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The Griqua conundrum: political and socio-cultural identity in the Northern Cape, South Africa

Waldman, Pearl Linda

2014-03-24
http://hdl.handle.net10539/14277

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buy alcohol. When she refused to be persuaded, they stole her money and returned to her home drunk and abusive. The house was extraordinarily bare and the demands and impositions of her family were such that she often left her house and went to live on a nearby farm, where she had established a relationship on a paternalist basis with a farmer who allowed her to live in one of his houses.

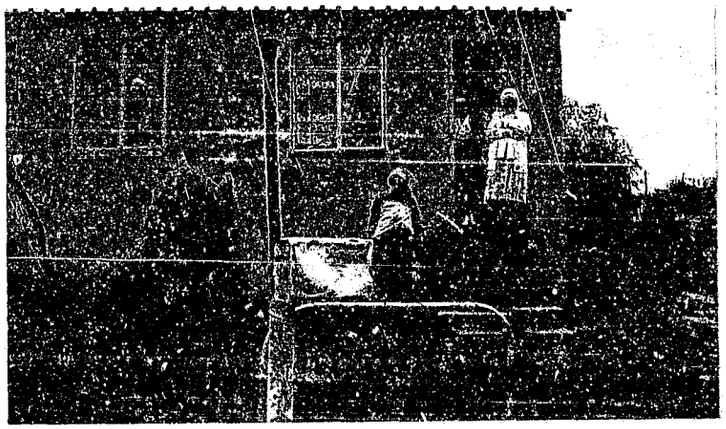


Figure 6.10: Maria Pieterse (in light-coloured clothing) outside her home (which extends only to the fence pole, 1988. By 1998 her house was considerably more rundown)

Clearly women were seldom in control of their houses and households, even when they were senior women in female-headed households. Despite ritualised statements of female influence, such women had little chance of altering their situations. These rituals were therefore not symbolic reflections of women's structural positions and should rather be considered as 'powerful alternatives to everyday cognition, which are experienced by actors as if governing an altogether different world' (Bloch, 1989: viii). The above complex of rituals suggests, but does not endorse, women's autonomy and power in Griquatown. Rituals in Griquatown should rather be seen, in part, as 'mis-statements of reality' (Bloch, 1989: 43) during which expressive acts are not directed to strategic ends.[71] If, however, rituals are 'mis-statements', how does one explain the 'disconnection' between these ritualised moments and everyday life (Bloch, 1989: 43)?. It is helpful here to follow Connerton's suggestion and to focus on the form of the ritual, rather than on the content. He suggests that ritual, as a form of social memory, facilitates a continuity with the past (1989: 44-45). It is thus through rituals that communal memories are shaped and a collective identity is constituted (1989: 48, 59). Such a position is closely aligned to Cohen's suggestion that rituals allow a 'society to reproduce itself culturally' (1994: 57).

Ritual activity in Griquatown cannot therefore be seen as a symbolic representation of society. Neither, however, is it merely a 'mis-statement' of reality. Rather, as Connerton suggests, certain concepts 'can only be expressed in ritual' (1989: 54). In

[71] This is not to suggest that these rituals should be identified as 'performance' in the manner that Sharp and Boonzaier have done (1994, also see Sharp, 1997).

Griquatown, during these rites of passage, when the normal order of life was temporarily suspended, older women deliberately situated themselves within or at the entrances and exits of houses. In so doing, they were acting as forceful and authoritative individuals who were empowered to oversee the rituals necessary for the successful ideology of a broader Griqua family. Rituals, in Griquatown, thus mediated between a broader Griqua family and the smaller family in which individuals grew up. Women, located at the heart of Griqua identity, were ritually situated in the centre of the physical houses where initiation took place. It was in relation to these houses and the centrality of women within them, that men's identity as *inkommers* was articulated. In stressing older women's authority and power over a heterogeneous and widespread Griqua community, the rituals simultaneously downplayed men's role within the community (cf. Cohen, 1994: 64). In ritual, all men were viewed as *inkommers* whose roles were minimised and of little consequence.

The rituals furthermore enabled people in Griquatown to represent themselves in various ways for different contexts. As discussed in both Chapter Four and this chapter, the initiation ritual was seen, both by Griqua people themselves and by academics, as the defining feature of Griqua identity, whereas the other rituals documented in this chapter were seldom acknowledged as rituals *per se* – or as typically Griqua – and have been overlooked by academics. An examination of this complex of rituals presents, however, a different perspective. The *hokmeisie* ceremony enabled Griqua people to ritually communicate ideas about exclusiveness and ethnic boundedness – as was so often propagated and demanded by the apartheid state. For this reason, the ritual was performed at other official gatherings[72] or referred to when television crews and / or researchers came to the Northern Cape towns. This was a ritual that clearly and unambiguously announced a Griqua presence. The other rituals, however, were far more ambivalently situated and, as is explored in this chapter, represented part-Khoi, part-Christian, part-Tswana and part-Griqua beliefs. Whereas this total ritual complex perhaps more accurately reflects Griqua identity in Griquatown, it is more inappropriate for making statements about a Griqua ethnic identity. Thus it was through the performance of a series of rites of passage, drawn from a variety of different sources, that these rituals mediated between the occasional need for an 'apartheid-style' ethnic exclusiveness (as discussed in Chapters Two and Four) and the reality of everyday life in Griquatown.

[72] For example, the Khoisan Identities and Cultural Heritage Conference, hosted by the University of the Western Cape at the South African Museum, in Cape Town was opened with a 're-enactment' of a Griqua initiation ritual (12-16/07/1997). The young initiate had been initiated in Griquatown prior to the conference.

CONCLUSION

Cars ens argued that watersnake beliefs occurred in communities where men and women were of relatively equal status and that Nama initiation ceremonies could therefore be seen to signify women's authority. The material presented in this chapter suggests that such an argument, which sees ritual as a direct reflection of profane relations, cannot be applied in Griquatown. Here women, as household heads, remained unable to deal with the daily demands on them and their resources. For women such as Maria Pieterse, ritualised statements of authority were made at turning points, when girls became women, when sexual activity was publicly acknowledged, when women become wives or when individuals passed away. During this process, '(s)ocial roles are grafted onto, inform and substantiate' individuals and the social unit is reinforced (Cohen, 1994: 68)

Everyday life was, however, far more complex than the relationship between men and women enacted during ritual. Just as women did not have the authority that they would have liked, men were not simply *inkommers* to the family and they could not be excluded from houses or kept on the outskirts as their behaviour in ritual would imply. Moreover, although rituals defined men as peripheral to the house and to the nuclear family, men did in actuality play a fundamental role in establishing and maintaining households in Griquatown. Ritual allowed women temporarily to occupy the home and to make assertions about their ownership of space and status that was not directly mirrored by their more profane relations with men. Profane relations between individuals in Griquatown were not as clearly defined and were not only about the binary relationship between the categories of men and women. Rather, as is suggested in Chapter Five, each individual within the town simultaneously depended on, and was undermined by, his or her 'family' members. Each individual was placed in multiple relations to other people in Griquatown. The following chapter further examines the question of Griqua identity in terms of how individuals occupy manifold positions within Griqua society. A woman was never only a woman, or older woman – the categories into which she was ritually classified – but also a wife, a mother, a daughter-in-law, a sister and so forth and her relationships with these other people affected and influenced conditions within the household and with her immediate family.

CHAPTER SEVEN
SARAH SUE MEINTJIES (nee SEKUTI, alias LIEPIE): REPRESENTATIONS OF SELF AND SOCIETY

Women are often constructed as cultural symbols of the collectivity, of its boundaries, as carriers of the collectivity's 'honour' and as its intergenerational reproducers of culture. Specific codes and regulations are usually developed, defining who/what is a 'proper man' and a 'proper woman', which are central to the identities of collectivity members (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 67)

Each man is like all other men, some other men, and no other man (attributed to Clyde Kluckholm in Agar, 1980: 42).

INTRODUCTION

The rituals described in the previous chapter were the product of Griqua collective behaviour and they endorsed women's role within the home and their 'ownership' of houses. Such rituals were remarkable for their lack of ambiguity. Places and social identities were clearly defined. Women were ritually positioned inside or alongside the house, a symbolic statement that embraced notions from precolonial Khoi society where women exercised authority over a broad sphere, Christian values adopted more recently, and practices implemented through apartheid housing policy. Men, on the other hand, were generally identified by ritual as *inkommers* and as outsiders.

The ideology of the home as a secure place and as a Griqua refuge, as evidenced in both Chapters Five and Six, did not constitute an unambiguous reflection of people's everyday lives. The ritual association of women with houses thus represented only one perspective of women's experiences. Another means of exploring women's status comes from an examination of power relations within the social context of daily negotiations. Here, people were seldom identified as only men or only women, but were situated within multiple relationships which positioned them as wives, husbands, sons, daughters, sisters or brothers and as Griqua *boorlings* or *inkommers*. It was in relation to these kinship, gendered and ethnic positions that people sought to define their own individual identity. The concept of the person, as Mauss has argued, is influenced by 'the perennial problem of how individual and society are interconnected' (1973: 288 cited in La Fontaine, 1985: 125-6). It is this relationship between the self and a broader Griqua collective that is examined in this chapter (cf. Di Leonardo, 1991; Moore, 1994; Cohen, 1994). Rather than trying to represent the full range of relational experience, this chapter presents a detailed examination of the life of

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Sarah (Liepie) Meintjies, the daughter of a well-known Griqua leader. In so doing, it explores the multiple positioning of an individual woman, and her relationship within a broader Griqua society.[1]

My concern with the relationship between individuals -- in this instance Liepie – and broader social collectivities in which they are inserted in predetermined ways requires an exploration of several new themes. As will become evident from a reading of this chapter, Liepie's quest to establish herself as an independent personality was intricately interwoven, in sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory ways, with her desire to be a wife, a mother and, at times, a Griqua woman. On several occasions this resulted in discord within Liepie's marriage and it is for this reason that the question of conflict resolution and its cyclical nature in Griquatown is examined in this chapter. Liepie's relationship with her husband was not, however, regulated only within the marriage and, as is explored below, her behaviour and marital relations were also under scrutiny by the broader Griqua collectivity in which she lived. Here gossip – and through it the implication of Liepie in certain unsavoury scenarios – also came to have a regulating role, forcing her to conform to certain broader notions of how Griqua people, particularly married women, should behave.

INTRODUCING SARAH MEINTJIES

> In 1997 Sarah Meintjies lived in one of the council houses that had been built in 1969 as part of the construction of a coloured township (described in Chapter Six). She had inherited the house from her father who had previously lived there. After his death, and after the 1994 elections, the council house in Kruger Street legally became her property. The front door of the four-roomed house opened onto a small *stoep* (verandah) and a yard comprising stones and dirt and a few motley plants. A hinged gate and a straggly hedge marked the end of the yard and the beginning of the street. Her house was painted a nondescript pale grey-blue colour, a reminder of the days when the Griquatown Council owned and maintained these houses. Her house number, 160, was barely visible through the layers of paint, but this hardly mattered as everyone knew where she lived.
>
> Sarah's father, Andries Leroux Sekuti, had been an important man in Griquatown and was widely recognised as the 'last' Griqua leader (*die groot ou leier van die Griekwas*).[2] Sekuti died in 1995 and left behind two daughters, Sarah and Petronella Gabriel (known as Pannes), and a granddaughter, Suzelle Pieterse, whose mother had been killed in a car accident when she was a small child.[3]

[1] In seeking to study the positioning of an individual within society, I am aware of the dangers of conflating individualism – namely the prioritising of an individual over society – with selfhood (Cohen, 1994: 168).
[2] Andries Sekuti was the recognised leader of Griquatown and he worked in close alliance with Bishop Kanyiles of the GPO (see Chapter Two for more discussion on this and other Griqua organisations). Conversations, Trooi Visser, 1/12/1995; Anna Visser, 15/08/1997.
[3] Suzelle's mother had never married and thus Suzelle kept her mother's surname.

After Sekuti died, Sarah (Liepie) remained in his house and married Charles Meintjies, a young builder-cum-handyman who had been her partner for the past ten years.[4] Charles' parents also lived in Griquatown, in a house in Waterboer Street that Charles' father had built. Charles was seldom in Griquatown as his work tended to keep him in Kimberley. During his absences Liepie ran the household and cared for their children, ensuring that the elder ones went to school and looking after the youngsters at home.[5] Charles' work on cars and his occasional building contracts, coupled with the tuck shop that Liepie ran, brought in sufficient money for the family to survive.[6]



Figure 7.1: Sarah Sue Meintjies, commonly known as Liepie (1998)

This brief introduction of Liepie has situated her as a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother and a daughter-in-law. This multiple positioning also suggests that that she was party to various allegiances that were sometimes in contradiction to each other. It also illustrates her Griqua heritage and demonstrates her poverty-struck existence (discussed in more detail below). In an attempt to understand 'the other' through an examination of his own life, Cohen has argued that

> We have routinely to juggle the incompatible claims of family and work, of family and friends, of friends and neighbours, of neighbours and co-

[4] Conversation, Anna Visser, 20/12/1995

[5] Liepie had four children during my fieldwork period in 1998. The following year she gave birth to twins, one of whom later died.

[6] Conversation, Sarah Meintjies, 16/08/1996.

> religionists; of locality and ethnic peers, of ethnic peers and nationality, of nationality and locality, and so on. All these associations pull us in different directions (1994: 9).

As a wife, mother and daughter-in-law, Liepie accommodated various claims that drew her in contrary directions while simultaneously maintaining a sense of herself as an individual. Anthropologists have tended to isolate one aspect of the 'dual' roles, stressing the social component and excluding notions of individual identity (Gluckman 1962: 41). However Cohen, drawing on Epstein's understanding of identity as 'a concept of synthesis', suggests understanding the 'individual as essentially a basket of selves which come to the surface at different social moments as appropriate. The basket, the container of these selves, is the individual's identity' (1994: 11). In this chapter I emphasise the interrelationship between the individual – Liepie – and broader Griquatown society (cf. Hannerz, 1992: 42, Cohen, 1994: 68). In so doing I attempt to bring together individual choices, self-representation, ethnic identity and societal demands to show how they overlap and interweave to form a character who is both an individual and part of a broader social milieu.

LIVED EXPERIENCES

Griqua identity, I have argued in the preceding chapters, has been, and continues to be, manifest in various ways. This has included religious worship, political mobilisation and ritual activity. The central themes in this expression of Griqua identity have been the location of women within the house despite their material poverty, the development of a broad overarching 'Griqua family' and, in contradiction to this, a sense of ambiguity over who truly belongs to this 'family'. Newcomers and wealthy residents were *inkommers* to Griquatown and Griquatown people were *inkommers* to the Waterboer family. At its most intimate level, a man was an *inkommer* to his wife's family, even if he had been born in Griquatown. Griqua identity can thus be seen to adhere primarily in women, and especially in women who were born in Griquatown. However, as only a small portion of women in Griquatown were initiated, many women may have found themselves ambivalent about this identity. They were *boorlings* to Griquatown and to a Griqua collective, but they had not been formally initiated, or married, into this society. Although this ambivalence was expressed at a communal level (discussed in Chapter Four), it also had particular implications for women at the level of individual identity. It is to this that I now turn.

'Life as lived' has generally not been reflected in ethnographic writing, possibly because, as Ramphele has argued, the 'complexity of the lives of ordinary people defies tidy concepts' such as those produced by anthropologists (1996: 44, also see Cohen 1994: 179).

Similarly, Abu-Lughod warns of the dangers of writing about culture in a manner that reduces, simplifies and generalises about reality (1993:7-9).[7] In order to overcome the tendency of anthropological generalisations to even out differences and encourage homogeneity, coherence and timelessness, Abu-Lughod concentrates on the lives of specific individuals. Such an approach emphasises the manner in which actual circumstances, individual histories and relationships are important in the constitution of experience. Furthermore, it represents individuals as making choices, changing their minds, having conflicting ideas, being influenced by the actions of others and so forth. These factors, which crucially influence and shape social life, are glossed over or ignored in ethnographic generalisations (Abu-Lughod, 1993).[8] Anthropologists, according to Cohen, have failed to deal with the complexity of the self. He recommends therefore that anthropologists 'elicit and describe the thoughts and sentiments of individuals which we otherwise gloss over in the generalisations we derive from collective social categories' (1994: 2, 4; also see Barth, 1992: 31).

Notwithstanding this neglect on the part of anthropologists, who have tended to see the relationship of the individual to society as anthropologically problematic and a domain of research reserved for psychologists, there has been much theoretical debate on the topic.[9] The general anthropological position – that the individual somehow represents an opposition to society – is, according to Cohen, merely 'a figment of the anthropological imagination' (1994: 54). Rather anthropologists should, in their attempts to interpret social and cultural behaviour, investigate and explain the nature of belonging and social membership for individuals (Cohen, 1994: 21). Anthropologists have, furthermore, made almost no attempt to deal with people's feelings and emotions despite understanding that the cultural expression of feelings invokes 'questions of choice, interpretation and personal identity' (Parkin, 1995: 162). Addressing intricate questions about intentionality, determination and choice – at both an individual and collective level – necessitates a reassessment of the relationship between 'conventionalised authoritative cultural categories and ideas...and the analysis of social action' (Moore, 1995: 26).

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[7] Abu-Lughod argues that anthropologists generally use ethnographic details, often concerning individuals, to produce generalisations about society. The problem is that generalisation makes the 'other' seem more coherent, more self-contained and more different from ourselves than they might necessarily be. 'Generalization, however useful for other projects, helps make concepts like "culture" and "cultures" seem sensible. This in turn allows for the fixing of boundaries between self and other' (1993: 7). Anthropologists should thus be wary of generalisation because of the manner in which it reduces differences and encourages homogeneity (1993: 9).

[8] Also see Rosen who argues that all analysis of legal process necessitates an understanding of the 'categories of meaning by which participants themselves comprehend their experience and orient themselves toward one another in their everyday lives' (1989: xiv).

[9] See Cohen (1994) and Kuper (1992) for reviews on these theoretical writings.

This neglect of a personal self, as discussed in Chapter One, stems from a conception of society as a construct that exists above, or apart from, individuals and from a failure to recognise that individual relations create and shape society (Strathern, 1992a; 1992b, Holy, 1996). It is therefore necessary to develop a theory of society which brings individuals back into the social collectivity and which examines individual self-consciousness in relation to other social identities. In this regard, Cohen suggests that

> (s)ociety and the individual are mutually implicated as concepts, not in the sense that society is reducible to its component members; but, rather, that the complexity of society cannot be grasped without understanding the complexity of individual selfhood which is its key (1994: 50).[10]

Writers, such as Cohen, La Fontaine and Abu-Lughod, suggest that the examination of individual identity enhances one's understanding of a collective identity. As argued in the preceding chapters, Griqua identity is, in many respects, an ambiguous identity. This does not mean that individuals question the degree to which they are Griqua, but rather that being Griqua becomes embodied in their lifestyle in profound and often contradictory ways. It has been suggested above, that Griqua women – who have not been initiated – and Griqua men – who are always, at one level, *inkommers* – experience this ambiguity in particular ways. Their experiences resonate the themes of Griqua cultural identity described in the previous chapters: poverty, marginalisation, religion, gender and status. The study of one specific individual thus provides insight into how this more personal, possibly more complex layer of identity relates to a broader collective identity.

In this chapter, Liepie has already been introduced as someone who embodies multiple roles. Her sense of self, of her Griqua and of her South African identity is woven into her experiences of poverty and marginalisation and into her struggle to maintain respectability. Before, however, examining her position within society and the articulation of these various roles, it is necessary to explore the manner in which she constructs herself as an individual.

LIEPIE AS AN INDIVIDUAL

> Liepie was born in Griquatown on 29 February 1960 and she was therefore a *boorling* both to the town and to Griqua society. She was christened in the Griqua church (which was later to become the NG and then the VG). Apart from the two years when she went to

[10] Read, in a similar vein, argues that individual identity and social or ethnic identities are opposite sides of the same coin (1955: 276 cited in La Fontaine, 1985: 130).

High School in Kimberley, she has spent her whole life in Griquatown. But, although Liepie was 'of Griquatown' and a quintessential *boorling*, she sought to define herself as different from the residents of Rainbow Valley. She was Andries Sekuti's daughter (christened Sarah Sue Sekuti) and this marked her as special. As a further mark of difference, she insisted on being called Liepie, a nickname that reflected her unusual status as a leap-year child.

To me, as an outsider, who had been partly accepted into Griquatown society, Liepie's status as a semi-outsider was apparent through her relationship with me and my field assistant, Audrey. While most of my other informants, despite my best efforts, tended to relate to me with some of the distance and deference accorded to an *inkommer*, Liepie, as someone of ambiguous status herself, was on far more intimate terms with me, sharing our shopping on Saturday mornings, mutual visits and walks through Rainbow Valley. As all three of us enjoyed reading, we would often exchange books, reading each other's favourite novels and discussing the advantages of particular authors. Whereas Audrey and I tended to select the same mystery and detective novels, Liepie consumed love stories. Indeed, Liepie usually took the lead in our relationship. It was she who had initially introduced me to Audrey. She felt that we would get on because, she said, we were both educated and we had similar feminist leanings. This Liepie inferred from my age and single status. Thus Liepie set herself slightly apart from Audrey and me right from the beginning of our friendship. As an older and married woman, Liepie commanded more respect and carried herself with more dignity. She often reprimanded us for not taking her seniority seriously or for not showing her greater deference. In addition, she considered her marriage provided greater opportunities for independence than did Audrey's feminism. Because her husband Charles was in Kimberley during the week and often over weekends, Liepie could decide what she wanted to do or whom she wanted to visit. Audrey, on the other hand, was beholden to her grandmother, who did not want her wandering around Griquatown and preferred her to be indoors doing domestic work. It was thus Audrey who, despite being formally employed by me to assist with my research, always had to report back home.

Liepie, Audrey and I formed a three-way friendship, although Liepie set herself slightly apart from Audrey and me. No doubt this was partially a response to the manner in which my research, and Audrey's employment as a fieldwork assistant, excluded her. Liepie's tendency to represent herself as different was evident both in her dealings with me and in her relations to broader Griquatown society. She, unlike most *boorlings* of Griquatown, had a good education. In this regard, she was more akin to the predominantly male *inkommers* who tended to be well educated. However, although she sought to define herself as different from the other *boorlings* of Griquatown, she did not think of herself as an *inkommer*. Her circumstances were the reverse of those usually associated with *inkommers*, in which educated men married local, uneducated women. Liepie, in contrast, was an educated woman, born in Griquatown, who had married a *boorling*. As a result of all these factors, she was situated somewhere between *boorlings* and *inkommers*. (It was perhaps for this reason that she had initially cultivated a friendship with me, an educated *inkommer* of unusual status, who was also accepted into Griqua society, as discussed in Chapter One). Despite her rather unusual status and her representation of herself as

different, Liepie was also a member of a family and, at a broader level, of Griquatown society. As such, her definition of herself as independent, her friendship with me, her lack of interest in her role within the house and in conforming to Griqua married women's standards of behaviour caused conflicts between Liepie and her husband and may so have influenced her other relationships in Griquatown.

LIEPIE AND HER SOCIAL COMMITMENTS

Liepie was the *de facto* household head who ensured the well-being of the household and the general maintenance of the house. Despite the frequent absence of her husband, their marriage was important to both of them and both made decisions about the household. Some of these decisions were made together, but more often they were taken independently by either Liepie or Charles. Such decisions, taken independently and in conjunction with other issues, led to phases of violent conflict within the marriage. Liepie responded to these phases in various ways – sometimes drinking, sometimes hiding at friends' houses, sometimes seeking religious assistance and solace. These phases of marital discord were interspersed with stages during which she and Charles saw their marriage as central to their lives and were kind and loving towards each other. Thus, as is evident from this chapter, the marriage was characterised by conflict and cycles of violence interspersed with periods of calm co-operation and interaction. Liepie's and Charles' marriage was not unusual in this regard: extensive evidence points to the pervasiveness of violence in Griquatown. Women, men and children were all victims of this violence and many people's lives were characterised by stages of sobriety interspersed with periods of drunken disarrangement and upheaval. Furthermore, it was not considered appropriate to interfere when violent encounters took place between spouses. I was frequently instructed that this was how life worked in Griquatown and was reprimanded when, upon watching a man beat and kick his drunken wife, I suggested that the police be called.

In the case of Charles and Liepie, these violent incidents tended to occur when either Liepie or Charles transgressed their social roles as wife / mother and husband / father. In the following section, I therefore examine Liepie as a person who, although she lives, eats and sleeps in one particular house and identifies with that house as her home, should be understood as one who straddles domestic settings, and whose life is profoundly influenced by occurrences outside the household. As mentioned above, both Liepie and Charles were active participants within the household and they both made decisions about the running of the household (cf. Cohen, 1995: 90). Decisions and choices made by Liepie ostensibly 'outside' of the marriage did, however, influence and modify their marital relations, as is

demonstrated in the following example. Liepie's friendship with me allowed her to demonstrate her independence, walking or driving through Griquatown; it also allowed her – in response to her current marital situation – to distance herself from the domestic role of married Griqua woman and to direct a challenge to Charles as her husband. Liepie's demands for Charles' increased involvement and commitment in the house and her own desire for additional independence outside the house, were contrary to the expected roles of both Griqua men and women (see Chapters Five and Six). This led Charles to question his wife's activities. In August 1997 Charles began to check on Liepie's movements.

> As Charles did not want Liepie roaming around with me, he would refuse to say what time he would be leaving for Kimberley. This meant that Liepie could not make arrangements to go out and that she was obliged to stay at home. When Charles did finally drive away, he would circle back to make sure that Liepie was still at home. As soon as he reached his destination, he would telephone to check what she was doing. By November 1997 it was clear that relations between Charles and Liepie were deteriorating. Liepie complained that he was no longer sexually interested in her. Moreover, Charles had started hitting her again. Whereas in the past Liepie had sheltered at Sophie's house,[11] this time she tried reminding Charles that, as they had been converted or *bekeer* by a Pentecostal *pastoor*, he should refrain from beating her. Liepie, meanwhile, was hearing rumours that Charles was dating other women. One evening, during a long-distance telephone call, she questioned him about this. Furious, Charles rushed back to Griquatown. By the time he arrived, he was very drunk. Liepie, meanwhile, had fallen ill and been taken to hospital – a circumstance which no doubt allowed her to avoid a beating from her drunk and angry husband.
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> Liepie responded to Charles' beatings and affairs by publicly stating that she was withholding sexual services and by starting to smoke cigarettes. But she was unable to maintain this apparent indifference when, in December, her swollen uterus was diagnosed and a hysterectomy recommended. Liepie did not want the operation, possibly because she was worried that if she did go through with the operation, Charles would find sexual gratification elsewhere. She decided that one way of avoiding the operation would be to fall pregnant, believing that no doctor would abort a baby in order to perform a hysterectomy.[12]

As is clear from the above example, Liepie saw herself as an independent individual who determined her own actions, whereas Charles wished her to conform to the local standards for married women. In constrast to Griqua cultural norms, Liepie wanted to situate herself outside of her house and her domestic role. She was always willing to accompany me and frequently commented on being seen driving around or walking through Griquatown with me. Liepie's husband preferred, however, that she was not seen in my car or walking around drinking soft drinks and socialising – outside her home – with me. In contrast, other married women entertained me in their homes or gardens, or chatted when we met in town.

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[11] Conversation, Sophie Julies, 28/11/1997.
[12] Conversation, Sarah Meintjies, 3/12/1997.

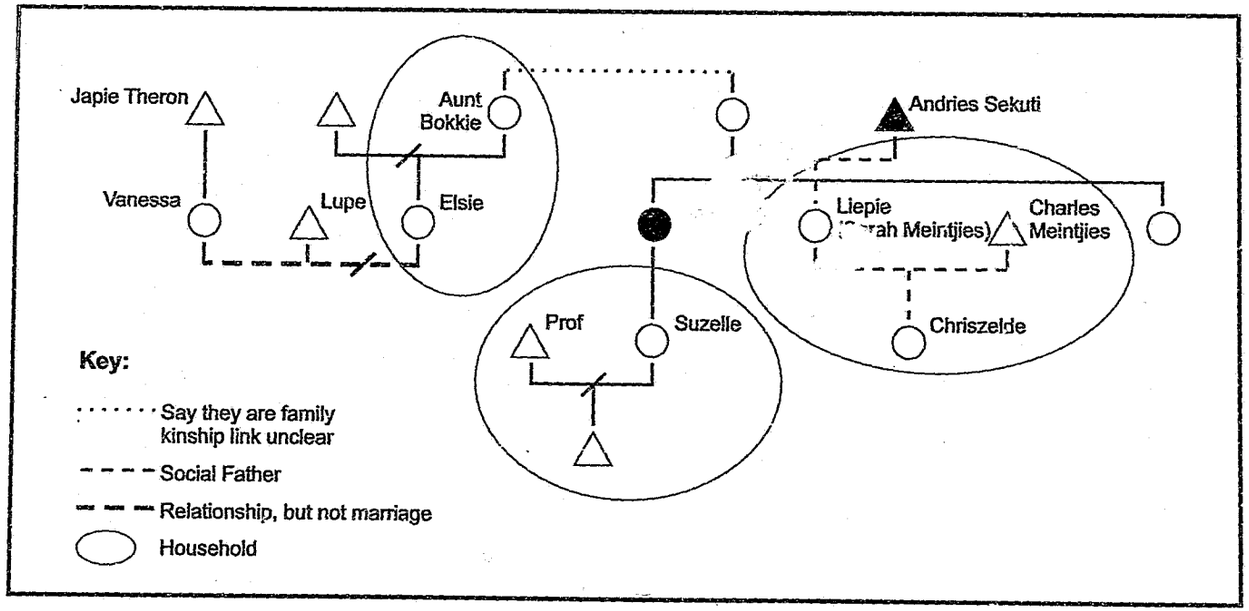


Figure 7.2: The main protagonists in a local drama

Whereas it was acceptable to walk from one woman's house to another, or to spend hours in the *veld* collecting firewood, it was not acceptable to be seen wandering – apparently aimlessly – around Griquatown. Charles, as shown above, attempted to dictate to Liepie how she should behave: she should remain at home and, in so doing, fulfil Griqua standards of female behaviour. He reinforced his wishes with beatings and sexual infidelity. This, in turn, led Liepie to question his behaviour and to point towards his failure to act as a loyal husband.

External factors, over and above Liepie's friendship with me, further intruded on the couple's relationship. Liepie, already vulnerable because of her health and her marriage problems, became embroiled in a local drama of sexual relations and jealousy. The drama involved one of Liepie's relatives, a woman called Aunt Bokkie, her daughter Elsie Pieterse, and a man named Lupe Visagie, with whom Elsie had, until recently, been involved in a relationship (see Figure 7.2).

Lupe had subsequently taken up with his new girlfriend, Vanessa Paulus, when the following series of events took place.

> On Sunday 7 December 1997, Lupe and his new girlfriend Vanessa stopped at Liepie's gate to chat to her. Liepie was already aware that tensions were brewing between Vanessa and Lupe's former girlfriend, Elsie. As Liepie did not want Elsie's mother, a relative, to accuse her of encouraging Lupe's relationship with Vanessa, she hurriedly closed her gate and retreated indoors. Late the following evening there was a commotion outside Liepie's house. Vanessa and Elsie had come to blows and people were trying to keep them apart. Vanessa, clothed only in a T-shirt and underwear, had earlier been beaten by Lupe and was covered in blood. He had heard about Vanessa's threats to Elsie and, piqued, had beaten her. Vanessa, seeking retaliation for her beating, was now trying to attack Elsie. The police were called and Elsie's mother and Liepie explained their versions of events to Sergeant McKuur.
>
> Liepie, in her explanation, was trying to distance herself from the tensions between the young adults Lupe, Elsie and Vanessa. She always avoided getting involved in fights and other people's affairs. She had, however, little choice this time as the fight took place outside her front door and, furthermore, Lupe argued that she was the cause of the problem. It was Liepie, according to Lupe, who had gossiped about how he was 'two-timing' Vanessa and how he had had sexual relations with Elsie in Liepie's garden shack.[13] Lupe had reportedly heard this gossip from Liepie's niece, Suzelle, with whom he was friendly. Suzelle was therefore also drawn into the conflict and further complications arose. Suzelle's common-law husband, Prof, was furious at her involvement. Arguing that a woman in charge of her own home had no business getting involved in other people's affairs, he beat Suzelle.[14]

[13] Written account, Audrey Williamson, 11/12/1997.
[14] Conversation, Audrey Williamson, 10/12/1997.

It is helpful here to turn to the work of Hannerz who has argued that gossip functions to maintain social boundaries and to enforce conformity (1967: 40). In this instance the gossip by *boorlings* can be seen as the application of social pressure to Liepie to conform with those of the in-group (cf. Hannerz, 1967: 42). Liepie, in attempting to keep herself apart from other people's daily squabbles and the intricate negotiation of relations, was distancing herself from other *boorlings*. The gossip about Liepie might be seen to have the effect of resituating her within this broader sphere of kinship and belonging in Griquatown (discussed in Chapter Five). As Hannerz has suggested '(b)eing gossiped about is as much a sign of neighbourhood belonging as being gossiped with' (1967: 42). This particular instance, however, reflects more on Liepie's ambivalence about being a member of the Griqua collective and behaving as a *boorling* should. Liepie, according to this narrative, was to blame for the disruption of Griqua social norms. Vanessa, ostensibly too young to engage in sexual relations, uninitiated and prior to any *mokwele* transactions having taken place, was displaying her sexuality and her semi-nudity in the street (i.e. outside the home) for all of Griquatown to see. Elsie and Lupe, moreover, were said to have sex in Liepie's garden – again outside a house. The situation was not one in which men entered a house illicitly for sexual purposes (and which could be dealt with through the transferral of *mokwele*). It was, rather, one of rampant and unsocialised sexuality. If Hannertz's suggestion – that gossip applies pressure on people to conform – is applicable, then the underlying message was that Liepie's desire to situate herself as independent, autonomous and outside the home, threatened the Griqua social order for both *inkommers* and *boorlings*.

In addition to her deteriorating relationship with Charles and her unwanted role in Lupe's affairs, her eldest daughter Chriszelda started an affair with Vanessa's father, Japie Theron, a man six years older than Liepie and of whom she did not approve.

> Japie Theron and Chriszelda Meintjies were beginning to be seen as a couple in Griquatown. Japie was known to drink excessively and to have beaten his two former wives. The first wife had escaped to Kimberley and the second had simply vanished. When someone in the street casually referred to Liepie as Japie's mother-in-law, she became quiet and withdrawn.[15] She complained that she was the joke of the town and that, against her wishes, everyone referred to Japie as her son-in-law.[16]

Although Liepie did not want her daughter to date Japie, there was little she could do about it and the town gossip served to emphasise her inability to control the situation. Chriszelda,

[15] Conversations, Audrey Williamson, 15/12/1997 and Sarah Mokokong, 1/01/1998.
[16] Written account, Audrey Williamson, 22/12/1997.

aged 18, was not interested in her mother's opinion and simply ignored her. Liepie tried discussing the situation with Japie's sister, but to no avail. Her husband Charles, who was in Kimberley throughout this time and who appeared to be avoiding his home, was possibly not even aware of the relationship until it was too late. Caught in this series of disasters, all of which reflected negatively on her as an individual, as a wife, as a mother and as a Griqua *boorling*, Liepie started drinking, saying that there was little else she could do.[17] As Liepie slowly sank further and further into alcoholic oblivion, it became harder for her to oppose Japie's presence in her house. Indeed, it was often Japie who supplied the beer which provided Liepie's respite. In addition, as demonstrated in the following example, there were moments when Liepie had no option but to turn to Japie to bail Chriszelda out of trouble.

> The week before Christmas, Chriszelda was accused of taking R100 from a man's wallet during an evening of drinking. The man demanded his money back and Liepie, short of cash herself, had no one to turn to. Asking either her husband or her in-laws for additional money would have involved an explanation that would, no doubt, have caused them to question her abilities as mother and wife. As Liepie's sister had no available cash, she was forced to call Japie. He was quoted as having said 'I cannot allow my wife to be treated like this' and immediately went to collect money and pay the man back.[18] All that day Japie was in and out of Liepie's house as he, Chriszelda and Liepie got drunk. When, at six o'clock that evening, Charles phoned, Liepie had passed out and did not hear the phone ring. Her neighbour heard the incessant ringing and went to answer the phone.[19] It was ironic that Liepie, in an attempt to keep Charles from hearing about Chrizselda and blaming her for inadequate supervision, turned to Japie for assistance and this action – intended to resolve potential conflict between Charles and Liepie – resulted in Liepie getting drunk and guaranteed the prospect of further marital conflict. Liepie's drunkenness and the involvement of the neighbours meant that there was no way for Liepie to escape the inevitable – that Charles and his mother would hear about the event and judge her accordingly.

Somehow, over the next few weeks, things were patched up between Liepie and Charles. The spirit of Christmas brought with it the promise of better things to come and Liepie proudly displayed her gifts from Charles. As he had managed to secure a well-paid contract with a building company, Liepie had received a washing machine, which would make washing much easier on her arthritic hands, a deep freezer and a wall cabinet. As their relationship improved, Liepie denied that there had been anything wrong between them. Briefly Liepie sobered up, attempting to procure Brufen (a powerful painkiller) instead of

[17] Conversations, Petronella Gabriel, 20/12/1997 and Sarah Mokokong, 7/01/1998.
[18] Written account, Audrey Williamson, 22/12/1997.
[19] Written account, Audrey Williamson, 22/12/1997.

alcohol. She said it was to dull the pain which, by this stage, was both physical and emotional. She further distanced herself from her daughter's relationship by commenting that Chriszelda 'had no shame' dating a man like Japie.

These patterns in Liepie's married life can be seen to conform to Gulliver's model of conflict resolution. He argued that negotiations, albeit in different kinds of societies and over divergent issues, have a similar trajectory in which a double course is followed. Negotiations are both developmental and cyclical. They both proceed towards resolution and alternate between conflict (Charles' beatings and Liepie's accusations) and co-operation (such as the Christmas respite) (cf. Gulliver, 1979: 183). A peaceful moment, such as that described above, can be seen as an indication that Liepie and her husband were still prepared to deal with each other and to attempt to resolve matters between them (Moore, 1995: 16). In keeping with Gulliver's prediction of cyclical processes, however, Liepie's and her husband's attempts to create an image of a secure family with warm relationships soon failed. The impetus for further conflict, this time, from Charles' improved material circumstances and his drinking.

> Charles came home on the last weekend in January and spent the whole day drinking. Liepie walked round the garden looking unhappy and, in a pique of bad manners, barely greeted people passing her home. Liepie's dog, McGyver, refused to eat and looked ill, but Liepie was in no mood to pay any attention. When the neighbours suggested checking to see whether it had a bone stuck in its throat, Liepie insisted it only wanted to eat meat. The next day the dog died and its body was left to decompose in the garden. By midday the chickens had begun to peck open the stomach. There had been no sign of Liepie all morning, so the neighbours eventually banged on the door to complain of the smell. Liepie, having been woken by the banging, was *dikbek* (sullen) at the intrusion. She instructed her eight-year-old son to dig a hole in the yard and bury the dog. However, as the houses are built on solid rock he could scrape only a shallow grave and the corpse was soon revealed.

This phase of negotiations, as indicated by the above extracts, was particularly bad. Liepie's children went unwashed and unfed and she wandered about in a state of apathy and sullenness. During this period, both she and Charles refused to act according to each other's wishes. Liepie refused to act as a wife and, contrary to her Griqua ideology, ignored her house, children and husband. Charles drank and beat Liepie, coming home or avoiding the home and visiting his lovers, as and when he chose.

In April 1998 Liepie started to shake off her apathy. Instead of insisting that only alcohol could provide a solution to her problems, she started to challenge Charles in a more direct and persistent manner. No longer did she hide at friends' homes or at the hospital in fear of

his retaliation. Rather, she was resilient and resourceful and she fought to return her family to what it had been earlier. This was another 'up' in the cycle of conflict and negotiation between herself and Charles. Nonetheless, as the following extracts show, this was not an easy process for anyone involved and there were occasional setbacks, when Liepie again returned to the bottle to dull her emotions.

> One long weekend in April Charles phoned Liepie to say that he was working and would not be coming home. Liepie responded that he was lying. Later, through some skilful detective work, she deduced that he was in Warrenton (a nearby town). On Saturday evening Charles unexpectedly arrived home. He found Liepie lying on their bed, clothed in a tracksuit, and drunk. Charles himself was drunk and as he slapped Liepie, he instructed her to show him her *boermanne* (a reference to her trousers and the masculine associations). Charles then yanked and hauled Liepie to her niece's house where he beat her with a *kierie* (walking stick). When Suzelle intervened, Liepie tried to run into the house for protection but Suzelle's common-law husband, Prof, pushed her outside where Charles continued to beat her. Later that same evening, Charles slapped his daughter Carol-Anne for asking when he was going to pay her school fees. Charles left on Monday afternoon saying that he had to go to work. Liepie retorted that she knew he was returning to Warrenton to fetch his clothes from his *hoormeid's* (whore's) house.
>
> On Tuesday Liepie phoned Charles' boss to find out how much Charles still owed on the car and what his salary was. When the man refused to divulge any information on the basis that it was 'personal and confidential', Liepie said that as his wife she had a right to know. She added that Charles' four children were without clothes and food. Despite her mother-in-law's attempts to dissuade her, Liepie's next step was to visit van Staden, the town's Welfare Officer. She instructed him to speak to Charles' employer.
>
> When Charles returned on Thursday night, he was very subdued. He was astounded that Liepie had sent the Welfare people to his workplace and that she had told his employer about hungry and naked children. When he asked her how she could humiliate him like that, Liepie replied that he ought to think about the manner in which he humiliated her and their children.[20]
>
> Later that same month Chriszelda moved to Johannesburg where she found work as a domestic worker and childminder. Liepie was delighted that her daughter was 'out of Japie's claws'.[21] By August Chriszelda had stopped drinking and converted to Christianity. Liepie, still fighting her own predilection for alcohol, was very proud of her daughter who telephoned and sent remittances regularly.[22] It took until December before Liepie was able to quit smoking and drinking. By this time she and Charles had smoothed over their disagreements and were again relating well.

[20] Letter, Audrey Williamson, 5/05/1998.
[21] Letter, Audrey Williamson, 27/05/1998.
[22] Letter, Audrey Williamson, 4/08/1998.

> In June 1999 Liepie gave birth to twins. She looked tired and thin but she was content with her life. Charles was very attentive towards his newly-born children and, although this pleased Liepie, she was a little jealous that they were receiving all his attention. She laughed when she explained that Charles had to sleep at her feet, across their bed, as she wanted all the space for herself and her babies. All night, she said with wicked delight, she had kicked Charles and kept him awake, while she and the babies had slept unaware of his discomfort.

It was with the birth of her twins, one of whom was not to survive, that Liepie resumed 'her place' in the house. Perhaps she no longer wanted to define herself in terms of independence outside the home (by this time both Audrey and I had left Griquatown and there were no other women for Liepie to roam around with). Liepie's delight in recounting how Charles was forced from his bed and his subsequent discomfort reflected her control of the situation and her assertion of dominance within the home. There are clear parallels between Liepie's self-proclaimed role of mother-cum-household-authority and the ritual positioning of women within the house discussed in Chapter Six. Similarly, Charles' banishment to the foot of the bed resembled the ritual behaviour of men who crowded around the home of a Griqua initiate, but who were not allowed access into the house.

The above extracts attempt to present to the reader the complex nature of interactions between Liepie and Charles, as individuals, as marriage partners and as members of a broader Griqua society. Furthermore, they offer testimony to the nature of human social interactions – as dependent on other, not immediately apparent contexts, and simultaneously as interwoven responses and counter-responses. These extracts from Liepie's life raise several points for theoretical discussion. The first has to do with the beating that Liepie received from Charles. Moore, like Cohen, has examined the importance of competing gendered identities and she suggests that in order to be successful, it is necessary for people to be able to balance competing demands. She points to the importance of representation and interpretation for individuals:

> The crucial point here is representation and others' interpretation of that representation. The perfect husband and the perfect friend do not exist, but their images and effects must be kept constantly in play. In this sense violence, when it occurs, is the result of a crisis of representation, as well as a result of conflict between social strategies which are intimately connected to those modes of representation (Moore, 1993: 68).

A 'crisis in representation', an individual's lack of control over how he or she is viewed and an inability to sustain a certain image, often results, in the case of men, in violence. According to Moore, this is an 'appropriate' resolution because the violent act confirms his masculinity and reinforces his, otherwise denied, identity (1993: 69). The material

presented above, however, suggests that there is more at stake here than a disjuncture between a man's self-image and the amount of power he can exert in a given situation. Charles started to beat Liepie, not because he was unemployed, but because he was trying to impress on her the need to remain at home and to project an image of a good wife. This positioning of Liepie within their house was necessary, not only to satisfy Griqua notions of women's place being located within the house (as discussed in the previous chapter), but also to enable Charles to fulfil his role as a man and as a father. According to Griqua cultural standards, Charles could only be considered a good husband and father if his wife, on whom he was 'dependent' for his '*inkommer*' status, could be seen to be acting as a good wife and remaining close to her home.

Furthermore, as Charles' material conditions improved and allowed him to cast a different image of himself, the beatings took place in public arenas. It was thus once Charles had regular work as a builder and was able to feed and clothe his children that his representation of himself changed: he began to be seen, and to see himself, as a man who might attract the attention of other women.[23] The cracks began to appear in the marriage when Liepie challenged his right to visit other women and his role as a father and husband. Before he secured his job, before he had a car and his increased financial security and status, he had not been attractive to other women. Charles' increased success changed this. When Liepie denied that he was working overtime, thus refusing to pretend that she knew nothing about his other lovers, she was challenging the image of the faithful husband that Charles wished to present to his wife. Similarly when their daughter, Carol-Anne, requested that her school fees be paid, she questioned his role as father and provider and received a slap.

These dynamics were not, however, one-sided. Liepie's and Chriszelda's criticism of Charles was not, in itself, sufficient to lead to conflict. In this regard Moore suggests that '(i)n all situations what is crucial is the way in which the behaviour of others threatens the self-representations and social evaluations of oneself' (1993: 67). As shown above, Chriszelda's relationship with an older man, who was a drunk and a layabout, threatened Liepie's identity as a mother. Charles too constantly threatened Liepie's sense of who she was. He was not the faithful husband who was meant to provide materially for her and he did not allow her to roam around with me. He objected to her wearing trousers which – as they symbolised her independence – he regarded as inappropriate for her married status. Trousers were also unsuitable attire for married Griqua women. Whereas one often saw

[23] See Gilmore (1990) who suggests that there are three universal criteria of manhood, namely the ability to impregnate women, to protect one's dependants and to provide for one's family.

young adolescent girls in jeans roaming the streets of Griquatown, the only adult women to wear trousers were the elite *inkommers'* wives. Liepie's decision to dress in this fashion may therefore be seen as a rejection of her role within the house and of the associated Griqua connotations. It was clear, during my fieldwork, that women who considered themselves to be representatives of a *boorling* collectivity would not dress in such a fashion.

The violence that results from these actions is, in complex and intricate ways, associated with notions of the home. When Liepie angered Charles and feared a beating, she escaped from her home. She went either to other women's homes or to the local hospital. This was an inversion of the ritual association of women with the home as described in Chapter Six. Whereas, in ritual, women had the power to control all activity within the house, Liepie's experiences suggest that she spent considerable energy trying to escape from the home, both in terms of her role as mother and wife and to avoid Charles' beatings. This was perhaps because, in ritual, women controlled who could enter and partake of the benefits in the house, but Liepie was unable to prevent Chriszelda from bringing Japie home. She could not seal off the entrance of her home to her own daughter and she could not dictate to Charles how he should behave.

There are also some parallels with the rituals described in the previous chapters. Both Japie and Charles were, in a sense, *inkommers* to Liepie's home. They both, through their behaviour, demonstrated that they could not be relied upon to assist with the continued maintenance of the house. Both men assumed nonetheless that they had the right to be in the house and that Liepie could not evict them. Such actions, on their part, demonstrated the ambiguity associated with men and *inkommers*. They were not 'of the house', but neither could Liepie, who was 'a *boorling* of the house' and in control of it, deny them the right to enter her home.

When Liepie questioned Charles about his affairs, he beat her, not in the confines of her home, but in the garden of her niece's home. In other words, the assertion of Charles' identity occurred in a public place where other members of Griquatown society could witness both Liepie's humiliation and Charles' assertion of masculinity. Liepie tried to run into Suzelle's house, but she was prevented from doing so by her niece's common-law husband, Prof, no doubt because he saw his house as a private space and he was unwilling to allow it to become an arena into which Liepie's and Charles' problems could intrude. Prof gave no consideration to the fact that Liepie's beating had, to a certain extent, been caused by Suzelle's actions. Having earlier beaten Suzelle for getting involved in Lupe's

and Liepie's affairs, he now sanctioned Charles' behaviour and made no attempt to assist Liepie. Evident in this paragraph are various notions of home. For Liepie, her own home became a place of danger, whereas Suzelle's home could – potentially but not in this instance – have provided shelter. For Prof this same house was a private domain, in which Liepie was not allowed to seek shelter. Charles was angered because Liepie was not 'at home' in the sense of being committed to her role of married woman and mother. As this incident makes clear, both men's and women's ideas about the home drew both on Griqua and Khoi ideology – where women were household heads and generally in charge – and on western notions of patriarchal control. They drew also on the contradictory ideas of a broader Griqua 'family' in which all *boorlings* were related and assisted each other and a nuclear family with private domestic relationships.

These extracts from Liepie's life also point to the problem of understanding violence as essentially male-on-female and domestic violence as something that is confined within a house. Low level domestic and semi-domestic violence permeated the whole of Liepie's household, the people with whom they were in daily contact, and indeed all of Griquatown. Here one witnesses a 'domino effect' in which people's actions reciprocally affected each other and extended beyond any one particular house. Liepie was caught up within the context of the love affairs of Vanessa, Elsie and Lupe and their varying friendships with her niece. She was accused of providing her garden shack as a place for 'illicit' sexual activities. It was not simply the fact that Charles beat Liepie, nor was it only her daughter's affair that caused Liepie grief, rather it was the manner in which violence and gossip and daily circumstances together made her life unbearable. It was thus these multiple associations with the home and the varied relations between Liepie and other people that were entailed in her experiences of domestic violence and marital strife.

In reviewing Liepie's responses, it is possible to see a cyclical pattern developing. Liepie initially challenged Charles by refusing to conform to notions of what a good Griqua wife should be. She did not cook food for him, clean her children or feed her dogs. Instead she turned to drinking with her daughter, to visiting her niece's shebeen and arguing that alcohol was all that dulled the pain. Once Liepie had begun to drink and smoke, she reached the low point beyond which nothing was 'too bad'. After a period of time during which decay set into her home and her life – the dogs died, the children were unwashed, her husband no longer came home or provided for her – Liepie started to assert herself and again challenged her husband's role as provider to her and her children. She now sought

other means, again outside the house, to expose Charles' behaviour and when initially unsuccessful at approaching his employers, she took her story to the Department of Welfare. It was only once Charles had been forced to confront his responsibilities and Chriszelda had left Griquatown and was far away from Japie, that Liepie could again construct herself as the sober mistress of the house which she, Charles and their children occupied.

The issues raised in this examination of Liepie's experiences point to several theoretical questions that anthropologists struggle to resolve. Although in this instance it has been possible to follow the negotiations until Liepie and Charles reached some form of settlement,[24] it is unlikely that Liepie's and Charles' negotiations over responsibilities within their marriage and representation of themselves as individuals have been, or ever will be, permanently settled. As Gulliver points out, many disputes are never resolved and disputants remain in what he calls 'persisting relationships' (1979).[25] In this regard, Moore has warned anthropologists to bear in the mind 'future possibilities' (1995: 32). This was not the first time that Liepie and Charles have had such intense negotiations over their marriage relations and it will probably not be the last. Liepie's and Charles' marriage was a continual process in which periods of peaceful co-existence and content were interspersed with phases of negotiation and conflict.[26] Although there was a cyclical nature to the problems experienced by Liepie and Charles, Gulliver's argument – that processes of conflict and negotiation do not necessarily reproduce a past relationship that has a semblance of equilibrium, but rather that they alter relations between individuals – is applicable here. Each series of negotiations provided, for both of them, gains and losses that did not take them back to a starting point of equilibrium.[27]

Liepie's story, which is partially reproduced here, was also a component of manifold other tales which bound her to other individuals and various other individuals to her. As mentioned above, Liepie was not merely an individual within a family. She was also part of a larger social collectivity (cf. Moore, 1995: 32). As such, Liepie was also the daughter of a broader Griqua family of *boorlings* (see Chapter Five) and the daughter of a famous

[24] The nature of anthropological fieldwork generally restricts the fieldworker from acquiring knowledge on long term negotiations (Moore, 1995: 30).
[25] Here Gulliver refers to a situation in which the disputants are bound to each other and are constantly in the process of negotiation.
[26] Moore has pointed out that these hostile and co-operative periods also serve to provide insights on the progress of negotiation (1995. 16).
[27] During my most recent visit to Griquatown, in November 2000, Liepie informed me that she and Charles were now completely estranged, although not yet formally divorced.

Griqua leader. Her role within these broader social categories is discussed below. For both Liepie and Charles, their negotiations over representation and appropriate gender roles were part of an attempt to escape their poverty. In so doing, both Charles and Liepie were, in a sense, trying to escape their Griquaness. As discussed in the preceding chapters, Griquatown was a place characterised by extreme poverty where only *inkommers* had some access to resources. *Boorlings* were, on the whole, extremely poor, unemployed and often disabled. As discussed in Chapter One, most *boorlings* survived through state pensions. This poverty associated with Griqua people was, however, ambiguous. Despite the fact that Griqua people were generally the poorest of the poor, they also, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five, clung to the proud history of powerful and wealthy Griqua *Kapteins*. Demonstrating a similar ambiguity, Liepie would always be a poor resident of Griquatown. She would always be dependent on her pension to survive (discussed below), but there were moments in her life when she could handle her poverty with dignity and self-esteem and lay claim to her Griqua heritage.

LIEPIE AS A GRIQUA *BOORLING*

Ideas about the family were irrevocably tied up with notions of 'being Griqua' and 'being Christian' in Griquatown. As discussed in Chapter Five, the demands of a broader Griqua family, consisting of *boorlings* and – in complex ways – of *inkommers*, was moderated by the practice of Pentecostal Christianity that allowed people to redefine and limit their 'families'. This complex interrelationship between Griqua families and Christian families does not, however, negate the possibility that individuals exist within such a collectivity. Rather, as Mauss has argued, the western notion of the human person is, essentially, a Christian notion (1985: 19). There is a 'conceptual interrelation between the individual, the Church and the world' as the Church is an organisation made up of individuals (Dumont, 1985: 113, 118).[28] Although Lienhardt has argued that membership in collectivities, such as a Church, enhances one's individual identity (1985: 155), this was not how Liepie sought to define herself or her link to the Griqua collectivity. Her religious engagement was extremely limited. Although Liepie's father had been a leading personality in the NG Church, Liepie seldom attended services. She joined none of the Pentecostal Churches, although in 1994 she and Charles had been converted or *bekeer* at such a service. This took place at Liepie's request, not in order to establish her in the eyes of God, but rather to

[28] A relationship with Christ was a unique relationship between Him and the individual concerned, based on the devaluation of material goods and worldly issues. It is this relationship between Christ and the individual and the rejection of worldly matters that, according to Dumont, allows Christianity to be universal. This relationship furthermore has allowed missionaries to proselytise and to bring solace to those whose worldly lives were unbearable (Dumont, 1985: 99).

improve relations between her and Charles and to prevent any future beatings. It thus appears that there are different avenues that women can follow in attempts to shore up their position and status in Griqua society. As discussed in Chapter Six, many women saw rituals as opportunities to assert their dominance in society, albeit that this autonomy was short-lived. A woman could, in addition, as illustrated by Liepie, follow a path of Christian conversion in an attempt to establish a degree of autonomy for herself and to re-emphasise the importance of her conjugal bond.

Liepie's ritual involvement, like her church activities, were extremely limited. She had been a sickly child: a fact which, under different circumstances, would have been seen as a reason for her initiation (cf. Waldman, 1989). Liepie was, however, never initiated into Griqua womanhood. This may have resulted from the unusual domestic context. By the time Liepie was old enough to be initiated, her mother and father had separated, and she was being brought up by her father. As initiation was a ritual usually pursued by the mothers of initiates because, as indicated in Chapter Six, women were the symbolic carriers of Griqua identity, it was therefore not surprising that Liepie, under the care of her father, had not been initiated and therefore could not attend other girls' initiations.[29] In contrast, Liepie's elder sister, Petronella Gabriel had been brought up by her mother: she was initiated, regularly attended *mokwele* and initiation rituals, and had been encouraged by Liesbet Waterboer, who had been in touch with Kanyiles, to organise on behalf of the GPO in Griquatown. Kanyiles, perhaps by way of persuasion, had convinced Liesbet with his comment that power lay with the women (*die mag lê met die vrouens)*. Kanyiles' comment was, however, also grounded in Griqua belief which, as shown in Chapter Six, allocated the role of cultural reproduction to women and ritually located them at the core of Griqua family and community life. This cultural responsibility has been described by Yuval-Davis as a 'burden of representation' that affects women both personally and collectively (1997: 47).[30]

Contrary to her sister, however, Liepie, an uninitiated woman herself, could not assume such a role. Although she was a Griqua *boorling* and, more importantly, a woman, she had

[29] Charles had, however, facilitated *mokwele* transactions when he and Liepie married, conversation, Jacoba Swartz, Anna Kalanie, 4/09/1997.

[30] Yuval-Davis argues that women, nonetheless, retain an ambivalent position with the collectivity. This stems from the fact that women symbolise collective identity, but are also excluded from the 'collective "we" of the body politic' through complex marriage and citizenship laws (1997: 47). I would, however, take issue with the terminology 'burden of representation' and question who regards it as such a burden? Certainly those women who initiate girls in Griquatown regard their work as an important responsibility which brings both pleasure and difficulties, but they would not see this work as a burden.

never been initiated, had never 'met' the watersnake and thus never married into Griqua society. She was therefore not in a position to use the ritual symbols described in Chapter Six, which represented women as being in control of Griqua cultural affairs and in control of the house, and which formed the medium through which Griqua ethnic identity was generally expressed. In assuming that these were the only routes for such expression, one should take heed of Cohen's warning that ritual and ethnic symbols simultaneously sustain, and often disguise, internal heterogeneity (1994: 120). Anthropologists, examining issues of ethnicity and social identity, have, as Cohen has argued,

> ... taken for granted the integrity of its central concerns: to show how individuals are constructed in the images of their collective representations. It [research that presumes collective boundaries exist] has imputed boundary-consciousness to people without pausing to inquire quite what it is that they are supposed to be conscious of. ... In the ethnographic literature, people have been constructed in terms of putative boundaries (localities), and in terms of anthropologists' consciousness of boundaries, without adequately interrogating these notions (1994: 124-5).

Even though Liepie had not been initiated and did not participate in ritual representations of Griqua identity, there were other, more fundamental ways in which she embodied being Griqua. As Cohen has argued, '(p)eople's attachment to collectivities is mediated by their *personal* experience' (1994: 177, original emphasis). In the following section I examine three themes that shaped Liepie's life as that of a *boorling* – and hence as that of a true Griqua. The first concerned her personal poverty, the second her own sense of ambiguity, and the third the dispossession of land that had affected her father's family.

To begin with the issue of poverty: Liepie and her sister were, like the other residents of Griquatown, extremely poor. As shown above, many of her conflicts with Charles stemmed from their combined poverty. Issues such as the payment of household expenses, school fees and car instalments, often sparked the fights and arguments in Liepie's home. Although Liepie was the only daughter to have been educated, she was, like her sister, unemployed. As mentioned above, Liepie had been a sickly child and arthritis had plagued her adult years, making it difficult for her to do even mundane household activities such as washing and cleaning. This meant that she was unable to find employment as a domestic worker which, despite her education, was the primary option available to her as a woman. She had thus started the tuck shop referred to above. This, however, proved to be unprofitable and she soon closed the shop. When I got to know her, Liepie was receiving household remittances from Charles which were sometimes extremely regular and

sometimes irregular and unpredictable, depending both on the state of their relationship and on Charles experiencing continued employment. When Charles sent insufficient money, or none at all, Liepie used the money from her disability grant to feed her children and maintain her home.

Liepie's disability grant was a mixed blessing. On the one hand it slotted her into Griquatown's 'pension culture'. As described in Chapter One, to receive a pension is to be defined, by the state, as too old, too ill or, in the case of maintenance grants, too 'bad' to work. Thus the most lucrative source of income in Griquatown involved being seen as not strong, not able and not worthwhile. To be a pensioner was to be a drain on the country and not to be seen as a worker or provider. It was perhaps for these reasons that Liepie never acknowledged to me that she received a disability grant for her arthritis. On the other hand, pensions provided more money than did regular employment in Griquatown. For many other women in Griquatown, receiving a pension meant that they could locate themselves within the house, occupy themselves with the maintenance of the home and, in so doing, fulfil their role as Griqua women. In Liepie's case it allowed her to do this, and also facilitated a fair degree of financial independence. It was Liepie's disability money, for example, that enabled her to install and pay the regular bills for her telephone and it was with Liepie's personal money that she bought soft drinks for Audrey and me. In this sense, her disability grant was a distinct advantage and it allowed Liepie to define herself as autonomous and independent, and to develop friendships of her own choosing.

This limited autonomy, buffered around a welfarist identity, created another level of ambiguity. On the one hand, Liepie was no more than a statistic requiring a disability grant and she was, in this respect, no different from most other residents of Griquatown. On the other hand, she had ambitions of independence, of autonomy and of rising above her circumstances. Whereas her grant provided her with some financial security and went some way towards facilitating Liepie's desires, it also worked to her disadvantage. Liepie's attempts to be an independent woman in control of her own financial resources were constantly challenged as other people made demands on her resources. Although, as the following example shows, these demands occurred in a relatively sophisticated manner – people did not physically intrude upon her house or destroy her goods as described in connection with Maria Pieterse and Liesbet Waterboer in the previous chapter – Liepie was still unable to determine the allocation of some resources within her house.

Liepie's parents-in-law, Gert and Maria Meintjies, lived in Waterboer Street, Griquatown. Because Gert's brother had been seriously ill and hospitalised in Kimberley, Liepie regularly phoned on their behalf and the calls had recently been excessive. Liepie was hoping that they would contribute towards the telephone bill, but as their daughter-in-law she could not ask them to do so. As no money was forthcoming for the phone bill from either Charles or his parents, Liepie ended up spending a large proportion of her monthly pension on it.

Whereas Liepie had installed the telephone for her own purposes, it became, like her pension, a mixed blessing. She could not stop other people from demanding that she make calls on their behalf and she could not insist that she receive payment for these phone calls. Furthermore, the telephone was not only a means for her to contact other people but, as demonstrated above, it enabled Charles to check on her activities and, in so doing, curtailed her freedom. Thus instead of bolstering her independence and status, the telephone also cost her dearly in monetary terms and limited her activities.

It is evident, from the above, that a sense of ambivalence pervaded much of Liepie's life. She had contradictory views on her friendship with me (which was satisfying to her as an individual but threatened her relations with her husband), on her pension (which allowed her a degree of financial freedom but defined her as a dependent of the state) and on her marriage (which both provided and denied her a sense of independence). In keeping with this, she wanted, at certain moments, to be located within the house and, at other times, resented her domestic role. Even seemingly minor things, such as the installation of a telephone and the uses to which it was put, had proved to be a mixed blessing.

This leads me to discuss the second theme, namely that of ambiguous identification. In Chapter Four I argued that being Griqua in Griquatown has to be understood in terms of a fluidity of movement between ethnic categories and that Griqua identity, redolent with ambiguity and contradiction, operates to mediate between other ethnic categories. These ambiguities also affect individuals for, as Yuval-Davis argues, the 'self is always situated'. Such situatedness does not concern only the physical body of an individual (in terms of age, ability and so forth), nor his or her gendered positioning. It is also affected by, and affects, 'macro social divisions of class, ethnicity, 'race' and nation' (1997: 10). The relationship between a broader Griqua identity fraught with ambiguity and the ambitions of an individual are particularly evident when examining how Liepie related to being Griqua.

> Liepie was the daughter of Andries Sekuti and Sarah Visser. Her parents were married on Leeukuil, a small plot of land on the edge of Griquatown. *Kaptein* Andries Waterboer was believed to have performed the wedding ceremony.[31] There was, however, a scandal associated with Liepie's birth. Her mother had run away to Kimberley with April Jasper, a schoolteacher or minister, and it was he who was Liepie's biological father. Nonetheless, Sekuti accepted Liepie as his child and she was christened as Sarah Sekuti.[32] Liepie, although she had been on friendly terms with the Jaspers when they had lived alongside each other at Leeukuil, considered Sekuti to be her father.

This was the story of Liepie's descent and, like her nickname, it made her something special. Although others often whispered to me about her mother's running away with April Jasper as though it were a scandal, Liepie told me about it with pride. In telling the story she was emphasising that she was Sekuti's daughter – 'he was everything to me, my mother and my father'[33] – but also that she was not the same as his other daughter. She was, rather, the chosen daughter that Sekuti raised because of his love for her and not because it was his duty. In addition, Liepie had always been a sick child. While Sekuti had cared for her, her sister was doing all the cleaning in the house, but was also drinking excessively and roaming the streets. Sekuti was very unhappy about this and regarded Liepie as more worthy than his own daughter.[34] In keeping with her assessment of herself as a chosen child, Liepie has been the one to remain in Sekuti's house after his death.

Liepie's somewhat ambiguous status – as a famous leader's daughter and yet not his daughter – was also reflected in her identity. At one level, Liepie did not see herself as Griqua and she reported that her identity document detailed her as Cape Coloured. Liepie's mother was said to be the daughter of a Bechuana woman and a white man[35] and Jasper to be of Malay descent.[36] In this sense, she was not Griqua. She was, however, born at Leeukuil which, as discussed below, is seen as a Griqua place. In this sense, Liepie was a *boorling*: she was born in Griquatown. Much like Andries Waterboer described in Chapter Five, Liepie did not fit the behavioural expectations of other *boorlings*. Sekuti, her father, was described in Chapter Four as having 'converted' to Griqua. Despite his having been a famous leader, some people thought that Sekuti was African, as indeed his name would suggest, or coloured and that he had 'become Griqua' through his residence in Griquatown. Sekuti's occupation of Leeukuil (discussed below) and his leadership role were, however,

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[31] Although Sekuti claimed to have been married by *Kaptein* Andries Waterboer, it is likely that he meant *Kaptein* Nicolaas Waterboer (1895 - 1962) who ruled during Sekuti's time. It is, however, also possible that Sekuti was married, not by the *Kaptein*, but by a younger brother, uncle or nephew named Andries.
[32] Conversations, Sarah Meintjies, 16/08/1996; Anna Visser, 15/08/1997, confidential conversation, 21/08/1997.
[33] Conversation, Sarah Meintjies, 16/08/1996.
[34] Conversation, Anna Visser, 20/12/1997.
[35] Conversation, Sophie Julies, 19/01/1998
[36] Conversation, 21/08/1997.

sufficient to overrule most people's doubts. Liepie, although identifying herself to me as coloured, was, as the following extract from my fieldnotes makes clear, drawing on both Griqua and coloured ideologies:

> Liepie and I were listening to her recording of an interview Andries Sekuti had done for radio broadcast. He spoke about his life: about the Griqua church – since converted into a 'coloured' church – where he went to school and was baptised; about the purple jackets worn by members of the GPO; and about his work as an elder in the VG Church.[37] He insisted that he was Griqua, despite the fact that his identity book recorded him as Coloured. Liepie stopped the tape, brought this to my attention and decided that she would forthwith also refer to herself as Griqua.



Figure 7.3: Liepie's Father, Andries Sekuti (photo given to me by him in 1988)

It was Liepie who had suggested we listen to the tape and, notwithstanding the problems of observer effect, it was clear that she was deliberately utilising her father's words to make a statement about who she was. Liepie had to have known what was on the tape before we listened to it and her actions suggest that she was listening to the tape not because of my academic interest, but to qualify her earlier assertion of coloured identity. Sekuti had done many interviews in his life: his comments on being Griqua had been aired on radio, on television and in many magazines and newspapers. It was, therefore, precisely because

[37] During the apartheid era, the Griqua Church became the NG Church which was open to all residents of Phillipsville. After 1994, this Church was again renamed the VGK (conversation, Sophie Julies, 17/08/1997).

Liepie knew what was on the tape that she suggested we listen to it. By playing the tape and bringing Sekuti's words to my attention, and then by reviewing her earlier statement on being coloured, Liepie was reiterating the ambiguousness of Griqua and coloured identities and demonstrating her position within these two interwoven and connected discourses. In this sense she resembled the majority of people who, as described in Chapter Four, saw themselves as being both Griqua and coloured and who related to these identities in complex and ambivalent ways. This was also evident in her behaviour described in the first part of this chapter. There were times when she embraced her Griqua role of manageress of the household. There were also times when she proactively rejected it and sought to define herself more as an outsider who was not committed to remaining within the house.

I turn now to dispossession, the third issue identified, and to an examination of how Liepie as an individual situated herself within, and related to, a broader theme of Griqua dispossession. One of the main themes to come out of any historical account of the Griqua and the driving force behind Griqua demands from the governments of South Africa has concerned the question of dispossession. As detailed in Chapter Three, Griqua people lost their land in the 1800s and, associated with this, their loss of mineral wealth and political power. The name Griqua was not regarded as denoting an official identity throughout the apartheid years, as shown in Chapter Four, and in this sense Griqua people had been dispossessed of their name and Khoi heritage. As almost all Griqua land dispossession occurred before 1913, government restitution generally excludes Griqua recipients. Post-1994 many Griqua leaders have attempted to challenge the cut-off date of 1913 for land restitution. Moreover, government insistence on retaining 1913 as the cut-off date is interpreted by Griqua leaders as a deliberate attempt to avoid Griqua (and other coloured) demands in order to improve delivery to African people. Martin Engelbrecht, one of the Griqua organisers discussed in Chapters Two, Four and Five thus argued that the Griqua 'have slipped through the cracks of the negotiated new dispensation, and neither their language rights nor their legitimate land claims have been taken into account. As such they continue to be dispossessed' (Daily Mail and Guardian, 27/05/1999).

Despite rumours that 'the Griqua' were claiming the whole of Griqualand West, general knowledge in Griquatown had it that there were only two 'Griqua land claims' – those of Andries Sekuti and April Jasper. These claims were for the allotments at Leeukuil where both men and their families had lived at the time of Liepie's birth. As demonstrated below, these were personal and extremely small claims for land.

> Andries Sekuti and his sister, Ouma Jacoba, had grown up at Leeukuil,[38] on small allotments of 150 x 100 paces. They had left Leeukuil because 'there was no longer a man there. Look when my father died, there was no one to look after (or cultivate) it. Then we all moved out'.[39] There is some suggestion here Andries Sekuti and his brother, Johnny, were working on the asbestos mines and this less led to the shortage of male labour.[40] The family moved from Leeukuil to the *ou lokasie*, Griquatown, in 1964,[41] not only because of the lack of male labour, but also because of a dispute over the title deeds for the cultivated area as a whole. In January that same year, the Griquatown Council queried who owned the title deeds for Leeukuil, on which Sekuti and his family were living, as it seemed the previous Council had purchased the land in the 1930s.[42] A month later the town clerk reported that the council did indeed own the title deeds and minuted that the 'squatters' were to be given notice to vacate the plots within one month.[43] After 1994 and the initiation of a land restitution program, Sekuti had written to claim Leeukuil and, on his deathbed, he had called Andries Waterboer to him and asked his assistance.[44]

Sekuti's claim to Leeukuil was a personal land claim, but it was interpreted as far more than this and was generally understood to be a Griqua claim for Griqua land. Possibly this belief was reinforced by Sekuti's close associations with the Waterboers. His marriage ceremony had been performed by a Waterboer and he had requested Andries Waterboer's assistance with the land claim.

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[38] Leeukuil was also known as Lowkuil and Leeuwenkuil. In explanation of the original Dutch name, Leeuwenkuil, Anderson, the LMS missionary, stated that the name resulted from the fact that a lion was shot there (Schoeman, 1998: 15), whereas van der Graaff, the Tulbagh magistrate, and Burchell stated that Leeuwenkuil was named after the multitude of lions that lived there (Schoeman, 1997: 58).
[39] Interview, Jacoba Swartz, 14/01/1998.
[40] Interview, Anna Kalanie, 14/01/1998.
[41] Conversation, Andries Waterboer, 20/08/1997.
[42] Minutes, Management Committee Griquatown, 27/01/1964.
[43] Minutes, Management Committee Griquatown, 18/02/1964.
[44] Conversation, Sarah Meintjies, 16/08/1996.

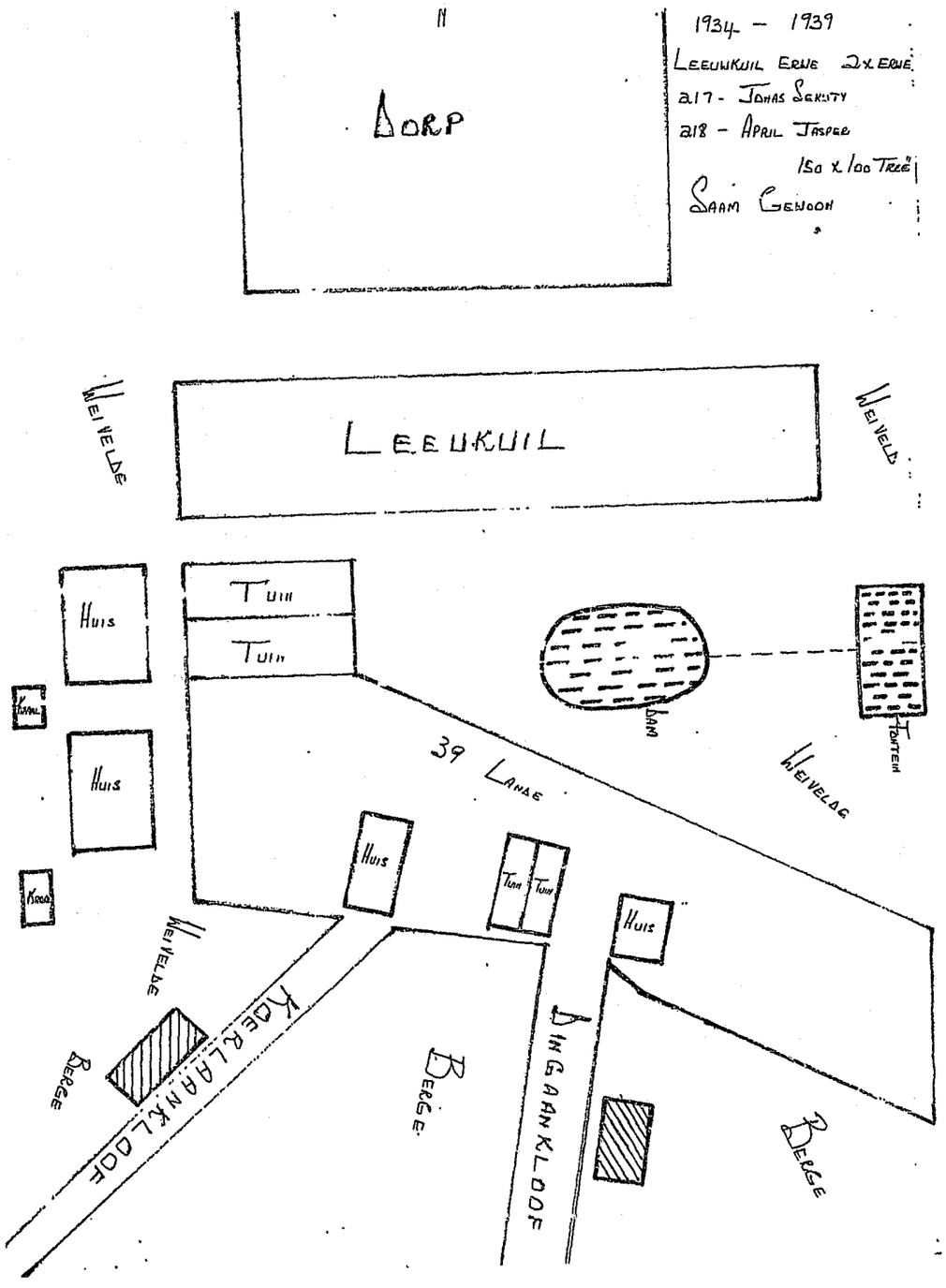


Figure 7.4: Diagram of Leeukuil (drawn by Andries Sekuti)

In Griquatown, the return of Leeukuil came to symbolise Griqua dispossession more generally. Leeukuil was especially appropriate for such symbolism because it was where the original mission settlement had been situated. In 1804 Anderson, of the LMS, established himself at Leeukuil and sought to end the itinerant lifestyle of his followers. Anderson's

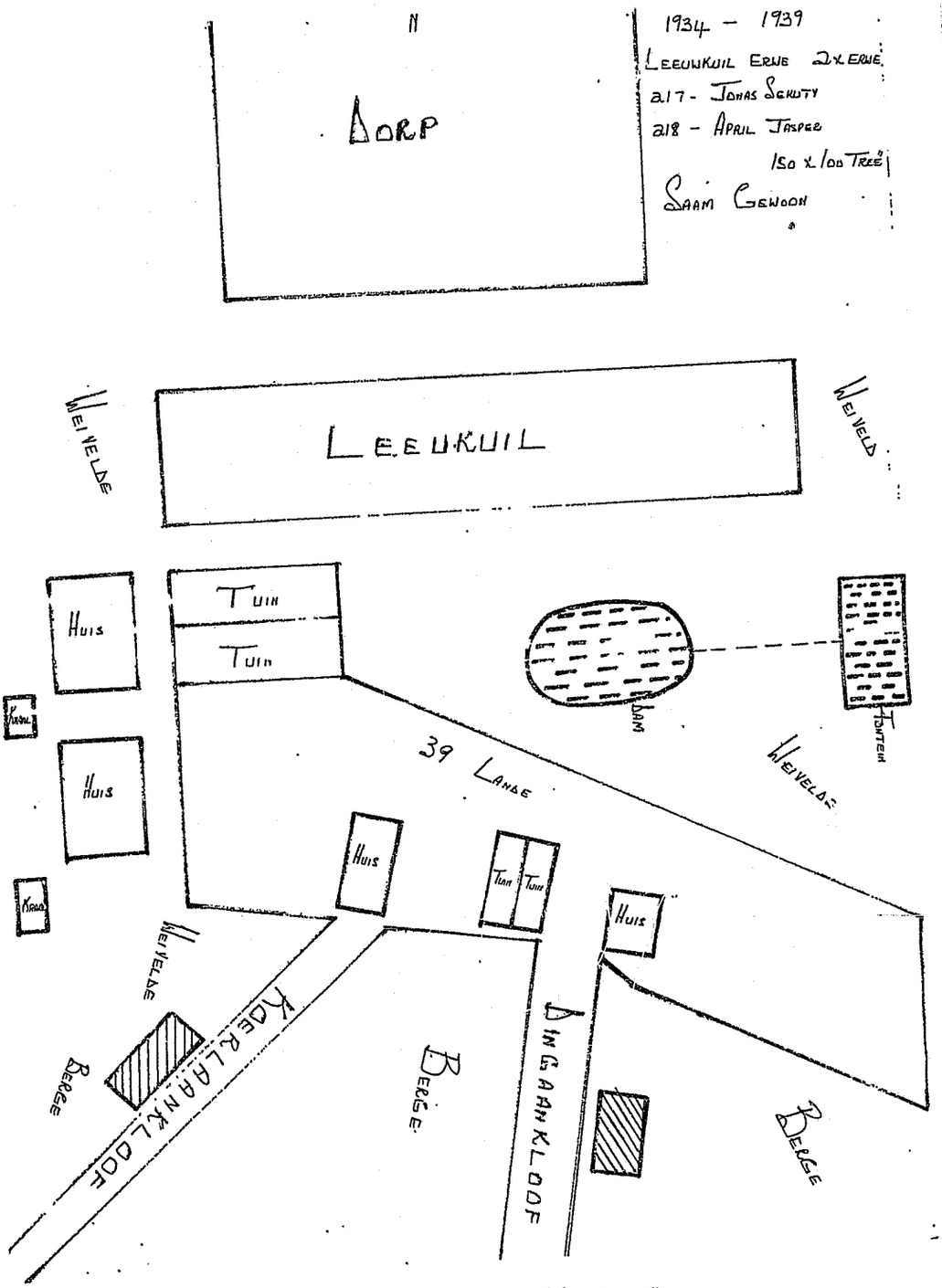


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mission at Leeukuil marked the start of settlement that was later to be known as Griquatown (Schoeman, 1998: 15).[45] Leeukuil was thus symbolic of the origins of the Griqua people. As Sekuti had been a famous leader it was appropriate that he should have lived at Leeukuil. Sekuti's dispossession from this place of Griqua origin was seen, as the following example shows, as more broadly symbolic of Griqua people's experiences of dispossession.

> *Dominee* Willemse from Kimberley conducted Andries Sekuti's funeral service. He emphasised the symbolic association between Leeukuil and the graveyard held by many people. As it was necessary to walk through the graveyard in order to get to Leeukuil, people in Griquatown spoke of dying as 'going to Leeukuil'. *Dominee* Willemse drew on this association: he sent people to collect soil from Leeukuil and spoke of how, in biblical times, people had seen and entered the 'Promised Land'. Sekuti, however, had only seen the 'Promised Land (Leeukuil)', but had not been able to enter it (to receive it back). The soil from Leeukuil was then placed in his grave to re-unite him with his land.[46]

The obvious biblical analogies used by *Dominee* Willemse were appropriate to a funeral, but they also reflected the integration of Christian ethos and Griqua ideology that had shaped the society resident at Leeukuil in the 1800s, and the general wisdom of people resident in Griquatown in the late 1990s. Here many people saw the return of Leeukuil as auguring a new and auspicious era.[47] The return of Leeukuil became – on a small scale – rather like a millenarian prediction that most people believed would take place and would allow people to re-enter the Promised Land.

> Liepie and her sister believed that Leeukuil had been 'taken by the government' and that the people living there had been forced to move. The land was, however, neither sold nor developed and has remained empty, apart from an area given over to dumping wrecked cars, for the past 30-odd years. This suggested to Sekuti's descendants that they were going to be successful and receive Leeukuil back.[48] The discussions we had concerning Leeukuil led me to believe that a claim had been submitted and it was merely a matter of waiting for the government to agree to the return of the land. Dirk Gabriel, Petronella's husband, Petronella and Liepie were already planning what to do with the land when they received it back. Towards the end of my fieldwork period, however, it become clear that no forms had yet been completed. It was with haste that Liepie's claim forms were submitted by *Dominee* Willemse hours before the final deadline.

To date, Leeukuil has not been returned either to Sekuti's dependents or to the people of Griquatown. The Promised Land which, in Griquatown, represented an entire era of dispossession, laden as it was with useless car wrecks and ruins of the homes of former

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[45] Anderson later built his own home somewhere between Klaarwater and Leeukuil.
[46] Conversation, David and Rachel Smith, 18/08/1997.
[47] Also see James (2000).
[48] Conversation, Petronella and Dirk Gabriel, 13/08/1997

occupants, remained outside the control of the 'rightful' heirs. Despite all the symbolism of a Promised Land and the excited plans of the would-be heirs, it is unlikely that the return of Leeukuil will significantly alter their lives. Indeed, they planned to sell Leeukuil because it was too far for them to walk there and so no one wanted to live on the land. Although small sections of the land could be utilised for vegetable production, everyone thought that this was unviable without a car (only Liepie's husband drove a car, and it was always with him in Kimberley). Sheep and goats could be grazed on the land, but none of Sekuti's dependents had any livestock and it was unlikely that they would be able to acquire any. Despite all the promise of a future, as symbolised in the return of Leeukuil, and retribution for the past, any land that Liepie's family might receive will probably sold for an insignificant sum of money which will soon be spent. Despite *Dominee* Willemse's comment to me that a 'Griqua without land was like a Griqua without trousers', Sekuti's family – having briefly glimpsed the Promised Land – are likely to remain poor, dispossessed and landless. Their situation not only reflects the history of Griqua land forfeiture, but also epitomises the future for most other residents of Griquatown as one of continued unemployment and destitution.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between an individual in Griquatown and broader Griqua society has required an examination of the life of one individual who in some ways was unusual, but in others quite representative. Liepie was concerned to emphasise her own identity as a married woman who was independent, literate and in control of her life. In this sense she was part of, but more than just a member of, a community. Nonetheless, Liepie's attempts to assert herself as an individual were tempered by ideas of conformity held by those in her immediate and broader family and by her neighbours. Such an analysis emphasises the extent to which collectivities are made up by individual members and are shaped by individuals' actions (cf. Cohen, 1994: 133). The examination of Liepie's everyday life further demonstrates the subtleties, inflections and complexities in individual consciousness so often masked in academic analysis (Cohen 1994: 180).

Liepie was not simply an individual or a member of a household, she was part of a Griqua collectivity and embodied in her life were the meanings and associations of being Griqua. Her experiences of poverty, ambiguity and dispossession formed the basis on which her Griqua identity – as a *boorling* of Griquatown – and as a coloured woman was constructed. Individual consciousness – such as that of Liepie – both informed and validated local identities (cf. Cohen 1994). In many ways, Liepie's life encapsulated the meaning of Griqua

identity in the Northern Cape – her poverty and disability pension were part of broader experiences of dispossession and proletarianisation. Her, sometimes conflicting, sometimes ambiguous viewpoints on coloured and Griqua identity replicated a widespread process in which people sought to create meaning in their lives through drawing on various ethnic and national identities. The faint promise of land restitution, and through this of future wealth, echoes widely expressed Griqua ambitions and desires to develop pride and to reclaim some of the lands owned by their historical *Kapteins*. Thus, by providing insights into Liepie's self identity and through an examination of household dynamics *located within a community*, an enhanced understanding of the meaning of Griqua identity is achieved.

Finally, some of the material presented in this chapter raises ethical issues, both in terms of what it means to be an anthropologist and in terms of doing research. There is the nature of my friendship with Liepie which appears to have increased the tension in her marriage and the beatings which she received. In this regard, and as mentioned above, domestic violence is pervasive in Griquatown and almost all women – including the wives of elite men – experience this at some stage of their married lives. Thus Liepie's experience is unique in terms of the specific details, but is, in other respects, a typical case. It is a trajectory which is often repeated in Griquatown and which raises questions about the nature of poverty in South Africa more generally. One might, in addition, inquire why Liepie chose to become, and remain, friends with me and what she got out of the friendship. At another level, these questions highlight anthropological tendencies to establish rapport – 'a kind of achieved friendship, kinship, empathy' with their informants (Clifford, 1997: 215). What has been left unexplored is the nature of this rapport and what the establishment of a friendship really means. In my personal experience, friendships are seldom uncomplicated and are, at periodic moments, fraught with tensions and anxieties, yet we as anthropologists naively expect that our relationships with informants should be straightforwardly open, honest and friendly. These considerations, juxtaposed with the issues covered in this chapter, emphasise the need for anthropologists to reconsider both the subject of their research – namely the importance of individual representations and experiences within society – and the manner in which this fieldwork is conducted.

SRAND CPU

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSION

> *The Griquas have become a People who were not a People* (Andries Waterboer, DFA, Thursday 16 June 1938).

Anthropologists' recent recognition of the fractured, fluid and hybrid nature of marginalised identities corresponds with historical knowledge about Griqua political processes which, through the pioneering work of Martin Legassick in the late 1960s, first identified the ambiguous nature of Griqua identity. The processes through which these historical Griqua *Kapteins* sought to secure political independence had both positive results – in that the Griqua polity was fortified in particular ways – and negative consequences which, in the long term, operated to undermine the very polities these processes were meant to strengthen. In addition, throughout the colonial period, the Griqua were ambiguously situated: on the one hand they could be seen as British colonists given their close alliances, contracts and treaties with the colonial authorities; on the other hand the leaders asserted a political independence and, despite the frequent attempts to secure British recognition and support, saw themselves as indigenous South Africans.

During the colonial era Griqua identity was thus positioned somewhere between the British colonists and other indigenous South Africans. Although the terms of reference for this ambiguous configuration were to change in the apartheid era, the nature of Griqua identity continued to be viewed as anomalous, as neither quite one thing or the other. During this period the terms of reference changed from British and indigenous to racial categories such as 'black', 'white' and 'coloured'. Griqua people came to be classified as a sub-category of Coloured – itself a classification defined in terms of negative attributes – and situated in a complex and ambivalent manner 'between' the oppositional categories of 'black' and 'white' people. Although some people were able to secure their official classification as Griqua, many others were simply considered to be Coloured. Official discourse in Griquatown stressed Coloured identity and, in so doing, negated the presence of Griqua people and did not consider them to require special recognition or consideration. The detailed examination of these processes and of people's responses to the humiliating experiences of categorisation by the apartheid government, suggests that Griqua identity has never been a fixed identity and that people attributed many different meanings to being

Griqua. Griqua identity provided a powerful ideological position of pride and prestige that mediated between the previous categories of 'white' and 'Coloured', while simultaneously Griqua people's general economic poverty blurred the divisions between 'black' and 'Coloured' society.

At a broader, national level, Griqua leaders found themselves beset with problems that stemmed from the various interpretations and definitions of what being Griqua meant. Whereas the post-apartheid South African government sought for one Griqua leader to assume paramountcy, this was not reconcilable with Griqua leaders' fractured relations with each other. The need to demonstrate Griqua unity in order to meet the government's requirements for negotiation led to complex processes of friction, tense relations and selective alliance-building between the various Griqua organisations. These processes threatened to undermine any negotiations with the government or gains made by any particular organisation. Nonetheless, the government was forced – partly through internal pressure and partly through the international backing that Griqua leaders had procured from organisations such as the United Nations Indigenous People's Forum – formally to acknowledge the Griqua people as an indigenous category of people within South Africa and, in so doing, to begin to redress some of the humiliations associated with the apartheid categorisation 'Coloured'. This action led, in turn, to the formal recognition of other indigenous minorities and to the incorporation of other people's demands, articulated on similar terms to those of the Griqua leaders. Griqua leaders therefore found themselves threatened with their incorporation into a category of 'vulnerable communities' comprising indigenous minorities of Khoi heritage. Inherent in these government actions was the potential reproduction of the 'Coloured' apartheid classification into which these people had previously been lumped. In response to this, Griqua leaders developed common Griqua ground on which to align themselves, through which to distinguish themselves from other Khoi minorities, and from which to negotiate with the South African government.

To return to the local level: in Griquatown, during the 1980s, many people had supported the activities of Griqua leaders. By the 1990s, however, overt Griqua mobilisation in Griquatown had fallen away as people committed themselves to the increasingly popular Pentecostal and charismatic churches. This waning interest in actively pursing a political career as a member of an organisation such as the GPO did not, however, spell a rejection of Griqua identity. Rather, Griqua identity was intricately interwoven with Christianity. Whereas most men in Griquatown did not have a direct claim to Griqua nobility and

therefore had to be content with secondary roles in organisations such as the GPO, the Pentecostal churches made it possible for individuals such as these to develop a sense of status and authority and to assert an alternative value system through becoming *pastoors*.

Griqua ideology located all people born in Griquatown within a broad and inclusive Griqua family and contrasted them ideologically with *inkommers*. It was, however, women, and particularly initiated women, who maintained this broader Griqua family through their ritual actions and ideological positioning. All married men were considered to be *inkommers* to the home and, by implication, to being Griqua. It was thus more appropriate for the local men of Griquatown, lacking both the descent links to famous Griqua leaders and the ideological positioning as keepers of Griqua cultural identity, to turn to the Pentecostal churches and nurture their own followers who, in turn, created other small, prescribed 'Christian families'.

It was through ritual that women became explicitly Griqua. During initiation they were 'married' to Griqua cultural norms. In this and other rituals, women were located within the house and domestic arena. Nonetheless, the ideology of a broader Griqua family spread throughout Griquatown (and other small Northern Cape towns such as Campbell) meant that women's association with the house did not restrict their participation in the political, conventionally male and public, domain. Rather, both men and women accepted that mens' political activities were also located within 'a home', but within the broader notion of a 'Griqua home'. Griqua identity took the home as its reference point: to be Griqua was to be part of a metaphorical home and family. Similarly Griqua political organisation was located in a notion of 'home' that spread beyond the physical boundaries of individual houses. It was this broader 'place' where *boorlings* came together and interacted as family, that made people specifically Griqua. Women, as 'true' *boorlings* with limited *inkommer* status, were thus able to participate actively in the GPO; and their specific location, within their homes but also within the broader Griqua family, enabled them to engage in and influence men's political struggles.

Griqua rituals stressed the role that women played in maintaining a house and a Griqua home. Women, in ritually constructing Griqua society, can be seen to perform 'work of kinship' and to fulfil the task of protecting the cultural 'boundaries' of this society In addition to symbolically asserting women's control over the domestic domain, the body of rituals performed in Griquatown appear to have facilitated the expression of social memory – a recollection about a past in which women had more autonomy – and allowed for the

cultural reproduction of Griqua society in a manner which both separated Griqua society into its component parts – *boorlings, inkommers*, men and women – and integrated Griqua society into one large extended and all-inclusive family. Thus some rituals defined women as central to the home and to a Griqua identity and specified that men were *inkommers* of little social significance; whereas other rituals, and in particular funerals, incorporated everyone into a broader Griqua family. This complex of rituals further enabled the people of Griquatown to represent themselves to the outside world of politics and media as a bounded ethnic group with a homogenous population, while internally emphasising the hybrid nature of Griqua society through ritually stressing values that were part-Khoi, part-Christian, part-Tswana and part-Griqua.

Although the enactment of a complex of rituals enabled women some – albeit fleeting – autonomy within their own homes and with houses more generally, at a personal and individual level more complex considerations and ambivalent associations were evident. The profane and personal relations of everyday existence have been pursued in this thesis, through the area of individual consciousness. The relationship between personal identity and a broader Griqua collective is explored through an examination of the life of one woman. The central themes of this collective identity: an association of women with domestic houses and a concern with status, place and poverty are replicated – in conflicting, sometimes ambiguous and seldom direct ways – in her personal experience. Liepie, or Sarah Meintjies, identified herself formally as coloured, but simultaneously emphasised her affiliation with being Griqua through her father (who had been recognised as a Griqua leader, but who was not her biological father). In many ways Liepie was part of the Griqua collective and embodied in her life were the values and ambiguities of being Griqua. Like most other people in Griquatown, Liepie experienced extreme poverty. She also recalled the dispossession of her father's land, the return of which has became symbolic of all Griqua land dispossession in Griquatown. Liepie survived through the receipt of a government pension – a pathetically small sum of money which enabled her, each month, to feed her children and maintain her household. Liepie was also, however, an individual who sought to emphasise her own identity as someone who was literate, respectable and in control of her life and hence to transcend the poverty and marginality of a typical Griqua woman.

In conclusion, Griqua identity in the late twentieth century is, as this thesis has argued, deeply complex. Intricately interwoven into present day Griqua identity and ethnic feeling are strands of meaning that stem from a variety of sources and that have intermingled into a

system of identification that has value to thousands of people – who call themselves Griqua – spread across South Africa. Thus it is that precolonial Khoi ritual came to be bound up with the mission Christian influence that shaped present South African society and Christianity. Furthermore, the mobilisation of Griqua men into 'cultural organisations' in response to apartheid machinations that sought to define the Griqua as a sub-category of Coloured, came to be coupled with Christianity and elements of Khoi ritual. These processes occurred in tandem with academics' and other intellectuals' attempts to 'find the Griqua' and then to define – and, in so doing, often to stigmatise – Griqua identity according to 'scientific' and either primordial or instrumentalist viewpoints. These academic ideas – that emphasised either the mixed or extinct nature of Griqua identity - contrasted with Griqua people's own meanings and attempts to assert their identity through political action, ritual behaviour, speech, newspaper articles, television broadcasts and so forth. What stands out in these overt articulations of Griqua identity is the multiple and varied sources that people draw on to identify themselves and to challenge oppositional beliefs. It is these identities – complex, conflicting, shifting, ambiguous and indeterminate – that together make up a Griqua collectivity in Griquatown and which, in turn, subtly inform local, national and international debates on the fate of indigenous minorities in South Africa.

The conundrum posed at the beginning of the thesis concerned the Griquas' inability to unite and the ramifications for their belonging to a rainbow nation. In part, the problem had to do with questions of organisational strength, recognition of leadership and, drawing on the anthropological notion that unity is a relational concept, organised opposition to Griqua identity. The inability of Griqua leaders to develop collective organisational strength also stemmed, however, from the very nature of Griqua identity. There was, as discussed in this thesis, no single, unambiguous Griqua identity and, in many contexts, Griqua identity could not be separated from a broader coloured identity. The people of Griquatown were equally committed to being Griqua and to being coloured. This they expressed in an ambivalence about belonging to a Griqua collectivity. Such ambiguity, however, was not untoward as the idea of being Griqua was cemented both in ideas of belonging, of place and birthright and in perceptions about who could 'truly' claim such an identity. Griqua identity was constructed in layers of belonging and each level contained the possibility of entry into another 'deeper' level of being Griqua. Women – initiated and 'married' into Griqua culture – assumed a position at the very core of this identity but, seemingly in contradiction to this gendered conception of identity, so to did the Waterboers – who were both male and female descendants of Andries Waterboer. *Boorlings* – people born in Griquatown –

formed the next layer of Griqua identity, but these men were *inkommers* to the inner core and these women were *inkommers* to the Waterboer family. The layers continued: Griqua people born in the Northern Cape were *inkommers* to Griquatown and finally there were the *inkommers* or non-Griqua. (Even these outsiders were, however, acknowledged as part of a Griquatown collectivity at specific moments. Funerals, in particular, highlighted the interdependence of Griquatown residents and *inkommers*). At each level, people were incorporated into a broad, overarching Griqua family – through ritual and cultural values – and simultaneously their Griqua, but nonetheless *inkommer*, status was stressed. This ambiguity – which can be seen to be the axis of Griqua identity – was reflected in the conflicts of political mobilisation and in the Griqua leaders' inability to work together. Underlying all their differences and conflicts was the impossibility of identitifying one man who genuinely should lead and represent the Griqua. None of the leaders – not Adam Kok, Andrew Abraham Stockenstrom le Fleur, Anthony le Fleur, Kanyiles or any of the others – could claim, unambiguously, that he should represent all the Griqua. Even Andries Waterboer, descendent of the famous Griqua leader, Andries Waterboer (1820 to 1852), remained, at one level, an uninitiated male or an *inkommer* into Griqua affairs.

The Griqua are, in a sense, 'nothing people' and their vast contribution to South African historiography has remained largely unnoticed. Griqua *boorlings* define themselves as 'of Griquatown', a *vaal* (bleak, grey and depressed) little town on the margins of the South African economy. Here they eke out an existence, surviving off the scraps of greater South Africa: they earn a bit as farm workers, occasionally they migrate to find work elsewhere, they scrounge from tourists, selling bottles filled with semi-precious stones or colourful sand, and, of course, they claim government pensions. This socio-economic poverty echoes an apparent poverty of identity. Throughout Griqua experience, outsiders have sought to define the Griqua. They have done this, on the whole, without reference to emic notions of Griqua identity. 'The Griqua' have been classified as British colonists, as indigenous South Africans, as Khoi and as an admixture. During apartheid they were classified initially as 'Blacks' then as 'Coloureds' (retaining Griqua as a seldom acquired sub-category). Post-apartheid Griqua people were seeking to endorse an indigenous First Nation status. Simultaneously, however, they felt pressurised into accepting a new status: that of citizens of a rainbow nation with special concession to them as a 'vulnerable community'. This Griqua leaders saw as a status which again denied them their own sense of identity.

Almost two hundred years after the first people settled at Griquatown, the Griqua remain unknown and largely unacknowledged within South Africa. And yet, as indicated in the

constant attempts to define the Griqua, there is a prevailing perception that they do indeed form some sort of social collectivity. It is perhaps appropriate that there should be some anxiety in understanding who the Griqua are, given the levels of ambiguity and difference that are inherent in this identity. Questions of definition have continued to confound Griqua leaders and governments whereas, at a local level, ideas about ambiguity and ambivalence provide the grounds for understanding a Griqua identity which is, in its very existence, a fluid, hybrid identity composed out of interactions with others. Andries Waterboer, whose comment from 1938 opens this chapter, might equally well have observed that 'the Griquas have become a people and are not a people'.

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APPENDIX ONE:

GRIQUA PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

UNDER
THE AUSPICES OF THE HON. CAPTAIN
NICOLAAS WATERBOER II
BORN AND PERMANENT GRIQUA
CAPTAIN OF GRIQUALAND WEST
ALBANIA AND SOUTH-WEST AFRICA
SECTION

LETTER OF AUTHORISATION

I, NICOLAAS WATERBOER in my capacity as borne and permanent Griqua, Captain of Griqualand West, Albania and South-West Africa Section, certify that, at a conference of the Griqua people, bearer Daniel James Kanyiles was elected as the permanent *OPPERHOOF* (paramount chief) of Griqualand West, Albania and South West Africa, for the period of Permanent years.

Identification No. 031/80/7037G

DECLARATION

1. The Griqua People's Organisation is not a political movement, and does not oppose the government of the country.
2. This official must work for the well-being of the Griquas.
3. He is responsible to the Hon. Leader and all high officials.
4. He must organize, and recruit the Griquas and hold meetings.

Done under my hand and signed in the presence of witnesses this 3rd day of January in the year of Our Lord 19 60 .

WITNESSES

1. Captain N. Waterboer II
2. Kaptein Watermond Chairman
3. Bmarchlow Private Secretary

Magistrate's Stamp

Born and Permanent Griqua Captain

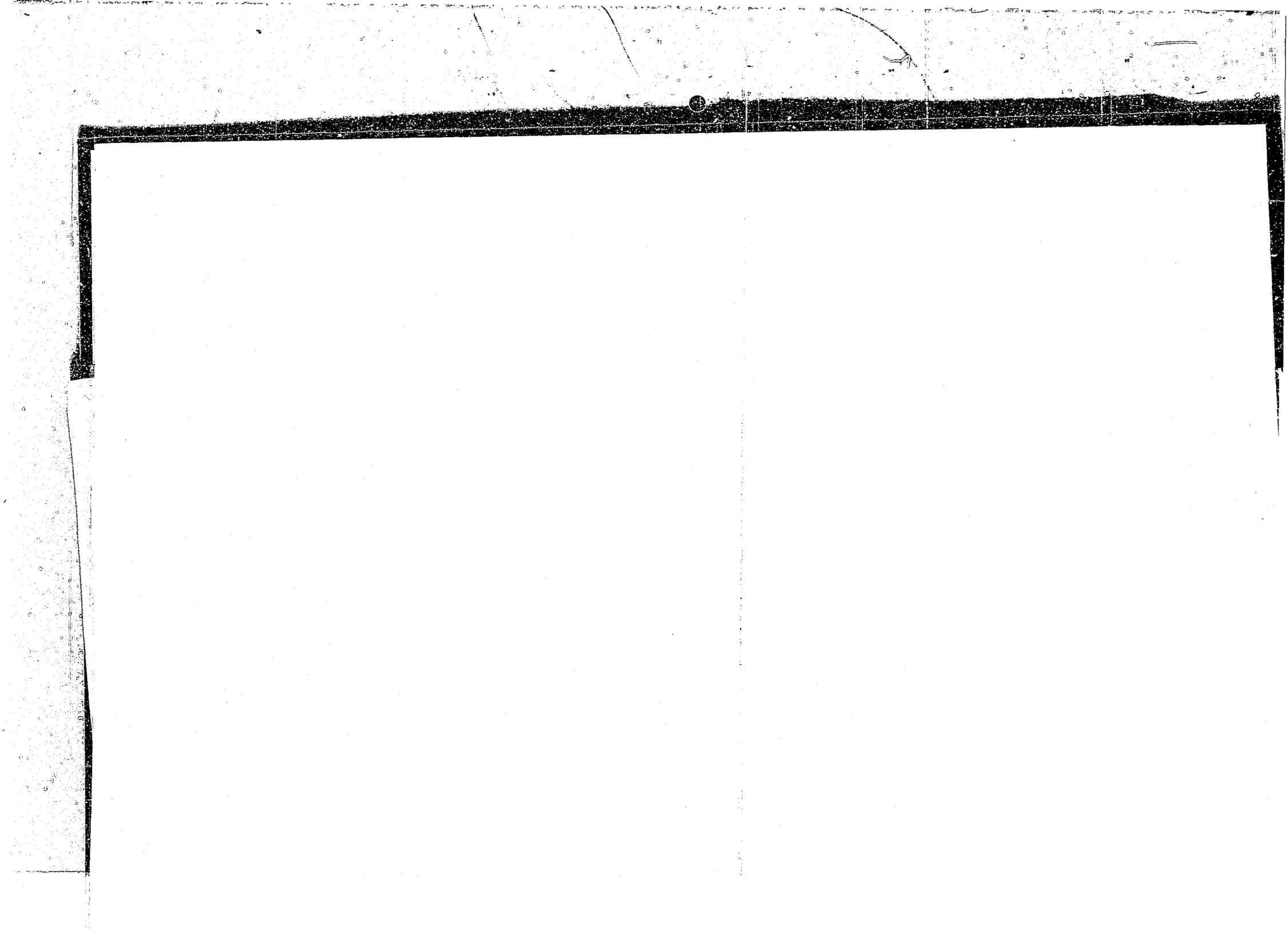
APPENDIX TWO:

Ref; No. 266 / Rietvale	Address 315 Kudu Street
Identity No. 430725.5097011	Branch GRIQUATOWN
It is hereby certified	This membership card is issued by headoffice
That; ISAK GREEFF is	Headoffice; phone 4885 181 Liphuko street, Greenpoint, Beaconsfield
a member of the Griqua People's Organisation	Date of issue, 1 – 5 – 19 82
The Griqua People's Organisation is not a political movement.	Mar James II hon. Chief Commissioner of oaths.

APPENDIX THREE:

OUR MOTTO PEACE, LOVE, UNITY	**GRIQUA** **PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION** Under the auspices of the Hon. Captain Nicolaas Waterboer II Borne and permanent Griqua Captain of Griqualand West and ALBANIA

Address of Member *Griquatown* Branch *Griquatown* Branch Manager *W. Badenhorst* Address *338, Mahosh Street [?]* *Greenpoint* Secretary *DJKanyiles* People's Leader *Kapt. N. Waterboer* Hon. Captain This card issued only issued by Head Office	I.D. No. ..... Card No. ..... It is hereby certified that ANNA WATERBOER is a member of the Griqua People's Organisation. The Griqua People's Organisation falls under the auspices of the Hon. Captain Nicolaas Waterboer II borne and permanent Griqua Captain of Griqualand West of Albania COST : 4/-



Author Waldman, Pearl Linda.
Name of thesis The Griqua conundrum : political and socio-cultural identity in the Northern Cape, South Africa. 2001

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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