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

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from participating in the GPO. He was an *inkommer* and a wealthy general dealer who complained that, despite his repeated attempts to persuade them, *boorlings* refused to consider him to be Griqua and therefore he had not been allowed entry into the GPO.[14]

If the *inkommers* were the educated elite, then the *boorlings* were 'nothing people'. Over the years their identity had been changed, shifted and manipulated. Apartheid governance saw them as coloured people: people who were defined by what they were not. Their Griqua heritage was largely dismissed by the Griquatown Council and by the central government. The powerful extended families and prominent people mentioned in Chapter Three (also see Ross 1974, 1976) remained only in people's memories as the process of proletarianisation led to increasing impoverishment. With *inkommers* occupying positions of status and formal leadership, the *boorlings* were reduced to defining themselves in terms of place: of where they were from (or of origin).[15] Such complex notions were expressed by Dirk Paulus who claimed that these people 'are scared to be Griqua, they are scared to lose their identity. If I come from Griquatown, then I am a Griqua, even though other people say you are coloured'.[16] His statement is filled with ambiguity – on the one hand people were scared to be Griqua, on the other they were afraid that, ceasing to be Griqua, they would lose their identity. Here Dirk Paulus was referring to both coloured and Griqua identities because, as discussed in Chapter Three, both identities were interdependent and interrelated, both drawn upon at different times, and both, in their interrelations, crucially important to the people of Griquatown. Paulus' solution was to define being Griqua in terms of place: of Griquatown.

Place, then, provided a seemingly incontestable category whereby people were either born in Griquatown (or the surrounding area) and were therefore *boorlings* or they were not. However, as this chapter will later demonstrate, *inkommers* and *boorlings* could not be so neatly categorised. The *boorlings* were the people of historic Griquatown, the descendants of the *Kapteins* and of the extended families that surrounded and supported the *Kapteins*. They were the progeny of the historical leaders who founded and shaped Griquatown. Although these inhabitants defined themselves in terms of being from the place, they nonetheless spoke negatively of it. Griquatown was a depressed rural town often described as *vaal* (grey, bleak and dismal). There was little to do in such a town and most people were anxious to leave and look for employment elsewhere. This

[14] Interview, Eddie Fortuin and Erick Scholtz, 20/08/1997
[15] Strathern's work in the Essex village, Elmdom, UK, demonstrates a similar sense of belonging for 'indigenous' families who remained at the centre of village life. These families, faced with the highly mobile residence patterns of newcomers to the village and of their own children, referred to themselves as 'real Elmdoners' who had been born there and were '*of* the village' rather than were simply resident in Elmdom (1981).
[16] Conversation, Dirk Paulus, 5/08/1996

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ambiguity was expressed in terms of being Griqua – a heritage of pride and place combined with their negative racial classification and a reality of bleakness and futility: 'Nothing happens here, there are Griqua here but they are all coloured. I don't know what we are going to do to be successful'.[17]

The *boorlings* felt that *inkommers* had occupied all the good jobs and that this left them with few opportunities for manoeuvre. Ouma Jacoba commented that they had no option but to clasp their hands and wait.[18] This resonates with, and perhaps elucidates, Lewis' argument that '(f)or the most part the majority of Coloureds – the rural and urban underclasses – remained outside Coloured political organisations' (1987: 251). Morse and Peele, researching political involvement amongst coloured people in Cape Town during the 1970s, similarly argued that these people had withdrawn from politics and demonstrated an apolitical stance.[19] It is, however, important to recognise that a passive stance such as that described by Ouma Jacoba is also a reflection of Christian values taught by the NGSK. The idea behind this is that God, not human beings, will pass judgement. People who have sinned will, in time, do penance for their actions and those who have been sinned against will receive retribution, if not in this life then in the next. The implication inherent in these convictions is that immediate political action is of little consequence and that 'true' compensation depends, not on the mobilisation done by politicians, but on the moral values and belief system of individuals.

Although opportunities for *boorlings* outside of formal Griqua politics were limited between 1950 and about 1990, this did not stop people searching for avenues to pursue. Isak Greeff was one such person. He had been a clever child and a willing student but, as explained in the quotation (pages 156 and 157), he was not able to continue his education. He did a number of odd jobs before finally securing employment as a driver. After being injured on duty in 1987, he retired and was declared disabled by a doctor. This allowed Isak to draw a disability grant that he supplemented by repairing cars in his back yard. His search for greater meaning and social status in his life had begun, however, before his injury and his subsequent definition as disabled. During the 1970s, when Isak was a congregant of the NGSK and a committee member of the GPO, he

[17] Conversation, Anna Visser, 5/08/1996
[18] Conversation, Jacoba Swartz, 14/01/1998
[19] Despite an attempt to survey members of the upper socio-economic classes, Morse and Peele overlooked the elite nature of coloured politics because they were concerned with politics only in terms of black and white oppositions. Coloured people, according to them, could be either a 'coloured bourgeoisie' or adopt a 'black power stance'. As Lewis points out, in the 1930s, there were coloured leaders whose demands were made neither in terms of an affiliation to black resistance politics, nor assimilation into white political and economic structures, but rather in terms of segregation from both (1987; also see Edgar and Saunders, 1982). Le Fleur, for example, 'attempted to revive the dream of an independent Griqua homeland, under the unifying symbols of a Griqua identity' (Lewis, 1987: 153).

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explored the possibility of founding an exclusively Griqua church and he commented 'that was my vision before I was converted, it occupied all my thoughts as I felt that ... we (should have) a Griqua church, our own church'.[20] Isak initiated discussions with Kanyiles who had earlier founded the short-lived *Griekwa Volkskerk van Suid Afrika* (Griqua People's Church of South Africa)[21] and who offered to support and train Isak. Isak's desire to found a Griqua church has to be seen in the context of the apartheid Griquatown Council which, although unwilling to support applications for various Pentecostal churches, had recognised the GPO and its Griqua following on a few occasions – in particular when *Kaptein* Nicolaas Waterboer II was buried and when the grave of *Kaptein* Andries Waterboer was relocated. There was thus a small possibility that a Griqua church might be looked upon favourably. Isak's ambition – to establish and lead a Griqua church – was firmly grounded in his Christian belief and in his desire to further Griqua identity, but self-advancement and personal elevation were also important to him and were enhanced through his involvement in such an enterprise. It is here that we begin to see the complexity of meaning inherent in being Griqua: Christianity, pride in one's identity, forefathers, a powerful history and a daily experience of subjugation, poverty and oppression were all interwoven and together comprised Isak's sense of who he was. It is thus not surprising that Isak turned to religion as a means to self-fulfilment.

His first wife, however, was less optimistic about this venture and did not want Isak to found such a church. She discouraged Isak from going ahead with his plans, as he described below:

> I tried, I did try (to establish a church), but then my wife did not want to agree.... She did not want to. She said no, and then we had to work from the bottom up, from the floor up. It was just her and I and she discouraged me and said, 'No, people will not be interested. They already have their churches.' Then later I felt that I would leave it.[22]

Isak's wife argued that people would not be interested in a Griqua Church as they were already congregants of other churches and she and Isak would have to labour alone to make his dream come true. Isak, she said, did not have community support for his project and this stemmed from the fact that people had been officially classified as coloured during the apartheid era. Sophie Julies, who later overheard my taped conversation with Isak, also commented that 'the people have already been

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[20] Household Survey, No. 48, Isak Greeff, 27/10/1997

[21] The *Griekwa Volkskerk van Suid Afrika*, founded in 1959, was never strong in Griquatown where most people belonged to the NGSK (see the *Griekwa Volkskerk van Suid Afrika*, Constitution of laws and regulations). Kanyiles then committed himself to the African Independent Orthodox Church in Kimberley where he was elected Bishop in 1972. Consecration Certificate, 2/07/1972, Conversation, Daniel Kanyiles, Ritchie, 31/07/1996.

[22] Household Survey No. 48, Isak Greeff, 27/10/1997

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photographed as coloured' (*die mense is klaar gesnap as kleurling,* see pages 132 - 133) and Isak's idea would not work. She was referring here to the fact that the people of Phillipsville were officially classified as coloured and, even though many people bemoaned the fact that Griqua was not recognised as an official category, they would not now be willing to trade that classification. In Griquatown, as mentioned above, to be coloured was to have formal recognition and something to aspire towards, whereas to be Griqua was often to be looked down upon, most especially by the coloured elite.[23] In addition, and as mentioned above, there was already a church – the NGSK – which had been thought of as the Griqua church for many years.[24] Sophie also commented on a lack of community support for Isak's idea, saying that the people would point to Isak and wonder at his desire to start a new Griqua church. Given the above context, creating a new Griqua church was thought of as an illogical act of duplication. It was not, as Isak's wife correctly judged, an act that would attract people. As a result of his wife's lack of enthusiasm, Isak abandoned the idea of a Griqua church and continued to mobilise for the GPO.

Towards the end of the 1980s Isak Greeff was attracted to the charismatic churches that were gaining popularity in Griquatown. He decided that he no longer wanted to 'live in the old world', and that he wished to move away from his old habits of drinking, swearing and lying. In addition, the Bible instructed him to 'go forth into the world and preach the gospel to sinners'.[25] He began to question the NGSK's practice of *kinderdoop* (infant-baptism)[26] which was counter to the adult baptism by immersion advocated by the Pentecostal churches. Moreover, the NGSK did not provide opportunities for one to confess his or her sins and so to be born again.[27] Isak started to talk about these matters and, when not taken seriously, he shifted allegiance to the Pentecostal-style *Christiaangemeente* (Christian Congregation). Here he became an *ouderling* (elder), but soon clashed with the other *ouderlings* and *pastoors* (pastors).[28]

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[23] Conversation, Sophie Julies, 27/10/1997

[24] Conversation, Sophie Julies, 17/08/1997

[25] Mathew 28, verse 19.

[26] In the NGSK the majority of members are baptised while still young, although a member can be baptised at any age.

[27] See Psalm 32 where David says he confessed his sins.

[28] Although in his case very much an outcome of personal initiative and ambition, Isak's move away from the NGSK coincided with a process in which this church became increasingly associated with the *inkommers* and the elite. In 1995, a survey showed that the NGSK retained only 41% of Phillipsville's practising community (conducted for burial policies in Griquatown). By 1998, the NGSK (renamed the *Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk,* or VGK) 39% of Phillipsville's population worshipped there. The elite, such as the mayor, town clerk, important businessmen, school teachers, policemen and clerks, all remained active members of the VGK and their socio-economic standing was evident in the many cars parked outside during Sunday worship. These surveys suggest that the membership of the VGK settled at about 40% of Phillipsville's population. Despite this, the VGK members remained concerned that people were shifting allegiances and believed that it was because charismatic and Pentecostal churches provided them with respect and attention not forthcoming from the VGK. The VGK displayed disdain towards members of the Pentecostal churches, equating the charismatic *pastoors* (pastors) to

Although Isak left the NGSK in order to advance within the *Christiaangemeente*, his opportunities were limited right from the start. It was an established church, with a *pastoor* and several *ouderlings* already holding positions of status. Isak, interested in becoming a *pastoor* himself, opposed the occasional cancellation of prayer services and began holding his own prayer services. The other men, and particularly the *pastoor*, felt that Isak was usurping their role and manipulating the congregation and they took steps to exclude him. It is clear that Isak was trying to develop his qualities as a religious persona and to assemble a cohort of believers who acknowledged his leadership. Although unsuccessful in this attempt and excluded by the *Christiaangemeente pastoors*, through his actions he established himself as a man committed to the work of the Lord. As we shall later see, this was to stand him in good stead in the future.

Isak's life, as described thus far, concerned his search for a sense of self and a desperate need to escape his 'real' world of violence, drinking and 'disabledness'. He conforms to West's description of African Independent Church leaders:

> ... the average leader of an independent church will be middle-aged, married with five or six years of education, and is likely to be in some form of employment which does not pay particularly high wages. In fact, therefore, he is likely to be very much like the ordinary member of his congregation. This is an important aspect of church leadership, and one which became increasingly apparent during fieldwork – that independent church leaders are 'men of the people', facing the same problems of lack of education, employment, etc., that are faced by members of their congregation (1975: 54-5).

In this regard Isak was no different from a number of other men in Griquatown. Towards the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s, he was to work his way through many different churches in Griquatown. In each instance he joined an organisation that already had established pastors and leaders and tried – always unsuccessfully – to work with them. The clashes between Isak and other church leaders were caused by his attempts to promote himself as a serious and committed leader and to acquire status. In many ways, his alliances – later severed through friction and conflict – echoed the strategies used by leaders such as Kanyiles in their negotiations with other Griqua organisations and with the government. This was not unduly surprising as Isak had spent many years working for Kanyiles in the GPO and looking to him for advice and

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deacons in the VGK and not to VGK *dominees*. If these *pastoors* rented the VGK building, they were not allowed to preach from the pulpit.

leadership.[29] Nonetheless, Isak's activities show his increasing commitment to Christianity. At the same time, his interest in the GPO waned. Early in the 1990s, Isak resigned from his committee obligations in the GPO, possibly in anticipation of a new era with increased opportunities.

POST-APARTHEID CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES:

The further decline of Griqua politics and the rise of Christianity as an alternative is reflected in the fact that by 1997 only Jelico Teis remained on the GPO committee. Andries Sekuti and Paul Pienaar, the main Griqua organisers, had died. Isak Greeff had remarried and was no longer interested in an organisational role, although he remained a member of the GPO. His sister-in-law, Anna Greeff, who had been drawn into the organisational structure as a young girl and later left because of her husband's jealousy, briefly rekindled her interest in Griqua affairs and visited Kanyiles in Ritchie a couple of times after her husband abandoned her and vanished. Then she lost interest in the GPO and, in the 1990s, occupied herself by founding the Good Hope Society in Griquatown, later becoming chairwoman and treasurer. Even Anna Visser, a most devoted follower of Kanyiles, was disillusioned. She argued that Kanyiles very seldom came to visit Griquatown and that she was no longer prepared to make an effort for the Griquas: 'I am no longer interested, its more rumours than truth .... I've come a long way with the Griquas, ... but I no longer see any opportunity. I am withdrawing because there has been no progress'.[30]

The disillusion with the GPO occurred alongside a trend towards the increased predominance of religion and religious specialisation in Griquatown. As the apartheid era drew to a close, various Pentecostal churches were able to enter Phillipsville and poorer *boorlings* were increasingly attracted to these smaller, charismatic churches. Griquatown was not the only place to experience this flourishing of new churches and Elphick argues that '(b)y the 1990s few places in the world, apart from the United States, matched South Africa in the proliferation of Christian denominations and sects – evidence that Christianity has apparently adapted to a striking variety of cultures and social classes, a reason for its dramatic advance' (1997: 7; also see Anderson and Pillay, 1997; Pretorius and Jafta, 1997). In Griquatown the number of Pentecostal churches

[29] Another form of continuity evident in Isak's behaviour concerns clientalism. Elbourne and Ross argue that patterns of clientage were maintained when Khoikhoi adapted to Christianity. Although Elbourne and Ross are describing a situation 100 years previously, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Khoikhoi patterns of alliance and feuding, as described in Chapter Two, have continued to influence people and to inform their strategies, regardless of whether they are mobilising for the recognition of Griqua identity at national level, fighting with other Griqua organisations about relative status, or carefully negotiating – already overfilled – religious leadership opportunities in Griquatown.

[30] Conversation, Anna Visser, 5/08/1996

increased rapidly and churches such as the *Twaalf Apostels* (Twelve Apostles), the Gospel Mission, the *Beukes Kerk* (named after its initiator and leader), the *Baptiste* (Baptists)and St Phillips were all operative in Rainbow Valley by 1997. Some of these churches, such as the *Beukes Kerk*, the *Baptiste* and the Gospel Mission, consisted only of a leader and two or three individuals, whereas others such as *the Volle Evangelie Kerk* (Full Evangelical Church) and the *Twaalf Apostels*, each had about 10 members. The large number of churches and the small congregations made it possible for numerous men to become religious leaders or *pastoors*.

West has suggested that African Independent Church leaders considered official sanction to be very important and tremendous value was placed on leadership certificates (1975: 58). A similar situation was evident in Griquatown where each *pastoor* carried an identity card. The cards, ironically endorsed at the same police station that previously prevented such churches from building in Phillipsville, confirmed that the holders were *bona fide* preachers. Leaders explained to me that such identity cards were necessary to prevent *skelms* or rogues from wandering onto farms in the guise of preachers. These cards were, however, primarily intended and interpreted as official affirmation of – and reinforcement of – the status of the *pastoors*.[31]

Pastoors, subsequent to 1994, were thus credited with some status and authority and were recognised as being relatively important. These changing circumstances made it possible for Isak to return to his dream of being a *pastoor*. Isak, supported by his second wife and several other individuals who accompanied the Greeffs in their prayers, had already gravitated towards the Pentecostal churches. It was an auspicious moment, with the heady freedom of possibility and religious fervour that gripped Rainbow Valley in post-apartheid South Africa, and Isak knelt in prayer as he sought for a means to establish himself as a committed *pastoor*.

Isak and his wife spent two weeks fasting and praying as he asked the Lord for guidance. He was rewarded with a dream in which the Holy Father turned to him and said 'Greeff, Greeff, move away from those people, they will kill you because of the gospel you preach on my behalf'. In his dream, Isak was directed towards the *Christelike Kerk* (International Fellowship of Christian Churches), but locally this church comprised only white members. Again Isak and his wife turned to prayer and this time they were accompanied by several individuals from Phillipsville. One of these people,

[31] Two things suggest such a conclusion: the congregations of these churches were extremely small and were drawn, not from the surrounding farms, but from Rainbow Valley. Also, the farms surrounding Griquatown were spread across great distances with only a few labourers employed on each farm. These households were usually in outlying areas, far away from the main farm house or any major roads and not worth recruiting.

Ouma Anna van Wyk, dreamt that the solution would be found and that they would be granted accommodation in the *Christelike Kerk*. Shortly thereafter the *Christelike Kerk* agreed to accept these coloured worshippers and for a brief period the congregation comprised white and coloured worshippers, until all the whites drifted away and found other places of worship. Isak then became the pastor of the *Christelike Kerk*.

Whereas Isak's initial aim of establishing a Griqua church was driven by his own personal interests, his reason for joining the *Christelike Ke...* in Griquatown came from a higher source. His legitimacy can be seen to have come directly from God who had issued a series of commands, conveyed to Isak and his followers during prayer. Following Weber, it is possible to see his authority and charismatic quality stemming, not from his personal characteristics, but rather from:

> ... what is the agent to be his connection with (including possession by or embedment of) the *very central* feature of man's existence and the cosmos in which he lives..... That central power has often, in the course of man's existence, been conceived of as good, the ruling power or creator of the universe (Eisenstadt, 1986: xxv, original emphasis).

Although it was clear that Isak had wanted to be a *pastoor* and the leader of a church, his incentive for getting involved with the *Christelike Kerk* was because God had instructed him to do so. As Weber might have argued, Isak's role in this church had its roots in a sense of duty to follow God's calling, rather than a sense of choice (1968: 49). Despite the slow progress and many setbacks, by 1997 Isak was a recognised and established *pastoor* in Rainbow Valley. He had his own church in which he conducted lengthy and enthusiastic church services. His congregation listened attentively to his sermons and believed in his right to lead them. As Weber argues:

> Whatever the leader says, whatever he asks, is right, even if it is self-contradictory. It is right *because the leader has said it*. The basis of the leader's legitimacy is the immediate 'recognition' of his miraculous quality, and the disciple is lost in complete devotion to the possessor of this quality, 'a devotion born of distress and enthusiasm' (1946: 249 cited in Lindhold, 1990: 25, original emphasis).

Isak saw himself as having been guided by God to establish himself as a *pastoor* in order to lead God's followers. This guidance came to him in a dream which was accepted by various people as proof of God's influence. The retelling of Isak's personal experience with God provided him with legitimacy and enabled other people to acknowledge him as their spiritual leader.[32]

Furthermore, with the change from an apartheid-governed Griquatown Council to a more representative structure run largely by ANC supporters, other opportunities also opened up for ambitious individuals and the *Raad* fell away. Isak, like other men who had formerly been attracted to the GPO during the apartheid years, took advantage of these new opportunities and accepted various leadership roles in spheres of life other than those concerning ethnic politics.[33] He became the chairman of the High School Board[34] and he immersed himself in the Good Hope Society, a funeral organisation run almost entirely by women that opened up a series of organisational and leadership opportunities closely associated with religion. Within this organisation he was known as *oupa* (grandfather) and his wife as *ouma* (grandmother),[35] together they were spoken of as the *groot mense* or adults of the organisation and as pillars of support.

Isak's success came from his charismatic leadership and from the belief that he was chosen by God to lead his congregation. Whereas his initial organisation within the GPO and his attempts to found a Griqua Church were of his own initiative, it was not he who chose to lead the *Christelike Kerk* but God who had instructed him to do so. His life story thus illustrates the reverse trajectory to that described by Weber (1968). Isak shifted from his position as organiser in the hierarchical GPO, where tasks and functions were carefully specified according to rank, to being a charismatic leader where organisational authority was not a priority. This shift was made possible by the opening up of the township to the Pentecostal Churches and the support of his second wife. Most importantly though, Isak considered himself a *boorling* of Griqualand West as he had been born in the neighbouring town of Niekerkshoop. He commented that he had experienced none of the antagonism other *inkommers* reported and that he felt

[32] Using dreams as an indication of prophetic calling may have longstanding antecedents. Elbourne and Ross argue that, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Khoikhoi people considered dreams to be a 'crucial means of communication between human and sacred beings' and a means of revealing the powers of a particular individual (1997: 33).

[33] See Legassick who argues that the native agents, whose objective was evangelisation, also played political roles and, sometimes expressly combined these political and religious functions (1979: 269).

[34] After 1994 the Secondary School could no longer maintain its racial exclusion policy and keep non-white children from attending school in Griquatown. Once school attendance become racially mixed, the white students left and started to attend a private school in Douglas (70 kilometres away), Conversation, Isak Greeff, 20/08/1997

[35] These terms of respect refer, not to their respective ages, but to their role within the organisation.

completely at home in Griquatown.[36] Indeed Isak, as a disabled, unemployed and uneducated man, did not fit the category of *inkommer* and in constructing himself as a *boorling*, he was making himself a 'man of the people', to paraphrase West (1974: 55).

Isak Greeff's position differed markedly from that of Andries Waterboer, another *boorling* of Griquatown. Andries was of higher status than Isak as he experienced frequent employment, with few periods of unemployment, and as he did not rely on a pension or disability grant. Because of the nature of his work, Andries often worked in Kimberley for long periods of time.[37] He had never been involved in the GPO as he did not accept Kanyiles as the 'legitimate' leader of this organisation. He did not campaign on behalf of any political party and never put himself forward for local government elections or other positions of authority. But, born in Griquatown and a nephew of Nicolaas Waterboer, the last acknowledged *Kaptein* of Griquatown, Andries inevitably acquired the title of *Kaptein* in his turn. He did this in a rather unusual manner: the GNC-Kr, under the leadership of A.A.S. le Fleur, had visited Griquatown and 'elected' Andries Waterboer *Kaptein* in an attempt to strengthen its organisational links in the Northern Cape and to undermine the GPO. Because of his status as *Kaptein,* Andries Waterboer was present when Mandela visited Griquatown and when the American Ambassador met with a delegation from the Northern Cape. He was, however, reluctant to assume leadership and regarded his position with ambivalence, arguing that he had been made a *Kaptein* 'through words' and that he did not have local support.[38] Nonetheless, people believed that he should be *Kaptein* because of his heritage. Indeed, even at national and governmental level there was support for such a position and when the GNF was formed, Andries Waterboer was granted participation because of his birthright.[39] He seldom attended meetings, however, claiming that he was too preoccupied with the RDP housing and he later requested that his brother might be allowed to assume his position.[40]

[36] Household Survey No. 49, Isak Greeff, 27/10/1997
[37] Conversation, Andries Waterboer, 20/08/1997
[38] Conversation, Andries Waterboer, 20/08/1997
[39] Conversation, Johan Meiring, DCD, Cape Town, 25/07/1997
[40] He had, in 1993, been contracted to oversee the construction of 188 houses in Griquatown as part of the Government's Reconstruction and Development Program. He was responsible for the hiring of builders, plumbers, carpenters and casual labourers to work on this project and these activities kept him busy. Interview, Andries Waterboer, 8/08/1997



Figure 5.4: Andries Waterboer at Leeukuil (note: remains of Andries Sekuti's homestead are in the foreground, 1997).

Andries Waterboer had a quiet confidence and did not seem to need to assert himself, either as an individual or as leader. In part, this came from his sense of historic importance – he was, after all, the nephew of Nicolaas Waterboer and he was acutely aware of how Nicolaas had suffered as apartheid legislation was implemented in Griquatown. In part, it stemmed from his socio-economic circumstances – Andries was doing well, he had built big hotels in Kimberley, he held a large contract for the construction of RDP housing in Griquatown, he had several teams of men working for him and he had sufficient work to keep him busy for several years. Because he was a Waterboer, and descended from the historic *Kapteins* around whom Griquatown was formed, Andries was the quintessential *boorling* in the positive sense of the word. As Sophie Julies once told me, Sampie Phillips (discussed below), Isak Greeff and all the others were *inkommers* and only the Waterboers were not *inkommers*.[41] Even though all these men were born in Griquatown or its surroundings, Sophie was suggesting that there were degrees of belonging. In her estimation, descendants of the Waterboer family formed the 'true' or 'original' *boorlings*. Other Griqua people, born in Griquatown, were *boorlings*, but were also *inkommers* to this particular Griqua 'family' (see below). Although discussed in Chapter Six, it is useful to note here that these layers of belonging are also reproduced in Griqua rituals. Figure 5.5 attempts to depict, graphically, the various degrees of belonging that Sophie Julies referred to. Located at the very core is the Waterboer family whom she saw as being authentic *boorlings*. Belonging should not, however, be seen as clear-cut. *Boorlings*, at most layers of belonging, were also *inkommers* to an inner layer. The Waterboers, as original *boorlings*, were according to Sophie, the exception and they were 'unambiguously Griqua'.

[41] Conversation, 21/11/1997.

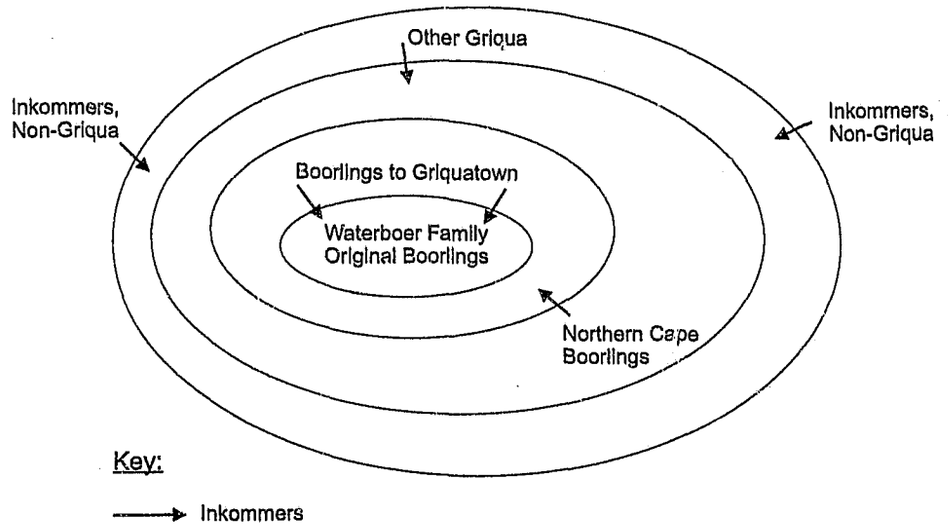

Figure 5.5: Graphic illustration of 'layers of belonging' in Griquatown & beyond.

In other circumstances, however, Andries Waterboer might well have been classified as an *inkommer* because of his wealth relative to other residents of Griquatown and his success. Andries was, however, different to the other elite of Griquatown. He continued to live in former council housing and had not moved to the white area of Griquatown (as many other coloured elite families had done after 1994), nor had he built himself a large house on the *bult* or rise (as the wealthier families had done before 1994). It was perhaps this juxtapositioning of two contradictory sources of identity that made Andries a somewhat reluctant *Kaptein* – he was a descendant of the original *boorlings* of Griquatown and yet, in many senses, his personal circumstances were more closely aligned to those of the *inkommer*.

Associated with Andries Waterboer, then, was a certain ambiguity – he was categorically a *boorling*, yet he was like an *inkommer*. This suggests that not only were these categories of *boorling* and *inkommer* ambiguous, they were also flexible and open to manipulation. This is well-established in the literature on coloured communities in South Africa: Boonzaier (1984), Pearson (1986) and West (1971) all recognise that *inkommers* do not make up a rigidly-defined or bounded category. West argues that in Port Nolloth variations as to who is labelled *inkommer* can be explained in terms of geographic distance, kin relationships and the extent to which people visited the town in their youth (1971: 12, 102). Pearson working in Rehoboth, Namibia, shows how historical waves of immigration have affected the categorisation of people as *inkommers*

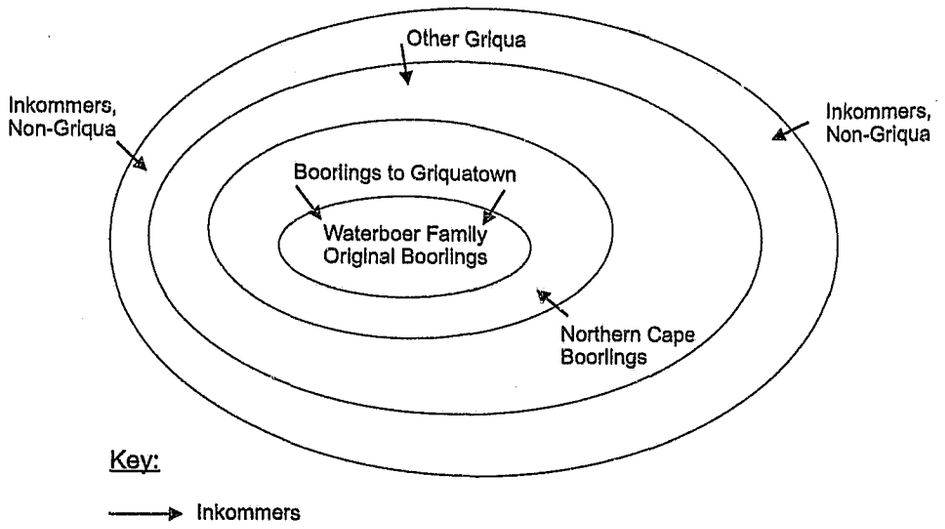

Figure 5.5: Graphic illustration of 'layers of belonging' in Griquatown & beyond.

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and *boorlings,* since earlier *inkommers* married local residents and became part of the community (1986: 25). According to Boonzaier, it was possible for *inkommers* to the Richtersveld to downplay their cultural differences. In order to secure citizen rights to the reserve and to be accepted as full members of the community, or as 'registered occupiers', *inkommers* mixed freely with *boorlings* and often intermarried. Once full citizenship rights had been acquired, the *inkommers* proceeded once again to stress their differences (1984: 17).

In Griquatown the permeability of the category *inkommer* was especially evident during the Local Government Elections of 1995 where various people queuing to vote agreed that there were no Griqua people standing for election.[42] Amongst the candidates for Phillipsville were Sampie Phillips (standing for the National Party), Jerrie Mojakie (for the African National Congress) and Jan Theron (as an Independent). While people readily agreed that these candidates were not Griqua, there was little agreement over whether Sampie Phillips (after whom Phillipsville had been named) and Jerrie Mojakie were *inkommers* or *boorlings*. Jan Theron had been born in Kenhardt and, as a wealthy builder, it was easy for people to classify him as an *inkommer*. The other two candidates were, however, more ambiguous. Sampie Phillips was born in Griquatown, which would make him a *boorling*.[43] He had, however, built his own home, found secure and relatively well-paid employment at the co-operative in Griquatown and educated his children to tertiary level. Sampie was an *ouderling* in the elite NGSK, his wife partook in the activities of privileged women, such as baking competitions, and Sampie was respected by many white residents of Griquatown. As such, Sampie and his wife behaved like *inkommers* and were often classified as such. Sampie himself took advantage of this ambiguity: denying any Griqua associations in the 1980s but, in the 1990s, asserting that he was Griqua because he was born in Griquatown. Jerrie Mojakie, unlike the other candidates, was relatively poor and lived in a former council house in Rainbow Valley. He had worked on the RDP housing program until he was elected Mayor of Griquatown in 1997. Although Jerrie was, in many ways, the same as other *boorlings* – uneducated, poor and with insecure employment - his links with the ANC and his friendship with elite *inkommers* such as Erik Scholtz, the previous mayor, and Albert Ryk, the Town Clerk, separated him from other residents of Rainbow Valley.

[42] General Discussions, 1/11/1995
[43] Conversation, Sampie Phillips, 20/9/1997

In response to the comment that there were no Griqua standing for elections, Mojakie argued that even though the individuals concerned might call themselves Xhosa, Zulu or coloured, there were six Griqua people sitting on the council. 'Our arteries are Griqua, we are all *boorlinge* of Griquatown'.[44]

People such as Sampie and Jerrie, both *boorlings* of Griquatown who acted, at least partially, as though they were *inkommers*, defined being Griqua in terms of place, in terms of having been born in Griquatown, and hence were able to manipulate their interests, and to draw on both *inkommer* and *boorling* status. Other elite *inkommers* to Griquatown had dabbled in Griqua politics during the apartheid era, but they had never thrown their full weight behind such mobilisation. When opportunities had arisen which may have been profitable, these *inkommers* expressed an interest and found means to emphasise their sense of being Griqua. For example, David Smith, born in Cape Town and posted to Griquatown as a school teacher, became briefly involved in a Griqua claim for land in the Northern Cape in the 1970s on the grounds that his wife, Rachel, came from the region. In the late 1990s most *inkommers* denied any connections with Griquas and stressed that they were not Griqua. In part, this concern amongst the elite to distance themselves from being Griqua stemmed from a commitment to ANC policies. Ideas about being Griqua were seen, by the elite, as reiterating racial divisions and echoing the policies of apartheid. The former mayor of Griquatown, Erik Scholtz, saw himself as an *inkommer* and an ANC supporter. Although he did not often mention it, he also saw himself as Griqua. But having come from the Eastern Cape and being related to the le Fleurs, he felt he was different from the people of Griquatown. He commented that:

> No, I say, it looks like a lost cause to me. Look, the government of the day, if it has to go though all the population in our land, how can I put it, it sounds to me as if it wants to move back to apartheid if we now request land that forms, for example, a Griqua residential area or something. Okay, I understand that our people say that they had farms and these farms were taken from them, then the government should make provision for the people who can prove that they were the owners of certain farms. But I do not believe that the Griqua population should be a separate population. It is true. I would agree with Oom Eddie, ... if the Griqua claim, for example, Griqua land ... how many people would have to be displaced now? Its again apartheid, you could say, in reverse gear.[45]

Paradoxically, Isak and Andries were both *boorlings* of Griquatown who operated in different ways, acquiring their social status through different measures. Although, as described above, Andries Waterboer was a quintessential boorling descended from the original Waterboers, his lifestyle was more akin to that of *inkommers* and he was able to

[44] Conversation, Jerrie Mojakie, 24/08/1996
[45] Interview, Erick Scholtz and Eddie Fortuin, 20/08/1997

find social validation in his skills, work and the associated financial security. In other words, Andries' sense of importance and social esteem came from his historical lineage, his activities and his belief in his abilities. Unlike Isak who was, in different ways, also a quintessential *boorling*, he did not seek affirmation from either a higher source (God) or other people. Isak was unemployed, medically classified as disabled and a recipient of a state maintenance grant. He was therefore unable to assert his social status through a belief in his abilities or his own resources. Contrary to all *inkommers*, he thus sought esteem and social standing in his relations with God and with other *boorlings* in the town. It was they who believed his dreams and accepted him as God's messenger, thus allowing him to carry out God's instructions and to be their leader.

Whereas, in the past, *inkommers* had taken an opportunist interest in GPO activities and in being Griqua, there was no need for them to pay attention to Griqua matters in the late 1990s. The elite, the opportunistic and the hard-working no longer had legal obstacles to their economic and social development. They no longer needed to obtain licences to open new businesses, they could move into the former white area of Griquatown, they assumed positions of leadership in the NGSK or VGK and they were elected onto the Griquatown Council. All of these opportunities were accompanied by a belief in the ANC and the idea that they were responsible for their own futures. In accordance with the ANC's view of people as citizens and not as ethnic communities, the elite of Griquatown came to reject notions of the Griqua as special or different.

POLITICAL MOBILISATION AND A GRIQUA HOME

Thus far this chapter has argued that Griqua identity and Christianity were intertwined in complex ways. A component of Christianity has always been located within the home and missionaries were concerned to produce 'proper Christian families' putting emphasis on nuclear households and not providing accommodation for single women (Elbourne and Ross, 1997: 45). Such concerns were carried over to the NGK and to their affiliated mission churches in the coloured townships. Indeed, as Kinghorn has suggested,

> (t)he role of Afrikaner churches went deeper than political activism. They nurtured the underlying values, the very soul of Afrikaner mobilization. Two core values were stressed: the family and hierarchical authority, neither of which, of course, is peculiar to Afrikaners (1997: 141).

These values comprised an integral part of Griquatown society. The identification of people as either *boorlings* or *inkommers* feeds directly into notions of family (born of the place) and of hierarchy (*boorlings* being oppressed by *inkommers*). It further fits

with the hierarchical nature of apartheid in which whites oppressed coloureds and Africans to differing degrees. Whereas Chapter Two concentrated on political activity, overtly centred on being Griqua, which was expressed in negotiations with the DCD and with the government, the politics of being Griqua should also be understood to be located within the family. As Griquatown had no social, political or economic centre, there was li tle public activity for people to rally around. Furthermore, as mentioned above, ideas about being Griqua were fraught with ambiguities and contradictions and those people who embraced their Griqua identity were themselves constantly ambivalent about the possibilities of organising on this level. Given the levels of poverty in Griquatown, it was extremely difficult for people to entertain alternative social visions and most people were preoccupied with staying alive on very limited financial resources. Their interests were largely located within the home: a context in which, as suggested by the class hierarchy of *inkommers* and *boorlings*, kinship, place and belonging become powerful and important resources. The *boorlings* (and many *inkommers*) were all related to each other, in complex and multiple ways that could not always be accurately traced, and often they commented that Griquatown was one extended family. Being Griqua was seen as something passed down the generations: 'the Griqua cause goes from generation to generation, this is a lifelong cause'[46] and as extending beyond the political domain. At the same time, it brought the political domain into the heart of the family.

Ideas about the relative status of *inkommers* and *boorlings* were often linked to houses and homes. Ouma Jacoba commented 'everyone who came in, all the *inkommers*, they are now boss. They have palaces, I live in a toilet'.[47] In part, this was because most of the *inkommers* had been wealthy enough to build their own houses, whereas most *boorlings* lived in small council houses. More importantly though, Jacoba pointed out that the concepts '*inkommers*' and '*boorlings*' were not only associated with housing, they were reproduced within the home. Every married man was an *inkommer* in relation to his in-laws. A man, upon marrying, became a newcomer – an *inkommer* – in his wife's father's home. Here *inkommers* were considered partly 'of the family' in the sense that they married in, and partly as enemies to the family. Erik Scholtz, the former Mayor of Griquatown, commented thus about what it was like to be an *inkommer*, '(n)ow the tension, they are your enemy in the family because you are an *inkommer* and they say you are getting rich here'.[48] This suggests that relations in the town, between poor *boorlings* and rich *inkommers*, were being reproduced within the home. A son-in-

[46] Conversation, Adam Kok, Campbell, 23/08/1996
[47] Interview, Jacoba Swartz, 14/01/1998
[48] Interview, Erick Scholtz and Eddie Fortuin, 20/08/1997

law, like the elite outsiders, could not be relied upon. No obligation bound him to his wife's family and he would only assist his in-laws if he felt like it. Furthermore, since a son-in-law was an *inkommer*, nothing he did was considered good enough. As Ouma Jacoba said, an '*inkommer* will never do what your own (son or husband) used to do'.[49] In the same way, being of Griquatown or of the Northern Cape more generally – being a *boorling* – was related to notions of family. In both Griquatown and Campbell the relationship between place and family was often commented upon. Griquatown and Campbell were seen as the original sources of Griqua or, as Jan Balie said, 'the Griqua lived in Campbell (and) Griquatown'.[50] Those people who were *bocrlings* were thus the descendants of the original families that had comprised the LMS stations.

Griqua identity took the home as its reference point and in so doing reiterated the emphasis on Griqua family and place. To acknowledge one's Griqua heritage was similar to entering a home. This entailed more than entering a physical building that provided shelter; to be Griqua was to be part of a metaphorical home in which the relationships of a family were reproduced. Within the broader Griqua 'home', it was important that protocol be carefully followed and in Campbell and Griquatown, for example, it was not possible for anyone simply to arrive and mobilise amongst the residents for support. Organisers needed to be invited into the Griqua 'home' and guests needed to forewarn their hosts of their arrival so that preparations could be made. Not surprisingly, this did not always happen. As the following example of *Dankfees* or thanksgiving ceremonies in Campbell show, a violation of a physical and political space was referred to in terms of illicit entry into a home.

THE DANKFEES

Adam Kok V had organised a *Dankfees* in his home town to inform people of his recent and active interest in the GNF (see pages 76 and 77). After considerable planning, the event was scheduled to take place on Sunday, 14 December 1998, but Martin Engelbrecht, Adam Kok V's former organiser and now political rival, arrived with a busload of people from Kimberley on Saturday, 13 December. Engelbrecht had planned to partake in the *Dankfees* and, upon hearing that he was a day early, decided to hold a service in the community hall at Campbell (situated next door to Adam Kok's house). Adam Kok V wanted nothing to do with this service organised by his rival, and vanished until a local farmer, highly interested in Griqua affairs and relatively influential because of his donation towards Sunday's *Dankfees*, found him and insisted that the rivals together host the *Dankfees*. Engelbrecht then formally opened the meeting and welcomed the participants and guests. After several songs and a prayer, Adam Kok V was asked to address the community. He began his presentation by stating that everything had started on a wrong note: someone else was welcoming him to his own home. The comment reflected his resentment and he later complained 'I wanted to hold the *Dankfees* tomorrow'.[51]

[49] Interview, Jacoba Swartz, 14/01/1998
[50] Interview, Jan Balie, Campbell, 28/08/1996
[51] Public Speech, Adam Kok, Campbell, 13/12/1997

Adam Kok, in complaining that someone was welcoming him to his own home, was suggesting that Engelbrecht, having had the nerve to host a *Dankfees* in his (Adam's) home town, in the local community hall and with many of his supporters present, was invading his political turf and thereby threatening his home. Martin Engelbrecht was not, however, an *inkommer* and, although he and his supporters came from Kimberley, he had grown up in Campbell and the woman who had raised him still lived there. Martin was, therefore, a member of the Griqua family – but one who was not behaving according to protocol and who was attempting to invert the hierarchical establishment of the leaders. The following day, Tollie Japhta again invoked the symbolism of the house and the family to distinguish between leaders such as Martin and 'sanctioned' leaders such as Adam Kok. Adam Kok V had been coerced into participating in the previous day's proceedings, but those gathered that day were under his leadership. The Griqua cause could only be enacted through the sanction of the Kok family. He was the leader in the Northern Cape who had been recognised by the Government and placed on the GNF. The leaders who had spoken the previous day had 'climbed in through the windows'[52] and had not engaged Adam Kok's support through the appropriate channels (the question of 'illegitimate' entry into a house is discussed further in Chapter Six).

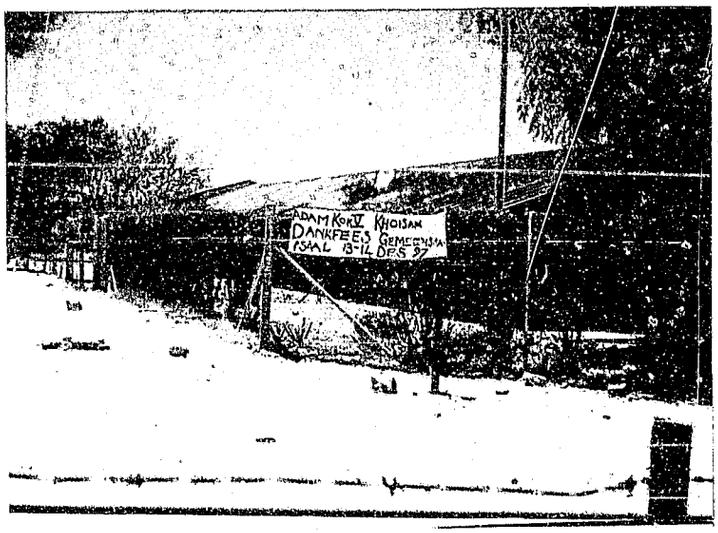

Figure 5.6: Advertising the Thanksgiving (*Dankfees*) at Campbell school (1997)

Inherent in the analogy of the home and family were ideas about gender relations and the roles of both men and women. Whereas husbands and wives accepted, to a certain degree, the idea that women should be located within the home, men's political action was located within a broader notion of a 'Griqua home'. In keeping with this idea, Tollie Japhta opened his speech at the *Dankfees* in Campbell by commenting that when he left home to attend Griqua functions, his wife asked him why he was so smartly dressed and whether he was going to visit another woman. His reply was that as a

[52] Public Speech, Tollie Japhta, Campbell, 14/12/1997

Griqua leader, every woman was his mother, his *cherrie* (girlfriend) or his wife.[53] At one level, this implies that his wife, confined to the home and not actively involved with Griqua meetings, did not know of his political involvement. Being a Griqua leader was similar to having a love affair, the activity took you away from the home for long periods, it preoccupied your mind, distracted you and introduced people who made demands on you. More importantly though, his reply – referring not only to girlfriends and lovers, but also to mothers and wives – suggests a broadening of the 'home' domain. Griqua organisation was thus located in a notion of 'home' that extended beyond the physical boundaries of an individual home and it was this broader 'place', where *boorlings* came together and interacted as family, that made people specifically Griqua.

In the course of the *Dankfees* festivals several other speakers picked up on the use of the home as an analogy, perhaps to counteract the tense atmosphere in which the events took place. Contained within these presentations was the idea that the Griqua home and family were constructed on the basis of notions that broadened a home into a place where people could feel comfortable and experience a sense of entitlement. During the second day of the *Dankfees*, participants were commended for gathering to continue the Griqua cause and a speaker pointed to the past difficulties when dealing with Griqua matters. The Lord had, however, made it possible to take up the task again and all those gathered had to participate. He continued: 'in my house I can go to the stove and lift the lids off the pots and no-one can say that I cannot take that food. I am here, I live here, so lets make a success of today'.[54] In this short extract, the speaker made use of the home to represent something that one was entitled to and should take advantage of. This analogy of the home was appropriate because in the past, in the context of the powerful apartheid state that had made Griqua activism difficult and had controlled almost all aspects of people's lives, the home had became one of the few places where people could retain a degree of control (discussed in more detail in Chapter Six). Similarly, he was implying that the people gathered for the *Dankfees* should feel empowered to continue the Griqua cause. They should enter the Griqua house and partake of the food (the benefits) to which they were entitled. The ideology of the home as a place that protected Griqua identity formed a strong thread during the *Dankfees* ceremonies. The strong walls of this symbolic home were to be constructed out of people's commitment to being Griqua. Those people who belonged within the home, or who were Griqua, should feel entitled to take shelter within its walls, to grow from the sustenance provided by the home and to establish relationships with other members of the home. As the case of Martin Engelbrecht illustrated, not everyone within the home

[53] Public Speech, Tollie Japhta, Campbell, 14/12/1997
[54] Public Speech, Unknown speaker, Campbell, 14/12/1997

behaved according to established procedures and people should beware of those who had entered the home through improper means – 'through the windows'.

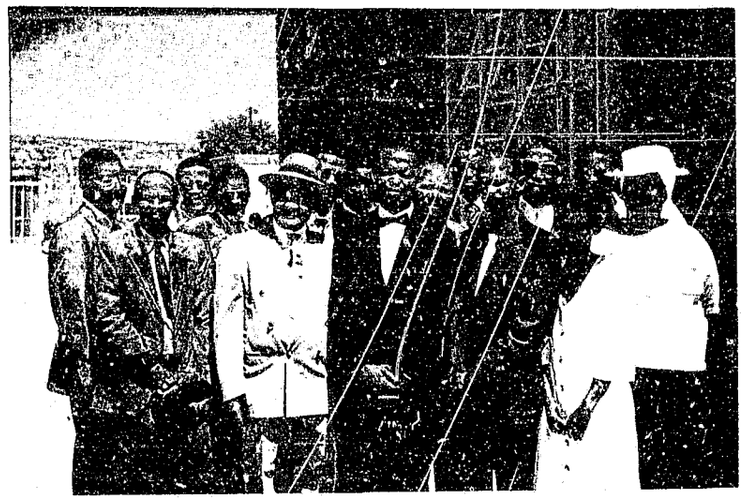

Figure 5.7: Adam Kok (centre figure in black suit and bowtie) and his organisers at the Thanksgiving. (1997)

Ideas about the home and politics should not, however, be seen as being circumscribed by fixed notions of gender and place. The following extract, which I quote in full, demonstrates some of the multiple connections between politics and the home. Anna Visser, like many of the people who chose to become involved in Griqua politics, was descended from an important lineage. She was the granddaughter of *Kaptein* Nicolaas Waterboer and she had also been the lover of Andries Sekuti (a well-known leader of the GPO until his death). For years she had been the secretary of the GPO and numerous people - academics such as myself, curious tourists, descendants of missionaries, Griqua activists and others – had been directed to her upon making enquiries in Griquatown. When Anna did not feel like talking, she pretended to be away from home and her neighbours or grandchildren would inform the visitors that she was visiting in Postmasburg, while Anna watched from her sister's house.[55] If Anna did not like the visitors who found her at home, she usually refused to discuss matters and re-directed them to Kanyiles in Ritchie. There were, however, occasions when she was angered into responding. One hot dusty day when I popped in for a cup of coffee after doing interviews all morning, she told me about some visitors in particular. From her description, it sounded as though Martin Engelbrecht, prior to developing the alliance with Kanyiles described in Chapter Two and before his falling-out with Adam Kok V (mentioned above), was seeking to acquire knowledge about *Kaptein* Nicolaas Waterboer and to undermine Kanyiles. The visitors – Martin Engelbrecht and his colleagues – referred disparagingly to Anna's home: a reference that angered her. More

[55] Conversation, Anna Visser, 14/08/1996

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[55] Conversation, Anna Visser, 14/08/1996

importantly, however, and clearly evident from her account, the reference to her home is a reference to her being securely located within a Griqua political space. Although the visitors were disparaging about her home, it was here that they had come in search of information. They had not gone to Kanyiles' office but rather come in search of her. The incident also shows how women in the home can influence and control a degree of political activity.

Anna: Then I said 'No, I've nothing of *Oupa's*' (Grandfather Nicolaas Waterboer's). Look we should actually say *Kaptein*, but we say *Oupa* because its my father's father. Then I said to him '*Kaptein* should not have married again (to) old Mrs Brown, then I would know more about what happened to *Oupa's* possessions. *Oupa* had a big trunk, about this big, you can put something in the top of it, you can put something inside it as well. It locks with two padlocks, old fashioned padlocks. That trunk was loaded (and taken) by that woman (Waterboer's wife, Mrs Brown – a woman who makes no claim to being Griqua).

Me: So this man came to you?

Anna: Yes, but I did not talk as I'm talking now

Me: What did you say to them?

Anna: I said to them 'I know nothing'. The man said 'Just look here, look at the list. You are on the list'. Then I said 'No, if Mister Sekuti is listed there or I am listed there, I cannot talk about things that the *Kaptein* told me. Perhaps it is not even true'. Then the other one said 'it is true'. Then I said 'no, but if you want to know so badly, why don't you go to Ritchie'? No, they do not work with that man. Then I said 'that's your problem. You cannot come and work on another man's border. You have come from Oudtshoorn, from the Cape, and you want to come and work here in this area'. I said 'go to him and work with him and see what you get out of him. But from me you will not get anything, I don't even know about farms'. Again they take out a long list; 'look at the farms that *Oupa* gave the farmers'. Such long forms ... and said 'looked at the farms that *Oupa, Kaptein* Waterboer, Andries Waterboer, the old *skelm* (rogue)' he said that, that man 'Andries Waterboer is a *skelm*, he worked with the farmers'. That is what the man said. Then I thought, oh, you're talking about him like that, I'll show you. Then I said 'after my *Oupa* was a *skelm*, what are you looking for on his land? This is the Waterboer's border this' I said 'and when the farmers were in control, we didn't suffer as we suffer now... we suffer terribly'. The man said '*Klein mies* (little madam) please don't get angry'. Then I said 'no, I'm not getting angry, but I see your moustache twitching and my lips twitch very easily. Go to Ritchie, *Oupa's* leader lives in Ritchie, please go to him. I have nothing to say to you'. 'Yes but the farms, here are the farms'. I cannot remember the farms names. You know those farms, what are those farms names? (addressed to me). 'Yes, you stay in an old house, (you) don't look like a *Kaptein's* grandchild. You stay in a house with one door'.[56] Then I said 'you know Mister, I'm terribly happy in this old house. I don't want a better house. This little house has brought me great happiness I am happy here, all my children married out of this little house. Now I live with my grandchildren and if they want to go to their mother they can. If they want to come back, they can come back But I'm staying...'. 'You don't even have an inside toilet, you are that old *Kaptein's* granddaughter, look here... they should have bought you a place in town'. Now I'm angry, I say 'Even if you give me money, I will never move from here', I say 'I am happy this is a small old house'. They never came back again.

[56] This is a sign of poverty and it is believed that houses should have two doors to allow the ghosts or evil spirits to leave, otherwise they get trapped inside the house. Ironically, although most council houses in Griquatown were built with two doors, one door is often sealed in order to maximise space in a room.

It is clear from Anna's account that she was empowered by having knowledge that she refused to share and that she was remaining true to the idea of being Griqua. Furthermore, it was through her unwillingness to divulge information that the nature of the visitors was revealed. They thought that Waterboer, Anna's grandfather, was a rogue and Kanyiles, a man highly respected by Anna, was not worth talking to. Anna was very proud when recounting this event and I heard about these visitors more than once.

The house, and the visitors' comment that she should have a house in town, forms a central theme in Anna's account. First, it relates to the physical building and the idea that *boorlings* were poor, living in barely adequate houses, whereas *inkommers* built large houses with many rooms. This had not always been the case: Andries Waterboer, the Griqua *Kaptein* of Griquatown from 1820 – 1852, lived in what has become known as the *geel paleis* or 'yellow palace' in the centre of town. The 'palace' was no longer standing.[57] But the idea that Griqua leaders ought to live in palaces has continued to preoccupy people in Griquatown. Anna, as the granddaughter of a famous lineage, should thus be living in more affluent circumstances and the visitors were suggesting that her poverty was, at least in part, due to Kanyiles' poor leadership of the GPO. Secondly, Anna says that her grandfather, *Kaptein* Nicolaas Waterboer, had kept his papers within his house and it was marriage that determined who would receive his papers. He had, in fact, remarried at the age of 82 – one year before his death (DFA, 4/10/1962) – and his new wife was not interested in Griqua politics. Nonetheless, it was this new wife who was to receive the *Kaptein's* documents and Anna seemed to be saying that neither she nor Kanyiles had been able to rescue them from her. Nicolaas Waterboer's new wife also controlled his funeral and in so doing downplayed his Griqua captaincy. She refused to acknowledge Kanyiles and organised a different minister to perform the burial service. Marriage to a Griqua man – who was a *Kaptein* – was thus sufficient to allow Nicolaas Waterboer's wife extensive control over what went on inside the household – despite her own lack of interest – and deprived the Griqua people of access to important parts of their heritage, namely their *Kaptein's* funeral and his documents.

It was not only Anna who understood that women were able to influence activities in this manner. Adam Kok from Campbell commented that he had tried to contact Andries Waterboer – the person of indeterminate *boorling / inkommer* status referred to earlier in this chapter (pages 172 – 174) – in Griquatown several times. As Andries was working in Kimberley, Adam always spoke to Andries' wife who diligently took a

[57] Some people argued that a small outhouse on the site dated from these times. Only a few photographs and remnant bricks were displayed in the Mary Moffat Museum.

message, but refused to provide Adam with a contact number for her husband. Adam commented 'it looks as if the wife does not want him to get involved with this cause'.[58]

THE VALUE OF PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIANITY

Finally, I return to the topic of Pentecostal Christianity which, in the context of Griquatown politics, provided Isak Greeff with such a sense of fulfillment. Christianity, for much of Griqua history, has been associated with power relations. The missionaries were influential brokers between the colonial state and the Griqua, and the NGK strongly influenced apartheid and its implication. The stress on Christianity as a guiding principle of rule fell away after 1994 and the election of a more representative government. But for many Griqua people this was problematic. It was, in their minds, only proper that Christian principles inform all organisation whether this be of a political, economic or purely social nature. This was particularly evident in the *Dankfees* ceremonies where a religious ceremony was used to present Griqua leaders to the people. The Griqua leaders involved in the GNF and described in Chapter Two, such as Kanyiles, Anthony le Fleur and Andrew Abraham Stockenstrom le Fleur, were all influential church leaders. Furthermore, one of the first changes made by Anthony le Fleur after being elected Chairman of the GNF was, in accordance with all other Griqua meetings, to insist that GNF gatherings began with prayer services. As mentioned above, *pastoors* in Griquatown commanded a degree of status and autonomy that was reinforced by the issuing of identity cards. Pentecostal Christianity was, however, a relatively new resource in Griquatown and, to return to the example with which this chapter began, its efficacy was yet to be explored in the context of a 'new' South Africa.

THE SHEEP-STEALERS

As already mentioned, five *pastoors* from the Five Apostles Pentecostal Church were arrested for stock theft in July 1997. They had purportedly stolen two sheep from the property of Mr Bernadus Jansen, a farmer in the Hay district. These men appeared in court on 27 August 1997 where they elected to represent themselves and argued that they had not stolen the sheep. Johannes Tulpies, one of the accused, explained that:

> (w)e did not steal. We were going from Groblershoop to Postmasburg to fetch 3 brothers (church members) for a baptism. That night, when we were on the dirt road, we saw the eyes of two animals. We thought they were steenbuck and I increased speed to 80 kilometers per hour in order to hit them. When I saw that they were sheep, I swerved so that I would not hit them. We then argued over whether to load the sheep (into the car). Then we loaded the sheep.[59]

The central theme of Johannes Tulpies, the accused whose comment opens this chapter, was that God had provided them with food. He used the opportunity to question the relationship between moral (and religious) and legal authority, saying that their acts

[58] Conversation, Adam Kok, Campbell, 23/08/1996
[59] Johannes Tulpies, Court Records, transcription of case 232/97.

were 'in keeping with the Christian scriptures' and that it was only theft 'according to the law', not by the standards upheld in the gospel.[60]

On the one hand, the theft was highly opportunistic and, as the *pastoors* themselves admitted, no-one would have taken the sheep in broad daylight. But it was late at night when they came across the animals and they were not expecting to be caught. On the other hand, the fact that the five men had no previous convictions suggests that the act of stealing sheep may well have had alternative meanings. In Griquatown, there were particular associations with sheep and status: evident in rites of passage (discussed in Chapter Six) and in the common adage amongst school children during 1997 and 1998 that a man's life was worth less than that of a sheep. This was based on the knowledge that a person caught stealing a sheep was generally imprisoned for two years, whereas if someone was killed in a drunken fight, the perpetrator was generally released the following day.[61] A man's life thus compared unfavourably to that of a sheep which was far more valuable. The *pastoors* argued, however, that the sheep was provided by God because the men were hungry. They were thereby suggesting that people were indeed more important than sheep. It thus looks as though the *pastoors*, in addition to perhaps opportunistically helping themselves to the sheep, were testing the power of Pentecostal Christianity and suggesting that the current value system in Griquatown was corrupt. They insisted that they had committed no crime and they used their arrest as an opportunity to challenge the legal system and to propose that their religious creed ought to take precedence over the laws of the land: '(t)he law of the state would say it's theft, but if you have spiritual insight then you would see that this is not the case'.[62] They further attempted to inspire the magistrate to accept the primacy of God's rule as one accused insisted: 'I want to ask and the magistrate as judge must answer two questions. The law that you have, what is the origin that allows you to wear that mantle? Does the law come from God or from the people?'.[63]

The court case brought mixed responses from people in Griquatown. Most farmers and policemen felt no sympathy for the *pastoors* who, they stressed, were simply being opportunistic about the theft. Indeed this was the version of events as accepted by the court and the state prosecutor pleaded the 'common case of possession' and furthermore stated that the defence was ridiculous.[64] (Not surprisingly, the verdict was that all five men were guilty). In addition, as stressed during the court case, it was necessary to warn offenders against such behaviour. Many other people in Griquatown

[60] Johannes Tulpies, Court Records, Transcription of case 232/97.
[61] Conversation, Mrs Isaaks, 13/09/1997.
[62] Gert Matthys, Court Records, Transcription of case 232/97.
[63] Johannes Tulpies, Court Records, Transcription of case 232/97.
[64] State Prosecutor, Court Records, Transcription of case 232/97.

thought that the *pastoors* were simply using religion as a means of manipulating the system and of justifying a theft. They felt that the *pastoors* were giving the Pentecostal churches a bad name and that they should not have been allowed to testify in court about their religion. Indeed one local policeman got tremendous mileage out of enacting the court case over and over again with much laughter from the onlookers. The *pastoors'* attempts to question the law and the value system of people in power in Griquatown ended in ridicule and they were each sentenced to a year's imprisonment. This demonstrated that the desirability of Pentecostal Christianity lay neither in its political power nor in influential connections to persons or institutions. Rather, it is within the local context of family, place, *boorlings* and *inkommers* that the efficacy of Pentecostal Christianity must be sought.

As has been suggested above, ideas about the family were irrevocably tied up with ideas about Christianity and being Griqua. Pentecostal Christianity had the dual attraction of allowing individuals an opportunity to establish themselves as significant beings within very small congregations and creating the means whereby people could re-define and limit their 'families'. This latter function was extremely important in an environment where everyone needed each other to survive. In Griquatown all *boorlings* were considered part of a Griqua family and the obligations associated with this 'kinship' were difficult to maintain given the depressed socio-economic circumstances. Almost all *boorlings* in Rainbow Valley were exceptionally poor and could only survive through the assistance of other people, who were obliged to help because they were defined as members of this broader Griqua family. In keeping with the idea of an inclusive Griqua home that extended beyond the physical structures of a house, most people, although claiming that they did not support other families outside of their home, constantly sent food to – or received it from – people in other households. As children were often dispersed within several households, many material items moved from one house to another with great frequency. People would also visit one another when they were hungry and I often watched Sophie, one of my hosts, feeding people or sending food to other residents of Griquatown. In addition, personal property was hard to define and people would frequently wear each other's clothes or take items from other people's bags. I recall my surprise when people leaving Griquatown simply packed items belonging to other people and only later – at the final moment of departure – informed the ostensible owner of their actions.

In this context where everyone was defined as family, assistance was, in a sense, obligatory, and private property was not respected. With everyone in dire need at some time, the charismatic churches offered a means of limiting social relations and reciprocal obligations. As mentioned above, most of these churches had very small congregations,

numbering between three and ten members. This made it possible for each individual member to be important and for a sense of community to develop amongst individuals. West's argument that the small size of African Independent Church congregations makes for 'intimate ingroup relations', an increased sense of 'security and approval' and a 'certain status or standing' amongst members, is applicable to the Griquatown case (1975: 83 – 87). Furthermore, although members of charismatic churches were friends – they attended each other's birthday gatherings (often held in the garden surrounding the church), helped out at weddings and funerals and so forth – they were also considered to be kin: hence the terminology of 'brother' for men and 'sister' for women (cf. West, 1975: 85-6). Almost all the Pentecostal churches in Griquatown were built alongside the house of the church leader and this again emphasised the relation between the church and the home. Members of the congregation were frequent visitors to the church/home where they would sit and talk, drink tea and discuss clerical matters. Because congregation members defined themselves in terms of honesty and respectability, it was possible for relations of goodwill and measured reciprocity to develop between them. Such relations differed from other relationships in Griquatown which were often structured in terms of obligatory commitment and extensively drawn upon in times of need and desperation.

The idea of using Christianity to define a community or a set of relations is not new. Elbourne and Ross have argued, for example, that for Khoi and slave populations of the nineteenth century 'Christianization and the widespread adoption of new norms of respectability were, for some coloured groups, building blocks for the reinvention of community....' (1997: 50). As discussed above, in the days of the LMS, Christianity was often resorted to as a means of gaining respectability and renewing any sense of 'honour lost by servitude' (Elbourne and Ross, 1997). If Christianity was an opiate for the repressed Khoikhoi in the nineteenth century, then Pentecostalism and charismatic beliefs performed a similar role in the late twentieth century. It was Weber who argued that charismatic leadership was born out of suffering, strife or enthusiasm (in Eisenstadt, 1968: xxiii). Lindholm has further suggested that such leadership is attractive in a society where people, oppressed by policies they consider wrongful, turn to a charismatic personality who 'not only offers participation in an ecstatic communion, but also promises to lead a transformative crusade against the corrupt world' (Lindholm, 1990: 175). A similar argument has been advanced by Anderson and Pillay:

> South African Pentecostalism, despite denials of some, has its roots in a marginalised and underprivileged society struggling to find dignity and identity. It expanded among oppressed African people who were neglected, misunderstood, and deprived of anything but token leadership by their white Pentecostal 'masters,' who had apparently ignored biblical

concepts like the priesthood of all believers and the equality of all people in Christ. And yet the ability of Pentecostalism to adapt to and fulfil African religious aspirations was its principal strength' (1997: 240).

It remains to question why such institutions blossomed only after the formal ending of apartheid? There are a number of possible answers to this. First, as mentioned above, the opening up of the township made it possible for churches to establish new branches in Griquatown. Secondly, as discussed in Chapter Two, although South Africa has attempted to remove the structures of apartheid oppression and to reassure all citizens of their place in the 'rainbow nation', many Griqua people remain unconvinced that their particular needs and demands will be met. Thirdly, despite the many changes that have taken place in South Africa, things have not altered drastically in Griquatown where people are crippled by extreme poverty, illiteracy and massive unemployment. Some residents of Griquatown argue that things were better under apartheid where a paternalist government had ensured delivery of at least some material benefits. In contrast, by 1997, the Griquatown municipality was bankrupt and the hospital closed in 1998. In addition, pension payments were sometimes erratic and there were rumours that child maintenance grants were to cease. These factors led people to believe that they were still oppressed and, no doubt, attracted them to the redemption offered by the Pentecostal churches.

The recent achievements of the high-profile leaders described in Chapter Two and their serious engagement with government officials to ensure that Griqua identity receives the recognition they deem appropriate suggests, however, that things in Griquatown are again about to change. Indeed there were already signs that new trends were in the process of evolving and by 1999 Griqua mobilisation was again being taken seriously in Griquatown. *Kaptein* Johannes Jacobus Waterboer, Andries Waterboer's brother, had taken over the captaincy from his brother and had begun to assert his leadership. He had acquired the use of an office in one of the municipal buildings on the main street of the town and had installed several people into support positions. I attended an initiation ritual in Griquatown in July 1999 with a BBC film crew where, for the first time in the 12 years that I had been visiting people in the town, I was asked who I was and what I was doing. The young man questioning me was the publicity officer for *Kaptein* Waterboer, who had instructed him to attend the ritual and, in so doing, learn the Griqua customs. He spent much of his time at my side asking questions and seeking verification of his ideas. Similarly, a journalist who tried to visit Griquatown in April or May 1999 was informed that he could not be assisted because the *Kaptein* was in Kimberley. He was advised against speaking to anyone in Griquatown who might have been able to assist him and was instructed to wait for the *Kaptein* (Matshikiza, Daily Mail and Guardian, 27.5.99). Such formalities were unheard of during my fieldwork period when

most people had not even been sure if there was a Griqua *Kaptein* or not, and with researchers being referred instead to a small number of people known to be knowledgeable about the Griqua.

CONCLUSION

Whereas the 1980s saw many people actively engaged in GPO organisational politics and mobilising around Griqua matters, this gave way to a commitment to Pentecostal and charismatic churches in the 1990s. The waning interest in the GPO did not, however, spell a rejection of Griqua identity. Rather, Christianity and Griqua identity have been interwoven in complex ways since the origins of the Griqua people and the practice of Christianity was considered necessary at all Griqua gatherings. The chapter thus suggests that distinctions between being Griqua and being Christian cannot be simplistically applied. As Elphick has argued '(i)dentifying the boundaries between religion and family life, between religion and politics, and even between religion and economics has always been very difficult, and, in the context of South Africa history, virtually impossible' (1995: 1).

The Pentecostal Churches and the charismatic church services allowed individuals – especially those who became *pastoors* – to develop a sense of status and authority and a means of asserting an alternative value system. Most importantly though, in a context where all *boorlings* were understood to belong to the same Griqua 'family' with its uncertain boundaries, membership in a Pentecostal Church allowed people to define a select inner group of 'siblings', 'brothers' and 'sisters', amongst whom relations were respectful and reciprocal. Given that being Griqua was part of belonging to Griquatown and domestic life, *boorlings*, or people who were 'of Griquatown', had no need to assert that they were Griqua. It was implicit in their belonging. However, the categories *boorling* and *inkommer* were ambiguous and, to a certain extent, all married men could be seen as *inkommers* to the home, and by implication, as being Griqua. This meant that being Griqua was more often stressed in women's activities, in rituals that asserted women's claim to the houses and homes in which they lived. Locating Griqua identity within the home and within women's domains calls for an investigation of ritual and cultural constructions that shape ideas about houses and homes and is examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX
HOUSES AND THE RITUAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDERED HOMES

'One of the blessings he now enjoyed through the gospel was that he could sit at ease in his own house and at his own table'. Christianity had given him the chance of privacy (Ross, 1999: 118-119).

The house is like a family, and in its history the family appears as solid as a built structure. As we go through the house, memories not only describe physical space but also tell a social history. Domestic space serves as a metaphor for the human entity that inhabits it (Bahloul, 1996: 10).

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Five argued that people's involvement in charismatic churches and their sense of being Griqua had to be understood in terms of belonging to Griquatown and in relation to a broader 'Griqua family'. In one sense, men within this 'family' were seen as *inkommers* to the home and, by implication, to being Griqua. Those to whom 'being Griqua' came more naturally – more as something 'inborn' – were women. In particular older, poorer women asserted their claim on a house and on the relations established within the home through ritual manipulation. This chapter examines the life course of people growing up in Griquatown and explores the manner in which ritual was used in the creation and maintenance of both a broader Griqua 'family' and a nuclear family within a private house. In order to achieve this, a review of the theoretical literature on houses and households is followed by an examination of women's association with houses in Griquatown. I argue that women's association with houses stems from a complex interaction between their precolonial Khoi origins, Christian missionary influences and the manner in which the apartheid government implemented housing policies. I then examine the actions of women – mothers, sisters, wives and widows – in relation to men and to houses. Here the emphasis is on how particular women ritually stress their association with the house and how men – brothers, husbands and sons – endorse this symbolic relationship through ritual acquiescence or inactivity. In so doing, I aim to explore the related themes of gender and space, rather than to provide a full-scale account of ritual behaviour and its symbolic meaning. As this chapter demonstrates, the ritual complex incorporates both ideologies of a nuclear home and notions of a broader Griqua family in which everyone was related. Not all women, however, supported these symbolic statements about their role within the home and younger people sought to negotiate their involvement in ritual and to shape their lives only partially along the ritual and ideological lines dictated by older women.

Extensive anthropological attention has been paid to 'households' over the past 10 years examining issues such as household structure, boundaries, or permeability, decision-making, household economics and inter- and intra-household links (Cheal, 1989; Rutz, 1989 and Wilk, 1989).[1] In focusing on these interpersonal bonds, anthropologists have tended to neglect the 'relationship' people develop to the actual physical structures in which they live (Carsten and Hugh-Jones, 1995: 3). This anthropological work is limited to the pioneering work of Levi-Strauss and Bourdieu, Gudeman (1976), Gudeman and Rivera (1990) and contributions to the collection edited by Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995). Carsten and Hugh-Jones suggest that neglecting 'the house' has resulted from anthropologists' familiarity with houses (1995: 3-4). Gudeman's early work, however, examined the physical house along with the household: for members of the Panamanian community in Los Boquerones, the 'concept of the household is defined by reference to physical space' and the physical house is co-terminous with the people living within it (1976: 96).[2]

Houses have been understood to provide models for kinship (Levi-Strauss, 1983), social groupings (Carsten and Hugh-Jones, 1995), for material practices and the economy (Gudeman, 1990); means for concealing rank (Waterson, 1995; Gibson, 1995; Mckinnon 1995) and for understanding structure and history (Kuper, 1993). Recently houses have been seen as representing 'the loci for dense webs of signification' (Carsten and Hugh-Jones, 1995: 3). The idea of the house as a symbolic reflection of reality has, however, been severely criticised by Ellen. He points to the need to examine the different levels of meaning, the different kinds of order and the contradictory symbolism that can be brought together in the significance of the house (cited in Carsten and Hugh-Jones, 1995: 22, also see Bloch, 1989). It is in the multiple connections between residents and the physical houses they live in, rather than in a single monolithic meaning, that the symbolism and value of the house as metaphor is to be sought. Here Grinker's analysis of the house and gender as a metaphor for ethnic relations amongst the pygmy-farmer relations in Eastern Zaire is particularly insightful (1994). Ellen's approach and

[1] See Guyer (1981), Moore, (1988) and Wilk (1989) for reviews.

[2] Also see Bloch (1995) for a more recent analysis of how the Zafimaniry of Malagasy construct houses. These houses represent the various stages of household development. Here marriage is distinguished from other social relations through the acquisition of a house. The physical house becomes progressively sturdier as the marriage is strengthened through children. Within South African anthropology limited work has been done on housing and most anthropologists have concentrated on household studies (Bank, 1994; James, 1985; Niehaus, 1988, 1994; Sharp, 1994; Ross, 1993, 1996; Spiegel, 1996; van der Waal, 1992, n.d.). Where anthropologists have looked at issues of housing, their concern stemmed from studies of kinship (Whisson, 1976) and rural-urban migration and urbanisation (Hellman, 1934; Jones, 1993; Mayer, 1971; Murray, 1987; Ramphele and Boonzaier, 1988; Ramphele, 1993) and on how betterment forced people to move into particular housing styles (De Wet, 1988, 1995). Recent work has stressed the manner in which housing and housing conditions have affected social relations (Lucas, 1995) and the links between housing and identity (Pannell, 1998). Mc Allister's analysis of ritual beer drinks amongst the Xhosa of South Africa is unique in that he examines the interrelationship between homesteads, individuals and social identity (1980).

his concern to recognise human agency in relation to material objects is echoed in Moore's work. She suggests that '(t)he apparently evidential nature of the sexual division is almost everywhere concretized through material objects'. Anthropologists should, however, focus on 'the bodily praxis as a mode of knowledge' and on the material context in which people's actions occur (1994: 71, also see Harris, 1981). Similarly, this chapter examines men's and women's association with the houses in which they live. This is achieved through an exploration of a complex of rituals in Griquatown. Although studies in which women are associated with the domestic realm are not unusual,[3] this chapter suggests that symbolic associations are intrinsic neither to material objects nor to their spatial organisation. It is the *actions of individuals*, in relation to material objects, that invoke symbolic meanings (Moore, 1994). Individuals in Griquatown made their own identity in relation to a variety of influences that drew upon Khoi tradition, Christianity, perceptions of modern practices and so forth.

HOUSES AND HOMES – ASSOCIATIONS, INFLUENCES AND CONTROL

Griqua traditions, although of a diverse and mixed nature, still reflect some 'clearly identifiable Khoekhoe customs' (Barnard, 1992: 193). Women's position in precolonial Khoi societies is difficult to assess and although the literature does not deal with women's position in depth, there is unanimous agreement that they had relatively high social status and exerted considerable control (Barnard, 1992: 169). Khoi women were, in addition, firmly associated with the home. In 1881, Hahn wrote:

> In every Khoikhoi's house the woman .....is the *supreme ruler*; the husband has nothing at all to say. While in public the men take the prominent part, at home they have not so much power even as to take a mouthful of sour milk out of the tub, without the wife's permission. If a man ever should try to do it, his nearest female relations will put a fine on him, consisting in sheep and cows, which is added to the stock of the wife (1881: 19 original emphasis, cited in Barnard, 1992: 185).

During the early nineteenth century Nama women had an elevated social and economic status, acquired, not only as mothers and sisters, but also as married women who owned the family hut and all the domestic utensils. A similar trend was evident among the Korana, where wives managed the household items and food. Although men and women tended to eat together, a husband could only consume food with the permission of his wife (Engelbrecht, 1936: 96-7). Using Hoernlé's fieldnotes on Nama property and inheritance, Carstens has argued that the house, which generally belonged to the

[3] The association between women and the domestic arena is well-documented within the anthropological literature (see Rogers, 1975, 1978; Rosaldo, 1974; Gilmore, 1990; Moore, 1988). It has also been extensively described within poor working-class coloured communities in the Western Cape (Field, 1991; Ridd, 1993; Whisson, 1976).

woman, provided the basis of women's authority.[4] 'In the arena of the domestic economy, a man stood in a special relationship not only to his wife but also to his sisters, especially the eldest, a relationship which demanded respect and to a certain extent deference' (1983: 63). Within Nama society, ritual was geared towards the position women occupied – as mothers, wives and mistresses – within the home. Carstens has argued that (1982: 513):

> I believe we can interpret the continuation of Nama girls' initiation ceremonies long after they might have been expected to cease in the light of the contemporary position of Nama women - that of Manageress of matrifocal households in the context of one segment of South Africa's rural proletariat (Carstens 1982: 521).

Khoi women's authority was not limited to the home but also extended into broader society (Carstens 1983: 64). As in other South African societies, sheep and cattle were central to Khoikhoi economy; yet the segregation of animals and humans according to gender associations was far less pronounced. Khoikhoi women were not separated from cattle, were able to inherit cattle and, in men's absence, cared for the animals (Elphick, 1977: 60). Furthermore, women assumed a sufficiently prominent role in Khoikhoi society to be able to influence livestock and trade transactions with colonial authorities (Elphick, 1977: 167).[5]

Among the Korana, the father's sister (*táras*) or father's sister's daughter held a particularly powerful position. Her consent was necessary before her brother's son could marry and she negotiated marriages and the associated transactions as livestock was exchanged between the concerned families. This transferral of stock was a means of formalising social relationships, but was not a form of bridewealth payment. Among the Orange River Khoikhoi, for example, the bridegroom presented cattle to his in-laws and received other animals in exchange (Elphick, 1977: 61). Engelbrecht records that the most crucial of these exchanges was the groom's gift of two cows, one for the feast and one to the bride's mother to acknowledge her efforts in nurturing and raising his bride-to-be (Engelbrecht, 1936: 130). With regards to ritual, there was a degree of continuity between these early records and Griquatown in the 1990s. Prospective husbands still occasionally presented an animal, usually a sheep, to their brides' mothers in order to thank them. Girls' initiation rituals, very similar to the Nama ones described by Carstens, continued to endorse women's strategic position within the home.

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[4] Also see Davidson and Klinghardt (1998) and Mills (1995) on the construction and mobility of Nama houses.
[5] Also see Engelbrecht who, writing about the Korana in the twentieth century, suggests that these women were excluded from political and judicial decisions that took place under a central tree in the camp – a space where no woman was allowed to remain (1936: 89-93).

Carstens argues that women's authority, although extending beyond the immediate domestic sphere, was centrally located within the house which provided the basis of their autonomy. He further suggests that Nama women's power declined with the advent of agriculture as men procured, controlled and inherited arable land (Carstens, 1983: 67). There appears, in addition, to be some suggestion that women's sphere of influence was made possible by the temporary nature of their houses or huts, necessary for the nomadic lifestyle practised by the Khoi.

Women's traditional authority over a domain broader than the nuclear home was further influenced – and possibly in the process undermined – by the missionary and Christian intervention (discussed in Chapter Three). Only settled persons, living in stone houses, were regarded as truly part of the mission station and under the patronage of the missionaries. In addition, as suggested in the opening quotation, Christianity formalised the concept of private space through which believers were screened from 'negative' influences (Ross, 1999: 119). It was into this private and domestic space that Christian ideology positioned women already predisposed to be there through pre-Christian Khoi influence. In addition, as detailed in Chapter Three, the missionaries set two processes in motion: on the one hand, the tendency to identity people 'ethnically' according to whether they lived at the mission or not and, on the other, the need to segregate Christians – later to be Griquas – from unbelievers. The importance of place and the *boorling* ideology associated with being Griqua, already discussed in Chapters Four and Five, thus came to be coupled with ideas of a Christian family: a nuclear household living within the physical confines of a stone house that provided individuals with personal and private space in which women were in charge of domestic concerns. As missionary involvement in the Northern Cape declined, and the Christian Nationalism of the NGS expanded through southern Africa at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the association of houses with Christian nuclear families became even more entrenched. As Ross has commented '(t)he States Bible, as used in South Africa, glossed "house" as "family", your wife and children, as children of the covenant' (Ross, 1999: 96). It was this religious principle – of Christian nuclear households where women occupied the private domain of the home and men exercised public, political and economic control – that was to extend from the end of the nineteenth century until the beginning of the apartheid era.

The ideas of ethnic classification and of private space were, simultaneously and somewhat contradictorily, further entrenched in Griquatown during the apartheid era when housing came to be determined by race and class – Griqua *boorlings* living in

Council housing and coloured *inkommers* in privately-built homes – and apartheid housing policy, based on the idea of a nuclear family, required the presence of married women in Council houses.

Thus, a further set of factors locating women within the house were the strictures associated with apartheid housing policy. The parameters for acquiring housing in Griquatown were set by broad-ranging apartheid government policy, but this was carried out locally by the Griquatown Council and by the Coloured Management Committee or *Raad*. In order for people to acquire housing in Griquatown, three criteria had to be met: they had to be seen to be coloured,[6] to be already residing in Griquatown and to be formally married. These three criteria were applied, at times separately, but often in conjunction, to shape access to housing and its social implications in particular ways. In the following section I demonstrate how the criteria, applied by white men on the Griquatown Council and *inkommers* on the *Raad*, operated to locate women within the household and – simultaneously – to provide women with some degree of power in their marital relationships.

The first segregation measure, the infamous Group Areas Act implemented in 1950, allowed the proclamation of areas for exclusive use by a particular racial group – black, white or coloured (Platzky and Walker, 1985: xii).[7] Griquatown, in 1957, saw the beginning of a process whereby property and accommodation depended on racial criteria, and 'coloured' people were more likely to acquire accommodation than black people.[8] In the 1960s the State officials instructed Griquatown Council to segregate residential areas.[9] The Council found the racial segregation of people enormously difficult and, as detailed in Chapter Four, could not decide who should be classified coloured and who should be considered black.[10] Nonetheless, concerned primarily with the former category which – despite these uncertainties – was identified as a principal category in the Population Registration Act of 1950, the Griquatown Council planned to develop a sub-economic housing scheme alongside *Rooirand*.[11] The 1969 relocation of

[6] See Chapter Four, especially pages 139 – 150.

[7] The Act was finally abolished in 1991 (Hendler, 1991: 210). Also see Cameron, 1991; Robertson, 1990 and Dodson, 1990 for detailed discussion of the Group Areas Act.

[8] Minutes: Monthly Meeting of the Municipality, 23/07/1957 and 19/09/1957, Griquatown. For example, a man who lived in Koegas, but who was 'from this district' was not allowed to purchase a house in Griquatown because he was seen as an outsider and because the Council felt it had to 'guard against the influx of Bantus'. Undated letter to the secretary of the municipality and reply from the Town Clerk dated 18/02/1965, filed under 'Bantoe Admin, 1957 - 1977'.

[9] Letter to the *Streeksverteenwoordiger*, 22/08/1966. Filed under '*Groepsgebiedewet*'.

[10] Minutes: Monthly Meeting of the Municipality, 16/05/1958; 15/11/1960; 14/10/1961; 21/11/1961; 20/08/1963 and 17/10/1963, Griquatown.

[11] *Rooirand* was the name of the area which, in 1964, was owned primarily by coloureds, although a few whites owned property there but resided elsewhere. The word translates as 'red ridge' or 'rise'. I imagine the red refers to the colour of the rocks and soil. In 1997 *Rooirand* was still used to refer to Waterboer Street - the original *Rooirand*.

coloured residents was in accordance with the Group Areas Act,[12] and 166 families – who were identified as coloured – were moved from the *ou lokasie* to the new residential area. People identified as African, rather than coloured, remained in the *ou lokasie* (old location) until 1984 when a new black location was built.

Townships were designed in order to facilitate the control of the residents (Platzky and Walker, 1985: 101) and the newly-established coloured township in Griquatown, named Phillipsville after a prominent male resident, was no exception. Three rows of houses were built, separated from each other by small open spaces and wire mesh fencing. The construction of the 166 houses, paradoxically, marked the beginning of a housing shortage in Griquatown: since before their construction both black and coloured people had been able to erect their own homes using whatever materials they could afford. They had also been able to extend their homes to accommodate growing families when necessary, or when they could accumulate the money, labour and materials. As *Ouma* Jacoba[13] explained: 'When my husband died one evening, it was just two rooms. The one did not have a roof yet, the one was at least roofed. I built more [rooms]. It was seven rooms [built] with manure and soil'.[14] After 1968 this was no longer allowed and coloured people had to move into the sub-economic brick houses in Phillipsville, although wealthier people were able to purchase land and build their own houses. Other coloured residents remained in the *ou lokasie* and were expected to move as soon as more houses were built in Phillipsville. The creation of the township and the new houses thus exacerbated the housing shortage in Griquatown.[15] This lack of available housing also had the effect of limiting who could live in Griquatown (cf. Murray, 1987). People who did not work in the municipal area were not eligible for accommodation[16] and those who had left Griquatown were unable to return. For example, Lena van Wyk, born in Griquatown, had moved to live on a farm in the Griquatown district from 1955. In 1970, when she and her husband separated she was unable to remain on the farm, she applied for residence in Griquatown. She was informed that 'all the houses are rented and occupied' and further that 'Coloureds are not allowed to move into the declared Bantu area (the *ou lokasie*)'. [17] The result then, of this misconceived program, was that being a *boorling* of Griquatown was not enough to guarantee the acquisition of housing, which now required continuous residence in the town.

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[12] The Surplus People's Project estimated that approximately 860 400 people, mostly coloured and Indian, were relocated during 1965 and 1985 in order to implement the Group Areas Act (Platzky and Walker, 1985: 35).

[13] The Afrikaans word *ouma* means grandmother and is generally used as a term of respect when addressing any old woman.

[14] Interview, Jacoba Swartz, Griquatown, 14/01/1997

[15] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 21/08/1975; 10/05/1979 and 11/08/1980. Also see letter to the 'Editor Promotions' dated 16/05/1984. Filed under 'diverse 1977 - 1985'.

[16] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 8/12/1976, 29/01/1982.

[17] Letter from the Town Clerk to van de[r] Riet and Enslin, filed under '*Kleurlingsake*' [undated, but file extends from 1963 - 1975].

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[14] Interview, Jacoba Swartz, Griquatown, 14/01/1997
[15] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 21/08/1975; 10/05/1979 and 11/08/1980. Also see letter to the 'Editor Promotions' dated 16/05/1984. Filed under 'diverse 1977 - 1985'.
[16] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 8/12/1976, 29/01/1982.
[17] Letter from the Town Clerk to van de[r] Riet and Enslin, filed under '*Kleurlingsake*' [undated, but file extends from 1963 - 1975].

The coloured residential area now consisted of two areas: *Rooirand,* or Waterboer Street, and Phillipsville. There was a clear class division. Phillipsville was the sub-economic housing scheme where most *boorlings* lived; whereas *Rooirand* consisted primarily of *inkommers* or property owners.[18] These *inkommers* influenced housing in Phillipsville through their activities on the *Raad*[19] which, during the 1970s, screened housing applications, decided who could occupy vacated houses and monitored rent payments,[20] although the Griquatown Council also influenced these decisions.[21] In addition, *Raad* members investigated who lived in each house, ensuring that non-Griquatown residents were kept out.[22] If a large family lived in a small house or a small family in a large house, the *Raad* would initiate an exchange for a 'more suitably-sized' house.[23] Whisson's examination of council housing in Ocean View, Cape Town, during the 1970s, shows that the Council collected information on the size of the family and the tenant's income before allocating an 'appropriate' house. All the members of the household were thus listed and the tenant had to apply for permission to accommodate any unlisted people (1976: 257). In Griquatown the *Raad* was also able to influence what shape (in terms of members' ages and relationships) a family should consist of, the ideal being two parents and their biological children per house (cf. Whisson, 1976).[24]

The *Raad* consisted primarily of men of middle class or prosperous status who allocated houses to poorer men. A basic consideration was that the men who received houses were married and, in order to retain the house, they had to remain married. The following extract of a letter to the Griquatown Council demonstrates the fundamental importance of marriage in the eyes of the officials:

> Please help me find my wife. Her name is 'Liena Xholiswa Cingo' and her maiden name is 'Oor'. She left Upington in 1975 and never came back. She was visiting Griquatown and never came back. I need [her] because the Bantu Administration needs her in connection with the

[18] This is not to suggest that no *boorlings* were able to acquire property or build their own houses. A few people did manage, at tremendous cost and effort, to erect their own houses in Rooirand. They, and their descendants, have continued to live there but, as the state of their houses indicates, in increasing poverty and in stark contrast to the houses of the *inkommers*.

[19] These Coloured Management Committees were provided for under the Group Areas Act of 1950 which envisaged the eventual 'introduction of separate local government structures' in coloured (and Indian) areas (Cameron, 1991: 49).

[20] The Local Government Affairs Amendment Act of 1985 formalised that Management Committees be allowed a certain degree of control over housing in coloured townships. The *Raad* was never formally issued with these powers. In many small towns the local authorities fostered an informal relationship in which the Management Committee (Cameron, 1991: 55). In 1976 the Griquatown *Raad* - no doubt under pressure from the Town Council – sealed the houses of those residents who had not paid rent. (This action proved futile as the locks could be easily opened with a piece of wire). Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 8/12/1976.

[21] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 26/03/1975 and 21/08/1975.

[22] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 29/01/1982.

[23] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 16/08/1979, for example.

[24] Unsigned letter addressed to Coloured Management Committee, 23/01/1978. Also see White (1990: 142) for a discussion of how the former Rhodesian state used housing as a means to construct or prohibit family life.

> house. Send her back immediately. I may not stay without a wife. I have been given a chance until 30.8.77. Before then she must be back and she must just let [me] know if she doesn't have money and I will be able to send it. This comes from her husband 'John Cingo'. As soon as possible, this is urgent. Thank you.[25]

John Cingo's letter suggests that married women, living with their husbands in sub-economic housing, had a fair degree of power. Their importance, and centrality within the house, made the threat to leave equivalent to a threat of eviction. If John Cingo had left his wife, she might have been able to persuade the authorities that he was merely looking for work. The Town Council, perhaps influenced by the presence of children, would have been less likely to evict the wife than her husband. In this regard, Whisson has argued that although most tenancies were in the names of men, it was women and their dependant children who validated the tenancy agreement. A woman thus considered herself to be the person who did the 'controlling and co-ordinating' (1976: 260). Similarly, the *Raad* concerned itself with who lived in the houses, and implemented the Griquatown Council policies in a gendered manner which underlined women's position within the house.

Racial categorisation, marital status and gender came together in particular and complex ways to shape poor women's opportunities to acquire housing.[26] Wives 'adopted' their husbands' racial classification upon marriage[27] and when African women married coloured men, they could apply for residence in Phillipsville, thus 'moving up' the hierarchy of colour. When coloured women married African men, however, they were compelled to 'move down' and live in the black location. Many such 'mixed marriages' occurred, over several generations, and the *Raad,* preoccupied with occupants' supposed racial identity, encountered enormous problems trying to equate social and legal definitions of individuals' racial classifications. Added to this complication was the fact that people often applied to be reclassified and the *Raad* carefully noted each reclassification.[28] Married women's 'adoption' of their husbands' racial classification lasted only as long as the marriage. Should the couple divorce, both partners stood to lose their accommodation – the husband because he was no longer married and the wife because she was African. For example, in 1983 the *Raad's* minutes read: 'house 58 in Kruger Street will be taken from the current tenant Jan Pieterse because the husband and

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[25] Letter to Superintendent, Griquatown, filed under '*Lokasie Bantoe Admin 1977*'.

[26] Di Leonardo has argued that women should not be understood only in relation to men, but also that other issues such as class, race, ethnicity, religion and so forth impact on the gender relations between men and women (1991: 30).

[27] According to Article 10 of the now-defunct Group Areas Act (No. 77 of 1957).

[28] *Raad* members, as the educated and literate members of coloured society, probably completed people's forms applying for reclassification. Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 23/10/1981; 18/01/1985.

wife have separated and become estranged and because the wife is black'.[29] The men on the *Raad* thus decided where someone could stay according to the racial classification of the husband. In such instances, marriage and gender criteria overrode racial considerations. When, however, the *Raad* was confronted by a situation in which the male figure was absent, then race took precedence over marital status. During the above-quoted *Raad* meeting it was also noted that: '(t)he house of deceased E. van Rooyen, 125 Le fleur [sic] street will be allotted to his sister Johanna August given that she is temporarily being accommodated in the Bantu area'.[30] Problems and disagreements inevitably arose from the allocation of housing; and people in Griquatown, particularly those individuals who fared badly out of the exchange, strongly resented such upheavals.[31] Anyone who ignored the *Raad's* instructions stood to lose the house.[32] One complaint regularly raised in the *Raad* meetings was that African people were living, 'illegally', in the coloured area.[33] As demonstrated later in this chapter, one means of demonstrating Griqua, and therefore coloured, identity was through the performance of initiation rituals for young girls. Although the Griquatown Council was, on the whole, unaware of such rituals and the *inkommers* sitting on the *Raad* never attended, girl's initiation rituals were widely seen as being exclusively Griqua and were contrasted to Tswana boys' initiation. These initiation rituals, enacted within the home and emphasising women's association with the home, also located the initiate and her kin within the broader Griqua 'family' and, in so doing, would have ensured community support for their claim to be coloured rather than African and to live in Phillipsville rather than the African location.[34]

To sum up, during the apartheid era the *inkommers* on the *Raad* in conjunction with the white authorities on the Griquatown Council controlled the sub-economic housing in Phillipsville. This meant that people were locked out of their houses, evicted, moved, 'disciplined' and were dependent on their spouses, particularly wives, for the right to

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[29] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 18/02/1983.
[30] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 18/02/1983.
[31] Unsigned letter addressed to Coloured Management Committee, 23/01/1978. Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 30/01/1978, 17/01/1979.
[32] Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 14/06/1979.
[33] Matters were complicated by the fact that some families comprised both individuals who were classified as coloured and individuals classified as black. Minutes: Management Committee, Griquatown, 21/08/1981.
[34] National housing policy changed after the 1994 elections and in 1997 the houses in Phillipsville were made over to the tenants. Husbands and wives, or men and women who lived together as partners were given joint ownership of the houses. Old women, and in some less frequent cases, old men, living with their children, received exclusive ownership of the house. People could now modify and extend their homes or rent rooms for a fee. Houses began to be bought and sold (at an average cost of R2000 per unit). In addition people began erecting shanty housing in the surrounding *veld*. These people were to be housed in new houses being built as part of the RDP. The aim was to 'fill the gaps' or empty land between the former white, coloured and black residential areas and, ironically, 166 houses – the same number as was built in 1968 – were being constructed on the foundations of the *ou lokasie* from which people had been moved 30 years previously. Although not yet finished, these houses were already allocated by the new Griquatown Council (comprising African and coloured members) to both African and coloured residents of Griquatown.

reside in the house. The *Raad* decided whether people could be considered 'from Griquatown' and hence hire a house, or whether a man was too wealthy to rent a house. The *Raad* allocated houses to married couples according to various criteria and determined in which location – African or coloured – people could live. The *Raad* also decided when families had to exchange houses or move. Throughout this period, the *Raad* and the Town Council assigned women to the domestic role of maintaining the household. This meant that women's traditional authority in a broader Griqua domain – or family of *boorlings* – was not wholly undermined by the Christian and apartheid doctrines of nuclear households which limited their activities to domestic affairs. A combination of female authority, stemming from traditional notions of being Griqua, of Christian domesticity and of apartheid housing policy, provided complex and ambiguous contexts in which perceptions of gender and housing continued to be shaped. Older women, in particular, attempted to remain influential as they used ritual to reinforce their position within the house and, in so doing, to emphasise that they held strategic positions within Griqua society.

RITUALLY CONSTRUCTING A HOME

Rituals, which brought together the broader Griqua family, allowed for the metaphorical 'growth' of the 'Griqua home'. They emphasised the importance of a house as a woman's place and its extension beyond the boundaries of a physical house. As demonstrated below, rituals combined ideas of a nuclear family in a private house with the ideology of widespread kinship relations throughout Griquatown. On the one hand then, the location of women within a nuclear home was an appropriate place for controlling their sexuality. In part this idea stemmed from the Christian missionary and apartheid influences on housing which sought to keep women within the home and to control their sexuality; and in part it stemmed from a Khoi concern to protect women (Barnard, 1992: 179). On the other hand, and coupled with the positioning of women with a nuclear home, was the idea of an inclusive Griqua kin group that derived from Khoi ideology and was defined in terms of the mission-influenced notion of place. These ideas came together at particular moments in the life course of individuals, when older women sought to ensure the individual's ritual protection and the collective action of women often expressed the interweaving of these notions of family and the complex ambiguity of being Griqua.

Initiation:

The most well-known and documented of all rituals performed in Griquatown is the *hokmeisie* or girl's initiation ceremony (cf. Davidson and Klinghardt, 1997; Barnard, 1992, Engelbrecht, 1936; Hoernlé, 1918; Nurse and Jenkins 1975a, 1975b; Nurse, Weiner and Jenkins, 1985; Schapera, 1930; Waldman, 1989). It is my intention, not to

provide a full analysis of the girls' initiation ritual, but to explore the themes of gender and space. In this ritual, a young girl was secluded inside the house for a period of time before undergoing a series of purification rituals and finally being introduced to the watersnake.[35] The ritual was intended to protect the girl in her adult life and to socialise her into a Griqua woman, a process that involved guarding her sexuality and preparing her for conjugal relations.[36] During the *hokmeisie* ceremonies I attended (in July 1987, December 1994 and July 1998) it was imperative that the house become a domain occupied solely by women.[37]

The girl was ostensibly initiated when she began to menstruate. She was expected to inform her mother of her polluted state and her mother would immediately set about creating the ritual space *inside the girl's home*. In the case of Bettie van Wyk's initiation (see Waldman, 1989, where she is referred to as Magda), Bettie, her mother, and her two brothers lived in a two-roomed house, in which one room was the kitchen and the other the sleeping quarters. Bettie's ritual seclusion took place in the bedroom and in the most central part of the house. Her mother hung a curtain across a corner of the room and placed a mattress inside this space. This was where Bettie spent the next two weeks.

The home, in this instance, had been divided into zones of increasing ritual pollution and danger. Anyone, male or female, friend or enemy, could enter the yard and knock on the kitchen door. (Front doors were seldom used in Griquatown and only strangers would knock on them). During Bettie's 'seclusion', her mother's bed was positioned in front of the door, making it impossible to use the door to gain entry into the house. This may have simply been a result of rearranging the furniture, but it did operate as an additional safeguard against men or polluted strangers unexpectedly entering the house. Men and women entered the kitchen: it was in the kitchen for example, that Bettie's older brother, Thomas, was to be found during her seclusion. Bettie was restricted to a corner of the bedroom, although the entire bedroom – comprising the entire sleeping space and half the living space of the house – was redefined to accommodate only women.[38] Thomas was banished from his sleeping quarters and slept either at his mother's brother's home or at a friend's home. For a period of two weeks, at least half the house became a female-only place (see Figure 6.1).

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[35] The watersnake is believed to live inside springs, fountains, rivers and streams. The watersnake living in the spring where the girls in Griquatown were initiated, was said to be a very beautiful male snake with long eyelashes and gorgeous eyes. On its forehead was a bright shining spot (Waldman, 1989: 38).

[36] See Waldman (1989) for an anthropological interpretation and Hoernlé (1918) for the interpretation of the Nama girls' initiation ritual.

[37] As, however, the latter two rituals were being filmed by professional, non Griqua, film crews, the cameraman was allowed to enter the room in which the initiate was 'secluded'.

[38] Bettie's younger brother, then only a small baby, was allowed to remain in the room with his mother.

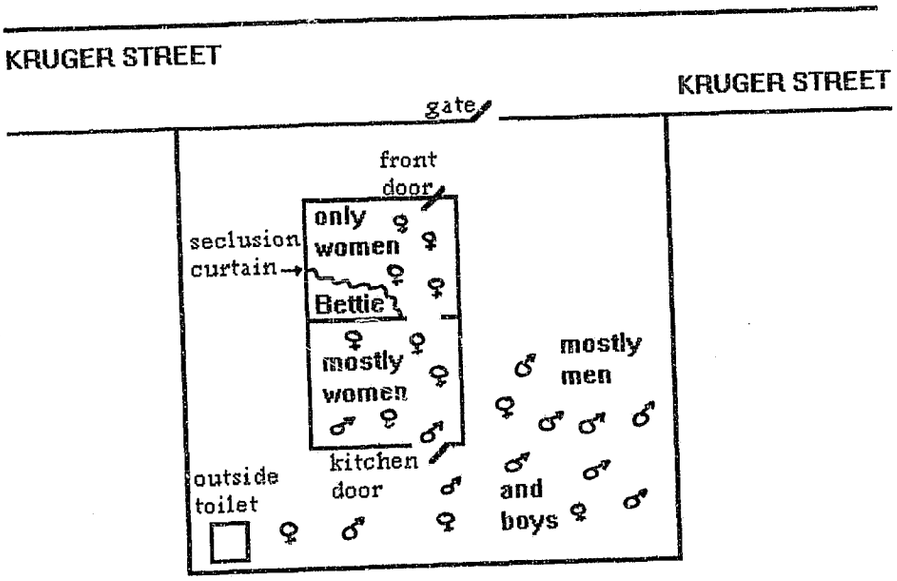

Figure 6.1: The spatial distribution of people during initiation

Within this female space, the curtain formed a permeable boundary between Bettie and the other women who visited her or her mother during her seclusion. Bettie's female friends would lift the curtain and join her on the mattress on the floor where they would whisper quietly to each other or page through magazines. Older women would visit Bettie and her mother, but would remain seated on her mother's bed, talking to Bettie through the curtain. Alternatively, they would seat themselves on the floor next to the curtain and help Bettie, invisible behind the curtain, to grind ochre or *buchu* while talking to Bettie, her mother and me. Generally I too remained on the 'profane' side of the curtain, unless I was specifically called by Bettie or there were no other people present, in which case I would join her behind the curtain. On the night before Bettie was to be reintroduced to the community or broader Griqua family as an adult woman, the flimsy curtain barrier between her and the other women was rolled up – not quite removed – but nevertheless no longer restricting visual interaction between Bettie and the other women. During the course of the evening, the room filled with women who had earlier proved that they were not menstruating and therefore not dangerous to the initiate. These women supervised Bettie's purification rituals, consumed the meat of the sheep that had been slaughtered (which no man could eat) and remained with her all night, often falling asleep in uncomfortable positions in the small room.[39]

[39] Elphick has noted that there was some suggestion, in pre-colonial Khoi society, that women ate only mutton and did not eat beef (1977: 60). It is possible that the associations between women and sheep in Griquatown in the 1980s and 1990s stem partially from early Khoi traditions.

A similar gendered spatial division was apparent when Susanne was initiated in 1994. She lived with her mother, three sisters and brother, her baby niece and nephew and her older sister's woman friend in a seven-roomed house.[40] Sophie, Susanne's mother, gave up the main bedroom – situated in the very centre of the house – for her daughter's initiation. The double bed, cupboard and dressing table were moved into another room and a curtain was strung across the room. Behind the curtain, Susanne was placed 'in seclusion'. The lounge, an area usually reserved for important guests, became exclusively the domain of women. The kitchen also filled with women, although occasionally a man would wander in, in search of alcohol or water. The remaining three bedrooms were shared by the women who lived in the house; and Boetie, Susanne's older brother, slept elsewhere during her initiation because, as a man, his presence was a potential threat to Susanne's ritual purity.

As mentioned above, it was uncontrolled – and therefore unsocialised – sexuality that posed a danger to the new initiate and hence the strict seclusion practised. The initiate's own sexuality, fertility and general well-being was at risk. Contact with all men, not only outsiders but also brothers, fathers, grandfathers or uncles – in other words *boorlings* to her immediate family – posed an immediate threat. Polluted or menstruating women also stayed away, young women who were having sex with their boyfriends were fiercely chased away from the initiate, and adolescent girls who had not themselves been initiated tended not to visit the girl in seclusion. As noted by Carstens, however, the emphasis on men as being particularly pollutive, allowed women to prevent their husbands, lovers, sons or brothers from entering the house throughout the initiation period.

During this time the 'wife with certain other women virtually take over the dwelling' (1983: 62). In so doing, the women were not only asserting their control within the one house in which initiation takes place, they were also asserting their ritual authority within a wider domain. All the women present were collectively endorsing their association with the house, or houses in general, and their ritual power over the men gathered around the initiate's house. These women were not automatically or 'naturally' associated with the houses, it was their ritual actions – in relation to the physical house – that endorsed this association (cf. Moore, 1994; Ellen, 1986). Ideological beliefs also supported such an association. When I was in the area, women were expected to remain at home and were said to be 'like houses'. This reference was explicitly related to women's sexuality and fertility. If a woman were to have sex outside of the house (or home) she would carry the consequences of her actions with

[40] When I first met Susanne and her family in 1989, they had lived in a three-roomed council house. After Susanne's father died, her mother, Sophie, used his pension money to extend the house.

her: and if a pregnancy resulted, the consequences would have to be brought home. This ideological link between women and houses was further reinforced by old women, who would point out an association between a woman's vagina and a tortoise, and by young men who referred to 'frigid' women as 'dead tortoises'. In addition, to have sex with a woman was to 'see' her tortoise. This hinted at a further association between the tortoise and the house. The tortoise – an anomalous animal carrying its 'home' on its back and thought of as slow moving, coupled with the rather phallic action of its head – was particularly appropriate for bringing together the notions of home and illicit sexual activity. To engage in illicit sexual relations with a woman – in other words to penetrate her vagina or to 'see' her tortoise – was like the antisocial habit of entering a house without permission and through the wrong entrance.

The young initiate, secluded away in the innermost section of the house, was thus being initiated into a female centre. During her initiation she was surrounded by other women who, I would argue, were central to a Griqua identity. These women were, in turn, surrounded by men (mostly *boorlings*) who were *inkommers* to the nuclear family but also *boorlings* of the broader Griqua kin group and who, in their ritual actions, sheltered all these women from other *inkommers* (see Figure 6.2). This structural positioning of men, as outside the home, was appropriate because, whereas women were ideologically bound to the house, men were free, sexually unrestricted and expected to act accordingly.[41] A man was said to be 'like a car', mobile, free to go anywhere and meet anyone. In dichotomous contrast with women's vaginas, tortoises and houses, men's penises were thought to be birds. Like cars, penises could go anywhere with ease. This association between men's penises and birds referred, not to their bringing food back to a nest, but to their mobility, their ability to 'sneak in anywhere', to make acquaintances everywhere and to be 'at home' wherever they went.

[41] Conversations, Sophie Julies. 21/12/1997; 24/12/1997; Marie Gouws 14/01/1998; Trooi Visser 19/01/ 1998; Sophie Julies, 19/01/ 1998. Interviews Maria Pietersee and Mietha Amos 19/01/1998 and Jacoba Swartz 14/01/1998.

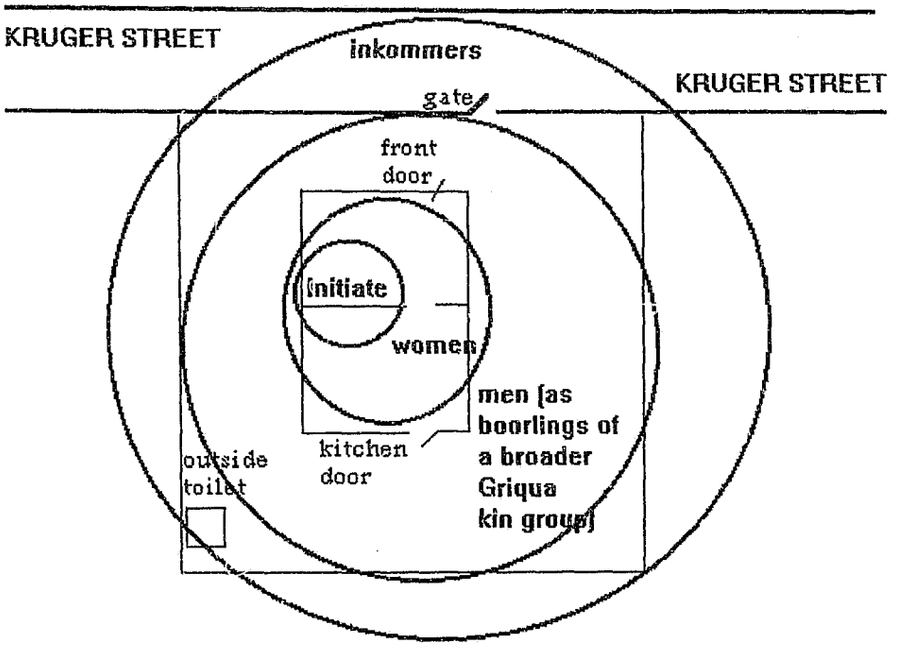

Figure 6.2: *Boorling* and *inkommer* identity during initiation

The *hokmeisie* ritual was the only ritual in Griquatown, and in the Northern Cape, that was seen by both academics and the people themselves as specifically Griqua. The initiate, secluded at the very centre of the house, was one of, and positioned with, the women who were situated at the heart of the collective Griqua identity.[42] Such a central position could, however, only be occupied by women who had been correctly socialised into being Griqua and this meant that their sexuality had to be carefully prepared through initiation. Being Griqua, then, was something inherently, and specifically, female and this may be a partial explanation why young boys were not initiated. For a young female initiate, her union to the watersnake was her marriage into being Griqua.[43] The white dress worn by the initiate may echo the marriage dress (discussed in more detail below) while the *buchu* offered to a male watersnake emphasised the girl's sexual attraction.[44] The tortoise shells and the sheep's pelvis were associated with her vagina and her reproductive functions. All the tortoises (i.e. the tortoise shells outside her dress and her vagina which they symbolised) had to be seen by the watersnake. Thus it was that, when

[42] Being Griqua, then, was something inherently, and specifically, female and this may be a partial explanation as to why young boys were not initiated.

[43] During a young girl's initiation, the remains of the sheep, the pelvis bone, and other 'dirt' from the initiation is said to 'belong to the snake' who eats it. These products, given to the watersnake, should sink beneath the surface of the water as a sign of his acceptance (Waldman, 1989: 38).

[44] In Griqua society there were numerous associations between women, sexuality and tortoises. During initiation a young virgin attached two tortoise shells to her dress, placing them carefully over her ovaries. These tortoise shells were filled with *buchu* (an aromatic herb). *Buchu* from these tortoise shells was rubbed over the sheep's sexual organs before it was slaughtered. It was placed on young boys' testicles as a ritual prevention of sexual diseases and on young girls' nipples. *Buchu* was also used to bathe the initiate before she is taken to the watersnake and to appease the watersnake. Some older women recalled that in the past they had used *buchu* as a perfume to make themselves attractive to men (Interview, Maria Pieterse and Mietha Amos, 19/01/1998).

the snake saw the tortoises of the initiate, he was symbolically entering her, or engaging in sexual relations with her, and – in so doing – entering the Griqua house. The watersnake also acted as, and represented, an *inkommer* into the broader Griqua family. He was, according to Carstens, like a wealthy lover to women and resented by men (1975). Carsten's argument is that beliefs in the watersnake occurred in relatively egalitarian communities where men and women had relatively equal status and sexual rivalries and jealousies do not occur (1975: 91). The watersnake thus provides a means of dealing with potential conflicts:

> (t)he very tentative hypothesis offered here regarding its function is that it provides an emotional outlet for male jealousy and aggression towards other males who are their sexual (or otherwise) competitors. The snake is a man, a beautiful man, he falls in love with and seduces women, who both love and admire him. Men hate the snake, 'it makes them furious and gives them an empty, jealous feeling'. The snake, moreover, is antagonistic to all men. From the woman's point of view it could be argued that the snake symbolises the wealthy lover, strong and virile, who tolerates no rival, especially in property and economic and other relations (Carstens, 1975: 91).

Seeing the watersnake as an *inkommer* and as the first love of all the women socialised into being Griqua suggests another level of complexity to Carstens' explanation. It was the union between the young initiate and the watersnake, the very first *inkommer*, that made her fundamentally Griqua. Once initiated, however, women do not remain tied to the watersnake all their lives and their betrothal and marriage ceremonies to 'real' men also provide ritualised statements about the nature of being Griqua.

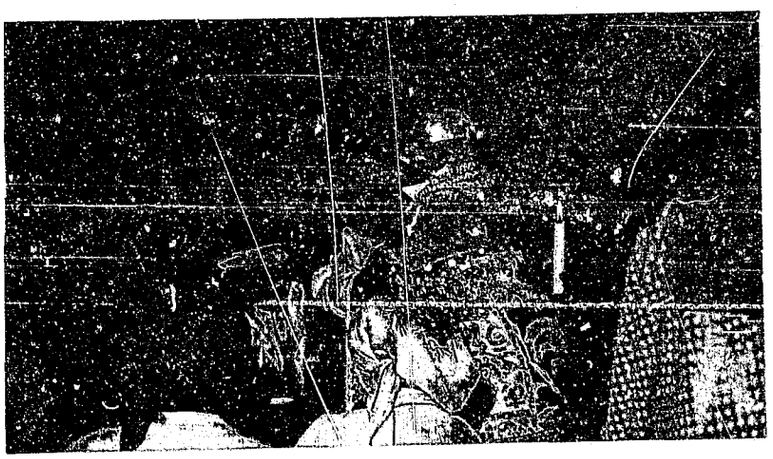

Figure 6.3: Bettie van Wyk preparing to meet the watersnake (1988)

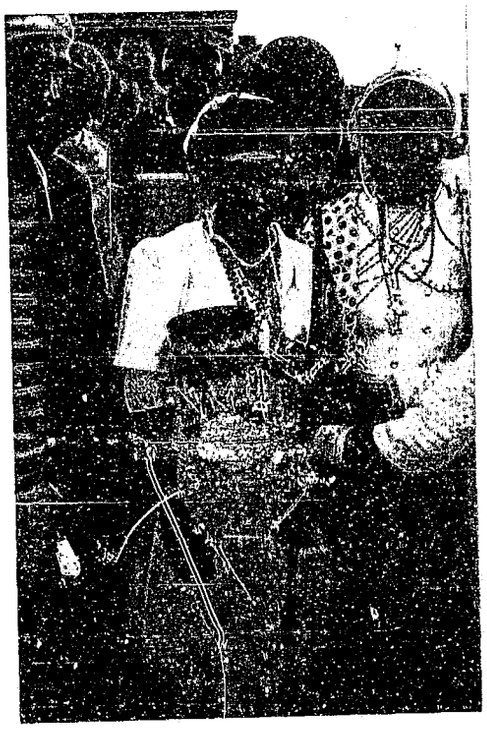

Figure 6.4: Bettie van Wyk returning home after her introduction to the watersnake (1988)

Betrothal:

The initiation ritual practised by women and girls can be linked to and contrasted with a betrothal-type ceremony in which a man provided a sheep, known as the *mokwele* sheep, for his in-laws. Whereas the initiation of young girls was intended to ensure the protection of young girls' sexuality, the *mokwele* ritual, with a young man as its central protagonist, acknowledged the impossibility of ensuring that these girls remained virgins until after marriage. Transferring *mokwele* was intended as a means of negotiating sexual access to, and eventual marriage with, a woman. Having sexual intercourse in a manner not legitimated through ritual was a transgression often symbolised as an illegitimate entry into the house where the woman resided. The transfer of *mokwele* – after transgressions had occurred – legitimated these sexual relations between a man and a woman in the eyes of their immediate families and in the broader Griqua domain. Both rituals emphasise the themes of gender and space with which this chapter is concerned. In contrast, however, to a girl's initiation where the initiate was secluded from male society and hidden in the most private place in the house, the *mokwele* ritual took place in the yard and located the woman firmly within an adult context where men and women were sexually active.

Many people in Griquatown saw *mokwele* as a Tswana or African, rather than specifically Griqua, tradition. The word '*mokwele*' was Tswana and meant 'the handing over of something during marriage transactions'.[45] Although other Griqua people understood *mokwele* to be part of their *geloof* (tradition), there was no specifically Griqua name for the ritual.[46] *Mokwele* transactions were considered necessary for attaining adulthood and demonstrating manliness and were meant to occur when a man asked to marry a woman. Nevertheless, for several reasons, the timing of *mokwele* and marriage were often staggered: first, the ceremony was expensive and involved the purchase of a sheep (to ensure the success of the marriage); tea, coffee, sugar, brandy (to seal the agreement between in-laws) and a *tjalie* (described as a traditional Griqua cape worn by women).[47] Coupled with this was a tendency for the girl's parents to delay the granting of permission. This meant each time a young man approached them, he would have to invest in gifts for them. Secondly, the man might wish to establish first whether his marriage would work before investing in *mokwele*. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, young men did not initiate *mokwele* transactions, nor did they request that their families should do so. Rather, in keeping with being young and modern, they and their partner agreed to marry and announced their betrothal. The bride's mother, accompanied by one of the old women who initiated young girls, would then – contrary to tradition – initiate discussions around the payment of *mokwele*. Full *mokwele* transactions did not often take place in Griquatown and many people felt that only the tea, coffee sugar, brandy and *tjalie* were important.[48]

By the 1990s, many such transactions were initiated and spearheaded by a few old women who also saw to the initiation of young girls in Griquatown. But they were not always completed to these old women's satisfaction. During my fieldwork Maria Pieterse, who had initiated many young girls, attended a *mokwele* ceremony in which she 'gave away' her daughter. She threatened that if the man in question did not provide a *mokwele* sheep, he would be fined a sum of money. This was, however, bravado on her part and, to the best of my knowledge, no *mokwele* sheep was ever slaughtered or money transferred. Young men, of marriageable age or recently married, were reluctant to be involved in *mokwele* transactions. Their reluctance stemmed not only from the cost associated with the ritual but also from the ritual itself, which, in effect, degraded

[45] Breutz has described the marriage negotiations among Tswana people in the Northern Cape. Once both families have agreed to the marriage, and discussions regarding the amount of bridewealth (*bogadi*) have been finalised, the *mokwele* gift confirms and seals the arrangements. According to Breutz, if the groom's family was wealthy, a sheep, goat and cow were given as *mokwele*. Alternatively, only one animal was presented. When the *mokwele* was delivered, the bride's family would present two calabashes of beer or 5 shillings to the bridegroom. Gifts, in the form of dresses, shoes, a headcloth, blankets, tea and coffee, are then presented to the bride (Breutz, 1963: 69 – 70).

[46] Conversation, Sophie Julies, 2/10/1997

[47] Survey Number 3, Ragel van Wyk, 6/10/1997

[48] Survey Number 14, Jelico Teis. 8/10/1997

the man who made the presentation. Although Sakkie Gouws, for example, had provided a sheep (which cost about R200, a substantial amount of money) and was expected to dress smartly for the occasion, he did not participate actively in the ceremony and was not allowed to eat the meat of the sheep.

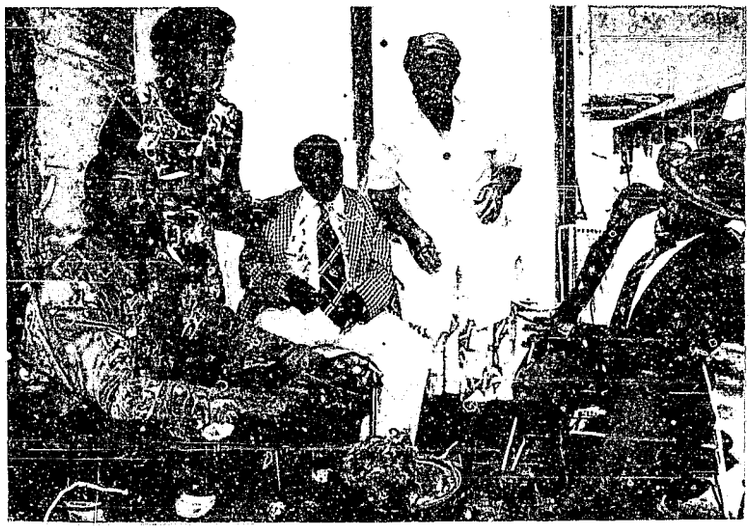

Figure 6.5: Old men and women eating the meat off the pelvis bone during *mokwele*

Mokwele* and *Hokmeisie

The two ceremonies can be seen to be gendered and spatial counterpoints of each other. Young girls were reluctant to undergo the *hokmeisie* ceremony, arguing variously that they were not chickens to be placed in a coop (the literal translation of *hok*), that they were afraid of the watersnake, that their friends would laugh at them and that it was old-fashioned. Young men's similar reluctance to engage in *mokwele* had to do with their effective exclusion from it. They did not play a central role in *mokwele*, even though they sometimes provided the sheep and tended to leave the arrangements to old women, well-known for their role in organising Griqua initiations for young girls. Whereas the *hokmeisie* symbolised the ritual 'marriage' of a young girl to a male watersnake, the *mokwele* ceremony concerned a man's – more profane – marriage to her. The *hokmeisie* ceremony was filled with ritual danger and the threat of pollution. For its duration, the girl was the most important person in the ritual and she was 'secluded' in the house. In contrast, the young man was not confined during the *mokwele* celebrations; indeed, he appeared marginal to the negotiations that took place between the parents.

In the *hokmeisie* ritual the sheep was slaughtered in the yard at night and the meat was eaten only by women in the bedroom and in close proximity to the initiate. The pelvis bone was removed whole and cooked separately. Five post-menopausal women ate the meat off the pelvis bone, taking care not to damage the bone. This was seen as a ritual precaution necessary to safeguard the girl's future sexuality and fertility. Finally, the pelvis bone, along

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with all the bones and other remaining parts of the sheep, except the skin, was fed to the watersnake. In contrast, the *mokwele* sheep was slaughtered during the daytime and the ceremony took place in the yard. Various women prepared salad and arranged crockery and cutlery in the kitchen. People came and went, fetching stuff from their homes, visiting other people nearby, chatting to people in the street and returning to the yard. Everyone ate outside where there was a general, informal segregation along gender lines (see Figure 6.6). Although *mokwele* was identified as 'our *geloof*' or tradition, it held no danger for the protagonists, contained no ritualistic prohibitions and was not as important as the *hokmeisie* ceremony. It is perhaps for this reason that *mokwele* was also less 'ritualistic' than the *hokmeisie* initiation and was held more infrequently.

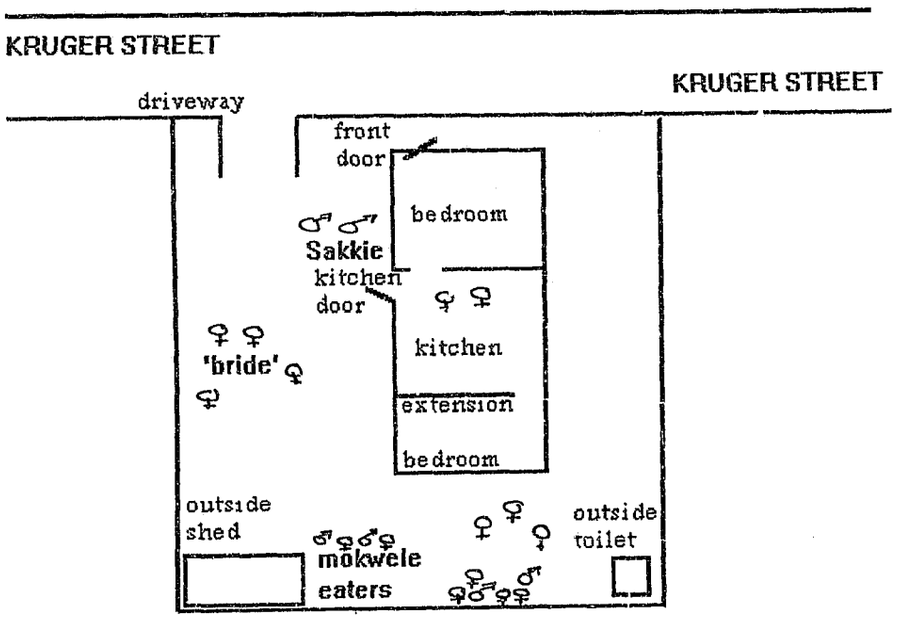

Figure 6.6: The spatial distribution of people during *mokwele*

The *mokwele* ceremony was in preparation for marriage, but it was also related to childbirth. Implicit in the acceptance of *mokwele* was the acknowledgement of women's sexual activity and there was hence no need to ensure that the pelvis bone remained intact. As Sophie explained,

> if she [the bride] has already had a child, a *voorkind*,[49] then the pelvis bone is cut open. But if she has not yet had a child, then the pelvis bone is left closed [or whole] as in the *hokmeisie's*, it is left closed. And the *mokwele* bones may not be cut.[50]

[49] The term generally applied to a child born to a young mother who is neither married nor involved in a long-term relationship with a man.

[50] Some people say that the other bones of the *mokwele* sheep may not be cut and that they may not be broken as in the *hokmeisie* ceremony (Survey Number. 15. Sophie Lottering. 8/10/1997). Some people argue that nothing

The reason for the disregard shown to the *mokwele* pelvis bone could thus be found in the nature of the *mokwele* transaction. Breutz argued that amongst Tswana people the *mokwele* sheep sealed the marriage transactions (1963: 69). For the people of Griquatown *mokwele* was a form of payment that was made when a man crossed 'the door's threshold',[51] or had sex with a woman. In engaging in sexual relations with a woman, a man was entering her vagina, in the same manner as the watersnake had 'seen' her tortoise. This was tantamount to the illicit entry of the house in which she lived. Johannes Pieterse explained:

> Now the *mokwele* sheep works differently. The *mokwele* thing goes like this. If you are going to marry the woman, look this is before you give the *mokwele* sheep, then you must pay 'the door'. I paid 17 pounds. Now then, when I had my oldest child [before my marriage], they said I entered the door, but they were not actually talking about the door. They said, 'look as you've done this and you haven't yet asked for the woman, look you've come in the back, you've come in the back of the *kraal*, you've broken the back of the *kraal*'. Now they ask for the 17 pounds that I have to pay. You take that sheep out, that's what they are asking for now.[52]

The account indicates that the illegitimate entry into houses where women reside is symbolic of the transgression of sexual rights. The two actions were directly associated. In having sexual relations with a woman, her suitor was crossing the threshold, surreptitiously entering the house and making her pregnant. In engaging in illicit sexual activities, he was 'entering the house' without permission, through the back door, the door used for family and well-known people.

In contrast to the *hokmeisie* ritual that ensured the construction of a 'genuine Griqua woman' who 'married' the watersnake, the *mokwele* ceremony emphasised the mixed and ambiguous nature of being Griqua. At an immediate level this was apparent in the ceremony itself: no-one was quite sure where this ritual originated from, it could have been Tswana (or African) or it could have been Griqua. Nonetheless, given the complex relations between Tswana or African and Griqua people described in Chapter Four, it was hardly surprising that the *mokwele* ritual could not be provided with an ethnic provenance. This lack of clarity was appropriate given that daughters were allowed to marry men from any ethnic background and, as demonstrated in Chapter Four, only 11.3 percent of all respondents in Griquatown wanted their children to marry Griqua people. The *mokwele* ritual was thus symbolic of marriages between men of no particular ethnic

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special was done to the pelvis bone (Survey Number. 10. Liza Thole. 7/10/1997), whereas some people argue that it is the breastbone which is important and which must be cut in a special way.

[51] Survey Number. 18. Japie Maarman 9/10/1997.

[52] Survey Number. 9. Johannes Pieterse 7/10/1997.

background to Griqua women. All husbands-to-be, regardless of their ethnic origins, were *inkommers* to the girl's family and mothers-in-law, in insisting on the provision of *mokwele*, were reinforcing this status of the bridegroom.

As *inkommers*, and as men who had illicitly 'entered the house', sons-in-law did not command much respect and it was, perhaps, for this reason that the *mokwele* ceremony played down the importance of the man who provided the sheep. Furthermore, as *inkommers*, not much was expected of these men. It was explained in Chapter Five how *inkommers* could not be relied upon to do what sons born to the house would do. People's lack of expectations of these young men and the men's awareness of themselves was reflected in their non-participation during the ceremony. Indeed, as suggested earlier, many young men do not fulfil their *mokwele* obligations. Sakkie Gouws, however, was – as people informed me at his *mokwele* ceremony – an exceptional son-in-law, hard-working, quiet mannered and decent, who really appreciated his wife and wanted to give thanks to her family. It was for these reasons that he presented the *mokwele* sheep to his wife's family.

The crucial gifts were tea, coffee, sugar, brandy and a *tjalie*. The *tjalie* was in exchange for, and symbolised, the mother's labour in bringing up her daughter and was given directly to her. The tea and other items were domestic items found in most homes. But although apparently mundane necessities, they were also central to socialising and necessary for establishing and maintaining social relations. Many women in Griquatown spent a considerable part of each day visiting and drinking tea at their friends' houses. Tea was always offered to important guests – even if this meant sending a child to borrow milk or sugar in order to do so.[53] Thus these domestic and material items symbolised not only the relationships being established between the *inkommer* and his in-laws, between his family and his bride's family but also – and very importantly – the network of established relations within Griquatown.

The brandy, often considered the most crucial of all *mokwele* items, symbolised the acceptance of the bridegroom into the nuclear family. It was drunk by the young man's in-laws who, during the process of drinking this brandy, would question the young couple before deciding to allow the marriage to go ahead. Brandy was also consumed when a Griquatown residents were being introduced to a new-born baby. Here the brandy drunk was symbolic of a newly-born baby's urine. As the baby was born in

[53] Tea, coffee and sugar were, in the 1870s, crucial to any journeys done on horseback. According to Halford, the women would pack these provisions into the saddle bags, while the men prepared their horses (Halford, 1949: 132). This importance may have led to the significance of tea, coffee and sugar in ritual journeys in Griquatown today. Ross argues that these commodities enabled people to emphasise their hospitality and, in so doing, to increase their own standing (1976: 16).

Griquatown, he or she was a *boorling* of the place. Nonetheless, it was necessary for the child to be introduced to Griquatown society or to its kin outside of the nuclear household in which he or she had been born. In order for this to take place, the members of the overarching Griqua family gathered at the child's house and drank the 'pee' of the new-born baby. The act was one of extreme intimacy and – having drunk of the baby's urine – everyone present 'knew' the child in a personal and familiar manner. The act was to make the child happy, or to bestow good fortune by installing the baby into his or her place in Griqua society. Similarly the brandy drank at the *mokwele* – although not referred to as urine – provided a means to 'know' the young man who – in marrying a Griqua woman – was an *inkommer* to her family.

Marriage:

Ideally, a girl's *hokmeisie* ceremony and a man's *mokwele* presentations would precede a couple's wedding. The logic in this ritual sequence – not always followed – lies in the fact that both the *hokmeisie* and *mokwele* rituals prepared people for marriage and sexual intercourse. Initiation, as mentioned above, was a symbolic marriage to the watersnake.[54] On some occasions, young girls explicitly linked marriage to a relationship with the watersnake and one woman in Griquatown commented how, as young girls, they had fantasised about setting up their homes:

> We also, as a result of the many snake stories we heard, we especially wondered what the snake's house under the water looked like and we created our own beautiful houses for the snake. In other words, we assumed the snake would want the same things we wanted in our houses.[55]

Whereas initiation located young women at the centre of a broader Griqua home and *mokwele* introduced young men into nuclear homes, the formal marriage ceremony combined these elements and, in so doing, further accentuated the association between women and the house or home. The wedding ritual integrated Christian, Tswana and Griqua customs in complex ways that emphasised the heterogeneous nature of Griquatown society. In the following example, Amanda van Wyk or Poppie, the only young bride I met during my time in Griquatown, tried to shape her wedding and her future life not only according to being Griqua and its associated traditions, but also in terms of her own life experiences and ambitions.

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[54] This snake was believed to entice people into the water. Men were drowned and, when their bodies were later found, were said to have been rejected by the snake. Women, if properly initiated, became the snake's wives and their bodies were never found. They cared for his home in the river and cleaned and cooked.

[55] Report, Audrey Williamson, 26/11/1997.

POPPIE'S WEDDING

Poppie lived with her mother in Griquatown in an old, run-down house built many years previously by Poppie's father. Inside, where Poppie spent most of her time doing housework, it was dark, dingy and hard to keep clean. Poppie's mother, known as *dronk* Ragel (drunk Rachel) to distinguish her from the other Ragel, was seldom at home. Poppie's frustration with her mother's drinking was channelled into her hopes for her own married life and she looked forward to a promising future with her husband, carefully chosen as a man of good manners who frowned upon the drinking of his father and her mother.

Benjamin, as a man of good standing, had rather unusually approached his parents and requested that the *mokwele* be transferred after he and Poppie agreed to marry. The tea, coffee, sugar and *tjalie* had been provided and *dronk* Ragel had consumed most of the brandy. No sheep was slaughtered, but Benjamin's parents had paid the amount requested as an appropriate fine. This money was used to repair *dronk* Ragel's house. Stairs were rebuilt and broken windows replaced in preparation for the wedding.

A 'real Griqua marriage', Ragel said, was one in which the married couple rode on a *perdekar* (a horse-drawn cart) and a sheep was slaughtered. The groom's parents ate the sheep's breast and the bride's mother could have no contact with the meat. The pelvis bone remained unbroken because 'with the marriage, the girl must again be as she was for the *hokmeisie* story'.[56]

Poppie and Benjamin got married in December 1997, without a *perdekar*, without a special sheep being slaughtered and hence without a pelvis bone to be carefully kept whole or to be broken, and without anyone dancing manure and blood into the ground. Nonetheless, part of the justification for all the effort neighbouring women invested in the marriage, was that it was an opportunity to demonstrate a Griqua wedding to me. The service took place in the VGK Church (Vereenigde Gereformeerde Kerk), performed by the Dutch Reformed minister from the white residential area as the VGK minister was unavailable.[57] It was a Christian wedding, but it diverged from western weddings in one respect: the wedding ceremony in the church confirmed the young bride's marriage to her husband and also demonstrated her symbolic 'marriage' to the household of her parents-in-law. During the ceremony Poppie was not 'given' from one man (her father) to another (her husband-to-be). Rather, Benjamin's mother and father stood next to their son at the altar. As Poppie walked down the aisle, escorted by her for-once-relatively-sober mother and a neighbour's husband (her own father was dead), Benjamin's mother instructed her son, the bridegroom, to wait and she went to meet Poppie coming down the aisle. The bride and the groom's mother then walked together down the aisle to meet the groom.[58]

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[56] Interview, Ragel van Wyk, 13/01/1998. Other informants disagreed with Ragel, stating that the pelvis bone could be broken open at a girl's wedding and stressed that it was more essential that the blood and manure be danced into the ground around the mother's house. This ensured that the potency and danger associated with blood was eliminated by the cleansing, purifying qualities associated with the ritual use of manure and urine (see Engelbrecht, 1936 and Hoernlé, 1918). At Sophie's wedding (more than 40 years ago) a sheep was slaughtered by her father-in-law. When her sister-in-law got married, a sheep was slaughtered and the pelvis bone was removed whole as was the piece from the rump to the tail. The grandmothers, or post-menopausal women, ate these two pieces and the 'old people', men and women, ate the head. Interviews: Sophie Lottering 13/01/1998; Liesbet Waterboer 13/12/1997; Trooi Visser 14/01/1998.

[57] The *VGK* (United Reformed Church in South Africa) stems from a union between *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk* (Dutch Reformed Mission Church) and the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika* (Dutch Reformed Church in Africa). During the apartheid era these churches were the coloured and African branches of the Dutch Reformed Church respectively.

[58] Sophie explained that both Benjamin and his mother were meant to walk back down the aisle to meet Poppie and her substitute 'father' halfway down. Then the mother would hand him to his future wife. Conversation, Sophie Julies, 8/01/1998.

> The reception took place at Anderson Primary School, across the road from Poppie's house. The guests eagerly awaited the arrival of the bride and groom. As they heard the approaching cars and the hooting, they rushed outside to welcome the newly-wed couple. The women, carrying brooms and dustpans, looked as if they had been unexpectedly caught still cleaning the hall. The guests then danced the *stapdans*,[59] singing and sweeping their way into the reception hall.

The *stapdans*, correctly performed, involved women carrying brooms, dishcloths and basins, while men carried axes or spades. This dance was intended to demonstrate that both men and women must work. At Poppie's wedding, however, it was only women who carried the required implements, noticeably all domestic items, and thus only women who were shown that they should work within their homes.[60] Men enthusiastically joined in the *stapdans*, but without brandishing any implements and without appearing to miss the axes or spades. This was, perhaps, related to the fact that the only significant male partaking in this ritual was Benjamin.[61] Women, in performing the *stapdans*, were grasping and brandishing material items and, in so doing, asserting their central role within the household. Both men and women were, however, acting in relation to material objects and, in so doing, situating themselves within specific ideologies (cf. Moore, 1994). As was the case with the *mokwele* transactions, men , as *inkommers*, were not expected to exert themselves in their mother-in-laws' homes and mothers-in-law did not rely on them. Therefore, although they were supposed to dance with implements, according to tradition, this was not really expected of the men and their behaviour was in keeping with present day Griqua ideology.

Men, nonetheless, continued to think of themselves as dependable and supportive, particularly when entering into marriage. This strength was demonstrated by their ability to purchase a wedding ring. Some men refused to marry because they could not afford a wedding ring, despite offers from family members and even the prospective bride to contribute towards the cost.[62] Women in Griquatown commented that the man had to buy the wedding band, that it was his duty to put the ring on his bride's finger as this made her feel honoured.[63] Generally, however, women were aware both of men's shortcomings and pride and either purchased their own rings for about R30 or borrowed their friends' rings to use in the wedding ceremonies, thus giving their husbands leeway to purchase their rings at a later date.[64]

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[59] The dance is said to demonstrate that a Griqua wedding is taking place. Conversation, SJ. 8/01/1998.
[60] Given the amount of effort that went into planning Poppie's reception, it is unlikely that someone forgot to provide men's implements for the *stapdans*.
[61] Poppie's father had died long before she met Benjamin. Benjamin's father was drunk throughout both the church ceremony and the reception, which meant that although present, he was so rowdy and aggressive that Benjamin cancelled the evening celebrations.
[62] Conversation, HvE. 13/01/1998.
[63] Conversation, MG. 14/01/1998.
[64] Interviews, Martha Visagie 19/01/1998 and Benjamin Kalanie 21/01/1998.

The ideology behind a Christian marriage upholds the image of a nuclear family, made up of a husband and wife (and later children) living in a house. This was explicitly referred to during the DR minister's speech to Poppie and Benjamin, and it was this type of Christian marriage that Poppie dreamed of. When, however, Poppie's mother-in-law came down the aisle to meet her and took Poppie by the hand to lead her towards Benjamin, Poppie could do nothing to oppose her mother-in-law's more traditionally Khoi notion that emphasised the relationship a woman was meant to have with her husband's family. She did, however, act so as to lessen this Khoi image at a later stage. After marriage the bride was supposed to move to the house of her parents-in-law for a period of time so that she could be observed.[65] But Poppie would have none of this and although she and Benjamin were moving to the same town as Benjamin's parents, Poppie insisted that Benjamin arrange separate accommodation for them. This was because, as all young wives in Griquatown knew, even with a good relationship between mothers- and daughters-in-law, the mother always supported her son.



Figure 6.7: Poppie's wedding (coming down the aisle with her mother-in-law at her side, 1997)

Although Poppie and Benjamin had attempted to shape their own lives according to the partly dovetailing, and partly conflicting, ideologies of Christianity and of Griqua tradition, they were not wholly successful. They moved, as planned, to their own house in the same town as Benjamin's parents. Poppie, in anticipation of being a housewife

[65] Interview Jacoba Swartz, 14/01/1998; Cleroy Eland 20/01/1998; Frans Pos 20/01/1998.

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and of looking after her own home, had left school shortly before her marriage. As she settled down to turn their house into a home, Benjamin looked for a job. He was, however, unable to secure employment and soon they could no longer afford their house. They may have moved to Benjamin's parents for a short period, but within 18 months of their wedding, they were back in *dronk* Ragel's house and living on her pension. As before, Poppie rose early to clean the house and do the domestic chores, whereas Benjamin – as was whispered by the neighbours – slept late and made no contributions to the house. Despite all Benjamin's good qualities and all Poppie's hopes, he was nonetheless acting as men, or men / *inkommers* were generally expected to act: neither working to bring in money, nor helping Poppie by chopping wood or doing other manual labour around the house.

Funerals:

The special relationship between mothers and their sons has been mentioned above. As illustrated by the example of Poppie's wedding, marriage to a man often also included an antagonistic and difficult relationship with his mother. If sons were relatively successful, their mothers would take advantage of this and live with them. This decision was, however, primarily influenced by economic considerations. Mothers would generally reside with whichever child – son or daughter – had greater resources and more space (also see Wilk and Netting, 1984: 17). As indicated in the following example, however, this relationship was often maintained through more than simple economic considerations:

> Mr Baadjies grew up in his mother's house in Rainbow Valley, but had moved to Matlhomola some time after his marriage. Once it became apparent that Mr Baadjies would not live much longer, his sister Aletta Fredericks or Meisie fetched him from Matlhomola and looked after him in the house he had grown up in. When he died, Meisie arranged for the funeral to take place at this house. She argued that her brother had requested to be 'buried out of his mother's house' and that his wife had agreed to this arrangement.[66]

Mr Baadjies' request may, however, have referred not only to the physical structure of his mother's house, but also to the nature of being Griqua. Baadjies' mother, Anna Gebanemoetse, had been a staunch advocate and active initiator of Griqua girls when I interviewed her in 1987. As mentioned above, boys were not initiated and I was

[66] Mrs Baadjies, argued Meise, was worried about the financial costs if her husband was buried from his own home. This, however, appears to be merely an excuse so that Meisie could bury her brother. People insisted that Meisie's story was not true and that Mrs Baadjies had prepared her house for the funeral. Others argued that Meisie and the Baadjies' family had made sure that he died in their house so that they might receive his burial policy payment. Another person suggested that Meisie and her family did not want the funeral to be in Matlhomola. This was possibly a partial explanation as the people of Griquatown continued to rank people according to apartheid racist ideas. Some people in Rainbow Valley still referred to 'kaffirs', especially when they themselves were drunk and uninhibited and many people still perceived themselves as 'better' than black people, despite the extensive interaction between residents in Rainbow Valley and Matlhomola.

informed that this was because men '*val onder die ma*' (lit. came under the mother').[67] The suggestion here is that because men were borne to women, there was no need for their safety to be buttressed through ritual action. Their mothers' protection – secured through these women's initiation as young girls – and their mothers' Griquaness extended to them. Baadjies was therefore both uninitiated and an *inkommer* to his wife's family. In a strange sense, he was also an *inkommer* into his own home, where he and his wife had lived. All that he had to endorse his Griquaness, was the fact that he was a *boorling*, both to his mother's house and to Griquatown. His request to be buried from his mother's house may thus have stemmed from these unarticulated reasons. This then takes us to the ritual associated with the final phase of an individual's life course, namely the funeral, and the following section examines these ritual events and the expression of a Griqua identity.

Funerals were the most common rituals in Griquatown. Every Saturday there were three or four people who had to be buried. Many people would attend several on the same day, going from one funeral to another. Although funerals were Christian rituals that displayed no especially Griqua attributes, Trooi Visser recalled that, in the past, funerals had had Griqua traditions: 'manure and ochre is taken and then the whole house is cleaned. Then the blessing, the blessing of someone who has died. But now there is no more of that kind of stuff'.[68] A person was usually buried by the members of the church to which he or she belonged, although many different churches played a role in each funeral.

Funerals were also open rituals in the sense that any person in Griquatown could attend. No-one was ever turned away and everyone who arrived would be fed. Funerals were the only occasions when everyone from Griquatown came together – the wealthy, elite, *inkommers*, poor, unemployed, *boorlings* and various church members all attended funerals. In keeping with this, funerals reflected the compound and heterogeneous cultural society in Griquatown and the manner in which, as discussed in Chapter Four, being Griqua was – at least in some senses – the same as being coloured.

At funerals, everyone was the same. Everyone present at the ritual was ranked as 'us', as ordinary people who were present to mourn their loss. It was, perhaps, because of the finality of death that this ritual served to 'flatten' the differences between *inkommers* and *boorlings*, between Griquas and coloureds and between wealthy and impoverished persons. After someone had died, various women from the community and from the deceased's church were kept busy cleaning the house, preparing food, making tea for visitors and comforting the bereaved. Meanwhile, male family members were busy

[67] Conversation, Ragel van Wyk, 21/08/1997.
[68] Interview, Trooi Visser, 14/01/1998.

digging the grave and erecting a tent in the garden. Here nightly prayer services were held until the following Saturday when the funeral took place. In addition to the prayers and songs, many people came forward to express their emotions and, in so doing, tried to comfort the mourners. Family members, friends, interested bystanders, drunks who happened to be passing by and male clergy from all the churches in Griquatown attended these prayer services. In other words, everyone within the broader Griqua 'family' mourned alongside the bereaved.

The traditional authority that Khoi women had over a broad range of activities and the association between women and houses remained features of funerals in Griquatown, although they were not necessarily as marked or as ritualised as they were in other contexts. On the Friday night before the burial, it was necessary to remain awake all night keeping vigil over the deceased. Elbourne and Ross have suggested that these religious meetings may have replaced the sacred Khoikhoi dancing that took place before a full moon (1997: 33). It was customary for the body of the deceased to remain in the front room of the house, although more recent practice has been for the body to remain at the mortuary until the morning of the funeral. Nonetheless, the practice of 'keeping the deceased company' through all-night singing has continued.

On one occasion when I attended such a service, the front room of the two-roomed house had been converted into a female space for the Friday night. Here women who had come from neighbouring towns to attend the funeral, bathed, ironed their clothes, dressed and generally sat around chatting. Whenever a man accidentally entered the room, he was informed that this space was for women. Inevitably the man apologised and left hastily. The back room was the kitchen and here men and women intermingled freely. However, as it was necessary for people to make their final farewells to the deceased *in the house*, this spatial arrangement had to change. Once all the visiting women had dressed and joined the all-night service in the tent, the front room was cleaned and prepared for the arrival of the deceased's coffin. Thus, when I returned the following morning, the way the house was being used had changed. I made the mistake of entering through the open front door, assuming that I would find the women gathered inside. Instead, there were several ministers from various churches and the body of the deceased. (At other funerals I attended, the bereaved family often sat with the coffin in this room). I was instructed to leave the house, again via the open front door, and to proceed to the kitchen door. Here I joined everyone else patiently waiting to enter the house through the back door and to progress through to the front room where they would have a final opportunity to say farewell to the deceased, before leaving the house through the front door. This was also the way the coffin left the house. The procession through the house was in contrast to the *hokmeisie*, in which the front door was often sealed and in which the passage through a house was never emphasised.

The movement of people, and of the coffin, through the house can be seen as symbolic of a person's life course. Furthermore, the slow and dignified process during which every individual present bade farewell to the deceased in the house where he or she had lived, stressed the relationship between individuals and the broader Griqua community. As the following example shows, during funerals, many women strategically positioned themselves in relation to the house and in relation to the individuals who entered the house and proceeded through the building.

KATRIENA VISSER'S FUNERAL

When Katriena Visser died, so many people attended the funeral that it was a huge event. She had had three funeral policies and her son had also taken out a policy in her name. R4000 was thus available for the funeral. The female members of the GHS (Good Hope Society), with which one of these policies had been taken out, were present assisting her family throughout the funeral preparations. On the morning of the funeral, Katriena's body, surrounded by women members of her family, was placed in the front room of the house. As everyone present at the funeral made the progression from the back door through the house to the front room, women from the GHS positioned themselves at the back door and sang to comfort the family. Once everyone had paid their last respects, Katriena's daughters and her sister's daughters carried the coffin from the house to the tent and their route was again lined by singing women from the GHS. Once inside the tent, another service was held. There were more prayers, more songs and a few speeches before it was necessary to proceed to the church. Whereas women had circled the coffin in the house and women had carried it into the tent, it was Katriena's daughter's sons and brother's son who carried the coffin from the tent to the church. Similarly, it tended to be men who carried the coffin from the Church and to the graveyard. After the coffin had been lowered into the grave, a final prayer was said before the church elders each placed a handful of sand in the grave. Next the family followed suit and then the grave was filled.

Upon returning to Katriena's son's home after the funeral, everyone washed their hands and faces before eating. Six sheep had been slaughtered to feed the mourners and women from the GHS had spent several days preparing the food. No special ritual procedure was associated with the slaughter of these sheep and anyone, including people who had not attended the funeral, was welcome to join in the meal.

As mentioned above, the passage of the coffin through the house, to the tent, the church and finally the grave was symbolic of the life course of the individual. Similarly, the women from the GHS, who supervised the mourners' physical passage through the home, and the women from the family, who remained with Katriena's body while mourners paid their respects and who carried the coffin from the house to the tent, can be seen as symbolically guarding the passage of 'family' members through the life course. They were, in addition and in ways that faintly echoed the *hokmeisie* ceremony, ritually 'protecting' the person in his or her final liminal stage: the individual was no longer alive, but was not yet fully incorporated with the dead. In so doing, the women from the GHS and from Katriena's family were adopting the role of the *táras*, as described earlier, whose tasks were ritually to oversee the lives of young people, especially young girls, and to facilitate their marriage negotiations and so forth.

Women's association with houses is again stressed in this part of the funeral ritual. Women congregated at entrances and exits and, in so doing, positioned themselves in and around the house from which the deceased was to be buried. As the coffin was carried further away from the house, so men assumed a more active ritual participation.



Figure 6.8: Women carry Katriena Visser's coffin from the house to the tent (1997)



Figure 6.9: Men escort Katriena's coffin into the church (1997)

Funerals were different from other rituals in two respects. First, as described above, they brought together everyone who was in Griquatown in a way that other rituals did not. By bringing together such large numbers of people, funerals were accommodating a diversity of Griqua society. *Inkommers* to the town and *inkommers* to the family, *boorlings* and non-*boorlings*, were treated the same at funerals where there was no ritual danger or threat of pollution. None of these in effect belonged at this moment to the category of strangers or people who needed to approach the house via the front door. Funerals emphasised the interdependence of *inkommers* and *boorlings*. It was a ritual during which everyone was embraced as a resident of Griquatown and therefore as a member of a broader family. The ritual thus emphasised the inclusivity of all people: men, women, *boorlings* and *inkommers*. In so doing, the funeral procedures operated to 'flatten' out differences between rich and poor, Griqua and non-Griqua.

The funeral rituals, stressing broader Christian, rather than narrower Griqua attributes, had the effect of facilitating this inclusiveness. Secondly, funerals allowed men and women to speak publicly about the deceased's life and, through this, about their own lives. In all the other rituals described, people were carrying out prescribed actions which left no room for talking about the significance of the ritual or its protagonists for them. Funerals, in contrast, provided an opportunity for people to discuss publicly their lives and for everyone present to evaluate his or her own personal experience of living in Griquatown.

The analysis of these rituals in terms of gender and space demonstrates the complex associations with housing, sexuality, kinship and identity that stem from traditional Khoi notions, Christian ideology and the implementation of apartheid housing legislation. These partly dovetailing and partly conflicting ideologies intertwine to produce a multifaceted ritual process. All the rituals discussed above conveyed ideas of a wider Griqua family while simultaneously emphasising Christian notions of a nuclear family and locating women in a domestic space within the house. These rituals, when viewed collectively, thus both emphasised a specific Griqua identity – which socialised girls into Griqua women and endorsed their association with the house – and acknowledged a more inclusive, heterogeneous Griquatown identity – in which men's sexual transgressions with Griqua women and into houses were legitimated and the interrelationships between all residents of Griquatown were acknowledged and emphasised.

RITUAL AND EVERYDAY RELATIONS

These rituals all appear to reinforce the ideological principle that Griqua women should be in charge of the house and in control of household matters. Such an impression is strongly supported, as I have just mentioned, by ideological beliefs stemming from precolonial Khoi identities, from missionary and Christian beliefs and from the manner in which the apartheid-implemented housing policy operated. It appears, therefore, entirely realistic to suggest, as Carstens has done, that these rituals be interpreted in terms of the degree of autonomy that women exercise in their houses (1982, 1983). There is, however, another aspect to understanding this ritual symbolism that has thus far been overlooked. Despite the fact that Christian beliefs and apartheid housing policy in different and complex ways, emphasised women's role in the maintenance of the house, they also operated to restrict women's activities to these domains and, in so doing, possibly to undermine the broader influences that women had had in Khoi society.

In Griquatown, these rituals reflect only an ideological position (cf. Bloch, 1989) and although women in Griquatown believed that they should be associated with houses and in charge of the household, their control in this terrain seldom went unchallenged. In order

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further to explore women's ability to assert their control, it is necessary to return to the funerals and to the testimonies uttered. As is evident from the following example, women's ritual relationship with houses was downplayed during such events.

SAMPIE PHILLIPS' FUNERAL

> At the funeral of Sampie Phillips, a leading member of the VGK church and an important person in Griquatown,[69] prayer services were held in the tent erected outside his house and here various people offered their testimonies. The men spoke of how they had met Sampie, how they had come to know him and what he had done to help them establish themselves financially. In addition they spoke of how Sampie had raised his brother, stopped him from drinking and introduced other young men to the church. The women's testimony was in sharp contrast to that of the men. The first woman commented that Toekie, Sampie's wife, was a virtuous woman who had had to deal with Sampie's moods (he was well-known as an exceptionally difficult person to deal with). The next woman, a niece of the deceased, stressed the importance of family in Griquatown and the assistance that family members provided. The third woman commented that 'a woman always suffered under a man, it did not matter what form (her suffering took), because she alone carried the burden, and she can only lay it before God...The whole of Griquatown knows what kind of a life she experienced under Oom Jantjie (a drunk who regularly beat her), but she overcame this through prayer. She knows that Aunt Toekie has to have done the same because Sampie also had his things'.

These testimonies were, to a certain extent, masked. Although the person speaking was provided with a microphone, loud music played incessantly and this, coupled with the distortion from a poor sound system, meant that it was almost impossible to hear. This gave women a certain amount of leeway with regards to what they said.[70] The women, in these testimonies, expressed their experience of everyday life in Griquatown. Toekie, wife of the prestigious Sampie, had been 'forced' to accept his sexual dalliances, his capricious moods and his dominance within the house. When Sampie died, Toekie knew nothing about his financial position, or even whether he had had a will. She was unable to drive his vehicle and thus 'unable' to go to town to do her shopping. After Sampie's funeral, other elite women – married to *inkommers* – wondered whether they were in the same position as Toekie and whether, if their husbands were to die, they would be as helpless and as dependent on their sons as Toekie now was. Thus despite the promise of family assistance made during Sampie's wake, it was to her son in Cape Town that Toekie now turned. This may have been because he – in stark contrast to her family in Griquatown – was able to offer both religious solace and financial assistance as he was employed as a *dominee* (minister) in a branch of the VGK. Throughout his life, Sampie had assisted Griquatown men to establish themselves financially. For this, he had been praised at his funeral. He had, however, died leaving his wife unskilled and dependent on other men, primarily his son, for her survival.

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[69] The Coloured location was initially named Phillipsville in recognition of the work Sampie Phillips had done for the community.

[70] It was therefore necessary to track down each of the women after the funeral and ask them about their testimonies.

The women's testimonies suggested that they recognised a discrepancy between their ritual association with houses and their everyday lives. As such, their statements were in agreement with Bloch's theoretical argument that '...we should see the cosmologies which emerge from the analysis of ritual and similar phenomena as powerful alternatives to everyday cognition, which are experienced by actors as governing an altogether different world' (1989: viii). Across the board, rich and poor women in Griquatown were unable to assert the dominance over their homes which ritual seemed to grant them. As demonstrated in the above example, an elite woman in Griquatown, such as Toekie, had little control over the domestic realm of her home. This lack of control similarly affected poor women but, as illustrated in the following examples, in somewhat different ways. Even when women were heads of households – living without any male authority figures when their husbands were deceased or had absconded – they were unable to maintain control over the people who slept in their houses or to ensure that their financial and material assets were used as they wished. This lack of control is demonstrated in the following two cases where, although Maria Pieterse and Liesbet Waterboer were household heads and *boorlings*, they had almost no authority within their own homes.

LIESBET WATERBOER

Liesbet Waterboer, as head of her household, complained bitterly about the impossibility of living in a house with five adult sons who all undermined her authority. They lived in a two-roomed house, in which one room served as the kitchen and the other as a bedroom. Liesbet shared the double bed in the front room with her elderly and virtually bedridden mother. What little space remained in this room was used to pack clothes and other items. One son had built himself an outside room and the remaining four slept on temporary beds in the kitchen on cold nights or on the verandah on warm nights. No one in the house had any form of employment and everyone survived on Liesbet's mother's old-age pension. The house was thus under-resourced and severely overpopulated. Several of the windows were broken, the kitchen had only a small stove and an old ramshackle table with equally old, misshapen and often broken pots. Liesbet would invite me to visit when her sons were drinking elsewhere, but when they arrived home drunk - as they frequently did - she and I would leave, either going for long walks or visiting someone else.

MARIA PIETERSE

Maria Pieterse, a ritual expert, experienced similar problems even though she lived alone in her two-roomed house. She survived on her old age pension and the occasional benefits derived from *hokmeisie* rituals and *mokwele* transactions. Her poverty was reflected in the physical state of her house. There was almost no furniture: in the bedroom were two single beds and a cupboard, in the kitchen an ancient set of shelves and a small table surrounded by chairs in various stages of disrepair. Maria's grandchildren and various nieces and nephews resident in Griquatown came to stay with her each month when she received her pension. Once all the money was spent, they returned to their own families. In addition, her children, who periodically visited from Johannesburg, were all drinkers who encouraged, cajoled and persuaded her to

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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.

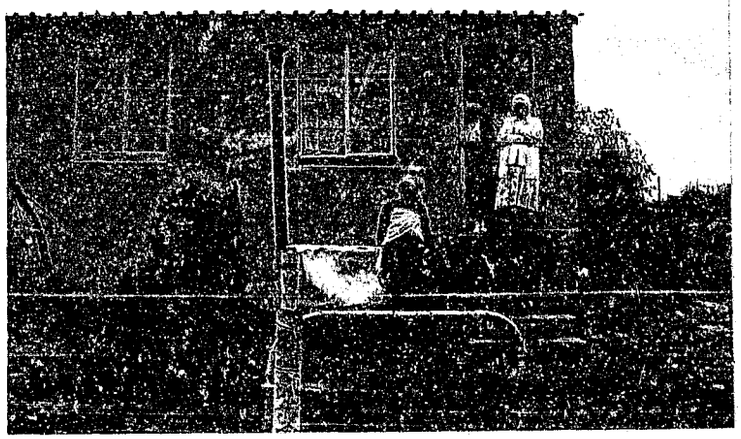

Figure 6.10: Maria Pieterse (in light-coloured clothing) outside her home (which extends only to the fence pole, 1988. By 1998 her house was considerably more rundown)

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).

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