person for one week and need to sort things out between you; some people have been here for 30 years or more working for me. If we have a few hiccoughs today, it doesn't mean he will pack up his things and leave, or I will dismiss him. We know we will sort things out. We have done this for 30 years or so. It will work out" (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 5 has a manager and three production managers below him. Each production manager works a unit of 16 to 18 hectares with a team of 16 to 32 permanent employees and even more temporary employees during the peak season (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

When asked whether there are certain employees with whom Farmer 5 has a better relationship than with others, he replied, "Yes! Obviously, there are some who make life a bit more difficult. We have a situation now with one of the younger workers who is addicted to Tik [a South African nickname for the drug methamphetamine]. His mind is going and he was a good worker" (Farmer 5, Interview 8, June 14, 2013). He continued to describe what the relationship with his employees was like before and after the strike took place, "Yes it was good before the time, but I dare say I think it is better now" (Farmer 5, Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

1.2. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with his workforce determines the level of militancy the labourers will show and hence will impact the severity of the strike on the farm.

This proposition seems true for The Chairperson who stated that his people did not take part in the strike. "There were one or two youngsters of whom I was suspicious and my relationship with them fell down completely. They are shady characters and walk around like dogs with tails between their legs. It is sad. I had no harm done on the farm either" (Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

Farmer 1 concurred by saying "No, we didn't have any damage done or big losses; a few gates were broken but that was all. Our farm stayed open, we kept working; yes our people were intimidated but some of them were just stubborn. But yes, there was

intimidation and they all took part; they didn't have much of a choice" (Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

Even though the lower level manager stated that he treated all subordinates the same, a few rows of his vineyard were set on fire during the strikes (Interview 3, June 12, 2013). But it is unclear whether this damage was caused by his own subordinates or individuals intimidating others. "They couldn't dare to come to work; their houses would be burnt down. People would come to work like normal in the morning but by 10:00 they received phone calls threatening them and they had to leave to save their possessions" (The lower level manager, Interview 3, June 12, 2013). The lower level manager continues, "I've been on this farm for 20 years now and I don't know of one worker who doesn't know and feel that he belongs here" (Interview 3, June 12, 2013) which, coupled with the fact that his subordinates did come to work until 10:00 further suggests that the damage might have been caused by external parties.

Farmer 2 told his labourers "If you want to be part of the strike do so; if not, it is up to you". He continued, "90% of my workers were fine but the other 10% was a bit unsure. I just told them not to attack us. Because the farm workers also by then started to participate in the strike and there was nothing one could do about it. That was when they put fire to one of the houses but we were able to stop it quickly. I do not have a problem with any of my workers now, our relationship was good, then it got bad, but now it is good again. I don't know how it is on the other farms" (Farmer 2, Interview 4, June 12, 2013).

When asked whether they suffered any losses or damages during the strike, Farmer 2 said "We were closer to the hotspot and the SMS's came through saying 'tonight they will burn the farm'. But no, we had nothing damaged on the farm" (Farmer 2, Interview 4, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 2 called one of his labourers into the interview and asked him what he experienced during the strike because some of his colleagues took part in the strike even though they were not upset. He answered "No, I don't think they were upset; there were problems here and there and some changes but I don't think there are any hard feelings" (Labourer, Interview 4, June 12, 2013). "With a worker like this, he is one of the best you can get, he does his work diligently, he is a supervisor and manager but you heard him speak. Yes,

the relationship is good but how can it be the same on a farm where people are retrenched after 10, 15 years of working on the same farm?” (Farmer 2, Interview 4, June 12, 2013).

“During the strike we used workers who came from Touwsrivier to help out. During the season, they came to help us out and afterwards I couldn't let them go; they helped me during the crisis and I employed them all; how could I not do that? That is the kind of thing that happened” (Farmer 2, Interview 4, June 12, 2013).

When asked whether they had any losses or damages on the farm, the empowerment farm manager replied, “Yes, but minimal for a farm lying right next to the squatter camp; we really had very little damage. Just a lorry battery that was stolen and a few sticks in the vineyard right next to the road, but really very little damage” (Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

He described how many of his workers wanted to join the strike, “12 of the workers stay on the farm, the biggest workforce come from the township and the strike started there and later the workers on the farm were intimidated by them and they also had no option but to strike. It was no work, no pay and it lasted about two to three weeks; nearly a month. At first, we paid them because we realised that they were intimidated, but then it got longer and longer. I would say 70% were on my side and 30% wanted to strike and committed to the strike. I say money is not the issue here, it is relationships. When will any worker be satisfied with his pay? Never so; it is not the issue. It is not about the money, it is about dignity; we as employers are ruining the employees' dignity. You want to be treated with dignity, no one can come into your office and offend you and not treat you with dignity. That is what we do with our workers” (The empowerment farm manager, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 3 had this to say regarding his relationship with his workers, “When we started farming, we were thrown in at the deep end. There were no relationship between worker and farmer. At that time there has always been a manager, I decided to change that and start relationships with my workers on the farm. I am a Christian spiritual person and to me, the only way to establish a good lasting relationship with your people is to change their circumstances and therefore you need to change their behaviour” (Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 3 continued, "Of all my people, only a few from a new farm we bought last year took part in the strike. 20 People at the most. The others came to work every day, despite rumours and threats of being killed or houses burned down or whatever. They knew where their loyalty lies and they worked. They knew they were not part of this political thing and they did not stand for that. The relationship we have with our workers and the changes they made to their own lives saved us from the strike and its negative effects" (Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

When asked whether Farmer 3's relationship with his workers changed during the events, he answered, "Not the relationship with my own workers, but with those outside. Yes, definitely. They who set fires to the vineyards and take part in the riots. Yes, it changed definitely. With those people who sat in front of you and looked you in the eye and then went on to set vineyards on fire. But with my own people, with whom we have walked a long road, we want to take them forward, uplift and train them. We take care of their houses and the way they live. For the next few years, I farm this land I will take care of these people because they supported me in a difficult situation. But not the people out there" (Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 3 did have quite a bit of damage on his farm during the strike. "One packaging store burned down ... and then three hectares of vineyards were burnt down. The sad part is the building can be restored, but the relationship with the people, never" (Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 4 described a tactic he deployed to improve his relationship with his workers. "Something interesting between my workers and me; when I started farming here years ago, during 1987, I made the choice that my workers call me on my name and not address me as boss. Many people will say it will undermine your authority but you can ask any person on this farm who the boss of the farm is and they know. That also brings your relationship to a next higher level. There are a few that will still call me "boss" or "sir" but only few; if it is his choice, then so be it. As I say it was in the time of apartheid, but I was at ease with that choice" (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

It would seem that this tactic paid off, as few of his employees took part in the strike and he had very little damage on his farm during the strike. When asked to comment on this, he replied, "We were in constant discussion with our people; we told them the strike was

illegal but should they want to take part, it is their own choice; but should they choose to work we would try to protect them as far as we possibly can. Nothing, no damages! They tried that one day and because it was a windy day, the fire caused some damage but after that, the fires did not have an effect because the wind didn't blow. No damages" (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 5 described the militant behaviour on his farm as follows, "Some of my people phoned me from out of Stofland [an informal settlement on the outskirts of De Doorns] informing me that they were on their way to my farm and the neighbouring farm, so we evacuated the stores and got a security company in to assist us. My people were on board with me; they were on guard that night with me. We stood guard that whole night and only the next morning did they come up the farm road and started pulling vines out of the soil. Then I gave orders to shoot warning shots to scare them away. That caused the people to scatter and run away. Only then did the police step in and started to shoot as well, because they realised things are getting out of hand. They should have stepped in right in the beginning" (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

When asked whether he had serious damage to his farm during the strike, he replied, "Only a few vines were pulled out of the soil, but other than that no damages. No fires" (Farmer 5, Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

1.3. The critical factor in high quality LMX relationships is trust.

When asked what the most important factor was to keep a work relationship healthy, the interviewees responded as follows:

"It is trust and communication; those two are the most important in a working relationship" (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

"A very plain answer, namely trust! This whole business functions and succeeds because I can trust you" (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

"In my opinion, there is only one important factor and that is communication. The more communication, the better understanding and the better work relationship can be formed to the top structure as well as down to the workers. Most important!" (The lower level manager, Interview 3, June 12, 2013).

“This is a matter that I really work towards; I strive to improve trust between me and the workers on the farm. Relations must be built on mutual trust” (The empowerment farm manager, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

“It is the same as in any relationship, like with your wife and your own kids; it is communication and then again, not only from one side” (Farmer 3, Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

“Trust; if you promise them something you have to keep the promise, breaking the promise causes distrust. I think for building relationships, you need informal communication between you and single workers, like with the person you run into, that brings relationships on a different level” (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

“Encouragement, inspire, to give credit to a person for what he does and to encourage him to do more” (Farmer 5, Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

2. The quality of the LMX relationships between farmer and labourer affects the time required to restore the working relationship after militant action and labour strike action.

The major role and influence that political parties and trade union leaders had in the events around the strikes makes it hard to discern whether it was the workers that took a long time to return to their jobs, or the political parties prolonging the strike to push their own agendas.

The Chairperson eluded to this point by staying, “You see, Tony Ehrenreich came here thinking he could persuade us to R90 and then move on, but he didn't keep in mind that in the valley there are more than 100 enterprises; basic companies with whom he would have had to negotiate. Now their wheels came off, because they promised these people R150 and they cannot deliver. They started jumping around like cats on hot plates and did not know what to do. This was the reason why this whole strike took such a long time to end” (Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

Continuing with his general overview of the events that took place, The Chairperson added, “These leadership roles that the employers played had a huge impact and by mid

January almost 95% of the permanent workers were back on the farms, working” (Interview 1, June 11, 2013). The empowerment farm manager adds to this point by stating “I know they were intimidated and had no other option but to take part in the strike and it did not have an effect on our relationship, so I can openly say that we still have the same relationship as before the strike” (The empowerment farm manager, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 1 seemed a bit more sceptical, “This trusting relationship has a long history of many years and has now been broken; I don't know if it will recover again after this. No, the trusting relationship was broken” (Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

The lower level manager describes how events unfolded on his farm, “Slowly, they realised this was not the way to go. Our people are now back to square one, but those weeks and a few months after the strike, the vibes were not good but it is starting to settle in now” (The lower level manager, Interview 3, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 2 describes how he managed the situation after the strikes, “I very soon told them ‘let's put it behind us and carry on’ I don't have a problem with any of my workers now; our relationship was good, then it got bad, but now it is good again” (Farmer 2, Interview 4, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 5 employed a similar tactic. “Half of my workers kept on working during the strike and the others not so. When they returned they stood wide-eyed before me, because they were upset with one another. Some because of those workers who kept on working and others because of the workers that took part in the strike and stopped working. I held a meeting just there and told them they should actually be thankful towards each other; the strikers should be thankful towards those who kept on working, who were responsible for harvesting the harvest; and they in turn should be sorry for those who were forced to take part in the strike and couldn't come to work. I told them it would do no good to anyone to be angry at one another, to put a smile on their faces and go on. Within an hour or so, the atmosphere cleared and changed” (Farmer 5, Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

2.1. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with the workforce influences the time required to rebuild the relationships after militant action takes place.

When asked how long it took employees to return to work after the strike took place, Farmer 1 answered, “A week or two, they returned in dribs and drabs. Those who did not want to strike came back sooner, others stayed away for longer” (Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

Farmer 2 said, “Some farmers were able to work right through the whole strike, but we had lost in total, I think, about 2 days. It differed from farm to farm. But we still paid them for the first 2 or 3 days” (Interview 4, June 12, 2013).

“About a week to two weeks; you know some came to work while others were still scared. Yes, we were back in full production say two weeks after the strike” (The empowerment farm manager, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 3 seemed very proud of the short time his workers took to return to their posts. “We were the first to be able to start harvesting the grapes and start packing, while the rest of the valley came to a standstill” (Interview 6, June 13, 2013). Farmer 4 stated, “My own workers stayed away for one day only, my permanent people; and that was the one day the strikers marched around the houses here” (Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

“Yes, there was one day when everything came to a halt but after that we carried on with skeleton staff. Most of the people are working again and happy to do so” (Farmer 5, Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

3. The social context in which leaders and members are embedded influence the quality of the LMX relationships.

In his overview of the events that unfolded during the strike, The Chairperson stated the following, “The story started on the 10th of October when the HTA received a press release from Minister Joemat-Pettersson where she reacted on a letter she received, faxed to her from the Lucky Seven shop here in De Doorns. The information in that letter was never verified. If I recall correctly, the 10 farms were named in that letter with a farm worker's signature next to the name of each farm. She reacted very strongly on that letter in the news and media without verifying it at all; that just shows you she was involved in this whole thing, as she was throughout the whole strike. Between 10 October and 1 November the local political leaders, all of them ANC members, started stirring up things

around here. All of them Municipal board members.” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

He continues, “They made a link between De Doorns and the xenophobic violence from a while ago and the press and media grabbed the opportunity to run negative publicity; there was money to be made out of the negative publicity. The media played a huge role in this strike” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013). The empowerment farm manager concurred, “So the media, the unions and the politicians all contributed to the disagreement between farmers and workers. It caused a gap between them and I don't know if it will be possible to restore it” (Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

“Everybody took part in the strike on 6 November; they lit more fires and the intimidation started. They ran into the farms and called out they would kill the people who do not join the strike. That was when many of the farmers closed their farms for the safety of their workers. Everybody was afraid; there was a woman here who spoke to the chairman of the HTA, she was so scared she could hardly talk” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

“You have to understand Stofland. It has only one entrance and it is built in a circular round shape. At the back, you have the mountain so from the back part of it to the N1 is about three kilometres. So all they do is they put a man on the road with a pick or shovel and all they say is the people are chopping or digging again on the road. Now just think for a while if you were a guy who stayed three kilometres away from the entrance and had to go to work walking all the way just to be intimidated by someone else what would you do: go to work or stay at home? That was the reason why the seasonal workers could not get out to come and work. Some of them did come through wearing normal clothing and then, once on the farm, they would change into working clothes they left on the farm” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013). The Chairperson concludes that “The picture of agriculture in our country is not a pretty one. That is the background” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

3.1. The social context in which leaders and members are embedded, including trade union presence and peer intimidation, influence the quality of the LMX relationships the farmer has with his workforce.

The interviewees discussed the influence that politics had on the strikes. "I was involved with all the negotiations. I am part of the HTA and I was there from the very start until the end. So, in my view, politics was the first reason for the strike" (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013). "You will not believe, me but it was more political and we all realised that we, the farm workers, were used to do the work of other people higher up" (The lower level manager, Interview 3, June 12, 2013). "Politics; all the strikes took place in the towns where the DA [the Democratic Alliance political party] are in control and they are starting this because of the elections next year" (Interview 4, June 12, 2013).

"The people felt that they lived in desperate circumstances, but there were other political people from outside instigating this and applying pressure. We cannot miss the role of the government in this regard; they saw what was happening and then seized the opportunity to pull things out of perspective and accuse the farmer of not taking care of their workers. They did not bother to investigate the minimum wage and the extras benefits and advantages the farmers provided for their workers. Because some of the farmers take very good care of their workers and nobody looked into that matter" (The empowerment farm manager, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 3 described how he experienced similar political influence during the strike. "I am a little bit into politics and this was a politically driven strike. The wages of the farm workers is very low, but the farmers did what the government told them to do. If the minimum wages were higher, farmers would have started mechanisation a while ago; but this didn't happen because the wages were low and farmers were not forced to mechanise. Labour was affordable. They want to claim the Western Cape back for the ANC and the only way they know how is with chaos and anarchy" (Farmer 3, Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

Interestingly, Farmer 4 acknowledged that the strike was politically driven but requested that politics not be discussed during the interview as it would cloud the discussion (Interview 7, June 13, 2013). Farmer 5 agreed with previous comments that the politicians, "want to cause trouble in the Western Cape through unrest in labour" (Farmer 5, Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

Many interviewees mentioned how they and their workers were intimidated. "People were intimidated and incited. Yes, there was intimidation and they all took part; they didn't have much of a choice. I was intimidated, I got phone calls telling me they know me, know my

parents; who they are, where they lived and that they would come to kill” (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013). “The people who came in were not from the valley; it was the black people with red eyes, you do not know them at all. They came into the homes of the farm workers and forced them to join the strike of 8,000 people we saw on TV. They intimidated the people; not on our farm, but on some of the others as well. Even one or two houses were set alight” (The lower level manager, Interview 3, June 12, 2013).

“I arranged for a security company to patrol the farm; they were there to take care of the workers, but as soon as they received an SMS about trouble on other farms the workers became restless. Some of them came to work, but halfway through the day they would hear the noise and then run home” (Farmer 2, Interview 4, June 12, 2013).

The empowerment farm manager describes how his permanent workers were intimidated. “12 of the workers stay on the farm; the biggest portion of the workforce comes from the township and the strike started there and later the workers on the farm were intimidated by them and they also had no option but to strike” (The empowerment farm manager, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

“I got home late that night with a police escort in Nyalas [a 4x4 armoured personnel carrier] and when I got home I told my wife and children to leave the valley, because it was getting dangerous and we saw vineyards being set on fire. People were shouting and blowing vuvuzelas [a plastic horn-like musical instrument] and whistles all around. It sounded quite scary and the situation seemed out of control” (Farmer 3, Interview 6, June 13, 2013). Farmer 3 continued to describe how the media played a role; “Yes, they are able to set things on fire very quickly. They were part of the whole thing; a lot of intimidation happened through the media, it was only for sensation” (Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 4’s location seemed to protect his farm from intimidation. “We are a bit further away from town, which made it more difficult to intimidate the people every day. But they had their war on social media and tried to scare the people in that way” (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 5 adds, “They isolated Stofland and intimidated people with knobkierries [an African club] and kept them inside. Told them they would burn their houses should they

leave to go to work. Then they marched and all had to join in; most of them because of fear, 90% of them. It was a fear-driven campaign” (Interview 8, June 14, 2013). Despite these actions in Stofland, Farmer 5’s labourers were not intimidated on the farm, “You see, because we had a safe haven and no intimidation on the farm all my people were on board with me they were on guard that night with me” (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

When asked about the presence of labour unions on the farms and the number of employees who belong to unions, the interviewees responded as follows: “I would suggest about 6% of the 100% on one farm, so it comes down to 6 people on a farm where 100 people work, it is really irrelevant. We have no knowledge of the unions. We don't understand them, we do not know where they come from we don't know how they operate and we have no need for them because there is the minimum wage. I can pay my workers what I want to, as long as it is above the minimum wage. The minimum wage is very important and it has to be low; keep in mind that we provide work for a vast number of the uneducated sector of the people of South Africa.” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

Farmer 1 stated that he did not have any union presence or membership on his farm (Interview 2, June 11, 2013). The lower level manager, on the other hand, did have a few members, “Yes there are members on the farm but not that many. Some came back after the strike and withdrew their membership. Remember the people are not a hundred percent informed about the unions. It is like when someone comes with a new idea; everybody wants to get on the band wagon, until they realise the implications. Many came and asked the manager to withdraw their names from the union lists” (The lower level manager, Interview 3, June 12, 2013).

The empowerment farm manager describes how the unions intimidated his workers to join the union. “I can give you an example of my people and how they were intimidated at that stage to become a member of the union. The workers and I have a very good relationship and they did not want to join the union, but they were intimidated; told that they would have nobody to defend them should they be put off the farm. The people were so intimidated; they were scared of what could happen to them should they refuse to join the unions. I asked the workers why would they want to join the union and they said that ‘the union could help them one day when we sell the farm’. I told them that the union would have no say about selling the farm or the effect it will have on the workers. It was not a valid point.

So two weeks later they all came to say they want to resign from the union.” (The empowerment farm manager, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

He continues, “I will say it again; it is other parties that come in between the farmer and workers: political, and it causes a break in their relationship. If the farmer has to put up with unions on his farm, who wants to manage his farm and tell him what to do, the relationship between him and his workers cannot survive. He will later just tell them to go to the union with their sick child or whatever their problem might be” (The empowerment farm manager, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

“I always tell my workers they are welcome to join any union, but that we do everything according to the law. You have your conditions of service, they get overtime, they get all these things; but if they want to pay a union to do whatever they do then they can do it. Any day, any time, they just need to understand that the union cannot give them anything more than that which the law states” (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 4 stated that “The unions will force the country on its knees. We need a Margaret Thatcher to stop this nonsense. One actually hoped it would end in a fight between the unions and not against the farmers” (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 5 provided some history about the unions in the valley. “A number of years ago, when my father was thinking of retiring, he started looking within himself and he did everything according to the letter of the law. And they didn't like it. So in the end, they joined the union to help them in their applications with the CCMA. But they lost 90% of the cases handled by the union. Eventually, they ended their memberships. When I took over on the farm, we laid the past to rest and started anew, without the unions, because they realised the union can't do anything for them. I don't think any of them are interested in joining the unions” (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

The interviewees described their labourers' levels of education as follows:

“My highest qualified worker has Grade 8, while for other farmers that will be their lowest qualified worker” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013). South Africa's general education and training runs from Grade 0 to Grade 9. Under the South African Schools Act of 1996, education is compulsory for all South Africans from the age of seven or Grade 1

to age 15, or the completion of Grade 9. Further education and training takes place from Grades 10 to 12 (Media Club South Africa, 2013).

“Some of them have Grade 12 but then others only Grade 6. We try to do as much as we can to improve their qualifications and training. We have our own preschool and crèche on the farm and the children perform well once they enter formal education. We have a very good teacher on the farm; we did well in the ‘farm worker of the year’ competition as well. It is good to give them a head start” (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013). “I would say an average of Grade 8 to 10. I have a woman with Grade 12 on the farm” (The empowerment farm manager, Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 4 describes the level of education on his farm. “It changed lately; 20 years ago, we did not have any workers on the farm with matric qualification (Grade 12), but today there are a number of them who have a matric certificate; four, five or six of them and then a few have high school level education. It is difficult to give percentages but I would guess at least 20% of the workers finished Grade 10. The education level amongst the older generation will be primary school level. Some of them have been to school for five or six years but are unable to read or write.” (Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

In terms of understanding the general management of the farm, Farmer 4 suggested the following, “It is important in this matter to teach the workers a bit more about the dynamics around the business, especially the finances and how it works, for them to get the big picture. For some, it will be like water on the back of a duck; but for the other, larger, part of the workforce, it will make sense and become important to understand the importance of the role they play and what I do” (Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 5 describes the educational development of his work force and the benefits associated with educated labourers. “My father was one of the first farmers to build good homes for his workers with bathrooms, toilets and electricity. They were also better educated, but also the first to run to the unions. But now they have completed the cycle and I have the benefit of advanced people” (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

Some of the interviewees described the impact the increased wages will have on unemployment. “I have been on the farm for 15 to 20 years now and I have never seen so many workless people walking along the roads” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11,

2013). “Yes, I would also shout for higher wages, but then again people must be careful what they do. Work opportunities are getting less and less” (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

The empowerment farm manager describes the unemployment situation. “As we spoke just now there are more farmers who cannot afford to pay more. If it was not for the government grant that I received, I would have been one of those farmers who had to lay off more people. I would have been down to only four people on my farm; and how am I suppose to prune the vines with only four people? When the rate was R69 you had three people doing one man’s work but you provided work and food on their tables. Now it is different and we need to look at the business. It is not in my hands. You cannot keep the same number of people working for you as you had the year before. Some people are going to lose their jobs. It could be up to 2,000 people in the valley without jobs or income. Another problem is the people from Zimbabwe; our people are lazy they do not want to work” (Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 4 expressed similar sentiments. “I just want to say, in the aftermath of the whole thing, those people who really had a reason to start this strike and needed help; they are worse off than before. Because now we limit labour to the minimum and you try as far as possible to do everything with your permanent workers and use the others as little as possible” (Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Other social issues that were regularly mentioned included alcohol and drug abuse. “What we do see is now that they get more money they start drinking more. You see them over weekends all over. First, it is drinking; the next thing drugs. They get caught up in these things and this is one of our major concerns in our area. Tik for instance, many of the younger workers are using Tik. The coloureds are very scared people, because nobody cares for them, or looks after them. They are easily influenced and intimidated and they don’t have strong leaders that address their problems” (Farmer 3, Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

Other than the regional “Worker of the Year” competition mentioned by a few of the farmers, Farmer 5 has an additional merit system through which their business tries to address some of the social issues. “We have a merit system. It works in 3 levels Silver, Gold and Platinum and includes extra payment. The people decide for which level they

want to apply. Platinum workers are expected to be excellent workers, good men and women at home; respected and involved in their community with no drinking or smoking. Most of the people will be on the gold level, and a few on the silver level. Any worker below this standard doesn't belong here. If they apply for a certain level and are not successful, the manager will guide them to the next level of performance encouraging them to excel. This evaluation happens every three months. It is a very good system, because of the fact that they have to apply for the different levels" (Farmer 5, Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

The data presented above clearly indicates the existence of emerging themes across the eight different cases and the relevance of the research questions and propositions. There are also certain instances in which some of the cases differ quite dramatically. To further summarise the data, Table 1 is presented below and outlines the contribution of each interviewee or farm to the research questions and propositions.

Table 1: Summary of information drawn from interviews

Research Question	Proposition		Chairperson Farm1	Farmer 1 Farm2	Lower level manager Farm 3	Farmer 2 Farm 4	Empowerment Farm Manager Farm 5	Farmer 3 Farm 6	Farmer 4 Farm 7	Farmer 5 Farm 8
<p>1. Does the quality of the LMX relationships between farmers and labourers affect the level of militancy shown by labourers during a labour strike?</p>	<p>1.1. The size of the farm and labour force influences the quality of the LMX relationships.</p>		<p>Confirmed the existence of LMX relationships due to time constraints.</p>	<p>Confirmed the existence of LMX relationships due to time constraints and size of operation.</p>	<p>Makes an effort to treat all subordinates the same, therefore claims no LMX relationships. Interactions with employees do occur therefore exchanges must take place and LMX should exist.</p>	<p>Did not explicitly confirm LMX relationships. His relationship with his employees was good; it deteriorated but was restored again. Permanently appointed temporary labour from a neighbouring region that assisted the farmer during the strike.</p>	<p>Confirmed the existence of LMX relationships due to the language barrier with Xhosa speaking workers. Confirmed really good relationships with workers and therefore no need for unions.</p>	<p>Confirmed the existence of LMX relationships due to better relationships with permanent employees.</p>	<p>Confirmed the existence of LMX relationships due to certain employees the farmer can trust and others not. Confirmed good relationships with his workers in general due to long term relationships over generations.</p>	<p>Confirmed the existence of LMX due to poor relationships with certain employees that abuse drugs. Believes relationships are better after the strikes than before.</p>
			<p>Permanent employees: 7 Seasonal employees: NA</p>	<p>Permanent employees: 250-300 Seasonal employees: 600-700</p>	<p>Permanent employees: 16 Seasonal employees: 16 He reports to a manager, two directors and the managing director.</p>	<p>Permanent employees: NA Seasonal employees: NA</p>	<p>Permanent employees: 23 Seasonal employees: NA</p>	<p>Permanent employees: 120 Seasonal employees: 330</p>	<p>Permanent employees: 60 Seasonal employees: 60</p>	<p>Permanent employees: 52 Seasonal employees: NA</p>

	<p>1.2. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with his workforce determines the level of militancy the labourers will show and hence will impact the severity of the strike on the farm.</p>		<p>Based outside the valley. Employees did not take part in the strikes. Was suspicious of some younger employees and that damaged the relationship. Had no damage reported on the farm.</p>	<p>All employees were intimidated to take part in the strike. Farm remained open throughout the strike. Only damage reported was a few broken gates.</p>	<p>Employees would come to work until they were intimidated. A few rows of vineyard were reported to be set on fire. Unknown whether this damage was caused by employees or other 3rd parties.</p>	<p>10% of employees were unsure whether to strike or not. Asked employees not to attack the farm. Received intimidating SMS's. Is located closer to the hotspot of the strike. Moderate damage reported on the farm: an employee's house was burned down.</p>	<p>30% of employees wanted to strike, the rest were intimidated to strike. Paid intimidated employees who could not come to work. Located next to the informal settlement. A stolen truck battery and a few burnt vines was the only damage reported.</p>	<p>20 Employees from a newly bought farm took part in the strike. Other employees continued working despite intimidation. Extensive damage reported on the farm: a packaging store and three hectares of vineyard got burned down.</p>	<p>Did not disclose how many employees took part in the strike. Allowed employees to strike but mentioned it was an illegal strike. Protected employees who were willing to work. Very little damage to the farm was reported.</p>	<p>Intimidated employees warned farmer of approaching strikers. Employees stood guard with farmer. Farmer gave the order for warning shots to be fired when militant striking labourers approached his vineyard. Only damage reported was a few uprooted vines.</p>
	<p>1.3. The critical factor in high quality LMX relationships is trust.</p>		<p>Trust and communication.</p>	<p>Trust.</p>	<p>Communication</p>	<p>Trust.</p>	<p>Trust.</p>	<p>Communication.</p>	<p>Trust and informal communication.</p>	<p>Encouragement, inspiration and to give credit were due.</p>
<p>2. Does the quality of the LMX relationships between farmers and labourers affect the time required to restore the working</p>	<p>2.1. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with the workforce influences the time required to rebuild the relationships after militant</p>		<p>Of the opinion that the politics involved prolonged the strike and that the leadership roles played had a huge role in</p>	<p>Of the opinion that the trusting relationship of many years has been broken. Not sure that it will recover</p>	<p>Slowly the employees realised that the strike was not the means through which to address their problems.</p>	<p>Told employees that both parties must put the strike behind them and carry on.</p>	<p>No comment.</p>	<p>No comment.</p>	<p>No comment.</p>	<p>Held a meeting between farmer, intimidated employees and employees who kept on working. Told them they</p>

relationship after militant action and labour strike action?	action takes place.		restoring the working relationships.	again.						should be grateful towards one another.
			Of the opinion that by mid January 95% of all workers in the valley was back on the farms.	Reported a week or two of lost production time. Employees returned in drips and drabs. Employees who did not want to strike came back sooner, others stayed away for longer.	The few weeks and months after the strike the relationship was not good but it is starting to settle now.	Reported two or three days lost production time due to the strikes.	Reported to be back in full production two weeks after the strike.	Claimed to be the first farm to start harvesting and packing grapes.	Reported only one day of lost production time.	Reported only one lost production day and continued with skeleton staff. Reported an improved atmosphere between employees within an hour or two after having their meeting.
3. Does the social context in which leaders and members are embedded influence the quality of LMX relationships?	3.1. The social context in which leaders and members are embedded, including trade union presence and peer intimidation, influence the quality of the LMX relationships	Politics	Of the opinion that the local political leaders stirred things up.	Of the opinion that politics was the main reason for the strike.	Of the opinion that it was a political strike. The farm worker was used to do the work of politicians higher up.	Of the opinion that politics were involved in the labour strikes. Stated that all the strikes took place in towns where the DA is in political control.	Of the opinion that people were living in desperate circumstances but politicians applied the pressure to strike.	Of the opinion that it was a political driven strike.	Of the opinion that the strike was politically driven and requested that politics be removed from the discussion.	Of the opinion that politicians want to cause trouble in the Western Cape through unrest in labour.

the farmer has with his workforce.	Intimidation	Stated that when the intimidation started, many of the farmers closed their farms for the safety of the workers.	Of the opinion that employees were intimidated . The farmer reported that he received threatening SMS's.	Of the opinion that external 3rd parties intimidated farm labourers and caused damage on farms.	Stated that employees would come to work but after receiving intimidatin g SMS's will return home.	Stated that seasonal workers in the informal settlements intimidated permanent workers who stay on the farm.	Reportedly required a police escort to get home safely after negotiation meetings. Claims that a lot of intimidation happened through the media.	Location of the farm made it difficult for employees to be physically intimidated. Claimed that employees were however, intimidated via social media.	Of the opinion that it was a fear driven campaign.
	Trade Unions	Of the opinion that union membership is really small and irrelevant.	Reported that no union membership exists on the farm.	Reported very few union memberships on the farm. Stated that some employees withdrew their memberships after the strike.	No comment.	Reported that employees were intimidated to join unions.	Of the opinion that the unions will force the country on its knees.	Stated that employees are welcome to join a union but the farm does everything according to the law.	Reported that employees withdrew their membership after the strikes because they realised the union cannot do anything for them.
	Education	Highest level of employee qualification: Grade 8.	Highest level of employee qualification: Grade 6 - 12.	Highest level of employee qualification: NA	Highest level of employee qualification: NA	Highest level of employee qualification: Grade 8 -10.	Highest level of employee qualification : NA	Highest level of employee qualification: Grade 12. Teaches the principles around business to employees for employees understand the big picture.	Highest level of employee qualification: NA. Reportedly has the benefit of educated labourers.

		Unemployment	Stated that he has never seen so many workless people along the side of the road in the valley.	Stated that work opportunities are getting less and less for labourers.	No comment.	No comment.	Stated that there are more farmers who cannot afford to pay higher wages and employ the same number of people.	No comment.	States that he tries to limit labour to the minimum by utilizing his permanent workforce as much as possible.	No comment.
		Other	States that the media made a link between the strikes and previous Xenophobic attacks and that the press and media ran with the story.	No comment.	No comment.	No comment.	Stated that the media, the unions and the politics all contributed to the disagreement between farmers and workers.	States that now that employees receive more money they drink more and get addicted to drugs.	No comment.	Reportedly uses a merit system to address social issues.

6. Chapter 6: Discussion of results

The data presented in Chapter 5 clearly indicate the existence of emerging themes throughout the eight different case studies and across the research questions and propositions. There are also certain aspects in which some of the cases differ quite dramatically. Table 2: Summary of propositions and supporting evidence below, summarises the following data presented in Chapter 5 according to each of the propositions.

Table 2: Summary of propositions and supporting evidence

Proposition	Supported by data	Evidence and extent of support
<p>1.1. The size of the farm and labour force influences the quality of the LMX relationships.</p>	<p>Inconclusive</p>	<p>Farmer 3, Farmer 4 and Farmer 5 have some of the largest operations and were able to develop good relationships with their large number of employees. Farmer 1, with the largest operation, stated that he was unable to develop good relationships with his large number of employees.</p>
<p>1.2. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with his workforce determines the level of militancy the labourers will show and hence will impact the severity of the strike on the farm.</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>Employees who enjoy higher quality LMX relationships with farmers will be less militant during labour strikes than employees that experience lower quality LMX relationships. Most farmers confirmed higher quality LMX within their upper leadership structures. None of the farmers mentioned that any of their high level leaders expressed militant behaviour. Employees who enjoy high quality LMX relationships with the farmers showed organisational citizenship and performed extra-role activities by working or trying to work through the strikes, despite being threatened and intimidated, warning farmers of approaching riots, standing guard with the farmers and returning to the farms quickly after the strikes ended. All the farmers, except the lower level manager, stated that they had lower quality LMX relationships with some of their workers and inferred that it was these employees that took part in the strike, intimidated others and caused damage to the farms.</p>
<p>1.3. The critical factor in high quality LMX relationships is trust.</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>The data obtained from the interviews confirmed that trust is a critical factor in high quality LMX relationships. The data also indicates that communication with workers is an equally important factor in building high quality relationships. Five of the eight interviewees listed trust as the critical factor in good relationships, while two interviewees listed communication as the critical factor.</p>

<p>2.1. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with the workforce influences the time required to rebuild the relationships after militant action takes place.</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>Comparing the lower level manager to all the other interviewees indicated that the existence of LMX relationships between farmers and their employees reduced the time it takes employees return to their positions after strikes or other militant actions. Most interviewees required two weeks at the most to return to full production. It took the lower level manager, who has consistent quality LMX relationships with his employees, months to return to full production after the strike.</p>
<p>3.1. The social context in which leaders and members are embedded, including trade union presence and peer intimidation, influence the quality of the LMX relationships the farmer has with his workforce.</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>The data clearly indicates that the social context in which leaders and members are embedded will influence the quality of the LMX relationship. The data indicates that politics, intimidation, trade unions, education and unemployment make up some of the critical factors in the social context that exists in the De Doorns valley.</p>

The research questions and propositions will be used to structure these results and discuss how they relate to the existing literature and theory of LMX.

6.1. The quality of the LMX relationships between farmers and labourers affects the level of militancy shown by labourers during a labour strike.

As discussed in Chapter 2, a major tenet of LMX theory is that supervisors do not develop identical relationships with all subordinates (Major & Morganson, 2011). In fact, a unique feature of LMX is its emphasis on differences in the manner in which a supervisor behaves toward different subordinates, thus stressing the quality of the exchange relationship (Milner et al., 2007).

Of the eight interviews that were conducted, six of the interviewees explicitly acknowledged that they differentiate the types of relationships they have with each of their workers. The Chairperson stated that due to time constraints he is unable to have contact with all the workers every day but that he does communicate with his leaders on a daily basis (Interview 1, June 11, 2013). Farmer 1 also differentiates in his relationships due to time constraints but also has a much larger operation than the Chairperson (7 versus 250-300 workers). This makes it even more difficult to see all employees every day (Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

Farmer 1 concurs that he would have better developed relationships with other workers if he could spend more time with them (Interview 2, June 11, 2013). The empowerment farm

manager not only differentiates due to time constraints but also confirmed that he differentiates in his relationship due to the language barrier between himself and his Xhosa speaking workers as apposed to his English or Afrikaans speaking workers (Interview 5, June 12, 2013). Farmer 3 stated that there was a clear differentiation in the quality of relationship between his permanent *versus* seasonal employees (Interview 6, June 13, 2013). Farmer 4 differentiates in his relationships with his workers on the basis of trust. Over time, he has learned which employees can be trusted and has a better relationship with those employees (Interview 7, June 13, 2013). Farmer 5 has workers who struggle with drug addiction and therefore differentiates in his relationships with his workers on this basis (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

Farmer 2 did not explicitly confirm that he differentiates in his relationships with his workers, however, after calling one of his labourers into the interview, he did state that the labourer he called was “one of the best he could get” (Interview 4, June 12, 2013). This indicates that Farmer 2 does, in fact, differentiate in his relationships with his labourers.

Interestingly, the lower level manager stated that he makes an effort to treat all subordinates equally and does not differentiate in his relationships with his subordinates (Interview 3, June 12, 2013). He is of opinion that differentiating in relationships will make his job more difficult (Interview 3, June 12, 2013). He has fewer subordinates compared to other Interviewees, and therefore one would think he would have more time to differentiate his relationships. This however does not seem to be the case.

Even though the lower level manager claims to treat all subordinates equally and does not differentiate in his relationships, this claim does not imply that he does not have LMX relationships with his labourers. An exchange between him and his labourers will take place when ever they interact. Therefore LMX relationships must exist. The fact that he makes an effort to treat all employees in a similar fashion possibly results in the quality of all his LMX relationships averaging on the same level of quality.

Such statements made by the interviewees confirm many of the existing claims in the literature. Firstly, they confirm the statements by Major and Morganson (2011) and Milner et al. (2007) that supervisors do not develop identical relationships with all subordinates and that there are differences in the manner in which a supervisor behaves toward different subordinates.

Secondly, as predicted by Graen (1976), as leaders often function under time pressures, they establish special relationships with a small group of their followers who are relied on to “get the job done”. Dienesch and Liden (1986) added that with the rest of the “unfavoured” work group, the leader will rely mainly on formal authority, rules and policies to ensure adequate performance. It is clear that the farmers function under time pressures and that they differentiate in their relationships with their subordinates. They communicate more with their top structure managers and rely on the organisational structure of the farm to ensure all employees perform adequately.

The existence of different quality exchange relationships (Henderson et al., 2009) namely the in-group and the out-group (Dienesch & Liden, 1986) are also confirmed by the interviewees during the interviews. Some interviewees even identified the type of employee who falls into each group.

The Chairperson and Farmer 1 both stated that they have better relationships with their higher level managers, because they interact with them more often (Interview 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013). Farmer 2 called in two of his employees to give their input on some the questions that were asked. After the first labourer left the interview, Farmer 2 stated that he is one of the best supervisors and managers because he is diligent in his work. The second employee was one of the workers who came from Touwsrivier. Because this individual had been willing to help Farmer 2 out during the crisis, he could not let him go afterwards and offered him permanent employment, which the individual accepted (Interview 4, June 12, 2013). Farmer 3 stated that his permanent employees stand out amongst the rest of his employees and that they are “like family” (Interview 6, June 13, 2013); whilst Farmer 4 knows which of his employers “can be trusted” (Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Clearly the employees mentioned above fall within the farmers in-group and he has better relationships with them than with his other employees. Some of the out-group employees were also identified by the interviewees. Below they describe the lower quality relationships they experience with out-group employees.

The empowerment farm manager stated that he has a problematic relationship with his Xhosa speaking workers due to the language barrier (Interview 5, June 12, 2013). Farmer

5 stated that there are some employees who made life a bit more difficult than others. He also has poor relationships with some of the workers who are addicted to drugs (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

In conclusion, the existence of relationship differentiation, in- and out-groups were clearly identified and confirmed during the interviews. Therefore, the existence of relationships between farmers and their workers which can be examined and understood through LMX theory is confirmed.

6.1.1. The size of the farm and labour force influences the quality of the LMX relationships.

Bauer and Green (1996) stated that a manager with ten subordinates will have ten distinct leader-member exchange relationships. Henderson et al. (2009) contend that there is a positive relationship between group size and LMX differentiation.

In Chapter 5, the interviewees were asked to describe the size of their operations and their relationships with their employees. Table 3, below, lists the size of the operations associated with each Interviewee in ascending order.

Table 3: Permanent employees per interviewee

Farm number	Number of Permanent Employees
1	7
3	16
5	23
4	20-30
8	52
7	60
6	120
2	250-300

It fell beyond the scope of this study to discuss each of these relationships in detail with the interviewees to gauge the quality of these relationships. However, the data obtained from the interviews suggest that farmers differentiate their relationships based on a wide variety of factors including time pressures, size of operation, language, length of the

relationship, trust, and drug abuse. Henderson et al. (2009) stated that as group size increases, it becomes increasingly likely that group members are more diverse. Therefore, the more employees a farmer has, the more diverse the employees are likely to be. It therefore follows that increasing number of factors on which farmers differentiate will exist in a larger group of employees. Therefore, differentiation in relationships will increase as the number of employees increase.

Interestingly, The Chairperson and Farmer 1 both stated that time pressure was one of the main reasons they could not develop quality relationships with all employees (Interview 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013). Yet they manage the smallest and largest operations respectively. It would follow that the spectrum of interviewees that fall between these two extremes will also be under time pressures to adequately develop their relationships with all of their employees. Therefore, regardless of the size of the farm, the farmer will always be under time pressures and not be able to develop quality relationships with all employees.

Both The Chairperson and Farmer 1 did state that they have “good” relationships with individuals in their upper management structure (Interview 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013) because they spend more time interacting with them. The empowerment farm manager stated that his relationship with the workers was “really good” but highlighted that he talks to his production assistants more than with the other workers (Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

Farmer 3 stated that he enjoys a good relationship with his permanent employees (Interview 6, June 13, 2013). Farmer 4 stated that he has good relationships with his workers and that there is no group with which he has a bad relationship (Interview 7, June 13, 2013). Farmer 5 stated that he had good relationships with his employees and that they might actually have improved as a result of the crisis.

Even though Farmer 3, Farmer 4 and Farmer 5 have some of the largest operations, they were able to develop good relationships with their large number of employees, yet Farmer 1, with the largest operation, stated that he was unable to do so. The evidence obtained from the interviews therefore seems to be inconclusive whether the size of the operation influences the quality of LMX relationships.

6.1.2. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with his workforce determines the level of militancy the labourers will show and hence will impact the severity of the strike on the farm.

To determine the quality of the LMX relationships that exist between the farmers and their workers a quick summary of the literature from Chapter 2 that covers this topic is provided.

Milner et al. (2007) list factors including: supervisor showing influence, support, trust, respect, and liking beyond what is expected in the employment contract as characteristics of in-group exchanges or high quality LMX relationships. Gerstner and Day (1997) found enhanced levels of satisfaction and effectiveness, mutual influence, more open and honest communication, greater access to resources and more extra-role behaviours in high quality LMX relationships. Henderson et al. (2009) state that in higher quality LMX relationships, leaders may offer mentoring, sponsorship of subordinates in social networks and empowerment in exchange for higher levels of subordinate organisational citizenship behaviours and task performance. Dunegan, et al. (2002) state that high-quality LMX subordinates receive more attention, nurturing and support than their low-quality LMX counterparts do. Maslyn and Uhl-Bien (2001) state that contingent employees may exert considerable effort to develop a high quality LMX relationship. Dienesch and Liden (1986) and Bauer and Green (1996) state that trust and trust-building are key components in high quality LMX relationships.

Milner et al. (2007) stated that in low quality LMX exchanges, the supervisor relies more on the formal power of the position to influence the subordinates. Gerstner and Day (1997) state that in low-quality LMX relationships, members receive less access to the supervisor, fewer resources and more restricted information, potentially leading to dissatisfaction in the job, lower organisational commitment and increased employee turnover. Kacmar et al. (2007) state that a perceived lack of a quality relationship with the boss and the corresponding perception of loss of control may result in less effort by those in a low quality exchange relationship.

Comparing each of the interviews to the factors summarised above yields the following results in terms of the quality of LMX relationships experienced by each interviewee and their employees/subordinates.

The Chairperson stated that he has more contact with his leaders and manager and that this is “the only reason” he has better relationships with them (Interview 1, June 11, 2013). He also stated that he does not have contact with all of the workers every day. These two statements confirm that the employees who are in regular contact with the farmer are in high quality LMX relationships, whilst the employees in low quality LMX do not have as frequent or as lengthy interactions with the farmer.

He also stated that there were one or two employees of whom he felt suspicious during the strike and that the relationship between them collapsed completely (Interview 1, June 11, 2013). This confirms further existence of low quality LMX relationships and the effect that distrust has on the LMX relationship. Because the Chairperson was situated outside the valley, none of his workers took part in the strike. In summary therefore, the Chairperson has high quality LMX relationships with his leaders and managers and low quality LMX relationships with his more junior employees.

Farmer 1 is very similar to the Chairperson in that he also does not see all his employees on a daily basis. He also interacts with his top tier employees more than other employees confirming the existence of low and high quality LMX relationships on his farm. Farmer 1 stated that if he interacted with his employees more often he would have had more confidence in them. This suggests that he does not trust employees with whom he interacts with less and therefore confirms that trust is a key component in LMX relationships. He further stated that in the top supervisor group, employees would come with suggestions and plans of their own. This indicates the open and honest communication, greater access to resources and more extra-role behaviours that typify high quality LMX relationships (Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

Farmer 1 did not disclose how many of his workers took part in the strike. However, he does state that the farm remained open throughout the strike (Interview 2, June 11, 2013). Farmer 1 therefore also has high quality LMX with his managers and lower LMX with his lower employees.

The lower level manager claimed not to have LMX relationships with his employees and makes an effort to treat all employees the same. His employees would come to work throughout the strike but often went home early in the day when they received intimidating messages (Interview 3, June 12, 2013). He did state that the strike was a difficult time for

him, as he found it difficult to be strict with his subordinates (Interview 3, June 12, 2013). Being a coloured manager, the lower level manager would seem to exemplify the statement by Ewert and Du Toit (2005) that the rural foundation created a new layer of black supervisors, insecure in their power and caught uncomfortably between the resentment of rank-and-file workers and the demands of farm management.

The lower level manager did state that he has been on the farm for 20 years and that he does not know of any worker who does not know and feel that they belong on the farm (Interview 3, June 12, 2013). This suggests that although the lower level manager treats all employees the same, the relationships are in a good condition.

Farmer 2 did not explicitly confirm that he differentiates his relationships with his workers; however, after calling one of his labourers into the interview he did state that the labourer he called was “one of the best he could get” (Interview 4, June 12, 2013). This indicates a high quality LMX relationship with that individual.

Farmer 2 also promoted a temporary worker from another region to a permanent position due to their assistance during the crisis (Interview 4, June 12, 2013). This confirms the statement by Henderson et al. (2009) that contingent employees may try especially hard to make a good impression on the leader so as to increase the chances of being presented with an opportunity to join the full-time ranks.

Approximately 10% of Farmer 2's employees took part in the strike (Interview 4, June 12, 2013), which suggests that they perceived a lack of quality relationship with the farmer, had dissatisfaction in their jobs and lower organisational commitment. Therefore it would follow that the 10% of employees were in lower LMX relationships than the rest of the workforce.

In summary, Farmer 2 had high quality LMX with his long term manager and some of his temporary workers that were appointed permanently. He also had low quality LMX relationships on his farm with the 10% of employees that took part in the strikes.

The empowerment farm manager showed influence, support, trust and respect beyond what is expected in the employment contract when he went into his worker's homes to address their needs (Interview 5, June 12, 2013). This action lead to open and honest

communication between himself and his workers which is why he stated that his workers “did not see a need to join a union”, because “they can go to him with their problems” (Interview 5, June 12, 2013). It would follow therefore that high quality LMX relationships were established through these actions.

He also confirmed that he does not speak to each of his employees daily and instead mainly interacts with his production assistants. He also highlighted the existence of a language barrier between himself and his Xhosa speaking workers, complicating his relationships with them (Interview 5, June 12, 2013). These factors might explain why 30% of his workforce wanted to join the strike (Interview 5, June 12, 2013).

In summary, the empowerment farm manager has high quality LMX with his production assistants and those employees whom he visited at their homes. He also has low quality LMX with those employees with whom he interacts with less frequently, as well as with his Xhosa speaking employees.

Farmer 3 stated that he has better relationships with his permanent employees than with seasonal employees. In fact, he states that his permanent employees are “like his own family”. He continued that there were “no relationships” between farmer and worker when they started farming and that he started developing relationships with his workers after taking over management of the enterprise (Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

He also stated that only 20 in number, representing 16% of his employees, took part in the strikes and that these employees were from a newly acquired farm. The rest of his workers came to work despite rumours and threats of being killed, because “they knew where their loyalties lie” (Interview 6, June 13, 2013). This indicates good organisational citizenship behaviour and task performance, which is a frequent outcome of higher quality LMX relationships. The fact that 20 of his workers showed lower organisational commitment as evidenced by participating in strikes indicates the existence of some lower quality LMX relationships on the farm.

Therefore Farmer 3 has high quality LMX relationships with his permanent employees and low quality LMX relationships with 20 of his most recent employees with whom; presumably, insufficient time had been spent to develop high quality LMX relationships.

Farmer 4 states that, in general, he thinks he has good relationships with all of his workers. He does acknowledge that he has better relationships with some workers than with others, but states that there is no group with whom he has a bad relationship (Interview 7, June 13, 2013). History has shown him which employees “can be trusted” and this seems to be the basis on which he differentiates his LMX relationships.

Farmer 4 also states that his relationships are based on a long term history with the employees. “Many of our workers are families that have been on the farm for two or three generations like my family as well” (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013). This long term relationship provides a firm foundation on which the employee and farmer can call to “work things out” should a hiccough occur (Interview 7, June 13, 2013). In 1987, during apartheid, Farmer 4 made the decision that his employees will not call him “boss”. According to him, that resulted in an improvement in the quality of relationships (Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 4 therefore has high quality LMX relationships with long term employees and employees which he knows he can trust. Although the data do not clearly define how many workers took part in the strike, it can be assumed that the farmer had lower quality LMX relationships with these workers.

Farmer 5 stated that there were definitely employees with whom he had better relationships than with others and highlighted a poor relationship he has with an employee that is struggling with drug addiction (Interview 8, June 14, 2013). He was also of the opinion that although he had good relationships before the strikes took place, he believes the relationships are even better after the crisis (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

His noted that his employees who reside in Stofland warned him that “the riot was on its way to his farm” (Interview 8, June 14, 2013). Although an exact number is not specified, this indicates that some of his employees either took part in the strike or were trapped in Stofland. He also states that the employees who are resident on his farm stood guard with him through the night until the next morning when the protest arrived (Interview 8, June 14, 2013). Again this organisational citizenship and extra-role behaviour displayed by the employees is the outcome of high quality LMX relationships.

In summary therefore, Farmer 5 has high quality LMX relationships with most of his employees. Lower quality LMX relationships existed with employees that are addicted to drugs.

Table 4 below, summarises the different quality of LMX relationships each interviewee had, the percentage of employees that took part and the damage that was incurred on the farm during the strike.

Table 4: Summary of LMX, striking employees & damage

Farm number	Quality of LMX	% of Employees that participated in the strike	Damage reported during the strike
1	High & Low	0%	No damage.
2	High & Low	Undisclosed	Only a few broken gates.
3	Constant good LMX	0%	A few rows of vineyard were set on fire.
4	High & Low	10%	Employee's house was burned down.
5	High & Low	30%	A stolen truck battery and a few pieces of vineyard were burned.
6	High & Low	16%	Packing store and three hectares of vineyard were burnt down.
7	High & Low	Undisclosed	Very little damage to the farm. No further details.
8	High & Low	Undisclosed	Warning shots were fired. Only a few vines were uprooted.

It must be stated that the researcher found it very difficult to decisively ascertain whether the damage incurred on any specific farm was the result of lower quality LMX relationships with employees or third parties who took part in the riots and strikes and may have been responsible. Therefore, a combination of the damage that was incurred and the percentage of employees that took part in the strikes was used to gauge the level of militancy adopted by the employees.

As shown in Table 4, all interviewees except the lower level manager had both high and low quality LMX relationships on their farms. Employee participation in the strike varied

from 0% up to 30%. Reported damages incurred ranged from no or very little damage to destruction of buildings and three hectares of vineyard.

An initial observation could be that the existence of low or high quality LMX relationships does not influence the level of militancy adopted by labourers during the strike. However, further analysis reveals that most farmers confirmed higher quality LMX within their upper leadership structures. None of the farmers mentioned that any of their high level leaders took part in the strike or caused damage to the farms. In fact, the employees who enjoy high quality LMX relationships with the farmers showed organisational citizenship and performed extra-role activities by working or trying to work through the strike, despite being threatened and intimidated, warning farmers of approaching riots, standing guard with the farmers and returning to the farms quickly after the strikes ended.

All the farmers, except the lower level manager, stated that they had lower quality LMX relationships with some of their workers. Most of the interviewees inferred that it was these employees that took part in the strike, intimidated others and caused damage to the farms.

It would therefore follow that employees who enjoy higher quality LMX relationships with farmers will be less militant during labour strikes than employees that experience lower quality LMX relationships. The proposition therefore remains true.

6.1.3. The critical factor in high quality LMX relationships is trust.

Dienesch and Liden (1986), Gerstner and Day (1997) and Graen (2003), state that trust has long been considered a key component and cornerstone of the LMX relationship. Empirical research by Scandura and Pellegrini (2008) also links LMX and trust.

Table 1 in Chapter 5 clearly indicates that interviewees confirmed these factors identified in the literature. It is clear to see that the farmers highlighted trust and communication as the most critical factors in establishing good relationships with their workers. Five of the eight interviewees listed trust as the critical factor in good relationships, while two interviewees listed communication as the critical factor. Of the five that listed trust as the critical factor, two added communication as well, possibly indicating that trust and communication play an equally important role; or conversely, that effective and open communication is a vital cornerstone in establishing trust.

Farmer 5 was the only interviewee who did not list trust or communication as critical factors. He listed encouragement, inspiration and to give credit to your workers as the critical factors in building good relationships. These factors lean more towards communication with your workers than trusting your workers. Earlier in this chapter, the Chairperson and Farmer 1 confirmed that they would have better relationships with their employees if they communicated with them more often (Interview 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013). These factors further support the notion that communication is an equally important factor in building high quality LMX relationships.

In summary, therefore, the data obtained from the interviews confirm that trust is a critical factor in high quality LMX relationships. The data also seem to indicate that communication with workers is an equally important factor in building high quality relationships. Further research might be required to confirm that effective and open communication builds trust.

6.2. The quality of LMX relationships between farmer and labourer affects the time required to restore the working relationship after militant action and labour strike action.

According to Avolio et al. (2009) recent research has moved beyond examining LMX in terms of antecedents and consequences and has examined the quality of the leader and follower relationship as a moderator and/or mediator of performance. This statement lead the researcher to investigate whether the quality of LMX relationships influenced the time operations took to recover and reach full production after the strike. Specifically: did employees in high quality LMX relationships return to their work roles sooner than employees in low quality LMX relationships?

The major role and influence that political parties and leaders had in the events surrounding the strikes (Interview 1, June 11, 2013) made it hard to discern whether it was the workers that took time to return to their jobs or an effect of the political parties prolonging the strike to push their own agenda.

The Chairperson stated that the politics that were involved “definitely prolonged the strike”. He also stated that the leadership roles the farmers fulfilled after the strike played a huge

role in the operations recovering and reaching full production in as short a time possible after the strike (Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

Farmer 2 and Farmer 5 exhibited some of the same leadership traits that the Chairperson hailed. Farmer 2 called all his employees together for a meeting and stated that both farmers and workers should put the strike behind them and carry on with the task at hand (Interview 4, June 12, 2013). Farmer 5 had a more complex situation, as he had employees who worked through the strike as well as employees who were intimidated into taking part in the strike. He also called a meeting with all of his employees and stated that they should actually be thankful towards one another. He noted that those employees who were forced to strike should be thankful towards those employees who kept on working and who were responsible for harvesting the crop. In addition, they in turn should feel empathy toward those employees who were forced to take part in the strike and could not come to work (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

Farmer 1 stated that the trusting relationships he had with his employees for many years had been broken. He doubted that “any amount of time” will be able to restore the relationships to what they had previously been (Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

The lower level manager stated that the employees “slowly started to realise that the strikes were not “the way to go” and they started to return to their positions (Interview 3, June 12, 2013). This added to an earlier comment by the Chairperson where he stated that the employees feel great pride for the farms they help to shape and nurture. When they saw the first farm trucks starting to collect workers from the township, they realised other farms were harvesting and their own farm was not, threatening its very existence (Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

6.2.1. The quality of LMX relationships a farmer has with the workforce influences the time required to rebuild the relationships after militant action takes place.

After hailing the leadership roles performed by the farmers in restoring production to their farms after the strike, the Chairperson states that by mid January 2013 95% of all employees in the valley were back on the farms (Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

Although Farmer 1 stated that the trusting relationship with his employees had been broken, the employees did start to return “in dribs and drabs”. He lost a week or two in

production. He also states that those employees who did not want to participate in strike action came back sooner than the employees who actively wanted to strike (Interview 2, June 11, 2013). This behaviour suggests that employees in higher quality LMX relationships returned to their jobs sooner than employees in lower quality LMX relationships.

The empowerment farm manager was also only back at full production two weeks after the strike (Interview 5, June 12, 2013). Farmer 4 lost only one day of production (Interview 7, June 13, 2013) and Farmer 3 was the first farm to start harvesting and packing their grapes (Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 2 and Farmer 5's leadership roles seemed to have paid off. Farmer 2 lost two to three days and Farmer 5 only one day. Farmer 5 stated that the tense atmosphere between himself and the workers cleared after about an hour due to frank discussions of the events with his employees (Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

It took the lower level manager, who has consistent quality LMX relationships with his employees, much longer to return to full production after the strike. He stated that "a few weeks and months after the strike the relationship was not good but is starting to settle now" (Interview 3, June 12, 2013).

Comparing the lower level manager to all the other Interviewees seems to indicate that the existence of LMX relationships between farmers and their employees reduces the time it takes employees return to their positions after strikes or other militant actions. Again further research will be required to confirm this finding, but there seems to be enough evidence to support the proposition that the quality of LMX relationships influences the time required to restore the relationships after a crisis situation.

6.3. The social context in which leaders and members are embedded influences the quality of LMX relationships.

Du Toit (1993) stated that because of the central position of "unchallengeable authority" the farmer occupies, agricultural workers depend on the farm for every aspect of their material survival including money, housing, water, electricity and often even food and drink. This leads to labour relations that are not easily separated from broader social relations as they might be in "town life" and more traditional organisational settings that

more completely separate “work” and “home” and therefore obligations between worker and farmer extend far beyond the labour-wage nexus (Du Toit, 1993).

Farmer 1 would seem to confirm Du Toit’s (1993) findings by stating, “All of a sudden I am in the position where I have to let them pay rent for their housing, diesel for their transport, electricity, the school I provided and transport for the children to and from school. I get goose bumps if I mention these things because I loved giving these things to the people, but now it is not sustainable for me to carry on with it” (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013). Farmer 4 had a similar statement to add, “We helped our people for instance to buy furniture. We would pay for it and instead of paying huge amounts of interest they pay us back without any interest added to their loan. It was a huge advantage they had. Nobody took that into consideration; it cost me a lot of interest to give these interest-free loans” (Farmer 4, Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Ewert and Du Toit (2005) discussed the Rural Foundation and how it failed to address the social problems like alcoholism, other forms of ‘social pathology’, skills shortage and labour relations in Agriculture that were amongst its stated aims to address. They also stated that there are workers who are retained as members of the permanent core labour force on the farm and those that only work during the peak season or have been retrenched (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005).

The Chairperson stated that “The women in the coloured community are much stronger and better leaders than the men. They are intellectually more advanced because they do not drink so much” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013). Farmer 1 echoed this by stating, “The women choose early in life to keep from drinking and alcohol abuse and how to lead her life” (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013). Farmer 3 also mentioned the struggle he has with his workers and alcoholism (Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

6.3.1. The social context in which leaders and members are embedded, including trade union presence and peer intimidation, influence the quality of LMX relationships the farmer has with his workforce.

It is clear from the comments above that the social environment surrounding the farmer and his workers impact their relationships. From the interviews, other social issues were highlighted including politics, intimidation, trade unions, education and xenophobia. These issues and the impact they have on the quality of LMX relationships will now be discussed.

All of the interviewees confirmed that politics and politicians had a major influence during the strike. The Chairperson clearly stated that “the media, unions and politicians contributed to the disagreement between farmers and workers” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013). Farmer 4 acknowledged that the strike was politically driven but asked that politics be removed from the discussion so that the interview was not “overshadowed by a political debate”.

It would therefore seem that the external political environment has a major impact on the quality of LMX relationships. From the data obtained, interviews conducted and conclusions discussed earlier, it would seem plausible that lower quality LMX relationships were more drastically affected by the external political environment than higher quality LMX relationships. Further research on this topic would be required to confirm this finding.

All eight interviewees confirmed instances of intimidation. In most cases, the workers were intimidated by their peers, political figures and third parties who believed that the actions were orchestrated by the politicians involved (Interview 3, June 12, 2013). Farmer 1 and Farmer 3 were both personally threatened and intimidated (Interview 2, June 11, 2013, Interview 6, June 13, 2013).

Farmer 3 pointed out that a lot of the intimidation “happened through the media for sensationalist value” (Interview 6, June 13, 2013). Farmer 4 also mentioned that social media were used to intimidate workers on his farm (Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

It is clear to see that the intimidation caused during the strike had a severe impact on the relationships between farmers and their employees. However, the data seem to be inconclusive as to whether or not intimidation impacted high quality LMX relationships more severely than low quality LMX relationships and *vice versa*. It would seem that higher quality LMX relationships were less susceptible to intimidation and that lower quality LMX relationships were more severely impacted by intimidation, but further research will be required to confirm this suspicion.

Ewert and Du Toit (2005) stated that unionisation in most parts of the rural Western Cape has been rather slow and piecemeal, with less than ten percent of the permanent labour force being part of a union. The data obtained from the interviews seems to confirm this

finding. None of the interviewees confirmed a significant trade union presence or membership on their farms with some noting a decreasing membership after initial recruitment campaigns. The Chairperson suggested that union membership was around 6% for all employees in the valley and that union membership is “irrelevant” (Interview1, June 11, 2013).

The empowerment farm manager stated that the unions intimidated his employees to sign up during the strike (Interview 5, June 12, 2013). The lower level manager and Farmer 5 stated that many of the employees who signed up to a union during the strike withdrew their membership shortly after the strikes (Interview 3, June 12, 2013, Interview 8, June 14, 2013).

The empowerment farm manager said “If the farmer has to put up with unions on his farm, who wants to manage his farm and tell him what to do, the relationship between him and his workers cannot survive” (Interview 5, June 12, 2013). This statement clearly confirms the fact that trade union presence and interference on the farm impacts the quality of LMX relationships between the farmer and his workers.

Moseley (2006) stated that despite the perception that farm labourers are an unskilled labour force, they often possess highly technical and specialised skills. He continues that despite these skills, labourers often have a limited understanding of the larger farm operation and usually have had little to no exposure to the business side of farming (Moseley, 2006).

The data obtained during the interviews suggest that the level of education of the farm workers ranges between Grade 6 and Grade 12. Despite the low level of education, the Chairperson confirms the fact that these workers do indeed possess highly technical skills. He stated that experienced workers are far more valuable than inexperienced workers and that the damage caused by an inexperienced worker can seriously impact the yield of the vineyard (Interview 1, June 11, 2013).

Farmer 4 seems to be the only farmer who tried to address Moseley’s (2006) second point. He said, “It is important in this matter to teach the workers a bit more about the dynamics around the business, especially the finances and how it works. For them to get the big picture. For some it will be like water on the back of a duck but for the other larger part of

the workforce it will make sense and become important to understand the importance of the role they play and what I do” (Interview 7, June 13, 2013).

Earlier findings confirmed that some farmers have low quality LMX relationships and do not interact regularly with lower level employees. The data indicate that these employees often have a lower level of education as well. Therefore, it would follow that farmers will have lower quality LMX relationships with less educated employees and high quality LMX relationships with more highly qualified employees.

The interviewees expressed their concerns regarding the impact that the increased minimum wage will have on unemployment. The Chairperson stated that he has “never seen so many unemployed people on the side of the road” (Interview 1, June 11, 2013). Farmer 1, The empowerment farm manager and Farmer 4 stated that more farmers “are reducing their labour and making better use of their permanent employees” and therefore “there are and will be fewer job opportunities in the valley” (Interview 2, June 11, 2013, Interview 5, June 12, 2013, Interview 7 June 13, 2013).

Milner et al. (2007) stated that many theorists have proposed that leader and member characteristics such as gender, socio-economic identity, age, and education influence the leader-member relationship. Many of the interviewees (Interview 1, June 11, 2013, Interview 7, June 13, 2013) confirmed that they have higher quality relationships with female than with male employees. The Chairperson stated that, “The women in the coloured community are much stronger and better leaders than the men. They are intellectually more advanced, because they do not drink so much” (The Chairperson, Interview 1, June 11, 2013). Farmer 1 concurred by stating, “The women choose early in life to keep from drinking and alcohol abuse and how to lead her life” (Farmer 1, Interview 2, June 11, 2013).

It is clear to see that politics, intimidation, trade unions, education and unemployment make up some of the critical factors in the social context that exists in the De Doorns valley. The data obtained from the interviews confirms some of the claims found in the literature. Most importantly, the data clearly indicate that the social context in which leaders and members are embedded will influence the quality of the LMX relationship.

Avolio et al. (2009) criticises LMX in that it fails to conceptualise the social context in which leaders and followers are embedded. This section of the research aimed at contributing to the literature regarding the social context in which leaders and followers are embedded.

The information provided in Chapter 5 and the discussion of these results in Chapter 6 prompted the following new propositions:

Communication between managers and subordinates plays an equally important role than trust in high quality LMX relationships.

High quality LMX reduces the level of militancy that farm labourers will adopt when external pressures, such as labour strikes; trade union mobilization; social circumstances; and standards of living, increase.

7. Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1. Summary of the study

According to Moseley (2006), commercial farming in the Western Cape has undergone an enormous transition since 1994, which marked the transition from the minority lead apartheid regime to a majority lead democratic society. These transitions include the removal of some government tariffs and subsidies; exposure to intensely competitive global markets, due to the lifting of international sanctions on South African products; and the strong value of the South African Rand (Moseley, 2006). Rather than somewhat benign “transitions”, these changes have in fact behaved more like disrupters that have negatively affected the agricultural sector. The minimum wage labour dispute in De Doorns can now be added to this list as the latest disruption to hit the South African Agricultural sector.

The extensive research by Du Toit (1993) and Ewert and Du Toit (2005) provided a context in which to analyse the events in De Doorns within the complex, broader history of the agricultural sector in South Africa. They state that until the 1980s, labour arrangements on South African grape farms were characterised by racially hierarchical and authoritarian paternalism inherited and adapted from early Cape slave society and that the relationships between farm-owners and labourers have not been simply exploitative, but were shaped by the discourse of paternalism (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005).

During the events that took place in De Doorns from August 2012 until January 2013, three South Africans lost their lives over a wage dispute. The loss of human life over a wage dispute seems like a needless loss of life and prompts the question: could better farmer-labourer relationships have prevented this tragedy?

This study therefore focused on farmer-labourer relationships in a labour-intensive agricultural setting and determined whether leadership strategies applied by farmers lead to a reduction in militancy by the farm labourers on a specific farm during the labour strikes as a result. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) was used as a framework through which to gain insight into Farmer-Labourer relationships in De Doorns. The purpose of this research was to determine whether farmers apply LMX principles in their labour relationships and whether any of these factors have influenced the level of militancy by the farm labourers during the De Doorns strikes.

LMX focuses on the relationship between supervisors or managers and each of their subordinates and emphasises the differences in the manner in which a supervisor behaves toward different subordinates (Milner et al., 2007). The quality of leader-member exchange is divided into two basic categories: the in-group, which is characterised by high trust, interaction, support and formal or informal rewards; and the out-group, which is characterised by low trust, interaction, support and rewards (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). The relationship develops through a sequence of exchanges in which individuals “test” one another to determine whether they can build the relational components of trust, respect and obligation necessary for high quality exchanges to develop (Uhl-Bien, Graen, & Scandura, 2000). A major tenet of LMX theory is that supervisors do not develop identical relationships with all subordinates (Major & Morganson, 2011).

Drawing from the relevant literature and the current understanding of the events in De Doorns, the following research questions were developed to examine the relationships between farmers and labourers in the context of LMX theory and to determine potential applications in reducing militancy and improving post-industrial action working relationships.

1. Does the quality of LMX relationships between farmers and labourers affect the level of militancy adopted by the labourers during a labour strike?
2. Does the quality of LMX relationships between farmers and labourers affect the time required to restore the quality of the relationship after the militant action and labour strike?
3. Does the social context in which leaders and members are embedded influence the quality of LMX relationships?

The study was approached using the qualitative exploratory design method. Purposive sampling was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with farmers and managers in De Doorns to construct eight case studies of the same event. The interviewees included a spectrum of farmers and managers. These ranged from a farmer working outside of the valley who reported not being affected by the strikes, to a farmer who requested that warning shots be fired on his farm to disperse militant striking labourers who threatened to destroy property. Several managers were also interviewed, including lower level managers with only a few subordinates, the manager of an empowerment farm and a chairperson of

Agri SA in the Western Cape. The interviewees were of mixed race, upbringings, age and farming experience.

The data obtained through these eight interviews were pooled and all eight cases were analysed to determine the relational statuses on each farm in order to address the research questions. The results were discussed and the major findings of this study will now be summarised.

The results clearly confirmed the existence of relationship differentiation often manifesting as “in- and out-groups” and therefore, the existence of LMX relationships between De Doorns farmers and their workers are confirmed. Unfortunately the evidence obtained from the interviews was inconclusive as to whether the size of the operation influences the quality of LMX relationships that exist between the farmers and their workers.

This study found that labourers who enjoy higher quality LMX relationships with farmers will be less militant during labour strikes than labourers who experience lower quality LMX relationships. The study further confirmed that trust is a critical factor in developing and sustaining high quality LMX relationships as five of the eight farmers interviewed confirmed.

There seems to be enough evidence to support the proposition that the quality of LMX relationships influences the time required to restore the relationships after a crisis situation. The farmers with higher quality LMX relationship lost fewer production days and recovered to full production sooner than the farmers with lower quality LMX relationships. However, further research needs to be conducted in order to confirm this proposition.

The data from section 6.3 in Chapter 6 revealed that politics, intimidation, trade unions, education and unemployment make up some critical factors in the social context that exists in the De Doorns valley. This study found that the social context in which leaders and members are embedded will influence the quality of the LMX relationship.

The information provided in Chapter 5 and the discussion of these results in Chapter 6 prompted new propositions that could be empirically tested by future research. These propositions are:

1. Communication between managers and subordinates plays an equally important role than trust in high quality LMX relationships.
2. High quality LMX reduces the level of militancy that farm labourers will adopt when external pressures, such as labour strikes; trade union mobilization; social circumstances; and standards of living, increase.

7.2. Implications for management

This study confirmed that farmers are under constant time pressures and are forced to differentiate in their relationships with their workers in order to achieve results. It was found that farmers had lower quality LMX relationships with labourers with whom they interacted or communicated with less frequently.

In section 2.1.6 of Chapter 2, the literature revealed that subordinates in low quality LMX relationships are less likely to make an effort to change their status and, therefore, farmers may need to be the catalyst for change and initiate the steps necessary to improve the quality of working relationships between themselves and their labourers. Failure to improve the quality of the relationship will likely maintain poor relationships and result in the negative organisational consequences with which such relationships are associated.

This study found that high quality LMX relationships can reduce the level of militancy that labourers may adopt during a labour strike and problems that result from other external pressures. The South African agricultural sector has been severely disrupted over the past two decades and it is therefore critical that farmers understand the intricacies of low quality LMX relationships and how to develop them into higher quality LMX relationships in order to protect their farms from militant behaviour and minimize the long term impact these disruptions cause. It is especially important for farmers to develop an understanding of what their labourers or subordinates expect from them as leaders in the relationship in order to improve the LMX relationship.

It follows that managers in other similarly disrupted sectors of the South African economy could greatly benefit from an understanding of the LMX relationships existing in the workplace and ultimately how to improve the quality of these relationships. The South

African mining sector in particular represents another similarly troubled industry, as evidenced by strike action/militancy and loss of life.

7.3. Limitations

Possible limitations to this study include:

1. Farmers, managers and labourers might have been reluctant to participate in this research for fear of being identified and prosecuted.
2. The recent occurrence and volatile nature of the events might significantly influence the opinions of farmers, manager and labourers in a manner that does not necessarily reflect their long-term beliefs, opinions, actions or management styles.
3. A risk of interviewing homogeneous farmers and managers instead of heterogeneous individuals covering a wide spectrum of farmer-labourer relationships.
4. No labourers were interviewed during this study.
5. The data obtained from the interviews might be biased towards the farmers' and managers' opinion of the quality of LMX relationships.
6. Not reaching saturation levels with regards to the data gathered during interviews, due to the small number of interviews which were conducted.
7. Resistance and influence from Unions and unionised farm workers.
8. Non-probability sampling techniques were used to select the individuals in the population from whom the data was gathered. Therefore the sample is not necessarily statistically representative of the population as a whole, and therefore inferences made about the whole population are prone to significant error.
9. The researcher found it very difficult to discern whether militant action and damage incurred on the farms were attributable to actions by the farm's employees or non-employee third parties that took part in the riots and strikes; as a result of this difficulty, it was extremely challenging to analyse the contribution of LMX quality to the likelihood of such damages occurring.

7.4. Recommendations for future research

The review of the literature and interviews with the farmers revealed the following interesting topics for future research. Many of the farmers stated that due to the context and social intricacies in which employees are embedded, they have higher quality LMX

relationships with female workers as opposed to male workers. A better understanding of the factors that lead to this could be very interesting. Expanding further to this topic it would be interesting to investigate the quality of LMX relationships between the farmers and these female managers as well as the LMX relationship between the male subordinates and their female manager.

During the strike in De Doorns, many of the labourers were intimidated by external 3rd parties; some were intimidated by their peers and colleagues. Future research could be conducted in the developing field of Member-Member exchange (MMX), which extends the LMX theoretical framework into understanding the relationships between colleagues on the same hierarchical level within organisations.

7.5. Additional findings

This section highlights additional findings that resulted from the interviews with the farmers that are not directly related to the research topic. Farmer 5 discussed a merit system that they had put in place on their farm to provide the opportunity, motivation and mentorship to labourers to assist them to improve their living conditions. The system consists of three levels; Silver, Gold and Platinum. Each level has specific requirements that the labourer must adhere to in order to be eligible for and/or maintain that specific level. Each level also has an increased compensation package associated with it.

Every three months, the labourers may apply for any of the levels. Platinum level workers are expected to be excellent workers, good husbands or wives at home, respected and involved in their community with no smoking, alcohol or drug abuse. The majority of labourers attain and retain the gold performance level, and a few are on the silver level. Should the labourer be unsuccessful in his application for their current or a higher level, the manager will guide them as to how they may reach the required level of performance and/or behaviour for an improved status, encouraging them to excel and providing mentorship.

Another additional finding was the discussion with the empowerment farm manager around what is required to make a success of an empowerment farm. The empowerment farm manager highlighted that mentorship from a successful experienced farmer was the critical factor that assisted him to develop into a successful empowerment farmer

(Interview 5, June 12, 2013). This means that other empowerment farms should adopt a similar strategy in order to enhance their chances of success.

7.6. Conclusion

The South African Agricultural sector is a critical sector of the South African economy. It contributes 12% to GDP in total; is responsible for more than 40% of South African exports; and provides 7% of formal employment in a country with an unemployment rate of nearly 25% (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2013; The World Fact Book, 2013). The history of agriculture is deeply entrenched in the turbulent history of South Africa (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005) and has therefore been one of the more disrupted sectors during the significant socio-political upheavals experience over the past two decades.

This socio-political milieu coupled with the pervasive poverty and low standards of living of the Western Cape farm labourer creates an immensely complex and intricate relationship between the farmer and his labourers (Ewert & Du Toit, 2005). Various external parties, including politics and trade unions, targeted these relationships in De Doorns by instigating a labour strike in order to push their own agendas in the province (Interview 1, June 11, 2013). It is important, therefore, to study mechanisms that could result in more sustainable, equitable and effective management methodologies that take into account these complex socio-political factors and will be successful in this potentially tense environment.

This study concludes that high quality LMX relationships between farmers and their labourers may be one such tool. The evidence presented strongly suggests that fostering high quality LMX relationships has positive effects including a reduction in the level of militancy labourers will adopt during labour strikes; and that the external social context in which framers and labourers are embedded, greatly affects the quality of LMX relationships.

The study clearly demonstrates that developing and maintaining high quality LMX relationships represents a tool that may be employed by farmers to understand their relationships with various employees and through better relationships, obtain better results from their labourers and ultimately improved outcomes for their farms. Understanding and

addressing the causes of low quality LMX relationships can be a critical tool in the farmer's arsenal of management techniques. In a labour-intensive organisation, as studied here through the case studies of the table grape industry, high quality LMX working relationships between managers and their subordinates may provide the cornerstone to achieve an advantage over other players in the market.

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Appendix A

Draft Questionnaire for Farmers

1. Please describe your labour relationship with your workers before the events of the farm worker strike.
 - 1.1. Did you conduct any specific strategy in order to improve the relationship between yourself and your workers?

2. Please describe your labour relationship with your workers after the events of the farm worker strike.
 - 2.1. Do you now conduct any specific strategy in order to improve the relationship between yourself and your workers?

3. What was the extent of the damage to your operations during these events?
 - 3.1. What percentage of your workforce joined the militant action?
 - 3.2. What were their reasons for/not joining?
 - 3.3. How long after the start of the events, did these employees return to their positions?
 - 3.4. How long did it take your operations to return to normal after the events?

4. Are there certain individual workers with whom you have a better relationship than with others?
 - 4.1. What, according to you, are the factors that contribute to this “better relationship”?
 - 4.2. Why would you classify your relationship with these workers as “better”?
 - 4.3. According to your knowledge, have you done anything in particular to win the approval of these employees?
 - 4.4. Do you offer these employees any preferential treatment?

5. Please describe the level of engagement of your farm workers to their respective positions.
 - 5.1. Do they view themselves as integral to the operations?
 - 5.2. Are they motivated and productive?
 - 5.3. Would they freely take initiative or make suggestions regarding their daily work?

6. Is there a Union present on your farm?

- 6.1. What percentage of your workers are members of a union?
- 6.2. Which unions are the most prominent on your farm?
- 6.3. What is your relationship with the local union representative?

7. Which entity, according to you, played the biggest role in moving the workers to militancy?
 - 7.1. The workers themselves, the unions, political parties or other entities?

8. What is your opinion with regards to the wage increase?
 - 8.1. How will this increase affect your operations in the future?
 - 8.2. What effect, if any, did this increase have on your employees?

9. What according to you are the major challenges in improving your labour relationships?
 - 9.1. What have you done well?
 - 9.2. What have you done poorly?
 - 9.3. Where can you improve?
 - 9.4. What has worked and what has not worked?

10. Are your operations engaged in a farm worker equity share scheme?
 - 10.1. How does this scheme work?
 - 10.2. Has this had any effect on the labour relations on the farm?