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THE GRIQUA CONUNDRUM

Political and Socio-Cultural Identity in the Northern Cape, South Africa

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Chapter One
Introduction

International attention was drawn to the plight of indigenous people with the declaration of the Year of Indigenous People in 1993 and by the Decade of Indigenous People from 1993–2003. During this decade, indigenous people throughout the world rallied together and attempted to change governments' perspectives of them as irrelevant, marginal and undeserving of special attention (Suzman, 2000; Saugestad, 2000). In South Africa attention focused on the San or 'bushmen' (see Boonzaier, *et al*., 1996; Landau, 1996; Morris, 1996; Ross, 1996; Jolly, 1996; Sharp and Douglas, 1996; Smith, 1996 and White, 1995) and questioned their claim to 'authenticity' (Saugestad, 1996). Attention was also directed at the plight of other indigenous people: at Nama mobilisation as indigenous and autochthonous (Sharp and Boonzaier, 1993, 1994; Sharp, 1996, 1997; Robins, 1997); at the relationship between these people and the more international global context in which they operate (Bredenkamp; 2000, Robins 2000; Hamilton, 1997) and at the Griqua leaders who were articulately voicing their opinions and demands (Minkley, Rassool and Witz, 1996; Saugestad, 1996; Bredenkamp 2000).

This book introduces new themes in the South African debate on indigenous people, with a discussion of the Griqua people who have long sought official recognition within their country of birth and who have only recently acquired it. The book documents negotiations between Griqua leaders, organisers and government officials and details a complex process of mediation and interaction which would be largely overlooked if one concentrated on the more overt discourse of Griqua leaders at official functions (Bredenkamp, 2000). Such a focus does not encompass all ethnic identification and, as Sharp has pointed out, there are important class differences between leaders and their followers. Whereas many leaders – and in particular Griqua ones – are relatively well-off and educated, their followers and indigenous

people in general remain impoverished and marginalised within the South African State (1996: 93). By drawing attention to the Griqua, this book aims to address their marginalisation. It examines the meaning of being Griqua for those 'quieter', poorer people who live in the small town of Griquatown in the Northern Cape, and who are relatively isolated from the Indigenous People's Forum and the United Nations.

Ethnic Identity and Nationalism in South Africa

The Griqua comprise an extremely diverse category of South Africans. They are defined neither by geographical boundaries nor by cultural practices. The name Griqua resulted from missionary intervention at *Klaarwater* (today called Griquatown). In 1815 Rev. John Campbell of the London Missionary Society (LMS) persuaded the diverse group of people north of the Orange River who called themselves 'Bastaards' or *Basters*[1] – comprising colonial 'misfits' (or people of mixed parentage), escaped slaves, Khoikhoi, San and Korana – to change their name to a more respectable term (Ross, 1976; Halford, 1949). The Griqua have been described as a sub-category of the Coloured people (van der Ross, 1993);[2] as not constituting an ethnic group (Morris, 1982); as constituting an ethnic group (Presi-

1 *Baster* translates as 'bastard' or 'child of illegitimate birth'. However, the word gained additional social and economic meanings in the context of the Cape Colony. Socially, *Baster* came to indicate children of mixed parentage, especially children born to white and Khoi parents, but it also referred to children of Khoi and slave unions. Economically, the term referred to people who were transport riders, craftsmen or small farmers and did not perform menial work such as farm or domestic labour (Legassick, 1979; Nurse, Weiner and Jenkins, 1985).

2 The term coloured is problematic in South Africa and is discussed in greater depth in Chapter Four. In this book, I use the capital C to refer to the official apartheid classification of people or places as Coloured, and a small letter c to indicate a more general and emic usage of the term.

dent's Commission, 1983; Waldman, 1989) and as a nation (Cloete, 1986). In part, the confusion of labels is due to the difficulties academics have experienced in handling the concepts of ethnic identity and ethnicity (Cohen, 1978; Comaroff, 1996; Kovacs, 1978; Handler, 1985; Williams, 1989).[3] In this book I have adopted a broader perspective and have examined Griqua identity in terms of its wider context as advocated by Cohen (1969) and in the light of interactive multi-ethnic and multi-cultural circumstances (Cohen, 1978; Sharp, 1996; Martin, 1998). This allows ethnic identities and mobilisation to be seen as intrinsic to the development of modern states (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975; Handler, 1988; Hobsbawm, 1991). It also situates the recent efflorescence of Griqua identity both within the current multi-cultural nationalism advocated by the South African Government and in the context of international mobilisation for the social, political and economic rights of indigenous populations. At a global level, this emphasised the development of people's human rights and indigenous rights; a process which provided many Griqua leaders and communities with new ways of defining problems and seeing solutions (Merry, 2001).

With the demise of apartheid and the dawning of a democratic era, South African anthropologists were faced with new theoretical and conceptual issues. They found that many previously marginalised categories of people – such as the Nama, Korana or Griqua – started articulating claims to an indigenous and primordial identity. Such claims were not the same as apartheid's imposition of Coloured identity and did not deserve similar robust, deconstructive analysis:

> Striking those discourses [imposed by the apartheid Government] down was an easy intellectual task, in that it did not call for any difficult moral choices. But now we are faced not only with the imposition of 'otherness' by the powerful on the powerless, and with the inscription of this 'otherness' in the cultural rhet-

3 Handler argues that ethnicity and nationalism are 'social phenomena constituted not merely by cultural difference, *but by a Western theory of cultural difference*. [...] In other words nationalism and ethnicity challenge us as ethnographers to distance ourselves from a culture theory, grounded in Western common sense, that we share with the subjects of our studies' (1985: 171, original emphasis).

> oric – the texts – of those who have power. We are also being faced with the claiming of 'otherness' as a weapon in the hands of those who see themselves as weak, and as a means of articulating their demands for recognition, dignity and resources. Now we have some difficult distinctions to make (Sharp, 1996: 102–3).

Academics were caught between deconstructing these discourses, as they had done in the past, or accepting essentialist notions of ethnic identity for political reasons. As Sharp points out, there were problems with both these approaches. On the one hand, it was difficult to accept these discourses wholly and uncritically and, on the other, it was impossible to distinguish between deconstruction for academic purposes and the political undermining of people's claims. Thus both these approaches came to be seen as equally limiting for academics (Sharp, 1996). Robins responded to this impasse by arguing that people's articulation of an autochthonous identity should be seen as more than an instrumental act guaranteed to secure certain economic gains. 'It is precisely because of their shattering encounters with Western domination and ethnocide that the cultural world of Namaqualanders is comprised of fragments, re-inventions, incoherence, disjunctures, silences and hybridity' (1997: 26).

The study of 'difference' in post-apartheid South Africa thus provided academics with new challenges which included the recognition of ambiguity and hybridity as a fundamental condition of many minority peoples and also of the paradox inherent in all nation-building projects (Sharp, 1997). It also entailed a recognition that all discourses of ethnic difference were relational and that indigenous peoples were 'entering into a dialogue with the wider society' in which many of the less positive aspects of Western society were contrasted with indigenous values and culture (Sharp, 1996: 92; Saugestad, 2000). Finally, post-apartheid studies of difference provided academics with opportunities to analyse the previously ignored interrelations between emergent ethnic identities and the nationalism advocated by the new government.

It is in the light of these changes in South Africa, which have reversed Coloured people's 'privileged' position *vis-à-vis* the power structures, that we can see the recent Griqua challenges to democracy

and nation-building in South Africa (cf. Sharp, 1994). As discussed in Chapter Two, the far-reaching political transformation has opened up new avenues for the Griqua to pursue and they have adopted new arguments concerning cultural representation. In the early 1990s, there was a strong feeling that, having lost out under apartheid, the Griqua were now being marginalised by the new government. They responded to this alienation by seeking recourse to a Khoisan, indigenous[4] identity, described by Bredenkamp (2000) as 'Khoisan revivalism'. This has, in part, involved the redefinition of their identity. Previously 'Griqua' under apartheid, they have become Khoikhoi for international, and more recently national, usage (President's Commission, 1983; Waldman, 1989; Bredenkamp, 2000).

Griqua leaders have understood this mobilisation not as a challenging of nationalism but as a process of claiming their rightful place in South Africa. These leaders are thus conforming to the multicultural principle that all ethnic groups have the right to remain distinctive and all individuals have the right to be treated as equals within the nation. Nationalism can, however, be seen to be inherently paradoxical and poses a vexing puzzle:

> The state may be accused of injustice both if it promotes equality *and* if it promotes difference. If the state stresses equal rights and duties, minority members may feel that their cultural distinctiveness is not being respected; that their boundaries and identities are threatened. [...] If, on the other hand, the dominant group stresses cultural differences and turns them into virtues, minority members may feel that they are being actively discriminated against (Eriksen, 1993: 142 original emphasis).

Debating the resurgence of ethnic identity and its relationship with the state does not, however, adequately address all that identity comprises. Indeed, as Comaroff has argued, it is '[a]ll too easy to underread the

4 In South Africa, as in other African countries, all Africans are indigenous because they are original inhabitants, 'non-dominant' and are culturally separated from white colonists (Saugestad, 2000). An attempt to move beyond this position has led to the use of a post-colonial definition that stresses internal differentiation. In this definition, indigenous people are, according to Eriksen (1993: 126), 'non-state people' who are well-positioned to spur controversy against the state.

complexity of the political force fields, the physical conditions, and the material relations that inform contemporary constructions of ethnicity, nationality, and identity' (1996: 164). Rather, ethnic identity is shaped in the expression of unequal power relations, in social and economic inequality as experienced at local levels and in the 'minutiae of everyday practice' (Comaroff, 1996: 166). Everyday life and the nature of interpersonal relationships have significant implications for the claiming of rights and practice of citizenship. Thus, while citizenship rights should enable people to act as agents, post-colonial contexts produce fractured notions of citizenship based on individual male rights (Kabeer, 2002). Understanding the complex dynamics of self-identity and social recognition thus illuminates Griqua people's ability to act as citizens in a democratic and post-apartheid South Africa.

Gender relations provide, perhaps, the most profound level of difference at the local level and in everyday experience, yet anthropologists have treated ethnic identity and nationalism as gender-neutral. Women are usually absent from discussions of the state (Geisler, 1995). An examination of South African politics led Walker (1994) to argue that gender equality was sure to be underplayed in the government's attempt to buy the allegiance of chiefs, what she called the 'politics of traditionalism'. But, as Delaney points out, citizenship is never gender-neutral as women are often constructed as the biological and cultural reproducers of 'the nation' (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 37). Griqua women appear to be, in some ways, more Griqua than their male counterparts. This, Kabeer has argued, has implications for the experience of citizenship because women enter public discourse and development projects as mothers, wives and economic dependants rather than as individual citizens (Kabeer, 2002).

As gender is seen as integral to all components of social life (Di Leonardo, 1991), the processes whereby Griqua men and women seek to acquire prestige, civil rights, material resources and political power and, in so doing, cooperate with or challenge each other, and attempt to define and restrict each other's roles are examined in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. In this regard, the insight provided by Di Leonardo is particularly pertinent. In her work on Italian-Americans, she sees women as doing 'the work of kinship' (1984: 194). These women

wrote letters, presented gifts, visited and telephoned kin, arranged holiday get-togethers, etc. This maintenance of kin relations between households was, in effect, a process during which gender relations became 'inscribed in constructions of ethnic identity'. Both men and women benefited, men because it connected them to a broader family without any effort on their part and women because it enabled them to expand their authority and influence (1984: 200).

There is no immediate parallel between Di Leonardo's study of Italian-American women and the women of Griquatown, but the idea of women doing the 'work of kinship' is pertinent. As we will see in Chapter Five, in some contexts, women are inherently Griqua while men are defined as *inkommers*, or newcomers, to a broader Griqua family. It is therefore women who ritually construct Griqua society and who provide the cultural protection of this society (see Chapter Six). Much of women's behaviour is couched in terms of an association with the home and the domestic sphere, through which they activate control not only of their own domestic spaces, but also of a broader and more inclusive Griqua domesticity which allows them a particular ethnic claim to power and autonomy.

In examining the gendered quality of ethnic identity, it is pertinent to focus on individuals as well as on socially constructed categories of people. I thus attempt to analyse the relationship between individual and collective identity, looking especially at one person and her relation to society. Within social science, this relationship is tangentially referred to in debates on structure and agency (Giddens 1984, 1990; Cohen, 1994; Kuper, 1992) while the notion of the individual has been largely overlooked. This is not to say that individuals have not been examined in anthropological literature (e.g. Tsing, 1993; Abu Lughod, 1993; Kaplan, 1998) but these have always been individuals in 'prescribed' positions (Burridge, 1979: 16) who are taken as exemplars of culture or society. Collective understandings of society are not, however, 'external, constraining communal values' which can be understood separately from the individuals who make up these aggregated representations of their worlds (Cohen, 1994: 115).

Cohen argues that academics have failed to ask what an individual is aware of when he or she invokes ethnic or national identity, and they have failed to demonstrate how individuals are constructed in the

images of these collective categories (Cohen, 1994). Williams (1989) similarly criticises the study of ethnicity for being a reflection of what anthropologists believed people to be doing, as opposed to what people themselves believed they were doing.

National identity has been seen to be locally mediated and, it has been argued, rests on individual consciousness. It therefore follows that

> individuals are more than their membership of and participation in collectivities, and […] collectivities are themselves the products of their individual members, so that ethnographic attention to individuals' consciousness of their membership is an appropriate way to understand the collectivity, rather than seeing it as constituted by an abstracted, if compelling, logic (Cohen, 1994: 133).

This emphasis on individuals and their identification with ethnic and national collectivities is examined in Chapter Seven. Here we explore the life of one individual – Susan van der Merwe, or 'Bokkie', – and argue that she has no straightforward identification with either a national or an ethnic consciousness, but rather that she as an individual shifts her opinions and perspectives according to other processes affecting her and her immediate family in profound and intricate ways. Her sense of self, of Griqua and of South African identity is intertwined in complex ways with her experiences of daily life and her struggle to retain her respectability.

Griquatown: The Place

'Welcome to Griquatown' reads a pock-marked and disintegrating signboard immediately outside the town. While the sign invited people into Griquatown, most tourists sped straight through to see the flowers of Namaqualand. Many residents wished that they too could leave Griquatown as easily as the tourists passing through.

Griquatown is a small farming town which developed around a mission station 150 kilometres due west of Kimberley (see Figure 1).

Few traces of the original mission station remain. Griquatown resembles a classic apartheid town with segregated residential areas: the white area known as Griquatown or, in Afrikaans, as *Griekwastad* lies alongside a Coloured location initially known as Phillipsville and renamed Rainbow Valley in 1994. Two kilometres southwest of Griquatown and Rainbow Valley lies the African location called *Itiereleng* (meaning 'do it yourself') during the apartheid era and later *Matlhomola* ('place of sadness'). The name Griquatown thus referred both to this complex of residential spaces and to the smaller area occupied by the 'white' town. By the late 1990s there had been some changes to the apartheid layout: schoolteachers and other successful residents of the Coloured and African locations had purchased houses in the former 'white' area and new Reconstruction and Development houses had been built in the spaces between Griquatown, Rainbow Valley and *Matlhomola*.

Afrikaans is the *lingua franca* in Griquatown. Some people, however, continue to speak a Khoi dialect, known as Griqua or Xiri, often interspersing Khoi words with Afrikaans. Morris, working in Campbell in the 1980s, found that 'the Afrikaans spoken by the older generation, in particular, is difficult to follow, interspersed as it is with Xiri words' (Morris, 1982: 1). People tended to use both Griqua and Afrikaans words when speaking to each other, but when talking to me they would often exclude Griqua words. This language, interspersed with Griqua words and peculiar to the Northern Cape, has been termed 'Griqua-Afrikaans' and has a particular idiom and intonation that differs from 'standard' Afrikaans (Cloete, 1986: 29, for an example of Griqua-Afrikaans see Hager, n.d.).[5]

5 Communication between masters and slaves, initially in a form of Dutch, evolved into Afrikaans (Martin, 1998; Giliomee, 1994). After 1994, the 'diglossic non-standard Afrikaans' was recognised as a literary language and, in so doing, the distinctions between the white Afrikaner 'standard' Afrikaans and the spoken, 'non-standard' coloured variety undermined (Wicomb, 1998). The notion of a 'standard' Afrikaans has been opposed by some Griqua activists who argue that their ancestors developed the Afrikaans language (van der Ross, 1984: 94). Afrikaans is therefore neither the inheritance of white Afrikaners nor, 'the language of the oppressors' as it has often been called (Wicomb, 1998: 370).

In the Northern Cape, the Griqua language is seen as fundamental to the definition of a Griqua collective (although other Griqua organisations, based elsewhere, scoff at this and argue instead for their important role in the production of Afrikaans). Language, as Martin Engelbrecht pointed out, provides an indisputable means of identifying a minority group: '[t]he moment you can speak a language, you can be identified as belonging to a group. It is very important for the continued existence of your identity'. This is especially so because, although the new South African Constitution recognises the rights of individuals rather than those of ethnic collectivities, it also acknowledges the 'historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages' and suggests that redress should occur (Constitution of South Africa, 1996: 6). This denial of mother tongue education and the suppression – or negative identification – of a language is furthermore an abuse of human rights (Papenfus, 1997: 4).

Griquatown is characterised by acute poverty: cars are old, buildings are unpainted and people drift about unemployed. This, however, was not always the case. During the 1970s, Griquatown residents derived good incomes from sheep and cattle farming, karakul-pelt farming, flagstone quarrying, lime works and the mining of asbestos, manganese, iron ore and semi-precious stones. By the 1990s, however, the asbestos mines had closed[6] and karakul farming had ended.[7] With the shifting farming and mining economy, the local populations experienced stringent employment cuts. For example, between the 1960s and 1970s, 12,000–14,000 workers were employed on the asbestos mines. By 1992 less than 500 labourers were employed on the remaining two productive mines (Felix, *et al*., 1994).

From the 1970s onwards, the quality of life grew progressively worse for the people of Rainbow Valley who experienced growing poverty and unemployment. This has recently been ameliorated, to a

6 The extreme medical dangers associated with asbestos led to trade union and consumer struggles in first world countries, while stricter legal controls and litigation cases decreased demand. South Africa has subsequently banned asbestos mining.

7 Changes in the fashion industry and a concern for the protection of endangered species led to a ban on fur coats. The karakul industry, with its tendency to slaughter young lambs, was adversely affected by these shifts.

limited extent, by increased access to state pensions – which, in fact, has discouraged them from re-entering employment. A household survey conducted in 1988 revealed that occupants of 38.4 per cent of the households received pensions and most people were employed as sheep shearers, drivers, builders, fencers, domestic workers, gardeners and farm labourers. In stark contrast, a 1997 survey revealed that almost 79 per cent of households relied on at least one pension in order to survive and that pensions provided the only source of income for 22 per cent of households. In pension-less households, residents employed a range of strategies to survive. Some people ran shebeens (selling unlicensed liquor), or sold firewood, meat, sweets, etc, while others provided a taxi service or took in boarders. Many people did odd jobs such as scrubbing floors, washing, cleaning, painting or repair work, in both Griquatown and Rainbow Valley.[8] None of these jobs provided secure employment and people spent long periods without work.

Those few women who were able to secure full-time employment in Griquatown were generally domestic workers who earned between R120[9] and R310 per month – whereas men, as gardeners, earned between R230 and R450 per month. These wages contrast markedly with the R470 that was received by pensioners and others eligible for maintenance or disability grants. More formal posts, such as those at the municipality and as a doctor's receptionist, paid about R500 per month, but only a handful of people were employed in such posts. The Reconstruction and Development Programme housing scheme was the largest employer in Griquatown, employing 150 men and four women in 1998. Here builders earned between R600 and R700 a month, whereas unskilled workers earned less. Almost a quarter of the households surveyed (22 per cent) relied on money remitted by sisters, mothers, fathers, husbands, boyfriends and daughters working in places such as Kimberley, Welkom, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and the Cape.

8 Odd jobs did not pay well and people received between R8 and R15 per day.

9 On 01/08/2000, $1 was equivalent to R7.05 and £1 to R10.60.

Household Income	Percentage of households in Griquatown
Employment provides entire household income	19.4%
Government pensions supplement household income	56.4%
Government pensions provide entire household income	22.0%
Destitute households with no income	2.2%
Total	100.00%

Sources of household income, Griquatown 1997

Not surprisingly then, Griquatown has been described as a 'pension town' or as 'having a pension culture'.[10] This phrase meant that, for most people in Griquatown, it was more lucrative to receive a pension than to be employed. Furthermore, because of the limited work opportunities in Griquatown, being registered as a pensioner or the recipient of a disability grant offered a far more secure income.

Many Griquatown residents had been employed on the Northern Cape asbestos mines. Ironically, while asbestos mining had provided jobs and a reasonably lucrative income between the 1960s and the 1980s, diseases associated with the asbestos provided financial relief for many people in the 1990s. Asbestosis payments or *myngelde* (lit. mine money) paid by the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases (MBOD) to former mine-workers, are a one-off – but crucial – source of income.[11] During the late 1970s and early 1980s, asbestos compensation varied from R6,000 to R30,000, depending on an individual's racial status, position held and employment duration (Myers, 1981:

10 In October 1997 the average pension payment was R514.03 although the range of payments was R130–R5,320. Most people, however, received R470 – the standard payment for old age and disability grants. If a claimant was married, then the spouse's income was factored into the pension payments and this generally accounted for extremely low payments. The very high payments, such as the R5,320 cited here, result from delays in processing applications and the backdating of pensions to the date of application.

11 MBOD compensation was paid for asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer (Myers, 1981).

241).[12] Many other people had lived in the vicinity of asbestos mines, but had not been employed on them. Some of these people also tested positive for *mynstof* (lit. mine dust, asbestosis) as a result of environmental exposure, but were not eligible for MBOD compensation. Their only hope of compensation was to receive a state disability pension or *ongeskik* pay of R470 per month.

Because so many people in Griquatown worked on the mines and suffered accordingly, *myngelde* was an important source of income. There was also a degree of status associated with the receipt of *myngelde* as sufferers of asbestos-related diseases were considered to be rich and hence valuable to their families. Stories about *mynstof* circulated rapidly through Griquatown. In one such story, people spoke about the receipt of R84,000 which was distributed between family members and used to erect gravestones. The story revealed a fundamental concern with identity and, as an important component of identity, descent. R50,000, an amount equivalent to eight years of pension payments, was said to have been spent on the erection of five gravestones. The essence of this account is the appropriate use of asbestos payments to mark the graves of deceased family members. In so doing, the living were cementing the relations between themselves and the people from whom they were descended and drew their identity. It is remarkable that only after the bulk of the money was said to have been spent on gravestones were the living descendants allocated money for more immediate and material needs. Asbestos mining, therefore, as well as producing wealth and resulting in death, provided the wherewithal to establish continuities with the dead and to emphasise historical ties with land around Griquatown. In using payments to erect gravestones, both for those who had died of asbestosis and for other family members, the living were locating themselves and their ancestors as being 'of Griquatown'.

People in Griquatown, then, were poverty-stricken, unemployed, depressed and – to a large extent – disabled or poisoned by *mynstof*. Their sense of ethnic identity was largely denied in official government circles and their language not recognised. Nonetheless, these

12 During the apartheid era, Coloured and white workers were classed together with different compensation requirements for African workers (Myers, 1981).

people continued investing in a sense of identity, emphasising who they were and who they were descended from. Through their use of language, religion, pensions and asbestos payments, they defined and cemented their identity as being 'of Griquatown'. It is this identity, as articulated by men and women of Griquatown, by Griqua leaders and as understood by officialdom in South Africa with which this book is concerned.

The Structure of the Book

Chapter Two introduces the theme suggested by the book title and situates the Griqua conundrum within a broader South African context. It examines the divisiveness of intra-ethnic relations and explores the nature of Griqua leaders' interactions with various South African Governments. It argues that Griqua factionalism should be seen, not necessarily as a specifically Griqua cultural trait, but rather as an inevitable part of the new process of nation-building. This chapter concerns itself with men such as Andrew Abraham Stockenstrom le Fleur II, Bishop Kanyiles and Adam Kok V, who lived in various places in the country.[13] As leaders of Griqua organisations (the Griqua National Conference, the Griqua People's Organisation and the Campbell Griqua, respectively), these men had historical claim to their positions. They were highly influential in their organisations and much of the intra-ethnic conflict is shown to be related to individual status and hierarchical competition. The chapter argues that the establishment of working relationships between Griqua leaders – and the stressing of unity and egalitarianism in these relationships – became possible only

13 Research for this book was conducted in the late 1990s. The men mentioned here and referred to in detail in the later chapters were the leaders of Griqua organisations at the time. Since then, however, Bishop Kanyiles and Andrew Abraham Stockenstrom le Fleur II have both passed away and new leaders have taken over the control of the Griqua People's Organisation and the Griqua National Conference.

once leaders felt that their Griqua identity was secure in the new South Africa. Achieving this confidence entailed a long process of negotiation, documented here, which eventually led to the government recognising the Griqua as a valid component of South African society, making a commitment to deal with Griqua issues, and backing that commitment with financial support. This process gave government officials confidence to tackle other indigenous people's demands and led to the establishment of a new Directorate of Traditional Affairs which incorporated various other indigenous South African peoples. It was the inclusion of the Griqua in this broader organisation that finally provided these respective leaders with a reason for Griqua unification.

The historical background of Griqua people in South Africa and the role of the missionaries in the creation of a Griqua identity is examined in Chapter Three. The chapter demonstrates that the category 'Griqua' has always contained a degree of ambiguity: an uncertainty concerning who is (or who is not) Griqua. Those people who lived in, or close to, mission stations and who were subjected to mission authority, were identified as Griqua, for example, while those living in the surrounding area were often seen as Khoi, *Baster* or Korana. Thus it was the town itself – Griquatown – that became crucial to the residents' sense of who they were. Being Griqua during the nineteenth century was also about being Christian and – although the Griqua were more concerned about recognition by Colonial Authorities than about Christianity *per se* when they agreed to the establishment of mission stations – this has remained a fundamental part of Griqua identity.

The next section, Chapter Four, continues the theme that Griqua is a constructed and ambiguous identity. In preparation for what was to become an apartheid Government, everyone in the Northern Cape was classified according to race in the 1950s. Griqua people's classification demonstrated the ambiguousness of their identity. They were initially 'mistakenly' seen as African rather than Coloured, although some individuals ended up with both African and Coloured documentation. This was the beginning of a process whereby the name Griqua came to be superseded by the term Coloured in both the Griquatown Council and in broader official political debates. The chapter further demonstrates that the syncretic nature of Griqua identity allowed for a

movement of people across the apartheid boundaries of race. This confusion of racial identity attracted – and continues to attract – large-scale academic interest. The chapter enhances the constructivist argument suggesting that, although Griqua identity is inherently ambiguous and ambivalent, carrying within it possibilities for people to draw upon the positive values of the past and reject the negative connotations that developed during the apartheid era, there remains a fundamental ideological commitment to being Griqua that cannot be reduced to instrumentality.

Continuing the theme of status, but inverting it, Chapter Five concerns those people who do *not* have historical title to leadership and are therefore *not* able to engage in high-profile negotiations with government officials. The chapter also expands on the ideological meaning associated with ethnic identity, first introduced in Chapter Three. It explores the idea that belonging to Griquatown and engaging in domestic life are fundamental parts of being Griqua. In Griquatown the distinction between *inkommer* (newcomer) and *boorling* (born of the town) is part of a broader ethnic identity. *Inkommers* cannot be 'of Griquatown' and therefore cannot cast themselves as Griqua. These categories of *inkommer* and *boorling* are significant components of personal identity and social standing. A discussion of these inter-related categories thus leads to an examination of the changing avenues people pursue in order to gain status. This involves a shift from a commitment to organisations that articulated Griqua concerns in the late 1980s to religious mobilisation and charismatic leadership which, in the 1990s, best enabled men to achieve social recognition and status.

Being Griqua is something women, in particular, emphasise. As argued in Chapter Six, this is done through ritual manipulation that asserts women's claim to the home. These rituals are drawn from a mixture of Khoi and missionary heritage, both of which stress women's position within the home, but they are also closely aligned with Tswana world views: this syncretism speaks of the mixed nature of Griqua identity. Whereas Chapter Five draws on the idea of identity and space and is related to dichotomous notions of the family and *inkommers*, this chapter expands into an examination of identity, ritual and space in relation to the home. It argues that ritual allows women

temporarily to occupy and take command of the home, to make assertions about their ownership of space and status and to emphasise their identity and status as Griqua. Such assertions are inverse to women's profane relations with men. Everyday interactions between women and men involve competing claims to homes and property that stress the manner in which all residents depend on a broader Griqua 'family' for their survival.

In an attempt to examine how the ambiguities of identity are reproduced in the home, Chapter Seven explores one woman's experiences. Bokkie is both the daughter of a famous Griqua leader and, as she insisted, a coloured woman. She is a married woman who should remain at home, but also an independent woman who selects her own friends and makes her own decisions about where she goes or what she does. Whereas she emphasises her identity as a well-read and independent woman, she is also a dependent wife who needs both her husband's attentions and his financial support to maintain her home. This chapter further examines how events in her, her children's and her husband's lives affect the people both inside and beyond the household. Continuing earlier themes, this chapter explores the ideology of Griquatown as one large family in which everyone is related and has an intimate knowledge of everyone else's business. Implicit in this chapter, with its explanation of what it means for an individual to belong to a community and to a broader society, is a further critique of the social constructivist and instrumental approach to identity.