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**Van der Waal, Kees (C.S.), ed. 2014. *Winelands, Wealth and Work. Transformations in the Dwars River Valley*, Stellenbosch. Ed. Kees (C.S.) van der Waal. Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal. viii, 247 pages**

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History of Cape Verde surprises everyone, its peaceful decolonization, as well as the smooth transition from a one party system to a democracy, in which the alternation of power as a result of free elections is a common instrument of change. For political scientists and social researchers the chapter on decolonization and contemporary politics of both countries are particularly valuable. Czech readers will surely appreciate the chapter on the relations between the Czech Republic and the Cape Verde Islands. The most notable event in this chapter is the fact that Cape Verdeans were inspired by the Czech Sokol gymnastic movement system.

Each separate section of the book is provided with extensive annotations. The book also includes a detailed extensive register and list of sources and literature, which contains mainly Portuguese sources. The text book is appropriately complemented by illustrative photos. The book of Jan Klíma *History of Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe* combines an interesting text for readers with scientifically relevant information.

Petr Sobotka

**Van der Waal, Kees (C.S.), ed. 2014. *Winelands, Wealth and Work. Transformations in the Dwars River Valley, Stellenbosch*. Ed. Kees (C.S.) van der Waal. Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal. viii, 247 pages.**

South Africa has been busy removing the injustices of the apartheid era for the past 20 years. The legacy of apartheid includes among others separate living of former population categories as they were defined and created by the apartheid regime. Separate living is closely connected with social class and income. In other words poverty and wealth have been distributed along the lines of divisions of population registration and group areas. As is well-known, “The New South Africa” instead of revolutionary expropriation of white capitalists chose a gradualist redistribution model combined with the adoption of the non-white elite into the neo-liberal capitalist system. Thus a minority of the formerly disadvantaged joined the middle and upper

classes while the overwhelming majority still languish in poverty, are unemployed and have low social status.

The apartheid legislation was abolished a quarter of a century ago. Theoretically people formerly classified as white, coloured, black and Asians may live where they like. But this is easier said than done. The present reality of South Africa is that the geography of poverty and wealth continues to largely overlap with the long abolished categories. Affordability of right is more powerful than the right itself. One has the right to live better, and anywhere, but cannot afford it. To give an example leading us to the book under review, people formerly classified as coloured and black further stay in separate townships around Stellenbosch while middle class people formerly classified as white continue to inhabit their spacy and comfortable houses and flats in Stellenbosch town. There has been hardly any movement to town from townships and certainly no movement from town to townships!

The volume under review results from an interdisciplinary research by a group of investigators gathered around Kees van der Waal, a seasoned anthropological fieldworker based at the University of Stellenbosch. The subject of their research are people living in several villages in Dwars River Valley. These are people formerly classified as coloured. The valley is situated to the north, in the immediate vicinity of Stellenbosch, a wealthy town with a mostly “white” population. The process under study is transformations, a term used in South Africa for the active surmounting of the vestiges of apartheid. In concrete terms the research was focused on the social experience of transformation of the Dwars River Valley inhabitants. They have been living in the villages of Pniel, Kylemore, Lanquedoc because they were settled there as former slaves and since their liberation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as workers in agricultural estates owned by whites. Private landownership emerged as a result of conquest by white settlers who came to this part of the Western Cape at the close of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. soon after the establishment of the first Dutch colony of Cape Town. The main agricultural products were wheat and wine, while wine has been today exported around the world. The Cape Winelands, to which the Dwars Rivier Valley belongs, is one of the most beautiful parts of South Africa because the undulating vineyard countryside, created by human activity, is surrounded by wild rocky peaks. Wine estates and some houses in Stellenbosch boast old Dutch colonial architecture

which adds to the historical romantic impression of visitors. The latter are wealthy people, both South Africans and the ever increasing stream of foreigners.

While the transformation legislation has been aimed towards economic and social emancipation of the working population, the neoliberal capitalism following its inner logic opposes these official intentions and endeavours by actions leading to the financial maximisation of land use. The tendency is away from agricultural production towards lucrative recreational or permanent housing (gated communities), and land speculation. At the same time, some self-declared (white) philanthropists while developing highly profitable capitalist projects launch development schemes ostensibly aimed at improving the lot of (coloured) inhabitants of villages located on or near land estates owned by them. In the case of Solms-Delta Wine Estate, the paternalist owners went so far as making the workers co-owners of the estate. However, the decision-making remains firmly in the hands of Mr Solms and his partners.

The editor and the contributors to the volume under review are well aware of the ambiguities of both transformation and development concepts. The background for the implementation of socio-economic changes is continuous ownership of the best agricultural land by major private companies. The Boschendal estate comprising 9500 hectares changed owners three times during the last hundred years. Profitability has of course priority while improving the living standards of the workers living in the valley villages copies that what is politically correct in this or that time period. "Transition" for the present Boschendal owners does not really mean empowerment of the marginalized villagers but in fact boils down to enhancing profitability represented by property developments such as the Founders Estates, combined with the production of famous wines and some cattle breeding, in brief making the owners richer by way of orientating to rich customers, local and international. The opacity of neo-liberal meaning of "development" and "transformation" is obvious.

While the volume is able to reveal the perversion of post-apartheid South Africa in the example of Dwars River Valley, it seems to be satisfied with lamenting. No way out of the highly contradictory, in fact mutually opposed, predicament is offered or even attempted. This,

unfortunately, is the dilemma of South African academia. Academics are part of the local middle class and as such are unable to seek radical or revolutionary solutions.

Helplessness is not limited to the authors of the chapters, it is characteristic of the de facto segregated inhabitants of the valley villages as well. These people are pictured as seeking merely symptomatic remedies such as neighbourhood watch or female entrepreneurship. But these are at best small exercises in nascent empowerment. The underdog position remains unchanged, masters-landowners can continue with their sinister scheming. The excellent chapter by Tracey Randle documents certain social mobility features, especially in Pniel. “Slow violence”, the term coined by R. Nixon, is shown by Randle graphically in the case of retrenched forestry workers who applied for state-owned Meerlust Bosbou land on which their houses stood. Although the government supported this application and even planned to build additional 600 houses, the commercial farmers in the vicinity quickly formed a landowners’ association in order to prevent the social housing development under the pretext that the value of their properties would go down. These landowners, no doubt rich whites (the book carefully, and politically correctly, avoids using the apartheid population categories), won and the housing project was suspended. Randle nevertheless believes in “new futures and solutions” of the legacy of slow violence in Dwars River Valley.

Another chapter on slow violence of poverty is by a psycho-ethnographer Lou-Marié Kruger. This experienced researcher draws a vivid picture of what I would call the practice of poverty and wonders to what extent researchers reproduce and produce societal discourses and thus contribute to the misrecognition of the poor while economic liberalisation advances. The afterword by Steven Robins, professor of social anthropology at Stellenbosch, praises the book for showing the complexities of the historically evolved inequalities and cases of agency. Though whether sustainable development will indeed take place in Dwars River communities is a question for him. Personally I believe that dependency path of previous and current capitalism in South Africa does not allow more than a very slow process of empowerment by way of paternalistic interventions.

## REVIEWS

The book is richly illustrated by colour and black and white photographs; there is a detailed index at the end of the book.

Petr Skalník