

SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION IN THE RICHTERSVELD,
A NAMAQUALAND RURAL AREA.

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation addresses the issue of rural differentiation in the Richtersveld Reserve, a Rural Coloured Area in the North-Western Cape. Rural differentiation is seen as being a function of the important but variable relationship between farming activity and oscillating labour migration.

By focusing on two different settlements in the Richtersveld - Kuboes and Eksteenfontein - the variable nature of the relationship between farming and labour migration is emphasised. More importantly, however, it is argued, on the basis of statistical and other evidence, that the differential involvement of people domiciled in the Richtersveld in farming and migrant labour cannot be accounted for only in terms of the developmental cycle of domestic groups. Studies which have taken such a view (Murray, 1976 and Spiegel, 1979) have been limited by a short-term perspective which deals with specific processes at the local level, but which overlooks processes of lineal social change.

By taking a longer time perspective, I have sought to argue that the relationship between farming and migrant labour in the Richtersveld has undergone a discernible change which has given rise to the formation of specific social classes. Farming has increasingly become concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy farmers, while the rest of the population has turned more and more to migrant labour as their sole source of income.

The specific nature of farming in the Richtersveld today and the barriers facing the prospective farmer wishing to build up his herd, as well as the political strategies of the wealthy farmers, are all seen as significant elements in the process of rural differentiation in the Richtersveld. I also make some attempt to trace the historical developments which might have influenced this pattern. In particular, I focus on the historical development of group identities and the way in which the consciousness associated with them might be seen to have given rise to the formation of social classes.

Finally, the process of rural differentiation is viewed in terms of the specific government policy as it pertains to the Rural Coloured Areas and it is suggested that the observed trends are in line with the new demands for skilled and semi-skilled labour in the Namaqualand region as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is customary for anthropologists to thank their informants for the help and understanding which they displayed during the period of fieldwork. It seems, however, that this debt is seldom fully recognised by the reader. The anthropologist as anthropologist has little, if anything, to give the informant. In contrast to this, the informant sacrifices his time, his privacy, his friendship and his hospitality. These are debts which I can never hope to repay. My only hope is that I will not be guilty of misrepresentations and that those who read this dissertation will (like myself) become less ignorant about their fellow South Africans. As one informant succinctly put it: "Ja, ons moet kennis maak. Onbekend is onbeminde."

I am also indebted to the staff and many students of the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town for the valuable comments and encouragement which they have given. In particular, I wish to thank Professor M E West and Professor M G Whisson (now at Rhodes University) who were both instrumental in awakening my interest in Social Anthropology. My special thanks are also due to Dr. J S Sharp, who supervised the writing up of this dissertation and whose intimate and detailed knowledge of Namaqualand Reserves encouraged and disciplined my thinking.

I wish to thank the Human Sciences Research Council and the Harry Oppenheimer Institute for African Studies for their generous research grants which made this study possible and enabled me to overcome (to the dismay of some "older" Anthropologists) many of

the rigours of fieldwork. And finally, I wish to thank my wife, Suzanna, for patiently supporting me during the period in which I wrote up my fieldwork; my brother, Anton, for correcting some of my grammatical errors; and Judith Balsdon for her expert typing from a rather untidy draft.

FIELDWORK

The fieldwork on which this dissertation is based, was begun in 1976 when I accompanied Professor Martin West on brief field trips to the Lichtersveld. Professor West had first established contact with the people of Eksteenfontein in 1969 (whilst doing his fieldwork in Port Nolloth) and through my association with him I was readily accepted by that community.

Between November 1976 and January 1977 I spent two and a half months on my own in Eksteenfontein, during which period I concentrated on the farming activity of the residents in this settlement. This fieldwork was written up as an Honours dissertation entitled "Farming in Eksteenfontein". During the next two years I spent a further five months in the field, mostly in the other settlements in the Reserve.

Although I focused upon the settlements of Fuboes and Eksteenfontein (administering a questionnaire to approximately 40 per cent of the households in these two communities) I also spent short periods in Lekkersing and Sanddrif. In Lekkersing (the administrative capital of the Reserve) I was able to consult many of the Management Board's records and have recourse to much of the correspondence which took place between the Superintendent of the Reserve and various government departments during the past thirty years.

During the periods in which I visited the area on my own, it was possible to live in, or just on the outskirts of, the various communities with the exception of Sanddrif (the smallest

of the four settlements), to which I made a few brief excursions. In Eksteenfontein I lived in a tent or caravan, while I was willingly offered the use of the vacant rectory in Kuboes. With a few isolated exceptions, I was received with the greatest friendship and hospitality by the various sections of the Reserve population.

Since Afrikaans is my mother tongue and because all the people in the Richtersveld can speak it relatively fluently, I found no difficulty in communicating with informants. The fact that I am a White Afrikaner did, however, give rise to certain problems. Many of the migrant workers initially viewed my presence with a certain amount of suspicion and, on certain occasions, open hostility was expressed. In their contact with outsiders the people of the Reserve have developed a stereotype of White Afrikaners which is, to say the least, not very favourable.

The main problem which I encountered, however, was that I inadvertently found myself associating too much with the office bearers and well-to-do members of the population (school teachers, board members, wealthy farmers, etc). Fortunately I soon became aware of this bias (in no small measure owing to the fact that people who were not in these categories openly pointed it out to me) and consciously tried to avoid it. But it is interesting to note that this was a problem which I encountered only in Eksteenfontein (where, as I will attempt to demonstrate, there are clearly defined class divisions) and not in Kuboes.

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CHAPTER 1 : Introduction

In all rural situations where the population increases and land becomes scarce, two divergent trends or patterns might be observed. Firstly, there might be a rapid process of differentiation whereby some farmers are able to increase their effective access to land, thereby allowing them to remain in the rural areas, while others become dispossessed and are forced to seek work in the industrial centres. Secondly, there might be a situation where most individuals manage to retain an interest in the land and in farming but, since the income derived from their farming activity is insufficient for their subsistence needs, they are forced to seek intermittent employment elsewhere. In other words, they become oscillating migrant workers.

In those areas of South Africa where land was individually owned the process of dispossession was, from the individual's point of view, a very rapid one. This process, which was particularly prevalent during the 1920's and 1930's, caused many people to migrate permanently to the cities, while those who remained in the rural areas were able to increase their land ownership. The rapid dichotomization of the population into "farmers" on the one hand and "urban migrants" on the other, meant that the notion of "oscillating migrant" was of little, if any, significance in these particular situations.

In sharp contrast to this, the circumstances of rural areas where more "communal" systems of land tenure existed, did not give rise to such a neat twofold categorization. It was therefore in such situations that the category of "oscillating migrant workers" became important. Of course, even here some people did migrate permanently to the cities, but oscillating labour migration has nevertheless persisted for well over a century and is, if anything, still increasing.

The study of migrant labour and the process of rural differentiation has, in the past, been studied from a partial viewpoint - "either from the rural end or from the urban end" (Houghton, 1960:179). Although the shortcomings inherent in such approaches have been overcome, there is still a tendency to view these phenomena from either a micro or macro perspective; and the few attempts to integrate the two perspectives have offered significant advances in our understanding of them (see, for example, Murray, 1976 and Spiegel, 1979).

In a recent study of rural underdevelopment, The Roots of Rural Poverty, the authors have focused attention on the developing national capitalist economy and its impact upon rural development (Palmer and Parsons, 1977). They argue that, where peasant agriculture in Central and Southern Africa is today "backward" and "uneconomic", it has been made so through a demonstrable economic process, while capitalist agriculture is "progressive" and "successful" simply because of its control of political and social power. Although previous ideas of the inherent "backwardness" of traditional farming methods and the consequent inability of the traditional farmers to adapt to changed circumstances have been largely dispelled, the "macro" perspective of most of the contributors, as well as their heavy reliance on archival sources, has meant that they have tended to overlook, to a large extent, the differences which exist within certain peasant societies. In other words, their framework fails to allow one to explain differences between various peasant communities which have ostensibly been subjected to the same external forces, unless one can demonstrate, using archival sources, that different communities

have a different significance in the broader economy (Ranger, 1978).

This thesis attempts to focus on migrant labour and the process of rural differentiation at the local level. This is not to say that I am denying the important impact of the broader political economy upon the rural areas. It is simply hoped that an anthropological approach, with its method of participant observation, will allow a further contribution to be made to this study.

"Fieldwork is perhaps the only way of making systematic sense of the African side of the multiple "intermediate" positions between peasant and proletarian, and especially the consciousness associated with them" (Ranger, 1978: 117).

Fieldwork for this study was undertaken in the Richtersveld Rural Coloured Area in the magisterial district of Namaqualand. Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to provide some background information about the Rural Coloured Areas and Namaqualand. After this I give a synopsis of the Richtersveld Rural Coloured Area itself.

a) The Rural Coloured Areas

The one point concerning the so-called "Coloured" people about which there is general agreement, is that this legally defined category does not constitute a homogeneous social group (see Marais, 1939; Patterson, 1953; Carstens, 1966; West, 1971 and Sharp, 1977).¹ They are, as West has pointed out, "a category (of people) created by the Population Registration Act (No.30 of 1950)" (1971:9). Prior to 1950 the term "coloured" was in everyday use to denote "people of colour" or "people of mixed origin" in order to distinguish them from "pure" Caucasoids on the one hand and Negroids on the other. However, this categorization, like all popular categorizations, had little objective validity. Not only because of the lack of clear boundaries which distinguished the "coloureds" either from the "whites" or from the "Natives",² but also because this category was clearly subdivided within itself. Nonetheless, the popular conception of the term, before 1950, was used primarily in a descriptive context, whereas the Population Registration Act specifically sought to give a legal status to this amorphous category of people and, in order to achieve this end, it tried to define exact boundaries between this and other categories.³

Before 1950 the boundaries between "white" and "coloured" were open to a certain amount of negotiation or manipulation and it was quite clear that no clear-cut divisions existed.

"In view of the extent to which both physical and cultural integration occurred between the Boer (Dutch) settlers and the indigenous Khoi-Khoi in the past of Namaqualand, I suggest that it is legitimate to regard all of the area's

inhabitants, from the mid-19th Century onwards, as comprising a single cultural and physical continuum which, taken on its own terms, has manifested no obvious areas of discontinuity" (Sharp, 1977:16)

The cultural "superiority" and the preferential treatment of those at the Boer end of the continuum - not surprisingly - led to a situation where those who were not "pure white" imbibed the stereotypes of the colonists regarding the Khoikhoi and therefore sought to emphasise their difference from the latter and similarity to the former. These people began to be referred to as "Basters" in order to distinguish them from other "coloureds". The Basters saw themselves, and were generally seen by others, as being different from both the "whites" and the "coloureds". It is likely, however, that the term implied "class", as well as racial difference. In other words, the poorer sections of the "whites" as well as the more wealthy "coloureds" were included in this category.

Many Basters could and did become accepted as "whites", while many "whites" continued to marry into the various Baster communities until the 1950's. The "Apartheid" era, however, ushered in a new system and the Basters like all other "coloureds" came to be unambiguously classified as Coloureds, with all the accompanying legal implications.

In 1975 the estimated size of the Coloured population was 2,43 million, which comprised approximately nine per cent of the total population of South Africa. Of this 2,43 million, approximately 75 per cent lived in the urban areas, while slightly more than 20 per cent lived on white-owned farms as employees of the farmers.

The remainder, a mere 2,9 per cent, lived in what are commonly referred to as "Coloured Reserves" or "Rural Coloured Areas". In 1975 the total population of these Reserves was 58 252. This constituted not more than 9,6 per cent of the total Coloured rural population and some 0,214 per cent of the total population of South Africa.⁴

There are at present 23 Rural Coloured Areas or Coloured Reserves in South Africa which cover a total area of some 1 717 531 hectares. Of these, six are situated in the Namaqualand district, viz. Richtersveld, Steinkopf, Leliefontein, Concordia, Komaggas and Pella. They are six of the seven largest Coloured Reserves with a total area of 1 210 201 hectares (70 per cent of the area of all the Reserves). Nevertheless, their total population is 23 400 (40 per cent of the population of all Reserves).

The Rural Coloured Areas, as the name implies, are reserved for the Coloured population. Most of these Reserves had their origins as mission stations of the London Missionary Society and Wesleyan Church. The establishment of mission stations provided the Basters and Khoikhoi with an effective safeguard against the encroaching Boers, and this seems to have been the motive which was more strongly felt than the mere need for a spiritual leader. Formal recognition was given to these mission stations by the government of the Cape Colony by way of "tickets of occupation" which gave the members some form of guarantee of permanent occupation of the areas around the stations.

A system of government developed in all these mission stations

whereby a raad (council) of elected or appointed members of the community, under the chairmanship of the missionary, was established. In order to relieve the missionary societies of secular administration and (at least ostensibly) to grant a measure of local government of the areas, the Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act (No.29 of 1909 (Cape)) provided for the separation of secular and church administration by replacing the councils with Advisory or Management Boards. However, the enforcement of this Act merely served to restrict the relative autonomy in local affairs (Carstens, 1966:17). Initially the district magistrates controlled the administration of the Reserves, but in 1952 the Department of Coloured Affairs took over this function. Finally, the Rural Coloured Areas Act (No.24 of 1963) was introduced and in 1969 the Administration of Coloured Affairs took over from the Department of Coloured Affairs.

The provisions of this latter Act and the motives behind its introduction clearly demonstrated a new policy towards the Reserves and "development" has become the watchword of administration and many a Management Board member alike. I therefore quote at some length from the Theron Commission's summary of its provisions:

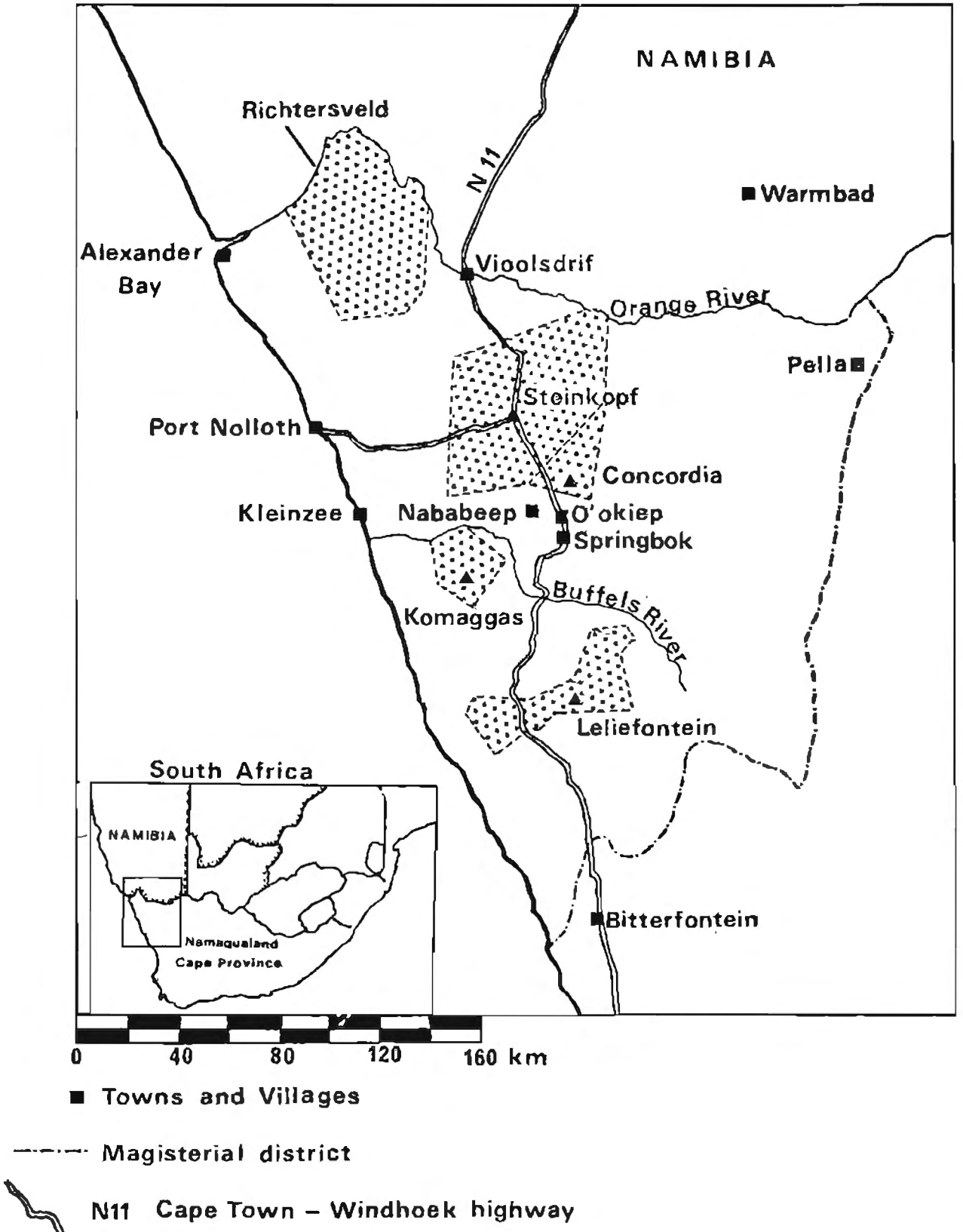
"The Act.....provides for the planning, classification and division of each area with due regard to local circumstances, the cancellation of existing rights, where necessary, and the reallocation of land rights, to provide for: residential areas in accordance with town-planning standards; a town commonage for dumping and for the expansion of the residential area and, if and so long as it may be available for the purpose, as grazing for animals of occupiers of erven; areas for afforestation or other suitable purposes; an agricultural area, subdivided into lots of such size, shape

and situation as the Minister may determine, and an outer commonage, being the remaining extent of the area for the exclusive use in the prescribed manner of bona fide farmers. This legislation therefore established the organization and means for the Government to assist with the stabilization, reclamation and profitable utilization of the land, as well as better socio-economic organization and development between town-dwellers on the one hand and bona fide farmers on the other and making appropriate provision for each of the two groups" (Theron Commission, 1976:145).

Today the political focal point of the Reserves is the Management Board, which consists of a number of representatives elected from and by the Reserve community, as well as three members appointed by the Minister - one of whom is recommended by the local church body. Each Reserve also has a Superintendent (a public servant) who acts as chairman of the Board (but who has no voting rights) and is fully responsible for the administration of the area.

From the point of view of the inhabitants of the Reserves, the powers of the Boards are similar to those of village management boards in South Africa. That is to say, they have the right to levy rates and see to the provision of essential services. In addition to this, the Boards also have substantial control over farming activities within the Reserves - especially insofar as they have the finance available, from the Coloured Development Corporation, to drill boreholes and erect wind-pumps, to erect and repair fences, and to implement new "development" schemes proposed by the Administration of Coloured Affairs.

MAP I : COLOURED RURAL AREAS, NAMAQUALAND



b) Namaqualand.

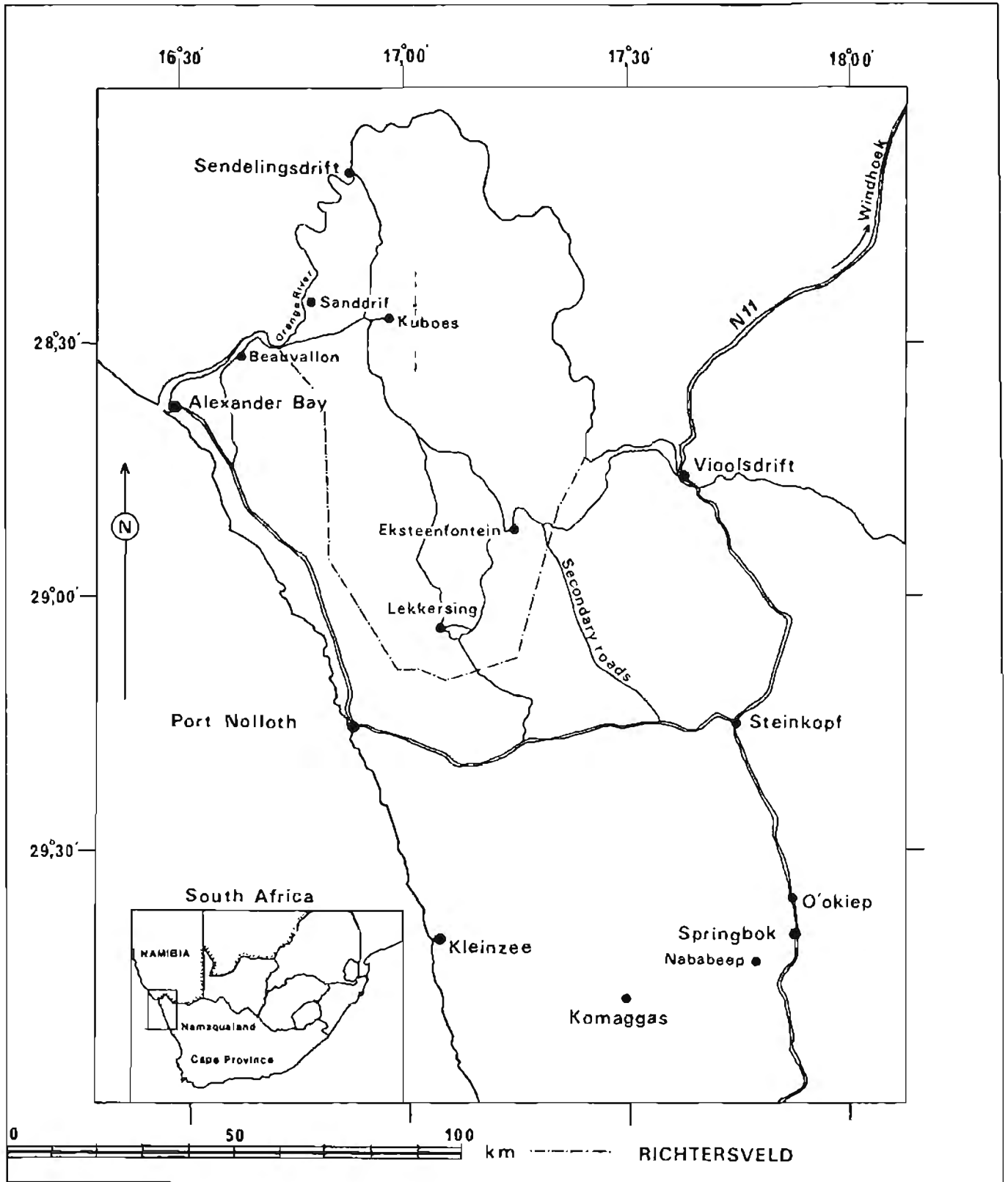
Namaqualand is the vast geographical and magisterial district situated in the north-western corner of the Cape Province. The Orange River forms the northern border and the Atlantic Ocean the western. On the east it borders on the districts of Kenhardt and Calvinia, with the Vanrhynsdorp district on the south.

In many ways Namaqualand is a rather special district. Firstly, it is probably the most isolated region of our country as is evidenced by the title of Kotze's book Namakwaland - n Sosiologiese Studie van n Geïsoleerde Gemeenskap (1943). Things have not changed much in this regard since 1943 - with the exception that there are now two tarred roads, one from Bitterfontein to Vioolsdrif (completed in the late 1960's) and the other from Steirkopf to Port Nolloth (completed in 1978). The nearest rail link is still at Bitterfontein, some 180 km from Springbok (see Map 1). "The true Namaqualander", writes Carstens, "is still inclined to regard his district as an independent country and looks upon all strangers and immigrants as foreigners" (1966: 15), while as late as 1943 it was reported that 93,3 per cent of the population of Namaqualand were born in the district and 2,8 per cent in the areas immediately surrounding it (Kotze, 1943:56).

Secondly, it has the lowest annual rainfall and lowest population density of any area in South Africa (with the possible exception of the Cape north of the Orange River). The average rainfall per annum varies considerably within the area, but few places receive more than 150 mm.⁵ Closely related to this is the low population density. The total population of Namaqualand is

estimated at just under 56 000, of which 23 000 (or 43 per cent) are Coloured, while the total area is 4 800 000 hectares. This gives a density of just less than 1,16 persons per square kilometer. The low rainfall, together with very severe droughts, (which, it is claimed, come in eleven-year cycles) makes the area only marginally suited to any type of sedentary farming on a permanent basis and, notwithstanding the low population density, there is general agreement that virtually the whole of Namaqualand suffers from severe over-exploitation of the veld. However, whereas sheep and goat farming has had limited success, virtually the whole area is eminently unsuited (with one or two notable exceptions, such as the irrigated farms on the banks of the Orange River) to cultivation, since this is entirely reliant upon the sporadic rainfall of the region.

And thirdly, on the positive side, Namaqualand is famous for its flowers and rich mineral deposits. Whereas the flowers - which make a brief, but glorious appearance after the winter rains - are of no social consequence, the mineral deposits are. In fact, the history of Namaqualand is, to a large extent, synonymous with the history of the copper industry in that area. Today, of course the diamond diggings at the mouth of the Orange River, at Kleinsee and Sendelingsdrif have simply emphasised the fact that Namaqualand's wealth and potential lies beneath the ground. The mines are the largest employers of labour in the area, while nearly all other employment - with the exception of that connected with farming - can be said to stem indirectly from mining activity.



MAP II : THE RICHTERSVELD

c) The Richtersveld.⁶

The Richtersveld Rural Coloured Area is situated in the most north-western corner of the Cape Province, just south of the Orange River. It covers an area of 513 919,2 hectares, making it the largest of all the Reserves. In addition to this, the relatively low population of 2 700 gives it the lowest density of all the Reserves - less than one person per two square kilometers (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Population density of five Namaqualand Reserves.

	Area (hectares)	Population	Population density (hectares per person)
Richtersveld	513 919	2 700	190,34
Steinkopf	329 301	5 375	61,65
Leliefontein	192 791	5 474	35,21
Komaggas	62 603	3 091	20,25
Concordia	63 383	4 300	14,74

Vegetation in this semi-desert region is of three types: Succulent Karroo, Namaqualand Broken Veld, and Western Mountain Karroo. The average rainfall is less than 140 mm per year, with a very poor distribution. For example, during some years it exceeds 240 mm, while in others it is less than 20 mm. For the most part humans and animals are dependent upon the sub-terranean water sources. In addition, most of the terrain is very mountainous and rocky, so that cultivation holds no prospects whatsoever.

The main economic activity in the Reserve is sheep and goat farming, since all attempts at grain cultivation ceased in the 1960's. Unlike the other Namaqualand Reserves, there is thus

no allocation of plots of land to individuals and the whole area is open for communal pasturage.⁷ Opportunities for wage-labour employment in the Richtersveld are very limited. There are officials of the Management Board, teachers and a few other posts. Individual enterprise, other than farming, is limited to shop-keeping, building, general repair work, water carrying and wood-collecting.

The roads in the Reserve are extremely bad and generally unsuitable for ordinary motor cars. After heavy rains (which fortunately are rare) it is generally impossible for vehicles to enter or leave the area until the roads have been repaired. There is no public transport whatsoever and the households which do not own vehicles are therefore entirely reliant on the few that do.

There are four main settlements or villages in the Richtersveld, each with its own school, church and shop.⁸ These are Kuboes, Eksteenfontain, Lekkersing (the administrative centre) and Sanddrif. The population of each of these villages is set out in Table 1.2 below. There is also a mining town at Sendelingsdrif (see Map II), but for all practical purposes this falls outside the Reserve's borders.⁹ This pattern is different from that found in the other Namaqualand Reserves, where there is generally only one main settlement and a few hamlets (without churches, schools or shops) clustered around it. Quite obviously this difference can be attributed to the size of the Richtersveld and therefore the distances between the settlements, but the existence of the four settlements is also symptomatic of certain historical events which have given rise to social divisions within the Reserve.

Table 1.2: Population of main settlements in the Richtersveld.¹⁰

<u>Village</u>	<u>Population</u>
Kubces	945
Lekkersing	644
Eksteenfontein	546
Sanddrif	357

Total	2 541

Hoernlé reported that in 1912 Kuboes was the only noteworthy settlement in the Richtersveld (1913:6). "This community," she tells us, "consisting in all of between two and three hundred souls, is a mixed one (i.e. Hottentots and Bastards).....The two peoples are mixing far more rapidly than they have hitherto done and, in a few years' time, the real old Hottentots will disappear here as they have already done further south" (ibid : 7-8).

It was also in Kuboes that the first mission station outpost was established by Frederik Hein in 1851 (Strassberger, 1969:71) and where the first church was built in 1893, which remained the only one in the Richtersveld until the 1950's.

In the early 1940's Kaptein Paul Links,¹¹ the chief representative of what was at that time an Advisory Board, decided to move from Kuboes to Lekkersing. This move saw the beginning of Lekkersing as an important settlement in the Reserve. More importantly, however, it caused a rift between the people of the north and the south. Since Links took the "head office" of the Board with him to Lekkersing, many people of Kuboes felt that they had been forsaken by the Board and ceased to take an active interest in its affairs. It was also commonly felt that Lekkersing had "stolen" the Board and this feeling resulted in a certain amount

of animosity between the residents of the two settlements. This situation was aggravated in 1949 by the movement into the Reserve (having been accepted by the Board) of more than 300 Basters from the Boesmanland area. Most of these Basters eventually settled in Stinkfontein (later to become Eksteenfontein) and appeared, from the point of view of the Kuboennaars, to be joining forces with the people of Lekkersing.

Sanddrif falls into a different category, and in many ways can be seen as a "hamlet" of Kuboes. In 1965 diamond mining was undertaken on a relatively large scale in the area, and the eventual opening of a school encouraged many people to settle there permanently. This mine was closed in 1974, but most of the people who had settled there, decided to stay. Today Sanddrif is generally regarded as part of Kuboes, since most of its residents were born there.

The divisions which have been brought about as a result of these events will be discussed more fully in the body of this thesis; at this stage it suffices to mention that the Richtersveld as a whole does not display the same sense of "community" as was reported by Sharp (1966) for Komaggas and Concordia.

Although the first missionary had begun work in the Richtersveld in 1851, he left the area in 1862 and returned only some twenty years later. It is also important to mention that this missionary, Frederik Hein, was himself a "coloured", unlike most other missionaries who were from Europe, and probably more understanding of the ways of the local populations.¹² Also, he was unwilling or unable to coax the inhabitants of the area into grain

cultivation (as was the case in the other Namaqualand Reserves). This meant that Hein experienced great difficulty in getting the people to settle permanently in Kuboes, since they were still inclined to move around with their herds of sheep and goats. After Hein's death, his son, who had married a member of the community, took over this work. However, he was not ordained as a minister and lost nearly all contact with the Rhenish Mission Society. It can thus be seen that missionary presence in the Richtersveld was much more sporadic and much weaker than in the other Reserves. The people had never been introduced to the notion of a council which could take decisions affecting secular activities. In addition, the population saw no need to restrict outsiders from entering the area. Consequently, when the Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act (no.24 of 1909) was passed, the people were unwilling to accept it. The council (such as there was) therefore remained an Advisory Board until 1957 when the Act was accepted and a Management Board was established. Today this Board consists of twelve members, four from Kuboes, Eksteenfontein and Lekkersing respectively. It meets once a month at Lekkersing, where the administrative offices are situated.

Officially, not all residents of the Richtersveld are classified in the same category. Firstly, all household heads are classified as "Occupiers". All occupiers who have permanent residence rights are classified as "Registered Occupiers" and, as such, are allowed to become and vote for members of the Management Board. Those household heads who do not have permanent residence rights are classified as "Non-registered Occupiers", but enjoy

all the same privileges as Registered Occupiers, with the exception that they cannot take part in the Board's activities. Very little therefore separates these two categories, especially in view of the fact that there has been only one case (to the best of my knowledge) where Non-registered Occupiers have lost their residence rights. There is also a special category of "Bona fide farmers" who are defined as stock-owners whose sole means of support derives from their farming activity. Here too there seems to be little validity in this classification, since it only considers the income of the household head and entirely ignores the possible sources of income from the other members of the household. Also, there seems to be very little correlation between herd size and classification as a "Bona fide farmer". For example, there are two very large stock-owners who own shops and are therefore automatically excluded from this category, while other stock-owners with less than 100 head (see case 17, Table 2.3) are classified thus.

Although all the people in the Reserve are of mixed descent, it is possible to distinguish between the predominantly Nama-speaking "Boorlinge" who have mostly lived in the area for many generations and the Afrikaans-speaking "Kommers" who entered the Richtersveld after 1949. Although "Boorling" (i.e. native) and "Kommer" (i.e. those who have come in) are the terms which these categories prefer when referring to themselves, the "Boorlinge" generally refer to the "Kommers" as "halfnaatjies" (i.e. half-castes) and are themselves referred to as "Namas".¹³

Even though one could point to certain cultural differences

between these two categories (for example, most of the Boorlinge still have Nama as their first language and still live in the traditional 'matjieshuise" (mat house)), there is actually very little, at this level, which separates them. They all can speak Afrikaans,¹⁴ they all belong to the Christian church and most of the members of both categories (especially the younger generation) have had at least four years of schooling.

Most people in the Reserve are poor by European standards, but their life-styles can be described as "simple" rather than "poverty-stricken". The traditional "matjieshuis" is still the most common dwelling-structure, although there is today a rapid move to corrugated-iron and brick houses. The residential units in the villages are widely dispersed, but this pattern is also undergoing rapid change as a result of the introduction of town-planning schemes. None of the houses has running water¹⁵ or electricity and most households still do their cooking over an open fire in the traditional "kookskerm" (cooking shelter). Telephones were introduced to the Reserve for the first time in 1977 and today there are 14 telephones in Eksteenfontein and 12 in Lekkersing. Most of the households own at least one radio and record-player, while a surprisingly high proportion have hi-fi sets, since they have become an important status symbol in the Reserve. Gas and paraffin stoves, refrigerators and motor vehicles however, remain the privilege of the well-to-do.

This brings us to what is perhaps the most striking feature of life in the Richtersveld: the extremes in economic wealth and poverty found within the population. In order to demonstrate

this, I wish to look at two specific households which, although at different ends of the scale, nonetheless are representative of the very wide variation in economic welfare.

Case 1.1: David Volmoer lives with his wife and nine children in a five-roomed brick house. David is the only bread-winner in the family, since his one son who has finished school has not yet gone out to work. All his children are well-fed and well-clothed and he claims that his financial position is strong enough for him to allow all of them to study at least to Std.10. His wife does the cooking on a gas stove and they also have a paraffin refrigerator. He runs a modern "bakkie" (light pick-up truck) which he trades in for a new one every three years and his son runs a second-hand station-wagon.

Case 1.2: Jakob Rooi (who, like David Volmoer, is in his late 40's) lives with his wife and four young children in an unpartitioned "Matjieshuis". A small paraffin stove is the only modern convenience which they own, but even this is not very often used, owing to the very high price of fuel. Even under these conditions, he finds difficulty in making ends meet and, although they eat relatively well, the worn and patched clothes of this whole family bear evidence of the severe economic hardship which they obviously endure.

These two cases have been selected not only because they demonstrate the extremes in economic welfare of different households, but also because certain variables which are normally associated with these differences are constant. For example, age, the number of economically active members, and (most important) the source of income are the same. Both Jakob and David are full-time farmers and neither of them rely on wage-labour earnings.

Not all households depend exclusively (as do these two cases) on income derived from farming. There is a substantial proportion of the adult males in the Reserve who seek employment outside. Migrant labour has been a fact of life for most of the adult males since the 1920's, when job opportunities were created with the opening of the mines at the mouth of the Orange River and elsewhere. It is, however, of variable significance

to different households. Some households (like the two cases above) have no direct involvement in migrant labour; others are exclusively wage-labour earners, while the remainder earn an income from both farming and migrant labour remittances.

It can be seen that there are significant contrasts in the Richtersveld with respect to the mode of livelihood of different households. Some households are entirely dependent upon migrant labour; some are entirely dependent upon farming; while others are involved in both types of activity. In addition to this, the types of farming vary significantly. These range from farmers who are employers of labour; to those who are nomadic pastoralists and even today closely resemble the Khoikhoi tradition. At the same time, the number of stock owned per household also varies greatly. Many households own no stock, while some own more than one thousand. In order to bring out these contrasts I have purposely selected the two villages which appear, at the overt level at least, to exemplify these differences. In other words, Kuboes represents the "backward" settlement where traditional farming methods are practiced and where there is substantial dependence on wage-labour earnings, while Eksteenfontein is the more "progressive" of the two communities with, at least ostensibly, a lower reliance on migrant labour.

d) Farming, migrant labour and rural differentiation.

It has been said that people in both the Black and Coloured rural areas feel themselves to be traditionally involved in farming (Spiegel, 1979:9-10 and Carstens, 1966:46). It is also obvious that migrant labour has existed for considerable periods of time. One must therefore take account of the fact that the economy of these areas involves both farming (i.e. pastoralism and/or cultivation) as well as independent wage-labour. At this level there is a strong analogy between the Black Homelands and the Coloured Reserves, but a detailed study of the existing material suggests that, although the relationship between farming and migrant labour is important, it is nonetheless a variable one. This is especially true if one contrasts the situation in the Namaqualand Reserves with that in the Black Homelands. Quite obviously the fact that the legal restrictions which prevent many Blacks from migrating permanently to the cities are not applicable to the populations of the Coloured Reserves, is of the utmost importance here. One could therefore claim, to simplify the argument substantially, that whereas the Blacks have retained an interest in farming, given the fact that they are obliged to remain domiciled in the Homelands, the Coloureds elect to remain domiciled in the Reserves, given the fact that they retain an interest in the land. However, if one compares the situation in the various Namaqualand Reserves, it is clear that, although the general patterns are the same, the specific circumstances in each Reserve need to be considered and, I would argue, it is also necessary to take into account the variable circumstances within a single Reserve such

as the Richtersveld. These considerations are of particular relevance to the points of debate emerging from The Roots of Rural Poverty.

The one significant feature which seems to be emerging from the Namaqualand data is that the relationship between farming and migrant labour turns upon the amount of land, the density of the population and whether agriculture is technically possible or not: in short, the income generated from farming in relation to the population. Murray (1976) and Spiegel (1979) have recently demonstrated the importance of migrant labour for subsidising farming activities in the Black rural areas of Lesotho, an observation also made in passing by Sharp in his study of Komaggas and Concordia (1977). Quite clearly the implication here is that farming activity per se is not economically viable, but that it serves certain important social functions. For example, Spiegel argues that farming activity in Lesotho primarily serves a redistributive function, while Sharp has demonstrated that it is the title to land which forms the basis of the sense of community which exists in Komaggas and Concordia.

With specific reference to the Namaqualand Reserves it can just be mentioned here that especially in those areas where grain crops are grown, migrant labour remittances do serve to subsidise farming. This is so, primarily because the area is only marginally suited to grain cultivation. In the Richtersveld, on the other hand, the area is large and the population density is low. Unlike in the other Reserves to the south, the population was never enticed into the long-term cultivation of grain. In view of these considerations it might therefore be expected that farming

takes on a significance different from that in the other Reserves. It is surprising, however, that the actual rate of labour migration (i.e. the percentage of economically active males involved in migrant labour at any given time) is not as low as might be expected from the above considerations. Nor is the difference in the rate of oscillating migration between Kuboes and Eksteenfontein of the order that one might expect from the abovementioned differences between these settlements. For example, although the average stock-ownership per household in Eksteenfontein is twice as great as that in Kuboes, the difference in the rate of oscillating migration does not appear to fully reflect this discrepancy. With regard to the "uneconomic" nature of farming reported for other areas, it is surprising that Eksteenfontein, which does have a lower rate of oscillating migration, is more economically prosperous than Kuboes. This observation in itself points to the fact that farming (in Eksteenfontein, at least) is of real economic importance and not simply "subsidised" by migrant labour remittances.

Clyde-Mitchell (1959) suggests that the complexity of the economic base is overlooked if one simply quantifies the "rate" of oscillating migration (i.e. how many people migrate). He therefore draws a distinction between the "rate" and "incidence" of migrant labour, "incidence" being the range or nature (i.e. who migrates) of oscillating migration. In this regard he thus distinguishes between two sets of factors which are related to migrant labour. In the first instance there are the broad economic factors which are most closely related to the "rate" (i.e. the total income generated within the area being studied

in relation to the population), while in the second, there are the individual economic and personal factors which are closely related to the "incidence" (i.e. factors such as age, sex, individual household composition and income, etc.). He cautions, however, that one cannot talk of specific "causal" factors, but that one should see migrant labour in its total context - a set of "concomitant adjustments within a changed social system" (ibid.;16). These observations have particular relevance for the Richtersveld if one is to make sense of the variable nature of the relationship between farming and migrant labour.

However, this emphasis on the factors, at the local level, which are related to migrant labour and farming, simply introduces another question: How does one account for the differences between the two communities of Kuboes and Eksteenfontein? And it is here that what might loosely be termed "cultural" factors become important. The people from the two villages have different cultural origins and this has given rise to different attitudes to farming as well as to migrant labour itself. These in turn can be reduced to different relationships to the land and experiences outside the Reserve. It is also evident that there has been a struggle for land within the Reserve, even though there is a communal land tenure system. It therefore also becomes necessary to look at the political processes associated with this.

Both Murray (1976) and Spiegel (1979) have argued that differential involvement in farming and migrant labour in rural Lesotho needs to be viewed in terms of the developmental cycle of the domestic group. Implicit in this argument is the assumption that farming

activity is not "economic", i.e. it needs to be "subsidised" by migrant labour remittances. Such an assumption does not hold in the context of the Richtersveld and I therefore propose to look specifically at the basic nature of farming and its relationship to migrant labour (Chapters II and III) in order to demonstrate that in this particular situation the relatively low population density, the absence of legal restrictions which prevent people from leaving the Reserve, as well as the nature of the communal land tenure system can give rise to real class differences which are directly related to differential involvement in farming activity.

It should however, be emphasised that these factors can give rise to class differences, but, with reference to the observed difference between Kuboes and Eksteenfontein, it is evident that certain additional factors are of crucial importance. In Chapters IV and V, I therefore look at the "cultural" factors - especially the historical events associated with them - and the way in which they have influenced attitudes to farming and migrant labour. And finally (Chapter VI), I make some attempt to describe the political processes within the Richtersveld insofar as they might be seen to have contributed to the present class divisions.

Notes to Chapter 1.

1. Some authors have put forward the suggestion that, after almost thirty years of "Apartheid", one might be able to view the Coloureds as being a "volk-in-wording" or "nation-in-becoming", but this idea is specifically rejected by the people thus classified (van der Horst, 1976:123). There has also been a recent attempt to apply purely mechanical criteria of group membership and thus to argue that there is a common Coloured identity in the Northern Cape (Kies, 1979). However, this is so contrary to what has been observed among the Coloured population in the rest of South Africa (including the North-Western Cape), that it becomes difficult to believe that such an interpretation of Kies' data is of any validity whatsoever.
2. For example, the Population Registration Act of 1950 classified Bushmen and Khoikhoi as "Natives" (Carstens, 1966: 258-9).
3. Since the term is liable to cause some confusion, I propose to draw a distinction between these two uses. I shall therefore endeavour to use "coloured" in order to denote the colloquial or descriptive use of the term, and Coloured to denote a legal category of people created the Population Registration Act.
4. This statistical information is based on data obtained from the Department of Information and the Theron Commission.
5. There is, for example, the story that when a Namaqualander says that they have had four inches of rain, he actually means that the drops were four inches apart.
6. The term "the Richtersveld" might cause some confusion, since it can be said to have three different meanings. Firstly, it can refer to the small area around Kuboes where Dr. Richter travelled in the 1840's and which later became the centre of the mission station. Secondly, it might refer to the broad geographical region within the four points of Port Nolloth, Alexander Bay, Vioolsdrif and Steinkopf. And thirdly, it might refer to the Coloured Reserve as such, comprising the specific area of 513 919 hectares as shown on Map 2. (For example, see Kaart No.4 in Kotzé, 1943:127, where he fails to distinguish between the geographical area and the Reserve). However, the term "Richtersveld" will hereafter be used only to refer to the area today officially demarcated as a Rural Coloured Area.
7. With the exception of certain camps ("spaarkampe") which are kept closed in order to allow the grazing to improve.
8. At the moment the shop at Sanddrif is not operative and, although there is no church building as such, services are held in the school.

9. There is a three-mile wide strip along the Orange River which is not, strictly speaking, part of the Reserve, although the residents retain the grazing rights. However, if a mine is opened along this strip, it automatically falls outside the Reserve's borders. For example, when the mine at Sanddrif was operative, there was some doubt as to whether the village itself remained part of the Reserve or not.
10. I did not collect any population data for either Lekkersing or Sanddrif. These figures are based on a household survey carried out by the Health Inspector of the Richtersveld, Mr. Simon Cloete, and I am particularly grateful to him for supplying this information. We both carried out surveys of Kuboes and Eksteenfontein and, based on the close correlation between our estimates, I can be sure that his figures are much more accurate than those submitted by the Board in previous years. Although there are a few isolated households not resident in these settlements, they are not enough to account for the discrepancy between this total and that which was submitted to the Theron Commission. I can only conclude that these figures are estimates which have not involved detailed surveys. Nevertheless, I have used the official figures when comparing the population of the Richtersveld with other official figures.
11. The office of "Kaptein" was inherited and has long been used as the term to describe the Khoikhoi chiefs (see Carstens, 1966:18). With the introduction of the Advisory board, the "Kaptein" became the main representative.
12. Frederik Hein was the first "coloured" minister in South Africa to be ordained - in 1893 (Strassberger, 1969:72).
13. "Boorling" and "Kommer" are the terms which I have chosen to use throughout this dissertation. I shall henceforth treat them as English words and cease to place them in inverted commas.
14. Although Carstens reported that he had to use an interpreter in Kuboes (in 1960), I came across no-one in the Richtersveld who could not make himself understood in Afrikaans (see Carstens, 1966:x).
15. With the exception of certain buildings, such as the schools, the offices of the Management Board, the rectory at Kuboes and two private houses in Eksteenfontein, which all have running water.

CHAPTER 2 : Stock-farming in the Richtersveld.

In this chapter I wish to look at the basic nature of stock-farming in the Richtersveld, with a special emphasis on the distribution of stock between households, as well as the relationship between stock management practices and herd size.

Introduction.

Today sheep and goat herding is the only form of farming practised in the Richtersveld.¹ The communal system of land tenure means that all Occupiers have equal rights to graze their herds anywhere in the Reserve. These considerations, as well as the semi-desert and mountainous nature of the terrain, determine certain conditions which significantly influence the nature of stock-farming activities.

Firstly, the absence of grazing camps and the danger of predatory animals necessitate the constant supervision of every flock by at least one full-time shepherd.² Herding is an arduous, lonely task which requires relatively high levels of skill and physical fitness. In addition, there is also much responsibility involved, since negligence or inexperience very easily result in significant stock losses. Consequently, it is not a task which is left to the young boys of the community (as is the case among so many other pastoral peoples). I came across only two cases where boys below the age of 15 years were shepherds and in both cases they looked after small herds which grazed in the immediate vicinity of the settlements.³

Secondly, since the establishment of schools, churches and shops at Kuboes, Eksteenfontein, Lekkersing and Sanddrif, the previously nomadic population has rapidly become settled and the grazing in

the immediate vicinity of these villages has quickly depleted. It is not generally possible for the herd to return to the owner's homestead every night and farmers are thus forced to establish temporary stock posts in the veld - often many miles from the settlements.⁴ In general, the further the stock post is from the village, the better the grazing (and of course, the greater the inconvenience to the farmer).

And thirdly, the labour requirements of a herd vary significantly according to the time of the year and the condition of the veld. During a good year, for example, grazing might be relatively plentiful and one shepherd can manage up to a thousand stock. However, during the lambing season and drought years, extra labour is required and, during the latter, it might even be advantageous to divide a flock in two, with each half then requiring its own full-time shepherd.⁵

To sum up then, we see that every herd requires the full-time services of an adult male; that the herd, and therefore also the shepherd, must remain in the veld for extended periods; and that every herd requires, at specific times, additional labour. These requirements present serious obstacles, especially insofar as they affect the smaller stock-owner. For example, a hundred head of stock cannot possibly (in purely economic terms) justify the services of one full-time and one part-time worker. Such a stock-owner might therefore be obliged to join forces with another, so that the combined herd becomes economically viable. However, different farmers have different means of overcoming these problems, and this will be discussed more fully below.

Goats are well suited to the mountainous and dry terrain and till recently they were the only livestock which were kept. In general, sheep are no match for goats. They require much closer supervision than goats, they are more prone to illness and disease, and they find great difficulty in negotiating the mountainous terrain. In addition, the wool produced in the Richtersveld is not of sufficient quality or quantity to justify the increased effort of keeping sheep when the price of sheep sold for slaughter is only marginally higher than that received for goats, viz. R25-R30 as opposed to R18-R25. Karakul sheep, on the other hand, are an entirely different matter and their relatively recent introduction to the Richtersveld has, for many stock-owners, completely revolutionised farming. Karakul sheep, which were originally bred in the drier parts of Asia, are very well suited to the conditions in the Richtersveld. They are bred primarily for the pelts of the day-old lambs which are then used for the manufacture of expensive fur garments. These pelts, as many farmers are quick to point out, often fetch as much as a full grown goat (although the value fluctuates according to the quality). In other words, one good Karakul ewe will generally produce one (perhaps even two) lambs per year and these pelts then immediately fetch between R15 and R20. If we compare this to goats, where the progeny needs to be herded for up to four years (with the strong possibility that many will die in the process) and are then sold for marginally more than Karakul pelts, it becomes obvious why the Karakul has been referred to as "the black gold of Namaqualand".

Unlike the marketing of the pelts (and the small amount of wool

produced in the Reserve) which is organised and controlled by the Wool Board - to the obvious benefit of the farmer, the sale of sheep and goats in the Reserve is totally uncontrolled and disorganised. Few farmers ever take their stock out of the Reserve to sell them. In general farmers wait for the arrival of speculators who enter the area and purchase the stock from them. However, these speculators only visit the Reserve infrequently (seldom more than once a year) and the indications are that the owners are not getting top prices for their stock. Also, the stock are not weighed at the time of sale, a system which invariably tends to favour the buyer.

b) Stock distribution.

Table 2.1 gives a breakdown of the individual stock-ownership of household heads in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein. It can be seen that 41,0 per cent of the Occupiers in Eksteenfontein and 16,7 per cent in Kuboes have herds of 200 or more, while 42,3 per cent in Eksteenfontein and 45,9 per cent in Kuboes own less than 50 stock. Or, taking the two villages together, 25,6 per cent of the household heads own 72 per cent of the total stock, while 45,1 per cent own 3,3 per cent.

Table 2.1: Stock ownership of Registered Occupiers in Kuboes Eksteenfontein. (Percentages in brackets)

No. of stock	Kuboes		Eksteenfontein	
	No. of households		No. of households	
1000+	-	(-)	2	(2,6)
900 - 999	1	(0,7)	2	(2,6)
800 - 899	-	(-)	-	(-)
700 - 799	-	(-)	1	(1,3)
600 - 699	-	(-)	3	(3,8)
500 - 599	-	(-)	-	(-)
400 - 499	6	(4,4)	6	(7,6)
300 - 399	8	(5,8)	7	(8,9)
200 - 299	8	(5,8)	10	(12,8)
100 - 199	29	(21,2)	11	(14,1)
50 - 99	21	(15,3)	3	(3,8)
1 - 49	26	(18,9)	16	(20,5)
0	38	(27,7)	17	(21,8)
Total	137	(99,8)	78	(99,8)

However, not only is there a wide variation in the number of stock per household, but there also appears to be a discernable variation in the average number of stock per household if we compare the different settlements. Table 2.2 clearly points to a significant difference in the "success" of farming, especially

if one compares Kuboes with Eksteenfontein. The average number of stock per household calculated for Lekkersing is very misleading, since a large group of people from Grootmis, who owned no stock whatsoever, settled there in 1974 and today constitute almost one third of the population. Sanddrif, on the other hand, consists almost entirely of a wage-labourer population who moved there in 1965 when the mine was opened.

Table 2.2: Mean stock ownership per household in four main settlements in Richtersveld.

Settlement	Total number of stock	Total number of households	Mean stock per household
Eksteenfontein	16 625	78	195,5
Kuboes	15 025	137	109,6
Lekkersing	6 575	92	71,5
Sanddrif	<u>225</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>4,4</u>
Total:	38 450	280	137,3

The above figures are derived from the annual survey carried out when all stock in the Reserve are dipped at various central points. However, they tell us nothing about herd size, nor about stock ownership within a household. We have already mentioned that the stock of the smaller owners must be incorporated into the larger owners' herds. Also, many unmarried children (who are therefore still resident in their parents' houses) own stock in their own right.

I was often told by informants that everyone in the Richtersveld owns some stock. Of course, this is an exaggeration, since there are many households (and therefore many individuals) who own no stock at all. What they were actually trying to convey is that, within a stock-owning household, some of the stock are transferred

to the children long before they leave the household. In many cases children receive one or more head of stock the day they are baptised and continue to receive stock (both from the household head and perhaps even from an uncle or grandparent) intermittently on birthdays or other special occasions. Sons generally receive more stock than daughters, while sons who actively assist in looking after the herd are given many more in addition to being allowed to keep the progeny of their own stock. In this way the household head is able to encourage the children (especially the sons) to take an active interest in the family herd. More important, however, it allows the children to receive their inheritance (or the major part of it) before the death of the parents, since they are entitled to take their stock with them when they leave their parental homes.

In Kuboes the pattern is slightly different. There the head of the household retains control of the stock until he dies. However, in general married sons tend to live in close proximity to their parents and take part in caring for the herd. In this way many of the households without stock do retain an active interest in farming.

c) Herd size and stock farming methods.

The actual means which the individual stock owner employs to meet the basic requirements of herd management are, to a large extent, determined by, and themselves determine, the herd size. That is to say, stock owners with herds of a certain size invariably follow certain specific patterns of stock management, while, at the same time, certain stock management practices tend to restrict the herd size to within certain limits.

Based on a sample of 90 households - 55 in Kuboes and 35 in Eksteenfontein - it was found that there appeared to be certain differences between the stock management practices found in these two settlements. The relationship between herd size and stock management is therefore set out in Tables 2.3 and 2.4 below. It was found that in these samples there were 31 stock-owning households in Kuboes and 22 in Eksteenfontein. That is to say, 56 per cent of the households in the Kuboes sample and 62 per cent in the Eksteenfontein one owned stock. These percentages correspond closely with the percentages of stock owners in the communities as a whole (see Table 2.1). The discussion which follows refers only to the stock-owning households in this sample.

In both Kuboes and Eksteenfontein none of the households with less than 50 stock had a member who was actively involved in farming on a full-time basis. In other words, in all of these cases the household herds were incorporated into the herds of larger stock owners. Quite surprisingly, however, the caretakers of these herds were seldom (especially in Eksteenfontein) close kin of the owners. This is because stock ownership (as will be

shown more fully later) is concentrated in the hands of a few well-to-do families. It follows that those with few stock do not generally have close kin who manage their own herds. Some informants explained that it was better if one viewed caretaking purely as an economic service offered in return for a regular monthly payment because this assured that the stock were well looked after. However, I could find no proof of the validity of this reasoning.

Since all the stock owners in this category manage their stock in what is essentially the same manner, they are therefore excluded from the two Tables 2.3 and 2.4 below.

Table 2.3: Stock management practices of 21 households with more than 50 stock in Kuboes (age of household head in brackets).

<u>No.</u>	<u>Herd size</u>	<u>Herding done by</u>	<u>Bakkie</u>	<u>Activity of owner</u>	
1	953	head, 2 sons	yes	herding	(60)
2	412	head	no	herding	(39)
3	392	head, son	no	herding	(55)
4	267	head	no	herding	(65)
5	248	head	no	herding	(32)
6	238	head	no	herding	(41)
7	227	head, son	no	herding	(43)
8	210	head	no	herding	(50)
9	192	son	yes	migrant	(48)
10	183	head	no	herding	(38)
11	178	head	no	herding	(38)
12	163	son	no	pensioner	(68)
13	159	son	yes	migrant	(47)
14	147	son	no	pensioner	(71)
15	141	head	no	herding	(40)
16	83	son	no	migrant	(55)
17	80	head	no	herding	(61)
18	75	son	yes	migrant	(64)
19	73	son	no	migrant	(52)
20	63	other stock owner	no	migrant	(34)
21	51	" "	no	migrant	(35)

Table 2.4: Stock management practices of 14 households with more than 50 stock Eksteenfontein (age of household head in brackets).

<u>No.</u>	<u>Herd size</u>	<u>Herding done by</u>	<u>Hakkie</u>	<u>Activity of owner</u>	
1	1 093	employee	yes	supervision	(56)
2	951	son, employee	yes	supervision	(56)
3	757	son, employee	yes	supervision	(46)
4	623	employee	yes	supervision	(68)
5	614	employee	yes	supervision	(61)
6	485	employee	yes	supervision	(36)
7	327	son	no	supervision	(69)
8	284	son	no	pensioner	(68)
9	276	head	no	herding	(47)
10	206	other stock owner	yes	migrant	(44)
11	183	other stock owner	yes	migrant	(38)
12	178	son	no	pensioner	(63)
13	133	son	yes	migrant	(56)
14	80	other stock owner	no	migrant	(60)

As can be seen from tables 2.3 and 2.4, the larger the household's herd, the greater the active involvement of members in herd management. As the herd increases, we see that first the son and then head of the household are able to devote their full-time attention to farming. Also, when the herd size is sufficiently large, it enables the stock owner to employ a full-time shepherd so as to relieve the members of the household of the arduous task of constant supervision. However, not all stock owners who are in a position to employ a shepherd actually do so and it is striking that none of the large stock owners in Kuboes (including those not in my sample) hired labour to look after the herd. We also see that the larger stock owner in Eksteenfontein is able to adopt the role of supervisor, rather than shepherd. This means that he must

constantly commute between the settlement and the stock post - something which is only possible if the stock owner owns a bakkie. Stock owner no.7 in Table 2.4 provides an exception to this relationship between an employed shepherd, a bakkie and the role of the household head. However, this particular household lives about two miles from the centre of Eksteenfontein and the herd is therefore able to return to the homestead every night. Even in this case, I have heard since I left the field, they now also employ a full-time shepherd.

Another significant difference between the patterns observed in the two communities is that in Kuboes the household is generally willing to withdraw its members from wage-labour employment sooner than is the case in Eksteenfontein. For example, in Eksteenfontein none of the households with less than 100 stock has a member who is engaged in full-time herding activity (this also applies to those households in this category not included in my sample), while in Kuboes four of the six households in this category have one member who is engaged in full-time farming activity. We also see that in the category with between 100 and 200 head of stock none of the households in Kuboes entrusts their herds to the care of others, while in Eksteenfontein there is even a household with 206 stock (no.10, Table 2.4) which is willing to do so.

Quite clearly one is talking here of "economies of scale". Small herds (especially less than 50) cannot support or do not justify the full-time involvement of one adult male. Larger herds (50 - 200 stock) do, while herds with more than 200 stock can begin to support two adult males, eventually allowing the stock owner to employ a shepherd and buy a bakkie. With regard to this, it is

important to view the involvement of a member of the household in full-time farming activity as being essentially of the same order as the other costs involved in farming (e.g. payments to caretakers of the herd, payments to employed shepherds and the cost involved in the purchase of a bakkie). That is to say, one must view this activity in terms of the possible opportunity cost - the income which the family member could contribute to the household if he were to be a wage-labourer rather than a shepherd.

Perhaps this relationship can best be demonstrated if we consider the average cost per stock of a hypothetical farmer as the size of his herd increases. In Figure 2.1 it can be seen how the involvement of household members in full-time farming, the employment of a shepherd and the purchase of a bakkie all serve to raise (at least initially) the short-run average cost per head of stock. In order to make this model as realistic as possible, it is also necessary to view the household's personal consumption of meat (through the slaughter of stock from the herd) as constituting a fixed cost, since no household which owns stock will readily purchase meat if it can possibly slaughter one of its own animals.

We have already seen that there is limited opportunity for stock owners with herds exceeding 200 of finding caretakers who are willing to look after these. Consequently, they are forced to allow at least one member of the household to take over the active management of the herd on a full-time basis. But this still leaves another question unanswered: Why are some stock owners willing to incur the additional costs of employing shepherds and purchasing bakkies when these are not necessary expenses? Although it is

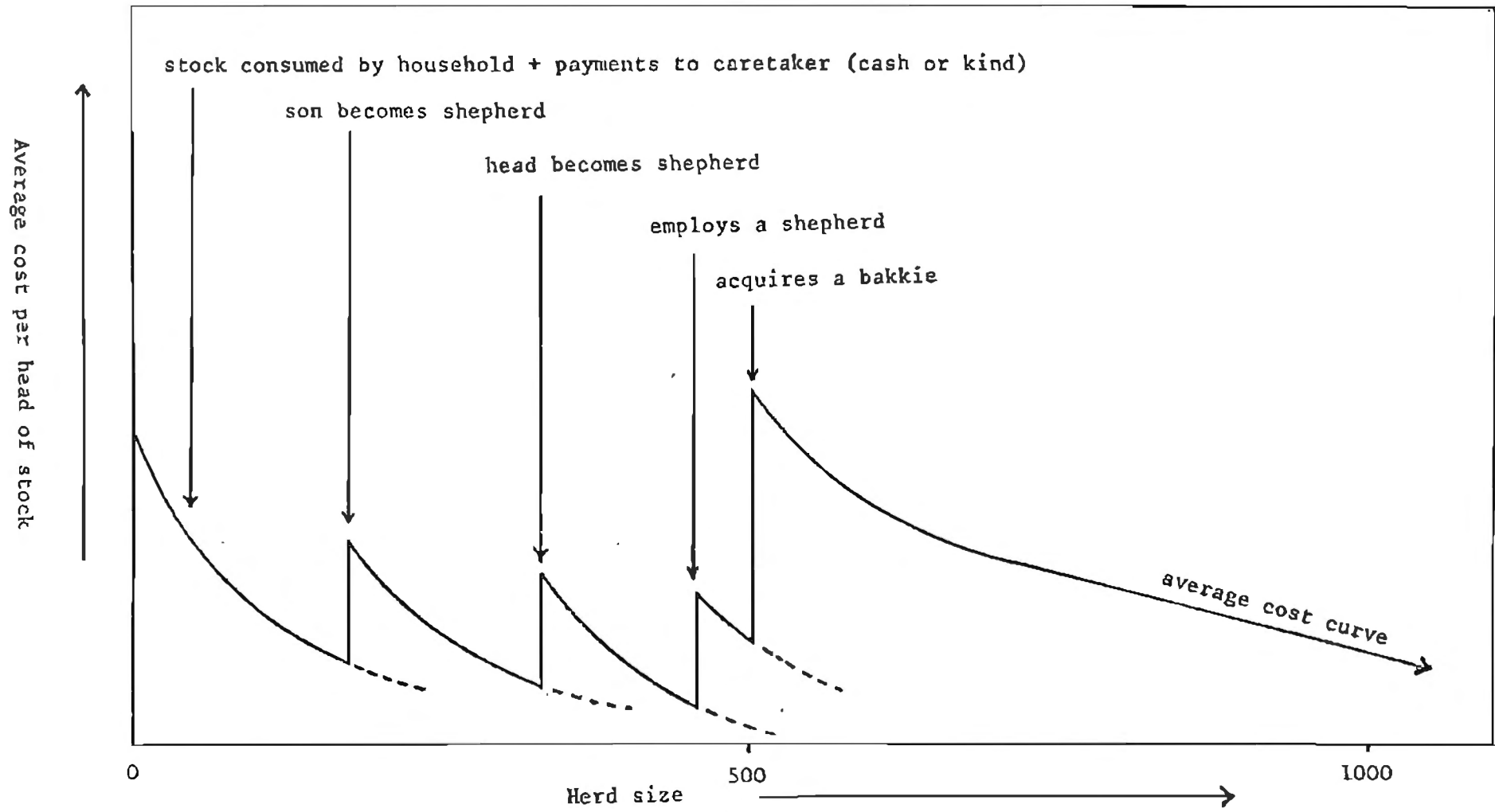


Figure 2.1

HYPOTHETICAL AVERAGE COST CURVE OF A STOCK OWNER AS HERD INCREASES

true that the acquisition of a bakkie and the employment of a shepherd might be viewed as status symbols (especially in Eksteenfontein), while at the same time they make life much easier for the members of the household, it is also apparent that, although a large herd allows the stock owner to introduce these factors of production, there are also certain distinct economic advantages associated with their introduction which give rise to increased productivity from a given herd size.

Probably the most difficult of these to prove or demonstrate is the observation made by so many informants that a herd looked after by someone other than a member of the household is not likely to increase very rapidly. Time and again informants called upon the old proverb: "Ver van jou goed, na aan jou skade,"⁶ indicating that a stock owner who did not take an active part in the management of his herd was not likely to make much headway.⁷ Whether in fact this is the case or not is difficult to prove in view of the absence of adequate reliable data. Nevertheless, I spoke to at least two stock owners who claimed that, although their herds showed little signs of increasing in size for many years while in the care of some other stock owner, they had managed virtually to double the herd size in a matter of two or three years after they had taken over the task of herding themselves.

The employment of a shepherd and the purchase of a bakkie must be viewed together, not only because all farmers who employ shepherds also own bakkies, but also because both are directly related to herd mobility. Grazing in the Richtersveld varies very significantly from one area to another and, as we have already seen, it is especially in the vicinity around the settlements that

grazing has been all but totally depleted. As the distance from these settlements increases, the grazing improves. It follows that those farmers who are most mobile are best able to exploit the grazing. This is not to say that those farmers without bakkies and employed shepherds cannot be as mobile as those who have these, but in general they are not, primarily owing to the terrific inconvenience to the stock owner and those members of the household looking after the herd. To some extent the people of Kuboes attempt to overcome this inconvenience by establishing more permanent stock posts, but these then become very immobile and are often set up for a period of six months or more. The results are therefore the same - the stock owner with a bakkie and employed shepherd is in an advantageous position and is better able to exploit the grazing.

The final factor which significantly influences the productivity of the herd is the release of the head of the household from full-time participation in herding to take up the role of supervisor of the family herd. Here there are four ways in which one can see this factor as influencing farming productivity. Firstly, it provides an extra hand which is readily available during those periods when the herd requires more labour. For example, during the lambing season and during droughts, farmers will be able to spend less time at home and participate in the actual herding activity. The labour requirements also vary from day to day, and many farmers insist on being present when their stock are being watered or when the stock post is being moved. However, while the supervising farmer can perform this function, he can also (unlike the stock owner who has permanent duties with his herd)

undertake other activities. That is to say, he can also purchase and transport fodder, transport sick stock to the village (where they can be cared for throughout the day and where a veterinary surgeon can be called if the need arises), transport water and other supplies to the stock-post, as well as supervise the sale of his stock at whatever outlet he chooses. And finally, he has the opportunity to come into contact with other farmers to discuss grazing and the availability of water in other areas, illnesses and their cures, as well as to hear about new farming techniques. If this last point appears to be somewhat contrived, one should bear in mind that a herder is very often completely cut off from all contact with his village for several weeks at a time. For example, on one occasion during a severe drought several farmers in Eksteenfontein had clubbed together and bought relatively inexpensive petrol-driven water pumps to enable them to draw water from those wells where the wind-driven pumps had broken down. This was quite a significant innovation in farming techniques and one which was soon adopted by many other farmers. When I went to Kuboes a few months later, there were still some farmers who had not even heard of this, although it was common knowledge in the village itself.

Another, but a much more significant innovation which the Kuboes farmers are generally slow to introduce is the incorporation of Karakul sheep into their herds. It is easy to attribute this to blatant conservatism, but innovations take time to permeate throughout a community and the isolation of a herder tends to retard this process. One sees similar patterns in Eksteenfontein where the Karakul sheep - goat ratio is much higher than in Kuboes, but where the more isolated farmers are the last to change over to Karakul.

d) Discussion.

I wish to take up three points which emerge from the description of the basic nature of farming in the Richtersveld: firstly, that a system of communal grazing does not in itself give rise to an equitable distribution of stock between households and that there is accordingly a wide variation in the incomes which households derive from farming; secondly, that there is not only a variation in the number of stock per household within the two communities, but also between them, and that while it is relatively easy to account for the low average stock per household in Lekkersing and Sanddrif, there is no such simple explanation for the observed variation between Kuboes and Eksteenfontein; and thirdly, that there is a clear relationship between farming and wage-labour activity.

Although all Occupiers have access to common grazing in the Richtersveld it is quite evident that stock ownership is the only means whereby effective access to the land can be achieved. As Sahlins has commented: "We need not be so fascinated with the 'title' to property as with the entitlement, nor with the abstract claims of 'ownership' so much as real privileges of use and disposition" (1974:92). The effective access to land is therefore directly proportional to the number of stock owned. In addition, it has also been argued that the larger stock owners are in a position to acquire the technical means whereby they are able to exploit the grazing more efficiently than those with smaller herds.

Even in the previous century, when the people in the Richtersveld still followed a nomadic life-style and there was very little

technical or other means whereby the large stock owner was particularly advantaged, there is much evidence to suggest that there was very wide variation in the number of stock owned per household. For example, many informants told the story of the proverbial 'Ryk Jasper Cloete'^a who owned so many stock that he was obliged to divide them into several herds which he then entrusted to the care of certain households who owned no stock. These households were allowed to slaughter stock and use the milk for their own needs, but the rest of the progeny accrued to Jasper Cloete himself. Consequently, he became more and more wealthy while the other households simply remained poor. Schapera also comments on the fact that certain families were wealthy, while others were poor: "The families of the wealthy Naman frequently have attached to them a few people in the capacity of servants or dependents.....(which) would also include impoverished Naman....."(1930:233).

Today, if anything, this situation has been aggravated by the introduction of the bakkie, employed shepherds, modern veterinary services (which have reduced the risk of heavy stock losses), as well as banking facilities and the availability of fodder to feed stock during times of drought. In this sense therefore, the large stock owner is in a more secure position than he has ever been. In addition to these considerations there are also certain barriers which prevent the small stock owner from building up his herd. The most important of these is the fact that the owner with less than say 100 head of stock is obliged to use all the product of this herd to support himself and his family, so that the herd never gets a chance to increase. The introduction

of wage-labour earnings has done little to ease this situation for the would-be farmer. Firstly, because there are certain obstacles or problems associated with looking after stock while the worker is out of the Richtersveld; and secondly, because migrant wage-labour, as a life-long career, offers a relatively attractive alternative to farming for many.⁹ In my samples in these two settlements very few of the informants who are not already involved in farming in a significant way expressed the desire that they or their children should like to become farmers. In a survey of five Namaqualand Reserves (i.e. excluding Pella) Redlinghuis reports that a mere 13 per cent of the 87 per cent who had never considered the possibility of leaving these areas showed any interest in farming (1979:16). If we now include those who had thought of leaving, as well as all those who have permanently migrated out, then it is clear that many residents have already moved completely away from the idea of farming as an alternative or complement to wage-labour earnings.

Although one is therefore able to account to some extent for the difference in stock-ownership between households, it still remains necessary to explain why particular households are more "successful" at farming than others and why Eksteenfontein should be more "successful" than Kuboes. However, before one can answer these questions it is necessary to investigate whether these differences are in fact symptomatic of a process of real social differentiation or not. It is to this issue that the remaining chapters are directed. In Chapter III I look at the nature of migrant labour within three types of households with specific reference to the household developmental cycle, while Chapters

IV and V look at the historical origins which might have given rise to the different attitudes towards land and farming, as well as towards migrant labour and the social significance of the reserve as such. Chapter VI investigates the political processes which might be seen to be associated with differential access to the Reserve's resources.

Notes to Chapter 2.

1. Hoernle (1913) reports that cattle were also of great importance in the Richtersveld, but today the total cattle population of the Reserve is less than 50 "wild" stock which roam about unattended. Although the farmers know who the owners are, some difficulty is experienced if a farmer decides to sell or slaughter one of his cattle, because it is almost impossible to catch.
The cultivation of grain was practised, with little success, until the 1960's. However, this created more problems than the Board could cope with (there were too few lands for the population and livestock frequently strayed into the grainfields, with disastrous consequences) and they were forced to forbid it.
2. In some cases individual goats and sheep do graze unattended in the immediate vicinity of the settlements.
3. The fact that young children generally attend school also precludes this possibility.
4. It should also be mentioned that, since the official town planning was introduced, the houses are too close together to allow the shepherd to bring his herd to the homestead every night.
5. Droughts are an integral part of life in Namaqualand. They occur with almost monotonous regularity (many people claim that there is a regular eleven-year cycle) and invariably throw the entire farming population into a battle for survival.
6. The equivalent in English would be 'The eye of the master makes the horse fat'.
7. Entrusting the herd to the care of another stock owner, however, was considered to be more desirable than hiring a shepherd while the owner was a wage-labourer outside the Reserve. Consequently there was only one case in the Richtersveld where a migrant wage-labourer employed a shepherd. However, he soon realised his mistake and returned after a few months. In Komaggas and Concordia, on the other hand, this practice was quite common (Sharp, 1977), but this point will be picked up again later.
8. 'Ryk Jasper Cloete' has become something of a mythical character in Namaqualand and crops up in the oral tradition of many areas (see Carstens, 1966:108). It is therefore very difficult to ascertain exactly how many different Ryk Jasper Cloetes there were.
9. I am not hereby suggesting that the people in the Reserves actually 'want' (in any absolute sense) to become oscillating migrants. The 'bright lights theory' has generally been rejected, as have other arguments which suggest that men prefer to become migrant workers (see Wilson, F., 1972: 170, 183, 193). Nonetheless these ideas are still widely held by many writers (see Bisschop, 1979:30 and Erasmus, 1977). The point that I am making is that the decision to migrate must be seen in terms of the only other real alternative open to most males - i.e. farming.

CHAPTER 3 : Migrant labour.

- a) Wage-labour, oscillating labour migration and permanent out-migration.

Table 3.1 gives a breakdown of the main types of economic activity of the economically active adults in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein, based on a sample of 55 households in Kuboes and 35 in Eksteenfontein.

Table 3.1: Economic activity of adults in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein (percentages in brackets).

<u>Economic activity</u>	<u>Kuboes</u>	<u>Eksteenfontein</u>
farming	23 (28,7)	13 (26,5)
wage-labour in reserve	3 (3,8)	5 (10,2)
wage-labour outside reserve	<u>54</u> (67,5)	<u>31</u> (63,3)
total	80 (100)	49 (100)

Economic opportunities in the Richtersveld, other than farming, are very limited. The eight people in this category in the above sample include three shop assistants, two teachers, one shepherd (none of the other employed shepherds is domiciled in the Reserve), one domestic servant and the church scribe. All the other wage-labourers are therefore forced to seek work outside the Reserve. In other words, they become oscillating migrants - working outside, but returning home over week-ends and during holidays. There were very few cases where people who had actually retained residence rights in the Richtersveld were (at the time of the survey) domiciled elsewhere; and none was included in the sample. Of the two cases which did come to my attention, one was a teacher in Port Nolloth who wished to retire to the Richtersveld one day (although he had not been born there) and the other, although still owning a house in Kuboes, had decided to move to Port Nolloth,

since both he and his wife had work there and did not have any children as yet.

However, there are many people who were born or raised in the Richtersveld, but who have decided to leave the Reserve on a permanent basis. Some of them express the desire to return to the Reserve one day when they retire, but very few actually do. The majority of them are therefore permanent out-migrants who lose virtually all contact with the Reserve, who feel no affinity to it and who only return in order to visit their close kin. Accurate figures of the rate of permanent out-migration are difficult to obtain, especially if one wishes to draw some comparison between Kuboes and Eksteenfontein. This is not only because one is dealing with a category of people who have permanently left the Reserve, but also because the majority of Eksteenfonteiners have only been domiciled in the Richtersveld for less than 30 years, so that a direct comparison of siblings or children of present residents is not possible (since many Eksteenfonteiners have close kin who have never resided in the Richtersveld). However, by selecting 10 elderly residents in each of the two settlements who all have two or more children who had been brought up in the Reserve and have now established their own households, some indication of the rates of permanent out-migration can be obtained.

Table 3.2: Present residence of the married children of 20 selected residents in the Richtersveld - 10 in Kuboes and 10 in Eksteenfontein (percentages in brackets).

	<u>Kuboes</u>	<u>Eksteenfontein</u>
Children resident outside the Richtersveld	9 (20,9)	21 (51,2)
Children resident in the Richtersveld	34 (79,1)	20 (48,8)
	<hr/> 43 (100)	<hr/> 41 (100)

b) Household composition and herd size.

I now wish to distinguish between the following types of households:

- i) where the only source of income is from pensions or social welfare payments.
- ii) where the head of the household is involved in farming on a full-time basis.
- iii) where one person other than the household head is involved in farming full-time.
- iv) where no member of the household is involved in farming on a full-time basis.

Since it is not common in the Richtersveld for unmarried working children to contribute a portion of their wages to the household on a regular basis, it therefore follows that the main source of income of the household is the household head himself. However, where the son of the household is actively involved in farming it means that he is contributing to the household because he is performing a task which would otherwise be done either by the household head himself (who would, as a result lose money he could earn as a migrant worker) or by an employed shepherd (who would have to be paid a regular wage).

This is not to say that unmarried migrants make no cash contributions to the household, nor that migrants never assist in the job of looking after the herd; they very often do help. But the significance of their contribution is small when compared to that of the head of the household or a son who is a full-time shepherd. And if one is attempting to trace and classify the

main source of income of the household, it is necessary to look first at the activity of the household head and then at the other members involved in farming on a full-time basis.

Table 3.3 gives the number of households in each of the above four categories in Eksteenfontein and Kuboes. It can be seen that more than half of the households in the two settlements has no members who are full-time herders or farmers. Of these, 64,5 per cent in Kuboes and 37,5 per cent in Eksteenfontein own no stock at all. Or, if one excludes the households in category i, this constitutes 40 and 21,4 per cent of the economically active households in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein respectively.

Table 3.3: Main economic activity of households in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein (percentages in brackets).

	Kuboes	Eksteenfontein
i - pensions and social welfare only	5 (9,1)	7 (20,0)
ii - household head farms	14 (25,5)	11 (31,4)
iii - only son farms	5 (9,1)	1 (2,9)
iv - no members farm	31 (56,4)	16 (45,7)
	<u>55 (100,1)</u>	<u>35 (100)</u>

Many writers have emphasised the fact that one should not be too concerned with the actual economic significance of farming undertakings in certain rural settings where migrant labour has become an integral part of social life, since agriculture continues to perform certain social functions which are much more important (Carstens, 1966; Murray, 1976; Sharp, 1977 and Spiegel, 1979). Nevertheless, I would argue that it is necessary to begin by looking at the purely economic implications of farming undertakings because they determine, to a large extent, the nature of the social

functions of farming activity. This is especially the case if one is considering the differential involvement of different households in farming. Only then can one begin to look at the resultant social implications.

Therefore, I now turn to a discussion of the economic viability of farming undertakings in the Richtersveld. Perhaps we can begin by mentioning the two basic factors which affect the viability of herding activity. Firstly, every herd needs a specific number of labour units in order to cope with it. In this regard we have already seen that every herd requires at least one full-time shepherd and that this number increases as the herd size increases. Secondly, every household needs a certain number of stock in order to meet its basic subsistence requirements. And here one needs to consider the number of mouths to feed (i.e. dependants) in a household in relation to the size of the herd (Stenning, 1958).

Loss of viability therefore occurs when these basic requirements are not met; for example, owing to regular seasonal variations (such as lambing season or dry months), irregular natural hazards (such as periodic droughts) or a change in the formal properties of the household over time (change in the number of workers and/or dependants). In the context of the Richtersveld, however, the loss of viability owing to these factors can, to a large extent, be overcome by turning to migrant labour as an alternative source of income and by entrusting the herd to the care of another or by employing a shepherd in order to meet the basic labour requirements.

The relationship between herd size and labour requirements has already been dealt with (see Chapter 2, esp. Tables 2.3 and 2.4),

but it still remains necessary to look at the structure of the household in relation to herd viability. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 attempt to investigate this by comparing the mean herd size, worker-dependant ratio and age of the household head where one or more members of the household are actively involved in farming with those where there are none.

Table 3.4: Comparison of herd size, age, and worker-dependant ratios of farming and non-farming households in Eksteenfontein.

	Households	
	No members farming	One or more members farming
Mean age of household heads	43,1 yrs.	57,0 yrs.
mean worker-dependant ratio	1:2,67	1: 1,62
mean herd size	30,8	473

Table 3.5: Comparison of herd size, age, and worker-dependant ratios of farming and non-farming households in Kuboes.

	Households	
	No members farming	One or more members farming
Mean age of household heads	41,0	51,0
mean worker-dependant ratio	1:2,58	1:1,68
mean herd size	9,9	230

It is not surprising to see that the mean number of stock owned per household is much higher in those households where there are members actively involved in farming than in those where there are none. We also see that there are significant differences between the mean ages of the household heads and the worker-

dependant ratios of these two categories. Quite clearly the worker-dependant ratio is closely related to the age of the household head, since the number of dependants decreases (and workers increase) as the head becomes older and the adult children go out to work or leave the household permanently.¹ It is much more difficult to establish, however, whether there is a casual relationship between these three variables. If one were to argue that the majority (or at least a large proportion) of households increase their herd size as the household completes its developmental cycle, then the more favourable worker-dependant ratio is largely coincidental, since the herd size in itself is much more viable in terms of the number of dependants it can support. Consequently, such a low worker-dependant ratio is not necessary. On the other hand, if one were to argue that the herd only can become viable when the household has reached a position where there is a favourable worker-dependant ratio, then it becomes very difficult to account for the tremendous difference in the mean herd size between the two categories. In other words, herd size or general profitability of the herd would become relatively unimportant, but household structure would not. Quite clearly both arguments are applicable, but a closer investigation of the household developmental cycle is necessary before one can draw general conclusions.

c) Household developmental cycle.

Table 3.6: Age distributions of heads of farming and non-farming households in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein.

Age category		20-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total
Kuboes	Farming	4	5	4	6	19
	Non-farming	14	9	6	2	31
Eksteenfontein	Farming	1	2	3	6	12
	Non-farming	7	7	2	-	16

If we correlate age of the household head and involvement in farming (Table 3.6), it is apparent that the higher age categories have a much greater proportion of households which are actively involved in farming. However, whether these observations can now necessarily be interpreted in terms of a household developmental cycle, is another matter.

Fortes (1958) outlined the dangers of trying to explain variation between households in terms of "types" rather than "phases", that is to say, without taking cognizance of the time dimension as an important independent variable (with specific reference here to the domestic developmental cycle). However, it is similarly unwise to assume that variation which coincides with different stages in a household cycle necessarily can be explained only in terms of phases without recognising the possibility of processual differences. To do so, would be to assume that observed differences do not give rise to real structural differences within the Reserve. Sharp recognizes this limitation of the developmental cycle approach and points out that "..... if change is rapid, the situation of today's 60 year-olds may not accurately portray the

future situation, at that age, of today's 30 year-olds" (1977:215). Whereas Sharp can (in the cases of Kommaggas and Concordia) assume that structural change will not significantly influence his conclusions concerning the household development cycle "which general observation confirms" (ibid), I cannot do the same.

Not only has change in the Richtersveld been so rapid as to limit the validity of conclusions which might be made about the general nature of long-term developmental cycle patterns, but the obstacles which prevent the establishment of new large herds make it highly unlikely that many of the contemporary young households will ever enter farming in any meaningful manner.² In fact, the tables which point to a higher proportion of farming households among the higher age categories are also indicative of a large-scale move away from farming towards migrant labour. The worker-dependant ratio, which is higher for households with younger heads, consequently follows a predictable pattern.

This situation is very different from that reported by Sharp (1977) for Komaggas and Concordia, while Carsten's findings are somewhat outdated for direct comparisons to be made. Nevertheless, Carsten's observation that "mixed farming is the economic activity to which most people aspire....because the pattern of mixed farming is a function of the total network of social activities which occur in the community of Steinkopf" (1965:46), deserves some comment. One wonders, for example, to what extent this might continue to be the case today - almost 25 years after the fieldwork was undertaken (and when it was estimated that 78,5 per cent of the income was derived from sources other than farming). Sharp's more recent findings, however, support Carsten's comments

as far as the social significance of farming is concerned, even though there is a significant proportion of the population which is not directly involved in farming. For example, only 36 per cent of the households in Komaggas and Concordia own any stock whatsoever (ibid ;113).

Quite surprisingly this figure is much lower than that recorded for Kuboes and Eksteenfontein, where it was found that 74,4 per cent of the households owned some stock (see Table 2.1). How does one then account for the apparent difference between the significance of farming in the Richtersveld and the other Reserves?

Firstly, as we have seen, economically viable farming is possible in the Richtersveld. This is primarily due to the large size of the Richtersveld combined with its low population. Because some farmers have been very successful, they have been able to exploit the environment much more effectively than their less wealthy counterparts. This in itself has given rise to a situation where it has become increasingly difficult for new farmers to establish significant herds. At the same time, the expected standard of living of the younger residents and the smaller stock owners have been raised and they have become unwilling to invest money and labour in the hope of possible future returns and have tended to turn to migrant labour as an alternative career to farming.

Secondly, as has been argued above, stock farming on communal land does not necessarily give rise to an equitable distribution of stock ownership. If one sees effective access to land in terms of the number of stock owned, then it is clear that differential stock ownership results in differential access to land and hence

income derived from farming. If plots of land are allocated to individuals, the capital investment of each individual is limited by the amount of land at his disposal -- unlike the farmers in the Richtersveld who are able to increase their herds (in theory at least) indefinitely. In those areas where plots are allocated on a more equitable basis every person who has access to a plot is in a position to use that plot with the minimum of capital investment. At the same time, where there is a relatively low limit to the number of plots which can be allocated to any one person, this tends to reduce the differentiation which might be brought about by differential capital investment, i.e. stock, machinery, fertilizer, etc.

The third point worth mentioning is related to the security of employment opportunities outside the Richtersveld. Sharp (1977) has stressed the fact that ups and downs of the copper mining industry have left a significant mark on the residents of those Reserves which supplied them with labour. Owing to excessive fluctuations in the price of copper, large numbers of mine workers have at times been retrenched. Even today this is a very real danger which faces these workers and by keeping an active interest in farming, they are in effect insuring themselves against such an eventuality. Very few of the residents in the Richtersveld, on the other hand, have been or are employed in the copper industry. The vast majority of them are employed by the diamond mines (at Alexander Bay, Oranjemund and Sendelingsdrift) and the related industries (such as the farm at Beauvallon which supplies the above three mining towns with their fresh produce). Since the price of diamonds is very strictly controlled, the industry

(and hence related job opportunities) are very sound. Consequently, the migrant worker in the Richtersveld does not need the same insurance against the possible loss of employment opportunities as do the workers in certain other Reserves.

Fourthly, when one compares the situation in the Rural Coloured Areas with those of the Black Homelands and other rural areas in Southern Africa, there are certain important differences which need to be considered. There is no legislation which prevents the worker from leaving the Rural Coloured Areas permanently or from finding permanent employment in the industrial centres. In this regard it might therefore be argued that the Black migrant worker is encouraged to retain an active interest in farming. In addition, bride wealth payments in the form of cattle still constitute a very real social obligation on the part of the young migrant, while in some areas, such as Lesotho, no pensions are paid. By the same arguments used above, it can be seen that in such circumstances it is likely that farming should play an important role in the lives of all migrants.

In the absence of these factors, Sharp has argued that farming activity and specifically the access to the material resources of the Reserve are directly related to the sense of community which exists in the various Reserves. In Komaggas the notion of citizenship was developed in order to protect the economic interests of the community, whose members thereby differentiated between themselves and other people in the Reserve. In a sense, therefore, use of the land might be seen as the prerogative of all "burgers" and involvement in farming as an expression of this

right. In contrast to the well developed notions of full members and resident non-members found in Komaggas, the Richtersveld as a whole did not develop along these same lines. Being the most northerly and isolated of the Reserves, the pressure on land was not as great as elsewhere. Partly because of this no strong mission was established in the Richtersveld and the few outsiders who did enter the area therefore found no difficulty in gaining residence rights and were rapidly absorbed into the local population. In the Richtersveld, therefore, there is no sense of community which turns the population as a whole into a community of farmers, whether they be actively involved in farming or not.

Migrants, farming migrants and farmers.

It is not my aim to deny that the household developmental cycle can account for the differential involvement of many households in migrant labour and farming activity, for it is true that there are certain cyclical patterns which are common to many households in the Richtersveld. It is simply my contention that in the long term these differences can be seen to result in real typological divisions. In other words, we need to look at the differences between households primarily in terms of types, rather than phases. In this regard I therefore propose to distinguish between three different types of households: migrants, farming migrants and farmers.

- i) The migrant households might be defined as those whose only source of income is derived from wage-labour activities. From Table 2.1 it can be seen that 25,3 per cent of the households in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein own no stock at all. However, it should be remembered that (based on the sample of 90 households in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein - Table 3.3) half of these are pensioner households comprising members who had been farmers for the greater part of their economically active lives. The remainder - i.e. 13,3 per cent - can therefore be classified as migrant households. Of all the heads of the households in this category which I interviewed not one expressed the desire to begin to build up a herd. Some claimed that they could not be bothered; others said that a small herd was not economically viable; while quite a few said that it was too late for them to switch to farming as a source of income. As one informant put it: "Die ryk boere

is ons te ver voor". Quite clearly, therefore, households in this category showed no signs of turning to farming at a later stage. Some of the heads of these households had in fact been farmers when they were younger, but in nearly all these cases they had lost all or most of their stock during severe droughts and had therefore turned to wage-labour as a more secure, and often more lucrative, activity.

Looked at from this perspective, it is clear that most of the households which own between one and fifty head of stock can also be included in this category. We have already seen that none of them has members who are actively involved in farming on a full-time basis (Chapter 2). As was the case with those household heads who owned no stock, these workers also did not foresee the possibility of one day turning to farming as a full-time activity. In all cases they saw their stock simply as a cheap source of meat for their domestic needs. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, there is therefore nothing to suggest that stock ownership for people in this category now, or in the future, signifies anything different from the vegetables which many urban residents grow in their back yards. This group, which constitutes 19,5 per cent of the households in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein can therefore also be included in the category of migrant households.

- ii) The farmer households are those where the head or at least one other member of the household is involved in farming activity on a full-time basis. From the sample of 90 house-

holds in Kuboes and Eksteenfontein it can be seen that 34,4 per cent of the households fall into this category. Here the existence of a household developmental cycle is of the greatest significance, since one can perceive patterns of activity which clearly are cyclical in nature. Of the 31 households in the sample which can be classified thus, six have heads who are migrants, while fifteen of the heads who are today full-time farmers have, at some stage of their lives, been wage-earners. Also, it is likely that, on the basis of the age of the household head and the size of the herd, the six heads who are at present migrant workers will eventually become full-time farmers.

These trends can be explained in terms of the household viability, i.e. herd size and worker-dependent ratio. All of the household heads in this category inherited relatively large herds from their fathers (in most cases more than 100). Many of them had become wage-labourers during the period that their herds were still in the care of their fathers in order to save some money and allow the herd to increase in size, whilst the household structure was still relatively favourable. Those who had inherited smaller herds were generally not in a position to become full-time farmers by the time their families had begun to increase and generally had to wait until the children began working before they could leave wage-labour employment and turn to full-time farming.

Not all the sons of farming households necessarily become farmers themselves. Paradoxically, many farmers with

large herds have tended to invest in their childrens' educations even though the sons were, by virtue of their assured large inheritances, in a very favourable position to become successful farmers.³ In all cases, however, the eldest son - who was the one who took over or assisted in looking after the herd - was the most likely to continue farming. Those children who entered the wage-labour market were clearly not forced into it through economic necessity, but it is significant to notice that they have tended to become white-collar workers and not manual labourers.⁴

- iii) It can now be seen that the remaining households (20,5 per cent) can be classified as farming-migrant households. That is to say, they are in an intermediate position between the farming and migrant households. Many of the heads of these households claim that they are in the process of building up their herds in order to become full-time farmers, although it is unlikely that many of them will realise this ambition. The remainder will stay migrants throughout their economically active lives and, as the herd will be divided between their children, the chances that they will become full-time farmers grow increasingly smaller. Consequently, the children of these households (especially the sons) will therefore find themselves in the category of migrants, with little prospect of ever entering farming in a meaningful manner. In the light of these observations it therefore follows that long-term cyclical household patterns are only appropriate to a small section of this category, since most of them will permanently move away from farming towards migrant labour.

Until now I have been emphasising what Raikes has termed the "classic" process of rural differentiation - the process whereby there has been an emergence of a class of rich farmers (gradually transforming themselves into capitalist farmers) on the one hand and the concomitant extrusion of a class of landless (or in the case of the Richtersveld, stockless) labourers on the other (1978: 268). However, unlike some writers who have seen similar patterns of rural differentiation as being significant of the emergence of "real" class differences (see for example, Carter, 1975; Turton, 1975 and Allan, 1949), I propose to use the preceding discussion merely as a starting point in the analysis of class formation in the Richtersveld, while fully recognising that these differences are not necessarily indicative of classes.

This "classic" conception of rural differentiation has been severely criticised, both in terms of its theoretical inadequacy and its essentially incorrect conclusions. Various writers have pointed out that it is a wholly static conception which ignores the processes of class formation (Raikes, 1978), that it ignores the idea of class consciousness (Cliffe, 1978) and that it overlooks the significance of the mode of production as opposed to access to the means of production (Scott, 1978). Other writers have suggested alternative interpretations of the observed differences by dismissing it as insignificant in the process of class formation in view of the possible Chayanovian-type demographic explanations which might be offered (Spiegel, 1979).

With regard to this last point, I have already looked at the involvement in farming and migrant labour in terms of a possible developmental cycle of the domestic group. However, this line of explanation needs to be seen in terms of ideological and political

factors which might lend credence to real typological differences which in turn might or might not be significant of actual class differences. In the two chapters which follow I therefore look at the nature of social groups in the Richtersveld primarily from a historical perspective and attempt to describe the consciousness associated with each.

Notes to Chapter 3.

1. It might be argued that there is also a brief period, shortly after marriage, during which there are no children and therefore a higher worker-dependant ratio. However, in the Richtersveld this period is generally so brief (in fact, children very often precede the marriage) that it is of little or no consequence to the present argument.
2. Admittedly many of these factors were present in the past. As was mentioned above (p.48), certain residents of the area were forced to become shepherds for the large stock owners. It should also be remembered that, prior to 1925, migrant labour was not an alternative to farming, since there were no jobs in the vicinity of the Richtersveld. Many informants also report that many residents turned to migrant labour immediately after the mines were opened at the mouth of the Orange River.
3. However, it should be noted that this tends to keep the greater part of the herd concentrated in the hands of the one or two sons who wish to carry on farming.
4. That is to say, they become teachers, clerks, nurses, etc.

CHAPTER 4 : The Bosluis Basters - group identity and attitudes to farming.

a) The history of the Bosluis Basters.

The history of Namaqualand during the last two centuries, although by no means uneventful or uninteresting, has generally been neglected by South African historians. It is not my aim here to attempt to rectify this situation, nor even to provide a summary of this history¹, but simply to outline certain trends and processes which have a bearing upon my thesis.

Prior to the 1700's Namaqualand and Bushmanland were inhabited by small nomadic groups of pastoralists and hunter-gatherers - generally referred to as Hottentots (Khoikhoi) and Bushmen (San) respectively. Land was relatively plentiful and the political organization of the Khoikhoi was weak² - thereby providing them with neither reason nor means to resist the waves of immigrants from the South which were to follow.

In the first instance, there were the "Orlam" settlers who were the displaced Khoikhoi from the South-western Cape. They met with little resistance in their northerly trek and where they wished to settle in areas already inhabited by the indigenous Nama clans they either established a hegemony over the latter or induced them to move further north towards the Orange River.

The next wave of settlers was that of the so-called "Basters" who have subsequently been referred to as the "actual pioneers of the North-western Cape" (van der Merwe, 1945:207). The term "Baster" was generally used to denote the ".....cross between European and people of colour, with a presumption in favour of the European-Hottentot cross" (Marais, 1939:10). The Basters at the Cape were not simply the offspring resulting from brief liaisons between

European men and Hottentot women. Instead, lasting relationships were generally established between the parents (Mac Crone, 1957: 3).³ Racial attitudes at the Cape by the 1800's were such that "a Boer who took a Hottentot wife lost caste among his own people,(and) his children could nothope to join the Boer society" (Marais, 1939:11). However, it is also likely that those Europeans who did take Hottentot wives were generally from the poorer landless class. These Europeans, who had imbibed the racial attitudes at the Cape, saw other whites as equals and working for them was therefore not viewed as desirable (van der Merwe, 1945:4). At the same time, they wished to escape from the prejudices at the Cape and large numbers of Basters were thus induced to trek northwards in search of land.

On the one hand the Basters were outcasts from the white section of society, while on the other they saw themselves as being superior to Hottentots and other people of colour.

"The Bastards, or Bastard Hottentots, especially those who could lay claim to white blood, regarded themselves as a class who were very much superior either to the aboriginal inhabitants or the slaves. The designation "Bastard" was not, as one might imagine, a term of abuse, but one in which the owner took a proper pride, for it distinguished him from the despised Hottentot kinship which he was only too anxious to conceal" (Mac Crone, 1957: 120).

In some parts the Basters were rapidly absorbed into the local Khoikhoi populations, while in others the latter moved northwards upon their arrival.⁴ Under these circumstances, according

to all reports, the notion of Baster, as being distinct from the Khoikhoi, began to lose most of its significance, although the term was still used by outsiders to describe all those who were of mixed descent (Marais, 1939:75).⁵

The white Trekboers following close on the heels of the Basters found themselves, at least initially, in a similar situation. The racial attitudes which they brought with them proved to be of little consequence in this land beyond the Cape frontier. There is much evidence which points to substantial social and racial integration between the white Trekboers and other sections of the population. Distinct cultural and physical divisions, such as might initially have existed, appeared to be diminishing and people found themselves not as belonging to any specific category, but rather on a continuum somewhere between the two poles of white and Khoikhoi (Sharp, 1977:16).

If we contrast this situation to that found on the eastern frontier, then the sparse population (and hence the general availability of land), the absence of significant political groups among the Khoikhoi, as well as the social and geographical isolation of the region, might all be considered as being significant. Quite predictably therefore, the increased population, the increased pressures on land, the extension of the frontier northwards and the establishment of mission stations which protected the land rights of the local populations, all had a significant influence upon relations between various sections of the Namaqualand population. For although the initial integration which undoubtedly took place tended to reduce real cultural and racial divisions, other factors

were at play which brought about a situation in which new boundaries were created and the significance of actual or objective differences could be manipulated to suit particular situations.

As the frontier extended northwards, the whites, who were most familiar with the whole system of individual land freehold and who were favoured by the colonial government, managed to obtain title deeds to the land they occupied. Basters and Khoikhoi, however, soon realised that the mission stations provided a safeguard against the encroaching Boers. Carstens tells, for example, of the chief of a tribe of Little Namaqua ".....who was journeying to Cape Town in search of a missionary to serve him and his people at Leliefontein" (1966:237). It seems likely that the mere need for a spiritual leader was not the major motive, for ".....it is probable that he needed support in the face of the encroaching Boers" (Carstens, 1966:237). In those areas where land was scarce, the arrival of missionaries rapidly led to the formation of group identities which could easily be used to restrict the numbers of people entering the several mission communities.

Although there was a distinct correlation between colour and the decision to enter the mission stations, this relationship did by no means apply in all cases. We know, for example, that some whites entered the missions and became assimilated into these communities, primarily by marrying into them, while some Baster families preferred to remain outside the mission station areas in the hope that they could become accepted as whites and acquire their own farms.

One such group consisted of a number of Baster families, originally from the Western Cape (Worcester and surrounds), who had settled in the Vanrhynsdorp area during the latter half of the last century. Gradually these Basters began to be assimilated by the white Vanrhynsdorp congregation, while at the same time significant class divisions began to emerge. On the one hand, only one or two of the Baster families were able to acquire their own farms, while on the other their ranks were swelled by poorer sections of the white community who married into the group.

Then, during the Boer Wars, events took a dramatic turn. A Boer Commando under the leadership of General Manie Maritz launched a raid into Namaqualand - apparently with the specific purpose of terrorising those who did not actively support them. As one eye-witness recounted the story:

"Ek was toe nog maar baie jonk - omtrent vyf of ses jaar oud (he was born in 1895) - en ons was bywoners op 'n plaas naby Calvinia. Dit was vroeg more toe ons omtrent twaalf ruiters uit die noorde sien aankom. Toe die ruiters naby ons kom, kon ons sien dat hulle Boere was. Ek kan nou nog sien hoe hulle by ons werf aangekom het met bandoliers so kruis oor die skouers. My pa was besig voor ons ou huisie om hout te kap. Hulle het niks gevra nie en net vir Pa gegryp en hom begin slaan. Ons kinders was toe nog almal baie jonk en kon niks doen om te help nie. Toe sê hulle vir my moeder om ons gewere te bring. Daar was twee mooi ou gewere wat my pa

gebruik het om mee te jag en die is toe gebreek en gebuig. En wat is dit werd? Jy kan mos niks doen met 'n geweer met 'n gebuigde loop en 'n gebreekte kolf. Toe het hulle my pa net daar laat lê en weg-gery. Ons het toe later gehoor dat hul ook by ander mense was. Ek weet nie waarom hulle dit gedoen het nie. Ons was tog hul eie mense en ons het toe nog nie vir die Engelse gebaklei nie".

Although I could find no direct records of these events, Lord Milner reported:

"Brutal treatment and murder of Natives are a matter of daily occurrence.....Nothing more disgraceful has happened in modern war than the treatment of the coloured man, Esau, at Calvinia. Whether they have actually murdered him, I do not yet know.⁶ What I do know is that they flogged him till he fainted, for the offence of being loyal to the British Crown..."

(extract from a letter dated 19/2/1901, Headlam, 1933:223).

There can be little doubt that a certain section of the Van-rhynsdorp congregation had been assaulted by the Boers. However, the inevitable question arises: What were the grounds for distinguishing between them and the rest of the congregation?

The "Times History of the War in South Africa" noted:

".....defection (from the Boers) merely represented leakage from the lower class of Boers, bywoners, landless men who had no stake in the country...."

(Amery, 1907:249).

"In the North-Western (Cape).....where the white population was very sparse, half-caste Bastards and Cape Boys were enrolled in considerable numbers....." (Amery, 1907:250).

It can therefore be seen that the Boers (under the leadership of Manie Maritz, who held strong racialistic views) knew that both the people of colour and landless Boers were potential enemies. They raided the homesteads of those who did not actively support them as well as those whom they feared might join the British. Consequently, it can be seen that class as well as skin colour were the bases of their discrimination.

But the result of these actions was exactly the opposite to what the Boers had hoped. Nearly all those who had been assaulted then went and joined the British. The unfortunate result was that after the War these people were then ostracised by the Vanrhynsdorp congregation (since the remainder had all supported the Boers) and were forced to form their own congregation elsewhere. This was then done and a small church was erected on the farm called "Bosluis" about 120 kilometers north-east of Vanrhynsdorp. It was also here that they were first given the name of "Bosluis Basters".

The Bosluis Basters were landless stockfarmers who trekked around in search of grazing for their herds. During the early part of the 20th Century there were still large tracts of unclaimed "crown land" and it was here where many of them managed to eke out a living. Others became "bywoners"⁷ on white-owned farms, offering their services in return for grazing-rights for their own herds. The relationship between

landowning farmer and bywoner was a very specific one in the history of white farming in South Africa. It implied substantial equality between the two parties, even though the farmer was the landowner and the bywoner not.⁹

Although the bywoner in most cases worked for the farmer, he was also recognised as being a farmer in his own right. In the case of the Bosluis Basters (who all owned stock) it is therefore clear that in order to become bywoners on white farms, they had to be accepted as near equals. Ownership of stock played an important role, but they also had to emphasise cultural similarity to the whites and dissimilarity from the Khoikhoi. Physical features of race were also important, since no person with obvious Khoikhoi features could have hoped to become a bywoner in this sense.

Consequently, the Bosluis Basters began to see themselves, and no doubt were seen by others, as a separate group. Although they were not "white", they were also distinct from the "coloureds" and Khoikhoi. The Bosluis Basters were widely dispersed throughout Boesmanland and Namaqualand, but the church at Bosluis provided the means of bringing them together (at least for the most important church services) and retaining their identity as a group. They did not readily mix with outsiders who were darker skinned than themselves and adhered to strict norms of endogamy unless they were able to marry "vorentoe" (i.e. with someone who was lighter skinned than themselves).

Perhaps these feelings of racial or cultural superiority which were felt by the Bosluis Basters can best be illustrated by

quoting at some length from H. A. Roussouw's account of one of his experiences with them:

"Voor ons afskeid neem van die Boesmanland en sy mense, moet ek eers vertel van 'n uiters interessante groepie mense, interessant weens hul houding teenoor die Kleurlinge. Dit is die Basters van Bosluis en omgewing. Hulle het nie almal op Bosluis gewoon nie. Weliswaar was hulle daar meer gekonsentreerd, want dit was feitlik hul hoofkwartier, want hulle het daar 'n van sink-gemaakte kerkie en skool gehad.....Amptelik was die skool 'n Kleurlingskool. Toe die blanke onderwyser bedank, word geadverteer vir 'n Kleurlingonderwyser. Daar kom toe drie aansoeke. Nou is daar moeilikheid, weet ek, want ek ken hierdie mense. Ek belê 'n ouervergadering en gaan daarheen gewapen met die drie aansoeke. Daar was die waardige ou vader, Dirk Uys, met sy spits baard en weglêsnor. Hy was die voorsitter. Daar was Meyers, Volmoers (Farmers), Cloetes, Groenewald, ens. Toe reeds het ek almal lankal goed geken. Sommige van kindsbeen af. Ek vertel hulle dat ons gelukkig was om die aansoeke van gekwalifiseerde onderwysers te ontvang en hulle moet my nou help om 'n keuse te maak, want dis hulle wat met die man sal moet saamwerk. Net daar begin die poppe te dans.

"Is dit aldrie witmanne of is daar 'n bruinvel ook by?"

"Ssss j mense, julle mag nie so praat nie. Dis aldrie Kleurlinge, maar van goeie stoffasie, ook maar julle soort".

Ek vertel in watter mooi huise sommige Bolandse Kleurlinge woon en dat baie van hul motors besit. "Baie van hulle is net so wit soos julle. Julle sal self sien".

Toe praat ou Dirk: "Meneer weet mos ons wil nie ons witmense hou nie. Ek was al in die Boland en in die Kaap en het alles gesien. Die spul hier in Namakwaland ken meneer mos self. Hulle bly verniet op die beste grond. Maar hulle is te lui, onbetroubaar en oneerlik. Wat hulle verdien, moet dadelik opgemors en opgesuip word. Daarom het hulle nie een 'n ordentelike huis om in te bly nie. Hulle het niks. En daardie daarbo - 'n bruinvel bly 'n bruinvel. Dit sit in sy bloed." "Daardies daarbo, hulle is weer almal wynsuipers, rowers en messtekers. Die mooi huise wat hul het en die motors, dink ek, is alles op skuld. Ons kan mos ook hier op die gemyntegrond (reservate) gaan woon. Ons word mos ook as Kleurlinge gereken, maar hulle sal ons kaal rowe steel. Maar die groot ding is: ons kinders sal met hulle meng en trou. Om dié rede bly ons liever hier in die woestyn en kry liever swaar as om met hulle te meng en te trou. Nou kom die meneer skoolmeester hier. Geleerde man, motorkar, en alles blink! Ons moet hom loseer. Netnou trou hy met een van ons kinders en as sy daarbo kom, is hy 'n wynsuiper en messteker. En wat die kleur betref - Meneer weet mos hier in Rooifontein en Kamassies bly mos die Basters, maar is hulle anderster as die bruinvelle? Nee, net so sleg."

(Rossouw, H.A., 1973:24-5).⁹

Towards the end of the 1940's land was becoming a serious problem for the Bosluis Basters. Fewer and fewer farmers were prepared to allow them to graze their stock and free land was becoming very scarce. Eventually, in 1948, their pastor - one Dominee Eksteen - obtained permission from the government for them to

settle in the Richtersveld. An advance group was sent to survey the new "promised land" around what was then Stinkfontein. They reported back to the other members of the group, and during the next few years most of the Bosluis Basters took up all their possessions and moved up into the Richtersveld.

It should not be thought that the Bosluis Basters were overwhelmed by the news that they could settle in the Richtersveld. Most of them had hoped that the government would buy them their own piece of land (plans in this direction had actually reached quite an advanced stage before they were abandoned, owing to the cost which would be involved), since it was recognised that moving into a "coloured" Reserve would mean that they would be seen as equals. In other words, they had a serious decision facing them. They could either go to the Richtersveld and acquire access to land, but reduce their chances of ever being accepted as whites (a fear which subsequently proved to be very well founded after the Nationalist Party came into power) or they could remain without land in the Vanrhynsdorp area in the hope that they would eventually be accepted as whites, since there were indications that their relations with the whites were already beginning to improve again.

The result was that those who had land, as well as those who did not have stock, remained behind, while the landless stock-owners moved into the Richtersveld. There were only two exceptions to this rule. The one was a particularly dark-skinned man whose father owned a farm near Steinkopf, but whose mother was a black woman. The father died in 1947 and the son therefore decided to

sell the farm and move with the rest of the Bosluis group. The other was a man who owned some land in Boesmanland, but felt some responsibility towards the family which had raised him as an orphan and therefore left when they left.

I wish to emphasise three points which emerge from this discussion of the history of the Bosluis Basters. Firstly, the fact that they did not own land was the main basis upon which the Boer commandos distinguished between them and the rest of the Vanrhynsdorp congregation, secondly, that in their subsequent attempts to acquire access to land, it became expedient for the group to stress their cultural and racial similarity to "whites" and difference from "coloureds", so as to be given preferential treatment by the "white" farmers; and thirdly, by moving into the Richtersveld there appeared to be little reason, at least initially, for them to continue stressing their "whiteness".

b) Race, ethnicity and class.

Since, as we have argued, there were no absolute lines of cleavage between different sections of the Namaqualand population on racial or cultural grounds, it is hardly surprising that the Boers turned to class divisions in defining the boundary between "white" and "Easter". The Bosluis group, however, having been ostracised by the Vanrhynsdorp "white" congregation, nevertheless retained the stereotypes which they had imbibed from their close contact with the "white" pioneers of Namaqualand. Since most of them were very poor and therefore lacked the means of acquiring land, they were not in a position (between 1901 and 1949) to exploit class as a means of distinguishing between themselves and other "coloureds". Not surprisingly, they turned to physical features of race and culture as the primary means of defining group membership, even though these differences, objectively defined, might not have been very significant (Moerman, 1974). If we view the Bosluis group as a political interest group (Cohen, 1969, 1976), it can be argued that, during this period, their main political interest was the acquisition of land, both individually as bywoners and collectively by having representations made, by Dominee Eksteen, to the government.

Once they had gained access to the land in the Richtersveld, there appeared to be little justification for continuing their discrimination against other "coloureds". Also, there can be little doubt that, once they had realised the full implications of the Population Registration Act of 1951, this must have induced them to reconsider the basis of their group identity. Accordingly,

it was during the first few years in the Reserve that the Boslius group, at least temporarily, largely suspended the maintenance of clear boundaries. The Boorlinge who lived in the vicinity of Eksteenfontein during this period all recall that relations between themselves and the Kommers were good, and one informant even went so far as to remark: "In daardie jare het ons soos broer en suster saamgewoon". It was also during this period that most of the marriages between Kommer and Boorling took place.

However, once the Kommers had been accepted as full members of the Reserve, it soon became evident that, even in a single area with a communal land tenure system, differential access to land would be a very important aspect of their economic welfare. Therefore, by the 1960's, the old lines of cleavage, which had not yet fully disappeared, could now be mobilised and exploited in the ensuing competition for the control of land and other resources in the Reserve.

Cohen's emphasis on the political aspect of ethnic groups (1969) raised certain questions concerning the relationship between classes and ethnic groups, since his approach was closely related to a Marxian theoretical perspective. In a later work the issue is further confused when he moves away from the narrow confines of politically motivated ethnic groups and includes classes and power elites within his sphere of interest.

"Classes and power elites cannot be comprehended without the analysis of symbolic mechanisms that knit their members together and transform mere categories of people to concrete, cohesive, cooperating and relatively enduring groups" (Cohen, 1976:11).

Any social group, therefore, (be it an ethnic group, a racial group or a class) is, in the final analysis, a political interest group. The actual symbols of group identity vary greatly (both between different groups and within one group over time), but their function remains the same (Cohen, 1976:26). Hence, it is possible that an ethnic group might become a class (ibid, : 69) and, I would argue, vice versa, since social groups are usually labelled on the basis of their symbols of identity.

If one therefore moves away from the primordialist proposition that race, language and culture are causally linked, then the sharing of a common culture (for example) can be seen as a result, rather than a primary definitional characteristic of the social group's formation (Barth, 1969:11). For although there might appear to be a close correlation between race, culture and language, such a proposition does not stand up to closer scrutiny, since the whole area of group identity is viewed as an essentially static phenomenon (Cohen, 1976:15). Racial and cultural differences are neither absolute nor immutable, but have their base (following Cohen) in political or economic interests. The close affinity between Cohen's notions of political and economic interests, and Marxian economic determinism are quite obvious. Nonetheless, Cohen's re-emphasis on symbols of group identity and Poulantzas' emphasis on class "consciousness" (1973) both move away from deterministic models of group formation. The close relationship between economic and political factors and group formation nevertheless remain, but it is another matter whether one can say that the former determine the latter. For example, it was argued above that class, as much as physical

features of race formed the basis of group formation in Namaqualand in the past. At the same time, it was also likely that the process of white group formation was motivated by political (and hence economic) interests. That is to say, not only did the whites use economic criteria as defining characteristics of group membership, but they also established a group identity - as a political interest group - in order to maintain or attain an economic hegemony over non-members.

It is similarly difficult to establish - with regard to the present situation in the Richtersveld - whether class was the cause or result of social group formation. On the one hand, membership of the Bosluis group was determined, to some extent, by class, while on the other the group itself was a means of obtaining political (and hence economic) control within the Reserve. Quite clearly there is no single answer to this question, especially in view of the fact that the Richtersveld is not an isolated "blank slate" within which all the elements of the process of group formation might be located. Consequently, pre-existing cultural and racial differences could have been superimposed on the local situation once the Bosluis group had entered the Reserve.

"In some social systems ethnic groups co-reside though no major aspect of structure is based on ethnic inter-relations.....In most cases, such situations have come about as a result of external historical events; the cultural differentiae have not sprung from the local organizational context - rather, a pre-established cultural contrast is brought into conjunction with a pre-established social system and is made relevant to life there in a diversity of ways" (Barth, 1969:30).

In essence the same problem confronts one when taking a class perspective, and the perennial question still remains: Does the material situation of the individual or the consciousness which he forms of it constitute the essential reality?

c) Attitudes to farming and the notion of "Boer".

In those Reserves where an analysis of a common group identity can be reduced to a common relationship to the means of production, land becomes the crucial variable. Within a single Reserve, however, unless it can be demonstrated that there is individual allocation of plots of land, all Registered Occupiers share a common relationship to the most important means of production, i.e. access to land. However, two important additional factors need to be considered. Firstly, it is the access to and not the ownership of the means of production which is important. That is to say, effective economic ownership must be distinguished from formal juridical ownership (Poulantzas, 1973:29). Or, as Sahlins has phrased it: "We need not be so fascinated with the "title" to property as with entitlement, nor with the abstract claims of "ownership" so much as real privileges of use and disposition" (1974:92). In the context of the Richtersveld it can be seen that it becomes important to look at stock ownership not only because it represents an element of the means of production in itself, but also because stock ownership provides this "entitlement" to the produce of the land. Capital investment and labour hiring are also important factors to consider (Raikes, 1978:286) and here we can refer to the prevalence of bakkie ownership and employed shepherds among the larger stock-owners of Eksteenfontein (see Table 2.4).

Secondly, it is not only the actual or objective relationship to the means of production (however this might be defined) which needs to be considered, but also the individual's perceptions of it. That is to say, if one takes a class perspective, it should

be realised that classes are groups of people defined principally, but not exclusively, by their place in the production process - ideological and political factors also play an important role (Poulantzas, 1973:27). One can look for the structural sources and supports of social identities, but these ideas or identities do acquire an autonomy in the sense that they cannot be automatically deduced from the economic base.

As a starting-point for discussion I wish to quote at some length from a conversation I had with a seventy-year-old Kommer resident of Eksteenfontein, one Mrs. Volmoer:

"Ons is 'n ander soort nasie. Ons het onder die Blanke boere grootgeword en ons het van hulle geleer. Jy kan mos sien ons is nie soos hierdie mense (i.e. the "Boorlinge") nie. Ons was ook arm en moes as arbeiders werk. Ek self het vir 'n lang tyd met hierdie twee hande vir die Blanke boere gewerk, maar ons het ook ons trots gehad en hard gespaar om ons vee op te bou. Vandag kan jy mos sien hoe ons mense vooruit boer..... Ons huur veewagters en dryf in motors....Daar is Namas in Kuboes wat groot troppe vee het, maar hulle het niks anders nie. Hulle is nie boere soos ons mense nie".

It is interesting to note that although the conversation began by stressing the fact that the Kommers are a different "nasia" (i.e. nation or race), the main points of difference which were subsequently emphasised were not skin colour, language or culture, but economic factors. Actual income or relative levels of economic wealth were not mentioned as being important in themselves (since there are many "poor" Kommers and "rich" Boorlinge), nor was the fact that many of the Kommers had, at some stage of their

lives, worked for others. Working as labourers was seen as being a necessary result of poverty, but, as this informant and many others observed, the farmers for whom they worked treated them well and saw them (notwithstanding their poverty, which was not an uncommon lot for Namaqualand farmers, white and coloured alike) as equals or near-equals. Here I wish to refer to the relationship between white farmers and "bywoners" described above (page 80), where it was pointed out that white farmers saw bywoners as essentially being fellow farmers who found themselves (at least temporarily) in a landless or poverty-stricken position. More important, in the context of this discussion, the Bosluis group saw themselves as being superior to and different from other labourers.

In this regard there is the rather humorous story of an elderly Kommer who, during the early 1960's went to find work at Beauvallon. When he arrived there, he was upset at having to feed the chickens, a job which (so he claimed) was "Hotnotswerk". When this objection was raised to the foreman, he was promised special consideration and special work and asked to climb into the back of the foreman's bakkie. Oom Attie, the Kommer, objected to this, saying that he did not want to sit in the back "met kleurlinge". The foreman then invited him to sit in the front of the bakkie and together they drove a few miles into the veld. There the bakkie stopped and Oom Attie was given the choice of either getting into the back, or walking back to the farm. He chose to walk. When he returned, the foreman was waiting for him at the pig-styes and he was given the lowly task of having to clean them or return to Eksteenfontein.

This time he gave in, for he needed the work.

I was originally told this story by someone from Kuboes, but this particular informant had heard it second-hand and did not know who it was who had experienced this unfortunate fate. Some months later, however, Oom Attie himself recounted the whole tale, which he had since learnt to view as a joke which had taught him a good lesson - the white foremen at Beauvallon were not white farmers!

To return to the conversation with Mrs. Volmoer, it was also striking that she contrasted the methods of farming employed by the Kommers and Boorlinge; specifically stressing the fact that the Kommers employed shepherds and owned bakkies, which, besides being symbols of wealth, are also symbols of a specific class position. This difference in the attitude of the Kommers to themselves as farmers, as well as their specific methods of farming is well illustrated by the use of the term farmer ("boer") by the Reserve dwellers. "Boer" has two distinct meanings in Afrikaans today. Although it does mean "farmer" in the normal sense, it is also a term which is used, especially by Coloureds, to refer to all white Afrikaners (whether they be farmers or not). At the very least, therefore, "boer" means, or is generally reserved for, White farmers; or alternately, farmers who practise farming methods which are similar to those of White farmers, i.e. large land and stock owners who produce for the market and who are employers of labour. It is noticeable that the people of Kuboes are reluctant to refer to themselves as "boere", even those who own more than 200 head of stock. In Eksteenfontein, on the other hand, all those who own herds of this size or larger are very willing to be called "boere".

But if this is the attitude of the Kommers to the farmers within their ranks, what of the migrant worker? Much work has been done on the class position of the migrant worker who retains an interest in farming - attempts to cure what has been termed the "schizophrenic" class position of the migrant. Among the Kommers in Eksteenfontein, based on the observation that there are relatively few of them who oscillate between farming and migrant labour, the migrant does not find himself in this position. His class position is derived, not solely from his objective position in terms of his relationship to the means of production, but also from his conscious association with the farmers of the community. For the farmers determine the class position of the whole group (they are also the political leaders - Management Board members and Church Board members - to the virtual exclusion of all others). However, the rate of permanent out-migration is high and those that do leave the Reserve soon lose contact with the Kommer group and accordingly their racialistic attitudes.

Even those that do remain resident in the Reserve find some difficulty in retaining their membership of the group. Weekends and long holidays, when the migrants return, are not viewed as "peaceful" periods by the permanent residents. The migrants, especially the younger generation, have come to be seen as "troublemakers" who are not "decent" members of the community. In addition, their income does little to enhance their status. For example, there is one case of a migrant in Walvis Bay who is the skipper of a trawler and reported to earn a salary which allows him to work for only a few months in the year (most certainly his house is the largest in Eksteenfontein). Notwithstanding his obvious wealth, he has very low status in the village.

d) The "Core" group.

It was stated above that the class position of many of the smaller stock owners in Eksteenfontein stems, to a large extent, from their conscious association with the more successful farmers in the community. In this section I wish to take a closer look at the successful farmers in Eksteenfontein, especially insofar as they might be said to constitute what I have termed a "Core" group within the community of Bosluis Basters.

The original members of the Vanrhynsdorp congregation did not automatically accept all outsiders who wished to join the Bosluis church. Full membership of the original group was largely determined by racial features and wealth. Skin colour and wealth do not allow a neat categorisation into mutually exclusive units, but because the original members practised what has been termed "vorentoe trouery", two distinct kinship groups began to emerge. This notion of "vorentoe trouery" (which might best be translated as "upward selective marriage") was by no means unique to the Bosluis Basters. Pearson reports similar findings for the Rehoboth Basters (personal communication) and the idea is also implicit in Carstens' discussion of the "Lineage categories" (perhaps a somewhat misleading term) in Steinkopf (1966, Chapter 5).

Even today some of the "Core" group members feel embarrassed to be associated with the rest of the Kommer group. For example, one old woman told me that I should not even bother to speak to the "Later arrivals"; "Hulle is nie soos ons mense regtig is nie". Another informant phrased it somewhat more poetically: "Ons is die grondpenne, hulle is die opdrifsel". But whereas it might have been advantageous for the "Core" group to stress its exclusivity (prior to 1949) primarily on the basis of the

physical features of race, group membership has now (in the Richtersveld) taken on a much more distinctive class dimension.

In Figure 4.1 I have attempted to show to what extent stock ownership in Eksteenfontein is concentrated in the hands of the "Core" group. Although not all the members of the group are represented in the diagram, it does give some indication of the close kinship links which do exist between them. What is most striking, however, is that all the males in the diagram (with the exception of no.13) are or were (for the greater part of their economically active lives) farmers of some note. Today all except nos. 3,9 and 13 own more than 400 stock. In other words, if we refer to Table 2.1, it can be seen that out of a total of 21 stock owners in the Reserve who have more than 400 head of stock (and out of 14 in Eksteenfontein), 13 are found within this section of the "Core" group. In addition to this, nos. 1 and 4 are very successful shopkeepers, while nos. 3, 4, 5, 12 and 14 are or were all members of the Board.¹⁰

Although many of the older members of the "Core" group do espouse the principle of "vorentoe trouery", I now wish to focus attention on several cases which demonstrate that, although physical features of race might still be deemed important, economic welfare can and does provide the means for gradual acceptance into the Kommer hierarchy.

The first case concerns a man of very dark physical features whose father was white, but whose mother was a Black. The father, who owned a farm in Boesmanland, had (because he had married a Black woman) been unable to remain a member of the

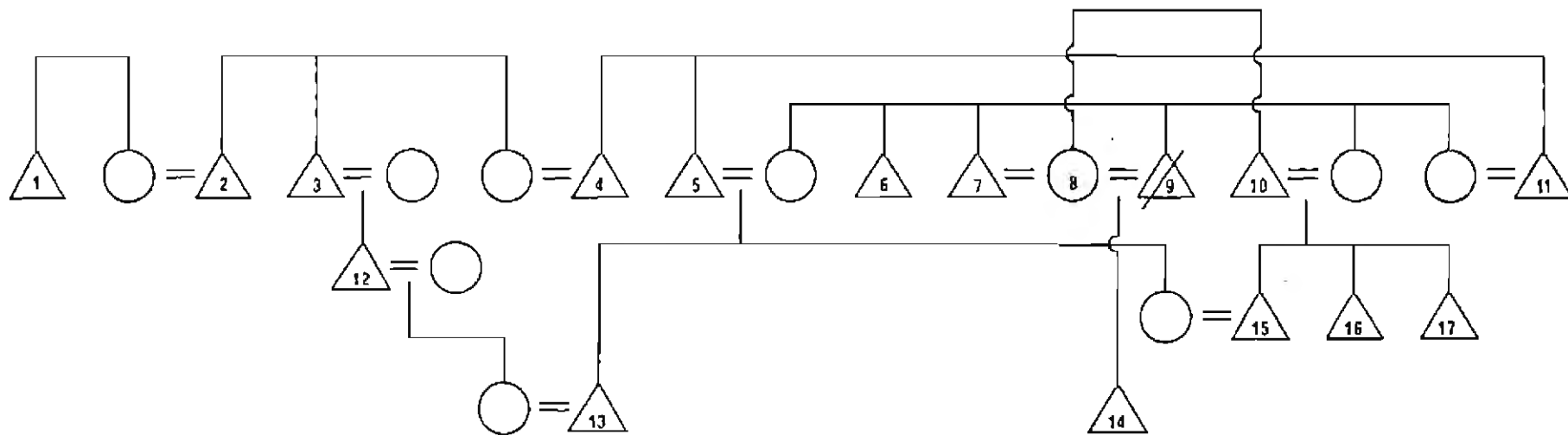


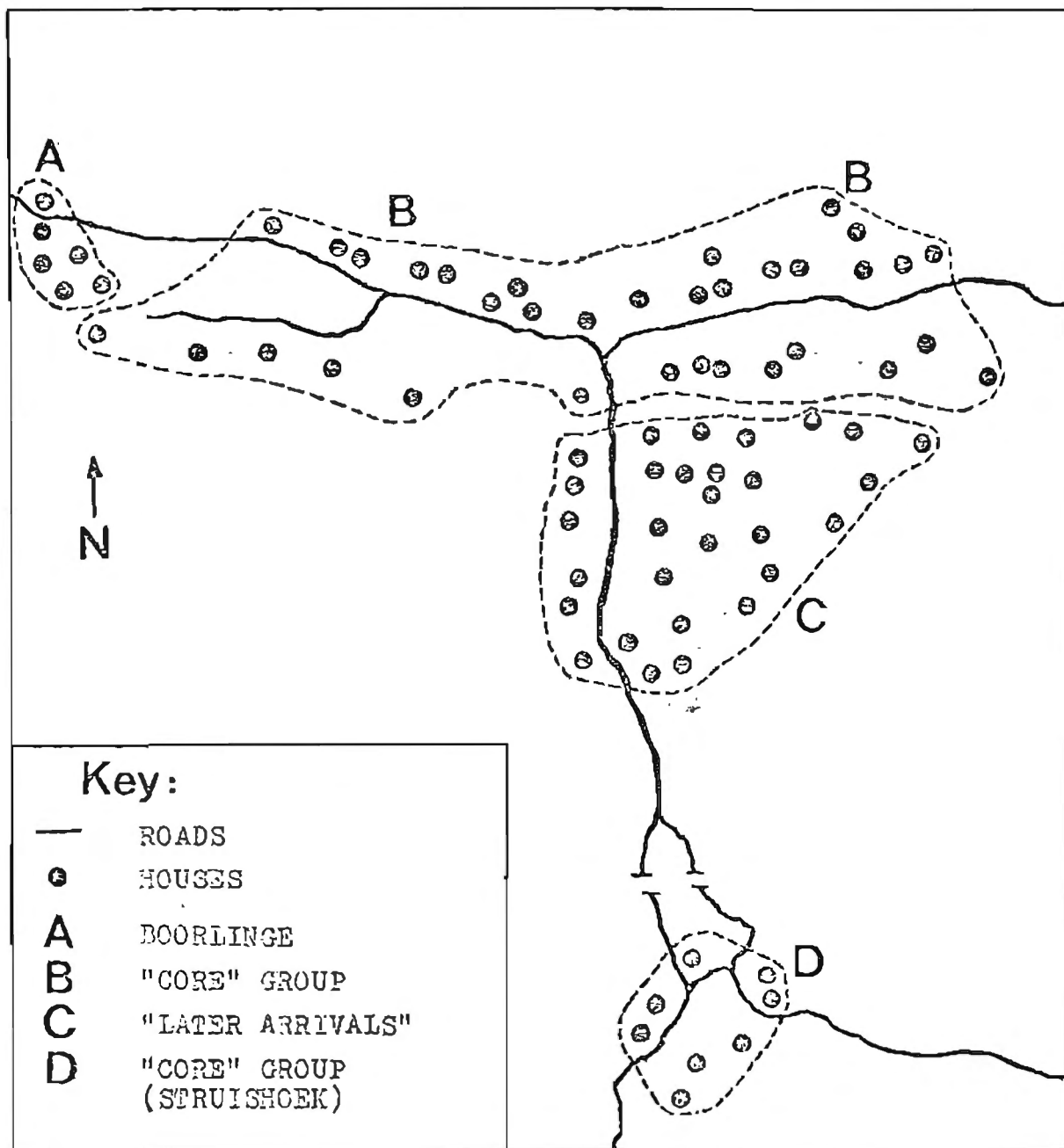
Fig. 4.1: Kinship links of large stock owners
in Eksteenfontein.

"white" community. Consequently, when his son, one George Cloete (no.10 in Fig.4.1), sought permission to join the Bosluis congregation he was accepted because he owned a very large herd. Unlike the poorer dark skinned outsiders, he was able to marry into the "Core" group. His sister (who herself inherited a large sum of money as well as a large herd when the father died) also married into the group. Although the kinship links which were thus established served to help George Cloete gain acceptance into the "Core" group, this acceptance was not without reservations. For example, he never became a member of the Church Board, nor was he ever a member of the Management Board. Also, members of the "Core" group are quite willing, even today, to admit that these marriages were not ideal - "armoede het die mense gedwing om met hulle te trou".

Another case worth mentioning is that of Jakob Cloete, who is also relatively dark skinned and whose father was not a member of the Bosluis group, but settled in Eksteenfontein in 1956. Jakob Cloete proved to be a particularly enterprising farmer. He took over the task of looking after several other smaller herds, thereby allowing him to build up his own herd to the level where it has now become economically viable, and today he owns a bakkie and employs a full-time shepherd. He is also married to the grand-daughter of George Cloete (a marriage which has been less frowned upon than one with most other members of the "Core" group) and this has helped to facilitate his acceptance into the "Kommer" group. Although most informants of the "Core" group stress that he is not really a full member, it is interesting to note that he is the only member of the

Management Board (at least until 1979) who was not a full member of the "Core" group. He has recently also been elected as a deacon of the church - a post which is normally reserved for "Core" group members. However, some indication of the ambiguity of his position appears when we look at his role in the church. Each deacon is given a specific area of Eksteenfontein and he then has to minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the congregation in that area. Significantly, Jakob was given the area which has the largest number of non-"Core" group members, but it also included Struishoek,¹¹ which is predominantly "Core" group. These "Core" group members in Struishoek did not take kindly to the fact that they now had a "Hotnot" ministering to them and some quick intervention on the part of certain other Church Board members was necessary before he was accepted (with certain reservations) by them.

The third case concerns Jacob Jacobs, a Boorling who is resident in Eksteenfontein. Unlike the other Boorlinge, however, he does not live in the main Boorling areas of Eksteenfontein (see Map III). This requires some explanation. In 1976 when I visited Eksteenfontein for the first time, it soon became apparent that there were three distinct residential groupings in Eksteenfontein: Boorlinge, "Core" members and "Later arrivals". These groups each clustered in specific areas as set out in Map III below. Things have changed dramatically since 1976 when people began to move to the official residential plots. The significant point is that Jakob Jacobs was a clear exception to this residential demarcation. Although married to a Boorling from Kuboes, there are indications that he is not considered (by



Map III: SKETCH MAP OF EKSTEENFONTEIN SHOWING RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS IN 1976.

the Kommers) to be the same as the other Boorlinge of Eksteenfontein. He has no close kin in Eksteenfontein and instead mixes with members of the Kommer group (mainly the "Later arrivals"). In church he does not sit at the back with the rest of the Boorlinge, but with the Kommers at the front. Although he does have distinctive "Nama" physical features, the one thing which distinguishes him from the other Boorlinge, is the fact that he owns 350 stock and is a full-time farmer.

These examples, which deal specifically with the way in which individuals have been able to cross group boundaries, shed some light on the importance of class (rather than physical features of race and culture) as the most important criteria of group membership. Most significantly, it can be seen that culture and physical features of race have been gradually displaced by class - a pattern also clearly observed and documented by Robbins (1975). Moerman's work on the Luo (1974) also sheds some light on this relationship between physical features of race and culture on the one hand, and class on the other. Like the Luo, the Kommers are patently aware of the fact that the relations between themselves and the Boorlinge can be divided into two possible frameworks: those of "class" and those of "ethnicity" (which, for present purposes might be taken to include physical features of race). The Luo also choose that framework which puts themselves in the most superior position. By a similar argument it can be said that the Bosluis Basters, before 1949, chose to emphasise their racial difference, since their class position was, at that time, very low. Today, of course, "class" has become (for many) the more preferable framework to emphasise, for a number of different reasons. Firstly, as was pointed out above,

physical features of race in themselves do not allow neat categorisation into discrete groups. Secondly, in view of the various individuals who have entered the group and who do not conform (even remotely) to the ideal of "whiteness", the racial framework has become particularly inappropriate. And thirdly, the emphasis of the "class" dimension gives the group its actual contemporary significance - much more so than it might have done in the past. These arguments might lead one to expect that those Kommers who are in fact in a more favourable class position will be the first to discard race as important criteria of differentiation, while those who are not, will be the ones who still stress their physical difference. Indeed, this is very much the case. For example, the people of Struishoek, who are relatively poor, were most opposed to Jacob Cloete, while the more wealthy stock owners were the ones who intervened. There is also a particularly sad case of a young Kommer woman from a relatively poor family in Eksteenfontein who took up a teaching post in Kuboes. After a few months she fell pregnant (the father of her child was a Boorling) and, since the couple obviously cared very much for each other, they decided to marry. The woman's close kin immediately took steps to prevent this from happening. Interestingly enough, the one person in the Kommer community who openly defended the marriage and criticised the actions of the woman's parents, was the wife of the most prosperous farmer and shop-keeper in the Richtersveld. Both she and her husband are extremely light skinned (both also have siblings who are classified as White).

Notes to Chapter 4:

1. Relatively detailed accounts may be found in Marais (1939, especially chapter III) and Sharp (1977, chapter II). See also van der Merwe (1945) and Smalberger (1975).
2. One notable exception was the mobilization of the Koranna clans in eastern Bushmanland.
3. It nonetheless remains interesting to speculate why the offspring of such unions did not learn their mother-tongue, but spoke only Afrikaans. No doubt the father exerted an unusually strong influence on the upbringing of his children.
4. See, for example, Sharp's (1977) account of the origin of Komaggas.
5. It should be stressed that not all people of mixed descent can necessarily be referred to as "Basters", since this name is generally reserved for certain specific kinship groups (Die Burger, 28 September 1933). However, it has been through this very misuse of the term (as well as its literal translation into English as "Bastard" or "Half-breed") that it has acquired a derogatory connotation. Today no-one (other than the Rehoboth Basters in South West Africa) will accept the term as applying to themselves.
6. In a subsequent letter he reported that they in fact had.
7. There is no actual English translation, but "co-tenant" is perhaps closest.
8. A bywoner is defined as "h Witman wat op die plaas van h ander woon en wat nie juis h vaste salaris trek nie, maar sekere voorregte geniet - soos vry woning, weiding, om h deel saai, ens. - in ruil vir sekere dienste wanneer die boer of plaaseienaar dit nodig het" (Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal, P.C. Schoonees, et al., Staatsdrukker, Pretoria).
9. I was referred to this book by the Kommer residents of Eksteenfontein themselves, since many of them have read it. In no case did they contradict the image which it created.
10. The son of 4 is also at present the Superintendent of the Reserve and Chairman of the Board.
11. Struishoek is a small settlement on the outskirts of Eksteenfontein.

CHAPTER 5 : The Kuboenaars - the different nature of farming.

It has already been mentioned that stock-ownership in the Richtersveld, before the 1920's and the advent of migrant labour, was very unequally distributed. It was also pointed out that a patron-client relationship existed between wealthy stock owners and those who owned no stock. On the basis of these observations it might therefore be expected that Kuboes would today demonstrate very clear lines of cleavage between rich farmers and migrant labourers, brought about by the fact that those individuals without stock were forced to become migrant workers, while those who owned stock were able to subsist solely from their farming activities. However, this has not been the case. In contrast to the situation in Eksteenfontein, where there seems to be a rapid division of the Kommers into farmers on the one hand and migrant workers on the other, no such clear division exists in Kuboes.

In previous chapters I have stressed that the communal system of land tenure can, under special circumstances (such as those outlined for Eksteenfontein), accommodate the formation of distinct social classes. However, this does not imply that either the communal land tenure system or even the differential ownership of stock necessarily results in a similar pattern of differentiation. In essence, therefore, the pattern in Kuboes closely resembles that found in the other Reserves of Namaqualand. However, I have argued that the Richtersveld differs from the other Reserves in several important respects and that these differences have meant that rapid social differentiation between farmers and migrant workers has been able to take place. Most importantly, we have seen

that the low population density and the fact that there is no cultivation on individually allocated plots of land have meant that large-scale "economic" farming is possible and that part-time farming activity is very difficult. In addition, effective access to land is determined by the number of stock owned.

On the one hand, the pattern in Kuboes requires no specific explanation, given that the particular historical circumstances as outlined in Chapter 4 were not present and that Kuboes resembles, to such a large extent, the pattern observed in the other Namaqualand Reserves. On the other hand, in view of the unique circumstance of the Richtersveld, it is worthwhile looking at certain factors which might be said to have retarded the process of differentiation in Kuboes.

If one takes a closer look at the actual nature of farming in these two settlements, then it is evident that the relationships amongst farmers and between farmers and non-farmers, as well as the distribution of stock within the two communities, are of primary importance (see Raikes, 1978 and Cliffe, 1978). Indeed, statements concerning the relative "backwardness" or "efficiency" of farming in Eksteenfontein and Kuboes simply confuse the issue because they overlook the important differences between the ways in which farming is organised in these two communities. In this chapter I therefore propose to look at the way in which Kuboes can be said to differ from Eksteenfontein in this regard.

a) The extended family and the household.

The "natural" residence patterns in Kuboes, like those in Eksteenfontein, have been disrupted by the introduction of official residential plots. In other words, when a young man gets married today, he applies to the Board and is allocated an official residential plot (usually quite arbitrarily) in the central area of his village. Notwithstanding these recent restrictions on the choice of residence, it is very clear, however, that certain houses are clustered in neat extended family units. Carstens makes a similar observation and reports that more than half of the people in Kuboes was part of such extended family units (1966:213).

These extended family groups usually consist of the mother and father and all their unmarried children (living in one dwelling unit), as well as some of the married children and their respective spouses and children (each living in a separate dwelling unit). Some of these extended families are matrilocal and some are patrilocal, but the majority are mixed. I am not going to attempt here to give a breakdown of the different types of "homesteads" in Kuboes which can be classified under the various headings of "elementary families", rejuvenated families", "patrilineal extended families", etc., (as Carstens has done). I simply wish to point to some issues which are raised by the existence of this extended family kinship and residence pattern.

Firstly, one needs to approach the data concerning individual households' differential involvement in farming and migrant labour with a certain amount of caution. That is to say, if

one looks at extended families and groups, rather than at households, it is likely that a much larger percentage will be involved in both farming and migrant labour. This very involvement of a single social unit in both types of economic activity will, of course, tend to minimize the division between migrant workers and farmers (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom, 1977: 109).

Secondly, the extended families co-operate very closely in the management of a joint family herd. It is also very common for the head of such an extended family to retain actual ownership of the herd until he dies. These considerations suggest that many of the stockless households in Kuboes, in fact, do have a direct interest in farming and also help to explain why the Kuboes farmers turn their full-time attention to farming at an earlier stage (i.e. when the household herd is smaller) than their Eksteenfontein counterparts.

And thirdly, the extended family, with its much larger labour pool, does not face the same labour problems as the nuclear family household. The common herd of the extended family will also (in general) be larger than that of the nuclear family (since household heads pool their stock and because the head of the extended family generally retains ownership of the greater part of the herd until he dies).

Let us now see how these principles operate by looking at one specific extended family group in Kuboes, that of Johannes Nel. Figure 5.1 is a kinship diagram of Johannes Nel and his five children. All his children except his older daughter (j) live

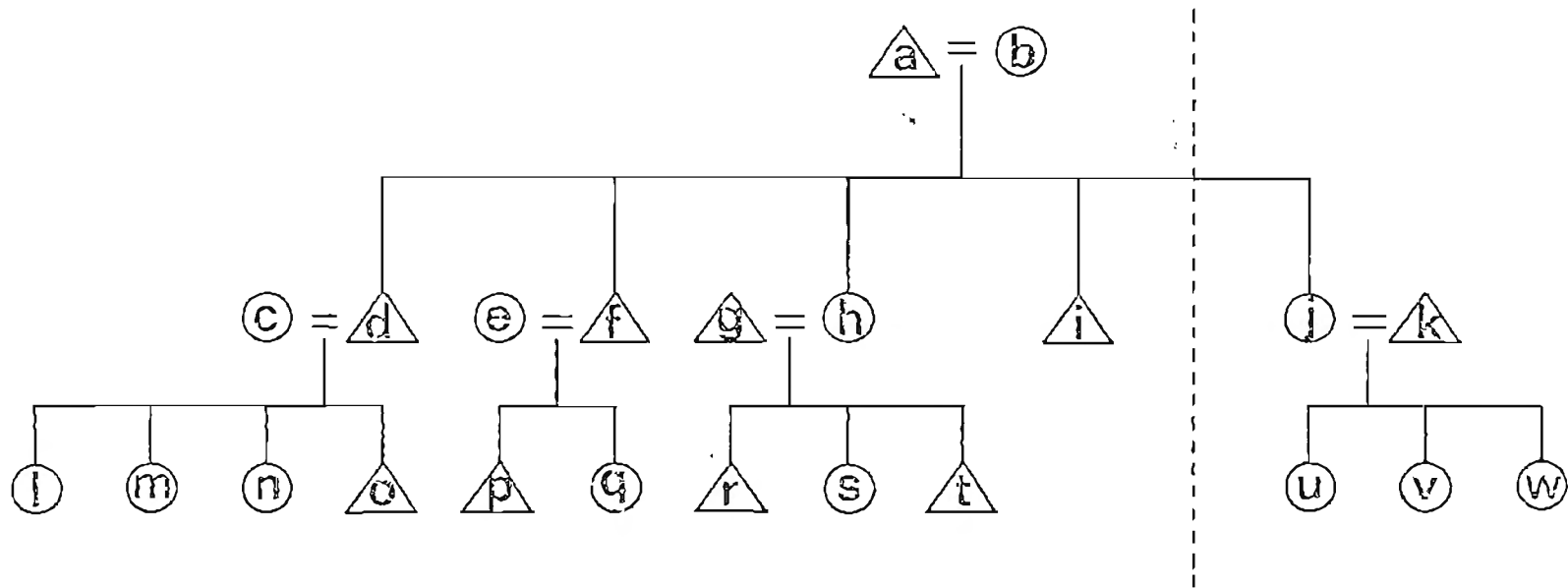


FIG. 5.1: THE NEL EXTENDED FAMILY.

in houses which are in very close proximity to one another. This group of dwellings might be termed the "extended family residential unit". Johannes Nel (a), his wife (b) and their youngest and only unmarried son (i) all live in one dwelling, while his other children (d,f,g) live in separate dwellings with their respective spouses and children. His older daughter (j) has gone to live with her husband's (k) extended family residential unit in another part of Kuboes.

Johannes Nel owns about 280 head of stock, while his son-in-law (g) owns 80. These animals are all herded by Johannes and his second oldest son (f). His other two sons (d and i), as well as his son-in-law (g), are all migrant workers. This arrangement, however, is not fixed. For example, three years ago Johannes's oldest and youngest sons (d and i) looked after the herd, while Johannes and his other son (f) went out to work. Also, the son who is now looking after the herd told me that he was only doing so in order to give his brothers a chance to go out and earn some cash.

At present all of Johannes's sons feel that they have a stake in the family herd, although none of them can actually be said to own stock. When Johannes dies, the herd will be divided among his sons and each son will probably then start his own extended family unit (as Johannes himself had done when his own father died). Johannes's son-in-law (g) was the youngest child in his family and his father died before he was married. For a while he joined his brother's household and looked after their joint herd. After he got married, however, he left his brother and came to live with his wife's parents.

Although the dwellings in the Nel extended family residential unit are very close and although there is significant co-operation in farming activity, each nuclear household still retains its own autonomy. That is to say, each household runs its own finances, does its own cooking, etc. The men who work might occasionally give the herders from other households small sums of money and they also often actively assist in the care of the herd (during week-ends and holidays), but essentially they share the task of herding by becoming herders or migrant workers on a rotational basis.

This extended family residence pattern and the co-operation between households is very common in Kuboes and serves to underline the importance of farming as a joint family undertaking. The relationships between farmers and migrants, and between stock-owners and those who own no stock, are therefore of a very different order from those in Eksteenfontein.

b) Stock ownership and farming methods.

Referring to Table 2.1, we see that only one stock-owner in Kuboes has more than 500 stock and that the greater majority of households own between one and 200 stock. Unlike Eksteenfontein, therefore, the stock are not concentrated so much in the hands of a few wealthy farmers and are much more equitably distributed. The co-operative nature of farming activity within the extended family, together with the more equitable distribution of stock between different households, means that i) a much larger proportion of the population is involved (directly or indirectly) in farming, and ii) that this involvement is of a similar order.

By "similar order" I mean that the method of farming, the relations of farming, as well as the economic value of such farming undertakings are essentially similar for nearly all stock-owners. Unlike the large stock-owners in Eksteenfontein, the Kuboenaars do not generally buy bakkies or introduce other technical aids to farming. Most importantly, however, they do not employ shepherds and the stock-owners themselves do not become supervisors. Farming therefore remains very much a family undertaking in Kuboes.

The significance of the fact that the Eksteenfontein farmers employ shepherds and become supervisors is fully recognised by the Boorlinge. Not only do the Kuboes farmers not employ shepherds, but they also specifically state that they won't do so. "Die Halfnaatjies werk so, hulle dink mos hulle is base".¹ They also specifically refuse to become shepherds for the Kommer farmers. For example, two of the Boorlinge in Eksteenfontein,

who are quite willing to work for a White farmer whose farm borders on the Richtersveld, became rather rude when I innocently asked them whether they had ever worked for the Kommers. I also heard a story of two Boorlinge from Lekkersing who sent a message to one of the Eksteenfontein Kommers saying that they were prepared to work for him. Since he was looking for a shepherd, he went to Lekkersing to pick them up. When he arrived there, however, they had changed their minds and had apparently left the Reserve. He eventually found them at Heuningfontein (a small hamlet between Eksteenfontein and Lekkersing) and a fight ensued. Nonetheless, they refused to go and work for him. Other informants told me that the two had just been playing the fool and that the Kommer should have known that they would not work for him.

There is also evidence to suggest that the Boorling farmers in general are not as market-orientated as the Kommers. This is very difficult to document, since stock sales vary greatly from year to year and farmers are notoriously reluctant to give accurate figures of stock sales. Nonetheless, on the basis of informal conversations I had with many farmers from both settlements, it became apparent that the Kuboes farmers very rarely sold stock to outsiders - not only because few of them had herds which were large enough to allow them to sell stock on a regular basis, but also because they tended to invest their wealth in stock, rather than converting their stock to cash. These observations were reinforced by one of the speculators regularly entering the Reserve who claimed that he bought more stock (on that particular visit) from one Eksteenfontein farmer than from all the Kuboes farmers put together.

c) Communal land ownership and the sense of community.

When the people of Kuboes speak of the land in the Richtersveld they often talk about "ons grond". Of course, they all realise that the government today owns the land and that they merely have usufruct rights. But they are loath to acknowledge this fact and still view the land as belonging to the original inhabitants of the Richtersveld area - the Boorlinge. These sentiments find their most obvious expression when referring to the Kommer farmers who, as they are quite willing to acknowledge are much more economically prosperous than themselves. "Alles wat hulle het is aan ons te danke. Dis mos ons grond wat hulle ryk gemaak het". This is in sharp contrast to the opinions expressed in Eksteenfontein by the Kommers who stress that it was the government and not the Boorlinge who gave them the land.

In addition to the fact that they see the land as belonging to themselves, the residents of Kuboes also see it as being communally owned - a joint resource which should be shared by all. Consequently, even the farmers within their own ranks who have very large herds are seen as taking more than their fair share of the communal resources and are not (again in contrast to Eksteenfontein) accorded very high status in the village. Also, they are particularly sensitive about farming practices which tend to favour the larger stock-owners or which over-exploit the environment. For example, they were very critical of the Kommer farmers' practice of moving into an area where rain had fallen before they even had time to "rub their eyes" and in so doing did not allow the land to derive maximum benefit from the rains. They criticised farmers who used petrol driven pumps to pump water

from the boreholes, since this meant that when the smaller stock owners who could not afford pumps wanted to water their stock there was no water left for them. Once again, such sentiments were expressed (at least in my hearing) only by the Boorlinge and never by the Kommers (even those among them who did not own many stock).

In contrast to the Kommer farmers in Eksteenfontein who view farming as being essentially an economic undertaking, the Boorlinge in Kuboes do not necessarily view it primarily in these terms. The observations concerning the social significance of farming in the other Namaqualand Reserves (Carstens, 1966 and Sharp, 1977) are therefore of much more significance here. In part, access to land is seen as the right of all Boorlinge in Kuboes and involvement in farming activity is simply a means of exercising this right. But it is also clear that the people of Kuboes are beginning to develop a notion of "community" and a sense of "separateness" from both the outside and the rest of the Richtersveld, which are very similar to the patterns observed by Sharp in Komaggas and Concordia (1977).

Largely as a result of the arrival of the Kommers, the Boorlinge of Kuboes have begun to feel very severe pressure on the land - something which had not been the case before. The realization that they were no match for the Kommer farmers within a single political unit such as the Reserve, has induced them to seek institutional separation from the other people in the Richtersveld. In 1974 they were successful in forming the Congregation of Kuboes/Alexander Bay², which gave them significant autonomy

in church and school matters (the school buildings are owned by the church) and emphasised their separation from Lekkersing and Eksteenfontein (both of which remained under the control of the Congregation of Port Nolloth). They have also recently made attempts to have the Reserve divided in half - Kuboes and Sanddrif in the North, the Eksteenfontein and Lekkersing in the South. As yet all these attempts have been unsuccessful (and it is unlikely that this ambition will ever be realised) but it does demonstrate how strongly the Boorlinge of the north perceive the boundary between themselves and the rest of the Reserve.

Sharp (1977) has emphasised the importance of social circumstances outside the Reserves insofar as they influence the creation of boundaries around the various Reserve communities. In view of the very low status which the Boorlinge ("Namas") are accorded in centres such as Port Nolloth (West, 1971: 13,106), it is likely that the treatment which Boorlinge receive outside the Richtersveld has also contributed to the sense of community which exists in Kuboes, since it has induced many to want to remain domiciled in the Reserve.³

The general reluctance of the Kuboenaars to leave the Reserve permanently is probably the most striking evidence of their close relationship with the land and their ideal of owning stock (even if only a small herd). While I was doing fieldwork in 1979 an attractive housing scheme had just been completed at Beauvallon. It consisted of forty individual houses which would serve as married quarters for workers who had long service records. Each house had running water, electricity and a flush toilet. In addition, each had a little garden and a large picture window

overlooking the Orange River. There were also other benefits associated with moving to these units, such as free vegetables and milk, and free education for their children once they had completed Standard 6 (in other words, their boarding fees and transport costs to the school at Steinkopf would be paid by the employer). Notwithstanding these benefits however, only one of the workers from Kuboes was willing to accept the offer, even though there were many who qualified in terms of a long service record. When I spoke to the others, they all claimed that such a move would lose them their independence and that they would have nowhere to go if they lost their jobs or retired. "Hier kan ons ten minste 'n paar vee aanhou en by ons kinders wees. Niemand kan ons hiervandaan uitskop nie".

d) Discussion

Till now I have been creating a picture of Kuboes as a completely undifferentiated, co-operating and egalitarian community. Not only does common sense tell us that this is unlikely to be a true representation of reality, but earlier arguments that social differentiation is simply a process and should not be seen in "all-or-nothing" terms, also suggest that I have been overstating the case.

Firstly, not all households are part of extended family patrilocal units. Nor do all such units own stock. Although the first households which moved into the official residential plots were able to choose (to some extent) where they wanted to live,⁴ it is very unlikely that the town planning scheme is going to be able to continue accommodating these residential patterns. The Kuboenaars are very aware of this, and many extended family units have consequently refused to move into the new central area. Many of those that have moved are today widely dispersed throughout the central village and this has resulted in the breakdown of the patrilocal residential pattern and the co-operative nature of farming activity.

It is also interesting that there has been a rapid change from patri- to matrilocal residence patterns among those extended families which do not own stock. The argument which is given is that, since the male members are seldom at home (being migrant workers) there is no reason why they should live close to each other. On the other hand, the women, who are at home all the time, like to be near their sisters and mothers. Also, there

are clear indications that certain divisions between the stock owning households and those which own no stock are beginning to emerge. At the same time, certain younger stock owners (especially those that have worked outside the Reserve for extended periods and have come into contact with what might loosely be termed "capitalist" farming methods) have begun to change their attitudes to farming. They are also being influenced by the "success" of certain of the Eksteenfontein farmers and it is only the older generation which is retarding the implementation of new farming methods and the change to new social relationships in the economic sphere.

Notwithstanding these considerations, the general thrust of the argument still remains. Although the situation in Kuboes is changing, the nature of the kinship organisation, the nature of economic relationships and the specific association of the Kuboenaars with the land, have meant that the process of differentiation has been retarded. On the other hand, it is also evident that the "development schemes" which are rapidly being introduced, are tending to hasten this process.

Notes to Chapter 5.

1. Interestingly enough, some of the informants who recall the application to have the Bosluis Basters accepted into the Reserve told me that the Superintendent proudly described the Basters as "so blank dat julle sal dink sommige van hulle is base".
2. Till that stage the whole of the Richtersveld as well as Kleinsee and Grootmis, Alexander Bay and Beauvallon were part of the Port Nolloth Dutch Reformed Mission Church. The only people in the Richtersveld who are not Dutch Reformed are a handful of Kommers in Eksteenfontein. Although they belong to the Full Gospel Church of God, they often attend church services at the Dutch Reformed Church in Eksteenfontein, since they do not have a church of their own in Eksteenfontein.
3. Carstens has recently re-emphasised the importance of reserves as social refuge areas (1971).
4. There was also a significant amount of "swopping" of residential plots once they had been allocated.

CHAPTER 6 : The changing role of the Management Board.

a) The role of the Board before the 1950's

In Chapter 1 I briefly outlined the process whereby the people of Kuboes had become estranged from the Advisory Board and how this Board, which had been nurtured by the missionary presence in the other Reserves, was of little importance in the Richtersveld. Also mentioned was the fact that the Richtersveld was the most isolated and sparsely populated of all the Reserve areas, which is probably the main reason for the failure of the mission station and later, the Board, since there was no need for a political voice to protect the people from encroaching Inkommers. The demise of the authority of Kaptein Paul Links further resulted in the rejection of the Board by the people of Kuboes. Consequently, they saw the Board as fulfilling no function at all and, to a people who were used to free-range grazing, no tax of any form, no building regulations and no bureaucratic procedures, the Board increasingly became a thorn in their sides.

Quite clearly the institution of citizenship in the Namaqualand Reserves developed in response to increasing population pressures in these areas. The Richtersveld, with its very low population density and geographic isolation, did not develop along these same lines and such new residents as did wish to settle in the area were, prior to 1949, readily accepted by and assimilated into, the Reserve community (such as it was). The low population density could also account for the failure of the mission station, since one of the main functions of the missionaries was to protect the people from encroaching Basters and Boers. Carstens

also makes this point with reference to Steinkopf and tells us that during the years preceeding the arrival of the Bosluis Basters, the form of local government in the Richtersveld closely resembled what he terms the "Baster-missionary period" in Steinkopf, "with the important qualifications that the resident missionary (when there was one) took little part in the political life and that the functions of government were simpler" (1966: 218). He also goes on to tell us that the people in the Richtersveld paid no taxes, that the Board received no outside assistance from any government department and that it, in fact, had very little control over the people (ibid, 219).

Carstens also comments that the people of Lekkersing and the surrounding area "began to regard themselves as being superior to those living in Kuboes and its environs" (ibid., 217).

Although I cannot wholly subscribe to his statement regarding their feelings of superiority, especially where he goes on to talk of the people in Lekkersing as being Basters and those in Kuboes as being Khoikhoi, there does appear to be evidence to suggest that such a process of differentiation between the two settlements did in fact take place (even before the arrival of the Bosluis Basters).¹

However, rather than attempting to account for this division in racialistic terms (as Carstens has done), I would suggest that the people in the south were simply more aware of the dangers of outsiders settling permanently in the area and consequently turned to the Board for protection. With the subsequent move of the Board's headquarters to Lekkersing, the residents of

Kuboes felt that their settlement had lost its former status as capital of the Reserve and this probably caused such animosity as did arise between the two settlements.

b) The arrival of the Bosluis Basters.

Although, as we have seen, the Bosluis group initially showed little sign of wishing to retain their separate identity, things began to change dramatically a few years after their arrival in the Richtersveld and it soon became apparent to the Boorlinge that the Kommers were taking over the whole southern part of the Reserve. This result had not been entirely unforeseen, since the Boorlinge had laid down certain conditions for accepting the Kommers. Most important was that they had demanded that the "white" farmers (of whom there were at least eleven in the Reserve in 1949) should be removed in order to make room for the Kommers and their stock. This particular condition was recorded in the Board's minutes and was ultimately met in 1957 when the last "white" farmer left. However, the Boorlinge also claim that they stipulated that unless the Kommers "behaved properly" and became integrated with the local population, they would be evicted. Although this condition was written down in a letter from the Superintendent to the Secretary of Social Welfare, it was never recorded in the Board's minutes.²

The people of Lekkersing, in whose area the White farmers had settled, saw it as a fair exchange that the Bosluis Basters should be allowed into the Reserve if the other farmers were forced to move. The people of Kuboes, on the other hand, only became concerned with the whole issue once the Bosluis Basters began to encroach on their land, by which time it was too late for them to do anything about the matter.

In 1956 the first Kommer applied to the Board for acceptance as a Registered Occupier. Since it could not be demonstrated that

the Bosluis Basters had not "behaved properly", the application could not be turned down. Soon afterwards many more applications followed and it appears that the Boorlinge were unable to deny the Kommers permanent residence rights in the Reserve. The one exception to this was the case of Jakob Malan, who had moved his stock into the Reserve although he still owned a farm in Boesmanland. Quite clearly this was one instance where there were adequate grounds for refusing his application for permanent residence rights and it was therefore vehemently opposed by all members of the Board. Nonetheless, it took many years before he was actually induced to leave the Reserve and, as late as 1962, he was still residing there "illegally".

It must also have become apparent to the Kommers that, even within the Reserve, they stood to benefit from the fact that they were regarded by outside "whites", as being superior to the Boorlinge. A letter from the "white" Superintendent to the Department of Social Welfare in 1949 demonstrates this point. In it he referred to the Boorlinge as "...n onontwikkelde ras...in (n) barbaarse stadium"; but to the Kommers as being "...tussen 98 en 100% Blank...en (wat) sonder twyfel deur n Blanke gemeenskap opgeneem en geabsorbeer kan word". Even today many of the Kommers still hark back to the days when they had a "white" Superintendent and "white" Dominee.

Two examples might serve to demonstrate the extent to which Whites favour the Kommer group even today. In 1978 the Coloured Affairs Department was attempting to introduce a system of what it calls "economic units" in the Reserves. In order to explain the proposed system to the Registered Occupiers it was decided to

hold a meeting of Bona fide farmers. However, this meeting was not held in the Administrative centre of Lekkersing, nor in Kuboes (the settlement with the largest population), but in Eksteenfontein instead, where not one "Boorling" farmer was able to attend. It was only a few months later, after the matter had been brought up several times in the Raad, that a meeting was held in Lekkersing and farmers from all the villages were represented.

The other case concerns the purchase of fodder from White farmers near the borders of the Reserve. While I was in Kuboes farmers asked whether I did not know of somewhere where they could buy fodder (lucern) to supplement their herds' feed, since they had not had rain for a long time and fodder was very scarce. I suggested that they try a farmer at Arriesdrift whom I knew had large lucern fields under irrigation. However, they had already tried him, and no lucern was apparently available. When I returned to Eksteenfontein a few days later, I heard that a Kommer farmer had just managed to buy twenty bales of lucern from that particular farmer in Arriesdrift. I asked how this was possible and was simply told: "Hy ken ons mense (i.e. the Kommers) en hy het belowe om die lusern vir ons te hou. Ek kan nou selfs nog 'n vrag gaan haal as ek dit nodig het". This was not an isolated example, for I heard similar stories about the farmers at Vioolsdrif.

In 1956 the Government appointed the first Kommer to the Board - one Allie Volmoer. He was a shrewd, intelligent and outspoken representative who soon acquired a very good knowledge of the rules and regulations pertaining to the administration of the

Reserve, so much so that he remained a member of the Board for the next 23 years. "Oom Allie", as he is generally referred to, did not simply attempt to further the interests of the Kommers and many Boorlinge saw him as a fair and just representative who was "anders as die ander Halfnaatjies". Nevertheless, many of the Boorlinge saw his appointment as a significant setback and began to lose interest and faith in the Board.

In 1951 the Boorlinge suffered a severe setback when they decided to make a stand against the implementation of the Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act (No.29 of 1909). At that stage the Board of the Richtersveld had not yet officially accepted the Act and this obviously caused some administrative problems. No doubt the Superintendent of the Reserve was being pressurised by his superiors to have the Act accepted by the Board and he saw the arrival of the Boslois Basters as a golden opportunity to force a decision on the matter. He felt sure that the Boslois Basters would express the desire to have the Act accepted and (although they had no representatives on the Board at that stage) that he could use their decision to influence the Board. However, when he questioned the Boslois Basters, they simply told him that they were prepared to abide by the decision of the Board. The Board, on the other hand, was not unaware of the Superintendent's dealings with the Kommers and immediately informed him that even if the Kommers had expressed the desire to have the Act accepted, it would not have made any difference. The Board also informed him that the Kommers were in the Richtersveld only at the consent of the Boorlinge, and that they (the Kommers) were bound by the Board's decisions. A heated argument ensued and the Superintendent

simply re-emphasised the fact that the Board was an Advisory Board and that decisions affecting the Kommers were not binding unless ratified by himself and the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare. He also called a special meeting of the Kommers because, as he put it, he "had reason to believe that they (the Kommers) were being intimidated and exploited by the members of the Board". However, when this meeting was held the Kommers claimed that they were under the custody of the Board and were prepared to abide by its decisions. The Superintendent commented that this was a forced decision because the Kommers had been threatened with a "bloedbad" (i.e. bloodbath) after he had been to Stinkfontein previously.

Although it might appear that this was a victory for the Boorlinge, the long-term implications in fact showed the opposite to be true. For example, this episode marked the beginning of gradually worsening relations between the Superintendent and the Boorlinge. In addition, it left the Boorlinge with no doubt about whose side the Superintendent was on, and re-emphasised the powerless nature of the Board as a decision-making body. In essence, therefore, the Boorlinge of Kuboes saw it as a defeat, the final straw which made them lose all interest in the Board's activities. The Boorlinge of Lekkersing, on the other hand, began to associate more and more with the Kommers and the Kuboenaars inevitably interpreted this as a sign that the Boorlinge of Lekkersing had joined forces against the people of the north - a feeling which is still strongly held today.

The Kommers, who had suffered heavy stock losses during their first few years in the Richtersveld (owing to the drought and

the fact that their sheep were not well suited to the harsh environment) and had therefore been forced (in many instances) to seek temporary employment outside the Reserve, began, from 1956 onwards, to find their feet again. Their total stock numbers increased rapidly and a struggle for land in the southern half of the Reserve ensued. At first the Kommers had attempted to have the Reserve divided in two so that they could have exclusive grazing rights in the area around Eksteenfontein. After this attempt failed, the struggle for land became a struggle for stock-ownership - the larger stock-owners being in a better position to utilise the land.

As the Kommers began to build up their herds in Eksteenfontein (where the "Core" group and hence most of the "successful" farmers settled), it soon became evident to the Boorlinge in that area that they were no match for the profit-orientated Kommer farmers. Most of the Boorlinge in Eksteenfontein therefore decided to move to Kuboes, where there was not as much pressure on the land.

This exodus of Boorlinge from Eksteenfontein only began in 1956, six years after the arrival of the Bosluis Basters. The increase in the number of stock in the vicinity of Eksteenfontein at that stage can be seen as the primary factor responsible for this migration. Indeed, many of those who moved and are now resident in Kuboes openly admit: "Ons is daar uitgeboer deur die Halfnaatjies". But it is also evident that the Kommers were consciously aware of the political dimension of the Bosluis Basters as a group and the old lines of cleavage which had not yet completely disappeared, could now be exploited in the ensuing competition for the control of land in the Eksteenfontein vicinity.

Some Boorling informants claim that there was a general feeling, just before 1956, that the Kommers were beginning to look down on them. They were no longer welcome in the houses of the Kommers ("Ons is nie meer ingenooi nie") and general relations between the two groups became rather strained. Matters eventually came to a head early in 1956 when the Boorlinge began to notice that they were being "pushed" to the back of the church in Eksteenfontein and one of them decided to force the Kommers to show their hand. The story which follows, was related by a number of Kuboes informants and there seemed to be very little variation in their accounts. The Kommers in Eksteenfontein, on the other hand, claimed that they could not remember it at all.

Soon after their arrival in Eksteenfontein, the Bosluis Basters established a church in the village. All the members of the Church Board were Kommers and all the services were led by Kommer lay preachers. Effectively, therefore, it was a Kommer church, although the Boorlinge also attended the services (as they still do today). In those early days, however, the congregation were shown to their seats by the vergier (himself a Kommer). Eventually the Boorlinge began to notice that they were being directed, more and more, to the pews at the back of the church, while the Kommers were shown to the seats at the front. The Boorlinge thus decided that one of them would ignore the vergier's directions and go and sit in the seats which had come to be reserved for the Kommers. Nothing was said at the time, but after the service the "guilty party", one Frederik Cloete, was asked to appear before the Church Board. There they asked him why he had not followed the vergier's directions. Frederik Cloete

then asked the members of the Board whether this meant that the Boorlinge were not allowed to sit at the front because it was reserved exclusively for the Kommers. Such a direct question had clearly not been expected and the Board members began (according to the informants) to make excuses. In other words, they would not commit themselves by admitting that it was in fact their policy that the Boorlinge and Kommers had to sit separately. Frederik Cloete had heard enough and left the meeting. Soon after this episode most of the Boorlinge moved out of Eksteenfontein and settled in Kuboes.

This story highlights several different points. Firstly, it emphasises the fact that it took a number of years before the Kommers openly began to show feelings of superiority towards the Boorlinge. As we have seen, this also co-incided with an increase in the pressure on grazing land in the vicinity of Eksteenfontein. Secondly, the Kommers' reluctance to admit openly that they were discriminating against the Boorlinge was probably largely because they had not yet obtained permanent residence rights in the Reserve. And thirdly, it shows that the Kommers were beginning to use the old lines of cleavage in order to restrict membership to the group and hence restrict access to the resources in the Eksteenfontein vicinity.

Not all the Boorlinge left Eksteenfontein at this stage. Interestingly enough, however, those who did remain (and are still resident in Eksteenfontein today) owned hardly any stock. This strategy of the Boskuis Basters thus was effective in that they had managed to get rid of those Boorlinge who were competing with them for the grazing around Eksteenfontein.

We see therefore that this struggle for power and control of resources in the Richtersveld brought about a split in the Reserve - the Kommers and Boorlinge in the south joining forces against the Boorlinge in the north. From the point of view of the residents in Kuboes, matters grew progressively worse after the acceptance of the Coloured Mission Stations and Reserves Amendment Act (No.35 of 1955) by the Richtersveld in 1957 and the appointment of a Kommer representative from Eksteenfontein in the same year. Since Kuboes and Lekkersing each had three representatives, this meant that the Eksteenfontein representative very often had the deciding vote on the Board. And, of course, matters became even worse when further Eksteenfontein representatives were elected. Today Eksteenfontein, Kuboes and Lekkersing each have three elected and one appointed representative (Sanddrif has no representatives) so that the north has only four votes as opposed to the eight of the south.

But these figures do not tell the whole story, since Kuboes is further disadvantaged by its geographical isolation as well as the fact that many of the representatives (especially the older ones) are not fluent in Afrikaans (the only language spoken at the Board's meetings). Being isolated, the Kuboes representatives have very little contact with the Board from one month to the next, so that they often have to discuss issues with which they are not familiar. In addition to this, there is also some evidence that certain Superintendents of the Reserve tended to favour the Kommers and the Boorlinge from Lekkersing. We have already seen to what extent the Superintendent, at the time of the negotiations to allow the Bosluis Basters to enter the Reserve,

saw the latter as being superior to the Boorlinge. Although this might have been "typical" of the "white" attitude towards the "primitive" Khoikhoi (or those who were close to them), at least one Coloured Superintendent of the Richtersveld also displayed similar favouritism towards the Kommers. At the one board meeting under his chairmanship which I attended, it was very striking to what extent he sided with the views of the Kommers and was able to manipulate the general voting. For example, one of the Kuboes representatives had applied to the board for permission to sell vegetables in Kuboes. After some debate, during which the Eksteenfonteiners (although this decision would hardly affect them), actually spoke more than the Kuboenaars, the board "unanimously" turned down the application. The lunch-break saw further favouritism on the part of the Superintendent when he invited the Eksteenfontein representatives to have lunch in his house, while the others had to fend for themselves (those from Lekkersing were able to return to their own homes).

c) New functions - "development schemes"

Once the Board had accepted the Coloured Mission Stations and Reserves Act, it took on a new dimension. Large amounts of capital were put at its disposal for the purpose of "ontwikkelingswerke", i.e. development or improvement programmes. These included the drilling of boreholes, the erection of wind-pumps and fences for grazing camps and the building of drinking troughs and storage dams as well as the introduction of certain essential services in the settlements, such as the construction of roads, improvements in the water supply and refuse and sewage removal. Today the board also employs a full-time nurse (which has meant that clinics have had to be built in the settlements) as well as a part-time health inspector (he also works for the Steinkopf board). These schemes, however, have two important dimensions. Firstly, one needs to distinguish between those schemes which benefit the farmers only and those which benefit farmers and non-farmers alike. And secondly, it is clear that any improvement to a settlement, or the area around it, benefits only the residents of that particular settlement. For example, the drilling of a borehole and the erection of a wind-pump five miles from Eksteenfontein is going to benefit only the stock owners who are domiciled in that settlement. Stockless households in Eksteenfontein, as well as all households in the other settlements of the Reserve, are not in a position to derive any benefit from it. The introduction of a sewage removal service in Kuboes, on the other hand, will be of some value to all the residents of the village (both those with and those without stock), but not to any of the residents in the other settlements. These facts

have been the cause of much dissatisfaction among the various sections of the Reserve population.

In defence of the Board it must be mentioned that the money at its disposal from the Coloured Development Corporation has been earmarked for particular purposes, which do not always coincide with the priorities as perceived either by the Board or by the residents of the Reserve. In addition, many "development" projects are simply started and then lie unfinished for many years until more finance is available. These are serious problems which the Board has had to grapple with and they will probably remain unresolved for some time to come. However, it is significant to note how these shortcomings are viewed by different sections of the Reserve's population.³

In Eksteenfontein there is a strong cry among the non-farming section of the population (i.e. those with few or no stock) that the Board's expenditure is primarily used to benefit the farmers (the erection of wind-pumps, etc.) and that those who are not involved in farming to any significant extent are having to pay taxes to support the wealthy farmers. In Kuboes, on the other hand, accusations are freely made that the Board is spending more on the southern part of the Reserve and that Kuboes is beginning to suffer from neglect. None of the residents in Kuboes made mention of the fact that the farmers were being unfairly advantaged.

Viewed objectively, the accuracy of these accusations is almost impossible to determine. In those cases where they are justified, the reasons are easily found when one considers the extent to

which the Board is obliged to channel money in certain directions. However, these notions do reflect the social divisions which exist between north and south on the one hand and between farmers and non-farmers in Eksteenfontein on the other.

The occupations of the various representatives on the Board also reflect these divisions. From the time that the first Kommer representative was appointed (in 1956) until 1979, no migrant worker from Eksteenfontein held office on the Board. All the representatives from Eksteenfontein were farmers of note who were involved in farming on a full-time basis.⁴ By contrast, the Kuboes representatives have primarily been migrant workers for at least the past 25 years.⁵ This difference between the two communities suggests not only that different sectional interests are represented on the Board, but also that there is a different status ascribed to farmers and migrants in the two communities. In other words, the fact that Eksteenfontein gets full-time farmers elected to the Board tells us something about the political power of farmers as opposed to migrant workers in that community. Conversely, the large percentage of migrant workers in Kuboes who are elected to the Board suggests that the farmers in that community have a much lower status than is the case in Eksteenfontein. Some informants have argued that this difference is owing to the fact that the Eksteenfontein representatives employ shepherds and are therefore able to take a day off in order to attend the Board's meetings, but it is unlikely that this is the actual reason, since the Kuboes representatives (being migrant workers) suffer great inconvenience by taking a day off work (thereby losing pay) and having to find transport from their respective places of work into the Reserve and then to Lekkersing.

d) Discussion

The changes in the functions of the Board, as well as the changes in the sectional interests which the Board represented, need to be seen in terms of the process of social differentiation outlined in Chapters 4 and 5. The importance which the Boorlinge in the south (in contrast to those in the north) attached to the land-protecting function of the Board, gave rise to a differential interest in the Board as such. Consequently it was very easy for the people of Lekkersing to gain effective control of the Board. This meant that the Bosluis Basters, soon after their arrival in the Reserve, could form an alliance with the Boorlinge of the south, and in doing so could exclude the Kuboenaars from the decision-making process. The attitudes of White outsiders, especially those of the Superintendent, only served to further estrange the Kuboenaars from the Board while at the same time encouraging the Bosluis Basters to partake in the Board's activities. The introduction of the Coloured Mission Stations and Reserves Act gave a new dimension to the Board's functions and provided fertile ground for the emerging division between farmers and migrant workers.

Notes to Chapter 6.

1. It should also be noted that Carstens never actually visited the Richtersveld before the arrival of the Bosluis Basters.
2. His actual report read: "Geen beswaar is gemaak nie, buiten dat die oorspronklike inwoners nie verdring sal word nie en dat as van die nuwe inwoners ongewenste persone mag blyk te wees, hulle van die Reserwaat verwyder mag word".
3. There is very little cognition among the majority of Reserve dwellers as to the actual amount of money involved in these "improvement schemes", or of the major sources of this money. Since all Registered Occupiers have to pay an annual tax of R22, most of them firmly believe that this money constitutes the Board's major source of revenue. In fact, the Board receives most of its finances from the Coloured Development Corporation in the form of a long-term loan which, in 1979, already exceeded the amount of R120 000. In 1979 the Board received less than R5 000 from taxes. This amount was substantially lower in previous years, since the tax has been raised very rapidly from R8 in 1974 to its present level.
4. Allie Volmoer, the appointed representative from Eksteenfontein, did not have very many stock since he tended to devote more of his time to the Board's activities, than to farming.
5. Admittedly it is more difficult to categorise the people of Kuboes as being either farmers or migrant workers, but it is striking that only one of the seven household heads in Kuboes with more than 400 stock (see Table 2.1) has been a representative on the Board during the last 25 years.

CHAPTER 7 : Conclusions.

In this thesis I have stressed that a process of social differentiation has taken place in the Richtersveld which has tended to concentrate farming activity in the hands of a few wealthy farmers, while the remainder of the population has become progressively involved solely in migrant labour. This is by no means an original finding, and in the light of recent work on rural differentiation, might well be interpreted as a retrogressive step. For example, Murray (1976), Spiegel (1979) and (to a lesser extent) Sharp (1977) have all emphasised that the differential involvement of rural dwellers in agriculture and migrant labour needs to be seen in terms of the cyclical processes involved (with specific reference to the household developmental cycle) and is not necessarily indicative of the formation of distinct social classes. In defence of my conclusions it is therefore necessary to look in more detail at some of the basic related issues.

"Classic" conceptions of rural differentiation have also emphasised the emergence of two distinct social classes, but have generally been content merely to pigeon-hole all rural dwellers into mutually exclusive categories of "farmers" and "migrants" (Raikes, 1978). In many ways exactly the same approach has been adopted in the study of peasants, and whole societies have been classified as "tribal", "peasant" or "modern industrial" (Fallers, 1967:36). The peasant, like the oscillating migrant worker, is generally viewed as standing "midway between the primitive and the industrial society" (Wolf, 1966:vii). This conception of peasants as an intermediate category has been severely criticised in view of the

fact that there have been too many peasants who have existed for too long for them to be seen merely as a transient phase in human evolution (Poster, 1967). Murray makes the same point concerning migrant workers in Southern Africa (1976:1). Nonetheless, both the peasant and the migrant worker are part of the broader process of urbanization and they have emerged only as a result of the rural dwellers' increasing involvement in the city (Shanin, 1971:12). This involvement or participation of the rural resident in a cash based market economy takes two basic forms: i) the sale of labour, and ii) the sale of agricultural produce (Saul and Woods, 1971:107).

This brings us to another closely related point; that change in "primitive" societies has traditionally been viewed in terms of a changing orientation of rural dwellers from conservatism to progressivism. I do not argue this, but fully recognise that such an ethnocentric "capitalistic" model is quite inappropriate when applied wholesale as typical of all "non-capitalist" rural farmers, as much in Africa as in the European context upon which the model of "peasant" is based (Saul and Woods, 1971). In other words, I am not suggesting that the long-term processes which I have outlined in the Richtersveld are typical of other Namaqualand Reserves (or, for that matter, of other rural areas in Southern Africa). Instead, I hope to have shown that the particular circumstances in the Richtersveld have given rise to a situation which might usefully be contrasted with the different situations in other areas. This is why, in the context of the Richtersveld itself, I have attempted to underline the differences between Kuboes and Eksteenfontein.

More specifically, I have tried to show how, in Eksteenfontein, the model of a "successful" farmer has been the one which the Bosluis Basters brought with them into the Reserve, and the one which has been encouraged and nurtured by government policy and individual officials. At the same time the potential freedom offered by farming on "communal" land, and the absence of a sense of community have further favoured these particular developments.

I also wish to stress that, since I am looking at rural differentiation as an element of social change, classes must necessarily be seen as being flexible and indeterminate, rather than fixed and absolute. One might therefore usefully introduce the notion of "degree of differentiation". Consequently, one cannot say that the Richtersveld (or even Eksteenfontein) consists of two distinct classes: "rich farmers" and "migrant workers". All that can be said at this stage is that there is a gradual move towards the formation of two distinct classes, but that this process is by no means complete. Many people still find themselves in an indeterminate position. Seen in this light, therefore, Spiegel's conclusions might be said to differ from my own only in degree. For although he stresses the cyclical patterns which perpetuate an undifferentiated rural working class, he does acknowledge that "...the differences between petty bourgeois households on the one hand, and those of the other (cyclical) categories on the other, are beginning to persist from one generation to the next" (1979:9). In the Richtersveld the rate of rural differentiation has been more rapid and therefore the degree of differentiation is more pronounced than in other areas

such as the Lesotho villages with which Spiegel dealt. The question of deciding the specific class position of the rural migrant worker who retains an interest in farming is therefore inappropriately phrased if one is seeking an answer which applies to all people in this category and for all stages of their development.

And finally, I have attempted to steer away from overly mechanical notions of class formation which have invariably tended to slot categories of people into conveniently defined classes. For example, Carter (1975) has defined three distinct classes in Northeast Scotland simply on the basis of the amount of land which farmers own, while Turton (1976) defines three classes solely in terms of differential involvement in farming and migrant labour. Although I have stressed the importance of the relations of production and the access to the means of production, it is quite clear that these alone do not determine the class position. Political and ideological factors also play an important role (see Terray, 1975; Poulantzas, 1978 and Laclau, 1971). This is shown by the differences between the "Core" group members and "Later arrivals" on the one hand, and the Boorlinge and Kommers on the other.

It is interesting to note that the pattern I have sketched in the Richtersveld is to a large extent in line with the government policy towards farming and cash labour in all the Coloured Reserves. This policy specifically encourages the introduction of "Economic farming units" whereby certain selected farmers will have the whole Reserve apportioned amongst themselves into tracts

of land to which they will have exclusive grazing rights. The remainder of the Reserve population will therefore be left without access to any farming land whatsoever. At present it is envisaged that about 35 tracts of land will be created in the Richtersveld, which means that the majority of stock-owners will have to rely on the grazing which is available in the relatively small areas (which are already severely overgrazed) of commonage around the villages. At the same time the government hopes to give the villages municipal status and ultimately do away with the Reserve in its present form. It is interesting to speculate about the underlying aims of such a policy, but the inevitable result will be the creation of a landed elite on the one hand, and a landless working class on the other.

The Management Board of the Richtersveld has already accepted these recommendations, unlike its counterparts in other Reserves in Namaqualand and elsewhere. This acceptance can be attributed to three basic factors. Firstly, there is sufficient land for a significant number of residents to become farmers. Secondly, the farmers have sufficient control of the Board for this policy to be accepted. And thirdly, the process of differentiation as outlined above has progressed to the stage where it will require very little adjustment on the part of the residents (especially those in Eksteenfontein) to adapt to the new situation. The only other Reserve to have accepted this policy is Mier, which is situated in the Cape north of the Orange River. Although I have no detailed knowledge of Mier, it is significant that it is the second largest of all the Reserves (398 798 hectares) and

has a relatively small population (3 005).

It is unlikely, however, that such policy will succeed in many other Reserves, primarily owing to their high population density. As far as the Namaqualand Reserves are concerned (about which there is much more information available) Sharp reports that the people of Komaggas and Concordia have consistently rejected all attempts at implementing "development schemes" which might favour one section of the population at the expense of another (1977). Carsten's data is somewhat outdated for any specific conclusions to be drawn at this stage. On the one hand, however, he has stressed the social significance of farming for the population of Steinkopf as a whole (1966:46), but on the other hand, attempts were being made in 1978 (by the Board) to prevent stock-owners with less than 100 stock from keeping them on the land. This last observation may well indicate that there is a similar pattern of differentiation taking place in Steinkopf as can be observed in the Richtersveld. Once again it is significant that the population density of Steinkopf is much lower than either Komaggas or Concordia (see Table 1.1).

These issues pose some interesting questions concerning the present-day significance of the Reserves for their residents, as well as the broader significance of the Reserves in the regional context, indeed, in South Africa as a whole. More specifically, these questions can be phrased as follows: Why do so many residents of Coloured Reserves elect to remain there? (Given that there are no legal restrictions which prevent them from settling permanently in industrial centres and that so

many of them have very little real interest in farming). And what has been the effect of the continued existence of the Reserves upon the people themselves and upon the regional economy?

With reference to the first question, it should be stressed that there has been a substantial amount of permanent out-migration from the Namaqualand Reserves in recent times. For example, Table 7.1 gives a comparison of the official population figures for four Namaqualand Reserves in 1938 and 1975. As can be seen, the average rate of increase is substantially lower than the 200 per cent calculated for the Coloured population as a whole during the same period. There is also further evidence of the high rate of permanent out-migration if we look at West's estimate that 36 per cent of the adult Coloured population of Port Nolloth in 1969 were born in these four Reserves (1971:11, from Table 2).

Table 7.1: Comparison of populations in four Namaqualand Reserves in 1938 and 1975.

Reserve	Pop.in 1938	Pop.in 1975	Percentage increase
Steinkopf	3 500	5 375	53
Concordia	2 580	4 300	66
Leliefontein	5 000	5 474	9
Komaggas	1 817	3 091	70

These observations say something about the emergence of a "class" of wage-labourers in all the Namaqualand Reserves, but nothing about the reasons why residents, who are in practice landless and stockless, elect to remain there. Many such residents claimed that living in the Richtersveld was cheaper than living elsewhere, while others emphasised that they wanted to be near their families.

But the Reserves are also seen as more desirable places in which to live because they allow the residents to escape from the world outside. Many residents feel that the Reserves are "decent" places in which to live and raise a family. The crime rate in the Reserves is very low - due in no small measure to the intimate nature of interpersonal relationships; and drinking is not yet a major problem, since there are no liquor outlets in any of these areas. I also often heard mention made of the peaceful atmosphere, the friendly relationships and the unhurried pace of life. Others stressed the importance of the church and the control which it exercises in keeping deviants in line.

Another important aspect which many residents referred to, was the fact that, in the Reserves, people had a certain amount of political autonomy - the ability to run and organise their own affairs without too much overt outside interference. Closely related to this is the fact that, in the Reserves, the people are to a large extent shielded from the petty discrimination which they invariably experience outside. "Hierso is daar nie so 'n ding soos apartheid nie".

And finally, but probably most importantly, there is a sense of security in the Reserves which is not matched elsewhere. Even though the diamond mines in the vicinity of the Richtersveld do not experience the same fluctuations as the copper industry near the other Namaqualand Reserves, the residents are patently aware of the dangers of moving to one particular place of employment. They recognize that this immediately makes the worker so much more dependent upon his employer, and many residents

expressed the fear that they might lose their jobs and thus be left without a roof over their heads. The security which the Reserves provide might well be at a relatively low level, but it is easier to be poor with dignity in the small-scale Reserve society.

These are the reasons which the migrant workers give for remaining resident in the Richtersveld. At a more theoretical level, however, Carstens has argued that "there is ample evidence to demonstrate that a process of positive conditioning takes place in reserve communities. This process may be regarded as the socialising mechanism that creates a pull to remain in a social refuge area" (1977:141). Whether Reserves should necessarily be termed "social refuge areas" is debatable, but Carstens is making the point (also based on observations about the Canadian Indian Reservation system) that Reserves, by their very nature, create a dependence on these communities which the residents are not easily able to forsake. Sharp's more detailed analysis of Komaggas and Concordia specifically draws attention to the processes which have brought about the "sense of community" in these two Reserves (stressing the importance of the residents' relationship to the land, which is implicit in the fact that they have certain rights which can, theoretically at any rate, be exercised) and there appears to be a similar process taking place in Kuboes. Among the Kommers (especially those in Eksteenfontein) land is seen much more clearly and singlemindedly as a means of generating income, and for those who are not able to utilise the land in this way (those with few or no stock), there remains very little to keep them in the Reserve - hence the high rate of permanent out-migration.

I turn now to the second question: What has been the effect of the continued existence of the Reserves upon the people themselves and upon the broader economy? Here it is necessary to look at the numerical significance of the Coloured Reserves. Firstly, I would like to stress that the total population of all Rural Coloured Areas is ± 58 250 - a mere 0,214 per cent of the total population of South Africa. When seen in this light, the Coloured Reserves cannot be said to have any great significance for the South African economy (especially when compared to the millions resident in the Black Homelands and States). If we look specifically at Namaqualand, however, the picture changes somewhat. Here 59 per cent of the total Coloured population is resident in the Reserves - a very substantial proportion of the total labour force available in the area. Admittedly Black migrant workers are available to the mines, but the quota system means that they alone cannot possibly supply all the labour requirements. In some instances mines have actually undertaken to give preferential employment to workers from certain Reserves. No doubt the motive of such policies is to create a more stable labour force, but it is also likely that their effect has been to keep wages down.

Seen in this light, the establishment of the copper industry and the establishment of the Reserves in Namaqualand are too close (chronologically) for one to ignore the thesis that the Reserves provide industry with a ready supply of cheap labour. For example, both Wolpe (1972) and Carstens (1971) have argued (albeit from different viewpoints) that the Reserves or Homelands reduce the cost which industry has to pay for labour. Wolpe

has argued that the Homelands reduce the cost (to employers) of reproduction, thereby allowing the employer to extract a surplus value while paying salaries below the cost of reproduction. Carstens, on the other hand, argues that the Rural Coloured Areas, by their mere existence, offer their residents a temporary sanctuary which prevents them from becoming full members of the broader economy. This removes the onus to supply housing and social services from the employer and condemns the worker to a continued state of migrant labour which consequently prevents him from becoming a full member of the broader economy.

There are some problems associated with these arguments. They assume that employers of labour are unwilling to supply adequate housing for workers and their families, and ignore the fact that an oscillating labour force might involve costs which are greater than the supply of housing and social services in the mining towns. The example of the housing schemes in Beauvaillon which was mentioned earlier (Chapter 5), suggests that things are changing. There has also recently been large-scale development at Aggenys (between Springbok and Pofadder) where nearly a thousand housing units have been constructed for Coloured families. In other parts of the country it is becoming increasingly clear that the labour requirements of industry are undergoing rapid change. The cries emerging from industrialists to have some of the influx control regulations abolished, suggest that industry wants a more stable and more skilled labour force. In Namaqualand the labour requirements are also undergoing change and a constant complaint from the mining companies has been that labourers are only prepared to work during the off-periods of farming activities,

or until they have sufficient for their immediate needs (Klinghardt, 1979:8).

The aims of industry are by no means in conflict with the aims of the Rural Coloured Areas Act of 1963 which sought to achieve the "differentiation between town dwellers on the one hand and bona fide farmers on the other hand" (van der Horst, 1976:45). If we look at what is happening in Eksteenfontein, where the average stock-ownership per household is greater than in Kuboes, but the rate of migrant labour more or less the same, then it is clear that such differentiation will not only give rise to a more stable labour force, but actually increase the supply of labour. It is also interesting to note in this regard that some writers have mentioned, with regard to Black Homelands, that certain class-levelling policies have had to be replaced by those which encourage the formation of a bourgeois class (see Molteno, 1977).

And finally, I wish to look at the notions of ethnicity and race in the light of my conclusions about the class situation. During my first few visits to the area the most striking feature of the Richtersveld was the fact that there appeared to be an absolute and overwhelming division between Boorlinge and Kommers. They did not mix socially, they did not marry, they lived in different settlements or different parts of single settlements, and (perhaps most importantly) the Kommers openly expressed feelings of racial superiority towards the "Nama".

These early impressions were encouraged by the writings of West and Carstens who both did brief research in the Richtersveld

"In this discussion of the Richtersveld social structure I have not included the Bosluis Basters because, although they live in the same Reserve, they really constitute a separate isolated community. Moreover, there is practically no interaction in everyday life between these people and the rest of the population. It is important to note, however, that the Bosluis Basters regard themselves as superior stock. They are very light in colour and do not marry with the indigenous Richtersveld population....."
(Carstens, 1966:208).

"The people who have come to Port Nolloth from the Richtersveld must be divided into two distinct groups. The first consists of Coloured people described at the beginning of this chapter, and the second a more recent group of immigrant Basters" (West, 1971:12).

Racial and ethnic differences within nations are sometimes regarded as historical accidents; in contrast to the social class differences created and perpetuated by the major institutional structures within that society itself. This is, however, a spurious distinction which overlooks the fact that racial and ethnic differences only become relevant within a single social setting, where local class differences are necessary in order to supply contemporary meaning for the perpetuation of such racial and ethnic divisions. This is not to say that class differences in themselves provide the basis for the formation of ethnic or racial identity, but rather that ethnic and racial differences provide the means of acquiring political, and hence economic, advantage. The Bosluis Basters (before 1949) stressed their racial and cultural exclusiveness for their own economic and political advantage - i.e. in order to acquire land. Once they had entered the Richtersveld a different strategy had to be used and they therefore underplayed these differences. Having acquired a foothold in the Richtersveld it soon became apparent that these differences (which had not yet completely disappeared) could be mobilized in order to gain control of exclusive grazing rights

in the southern part of the Reserve. This was achieved, as we have seen, by open feelings of superiority towards the Boorlinge in Eksteenfontein, which caused most of them to move to Kuboes. At the same time they were able to utilize the rift between the Boorlinge in the north and south of the Reserve by siding with the latter and in so doing, gained control of the Management Board. Today, however, it is becoming increasingly clear that even though stock ownership is concentrated in the hands of a certain select group of Bosluis Basters, racial and ethnic differences are no longer the most practical means whereby this advantage can be maintained and real class differences have therefore come to the fore. This is the only strategy which can ensure that the large stock owners retain their position in the Reserve. Or, to phrase this another way, since class has become a significant criterion of differentiation, racial and cultural differences need no longer be emphasised. They are too inclusive for the purposes of the larger stock-owners and, in view of the obvious contradictions which they create, are an embarrassment.

Even in the Richtersveld where, at the overt level, social divisions appear to be based primarily on physical features of race, it is clear that an analysis which attempts to translate the presence of racial attitudes into the existence of social groups, cannot deal adequately with all the facts. For example, it does not allow one to account for the division within the Basters (the "Core" group and "Later arrivals") or that between the Nama from Lekkering and those of Kuboes and Sanddrif. Nor does it allow one to account for the presence of certain individuals in certain groups (see, for example, the cases of

George Cloete and others on p.98-101). Indeed, it is by looking specifically at the nature of the social boundaries over time that the class component emerges most clearly.

If we now compare this with the situation in Komaggas, certain overriding similarities begin to emerge. In Komaggas we see that the notion of citizenship was developed in order to protect the economic interests of the community, whose members thereby differentiated themselves from the surrounding peoples. Sharp has described this community of "Burgers" as an association which was and is geared to the protection of property-holding interests of its members through time and for future generations. Although a group of Basters took over the land from the Nama, new members were gradually admitted to the community of "Burgers". These new members, which were drawn from the ranks of both the White and Khoikhoi outsiders, meant that it soon became impossible to distinguish between "Burgers" and outsiders on the basis of physical features of race and consequently jural factors became important principles of recruitment to the Komaggas community (1977).

In both Komaggas and the Richtersveld we therefore see that the significance of physical features of race tends to be open to negotiation and that social group formation takes on a class dimension. However, in the case of Komaggas the Burgers can be seen to stand in a common relationship to the means of production. This has therefore given rise to a situation whereby class provides the means of differentiation between the "Burgers" and outsiders. In the Richtersveld, on the other hand, stock ownership can be seen to constitute a significant part of the

means of production and this has resulted, in the case of the residents of Eksteenfontein, in a class division within the full members of the Reserve.

As far as Steinkopf is concerned, Carstens tells us that there is a division between members and resident non-members, as well as between two racially defined groups of full-members. However, he refers to both of these divisions as "class" divisions - a class simply being "an aggregate of individuals having more or less the same status in the community" (1966:120). The question now arises as to whether Carstens, in his description of Steinkopf, is talking of a completely different situation or whether he is simply using a more conservative analytical approach. I would suggest that if we apply the insights gained from Komaggas and the Richtersveld to the Steinkopf data, it is very unlikely that the division within the "Burger" stratum is as rigidly defined along racial lines as Carstens makes out. It is much more probable that in Steinkopf new class divisions, based on differential access to land, are also beginning to emerge.

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