

**“PLACE OF OUR OWN”:  
The Anthropology of Space and Place  
In the Afrikaner Volkstaat of Orania**

**by  
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submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

in the subject

**ANTHROPOLOGY**

**at the  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA  
PRETORIA**

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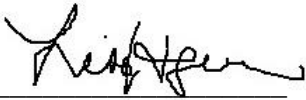
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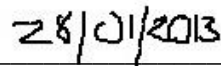
**“PLACE OF OUR OWN”: The Anthropology of Space and Place  
in the Afrikaner Volkstaat of Orania**

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been  
indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



Signed

(Lise Hagen)



Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Dedicated to Hugo Hagen: father, artist & storyteller extraordinaire*

*Carpe diem pappa*

Words are inadequate to convey the nuances and myriad facets to each and every step of this research journey. However, I humbly express my sincerest thanks to the following persons and institutions who contributed:

- The inhabitants, management and leadership of Orania for allowing me a glimpse into their lives. While there were many, many instances of assistance, collaboration and kindness, in particular I would like to thank Karel iv and Anje for food, and food for thought, the Strydoms, Lida and Nikke, for patience and Dr. Manie Opperman, Sebastian Biehl and Roelien de Klerk for their personal interest and support. *Dankie* Orania.
- My husband. *Geliefde*, thanks for accompanying me across the country and across the world, on roads certainly less travelled.
- To my supervisors Professors Mike de Jongh and Chris van Vuuren for their patient support and for fostering me, an anthropological cuckoo, above and beyond the call of duty.
- My parents, who instilled in me a curiosity about the world and how things work that just grows stronger the more I experience. In particular, I dedicate this study to my father, whose sudden, terminal illness just as I was completing this study was a heart-breaking but powerful affirmation of life.
- The Universe. For the adventure of life.

## SUMMARY

"Place of Our Own": The Anthropology of Space and Place in the Afrikaner  
Volkstaat of Orania

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Degree: M.A. (Anthropology)  
Subject: Anthropology  
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In anthropological studies place is often taken for granted, “just” the locale where other interesting, more significant things happen (De Jongh 2006:79). I argue that rather than a mere backdrop to activities, the landscape of Orania is significant and that physical place is essential for the construction of an Orania identity. I ethnographically examine whether the physical setting of Orania can be seen as a prime signifying system through which a particular Afrikaner ethnic identity, as well as a set of socio-cultural values is communicated.

Occupying the physical land is a form of collective identity that helps create ethnic identities (Tilley 2006:11-13). Orania is an authentic place-bound expression of this quest for identity and Oranians define their identity through their model of space and of their land. The physical boundaries are expanded when support groups outside of the settlement become an integral part of the activities in the community, and socio-political boundaries are tested by an in- and outflux of community members and the constant presence of South African and international press, and visitors.

Landscape does not merely comprise the land, but also includes the lived experiences and attitudes of the inhabitants. Landscape as text, “a medium to be read for the ideas, practices and contexts constituting the culture which created it” (Ley 1985:419) proves to be a legitimate and constructive way to make sense of the landscape. As with texts, the landscape as text is subject to multiple readings. The focus on textual landscape offers an expanded perspective on space and place, and in this case texts also amplify the Oranian space exponentially.

Different types of landscapes - culturoscapes, landscape as text and textual landscapes - are building blocks in the construction of an Orania identity. Finally, I would emphasise that Orania, and by extension this study, is not just an academic concept, but a product of the lived experiences and opinions of people who are closely connected to land of their own.

Key terms: Ethnography, anthropology, place, space, landscape, textual analysis, Afrikaner, identity, Volkstaat, Orania.

## LIST OF AFRIKAANS TERMS

<i>Afrikaner</i>	White Afrikaans-speaking Christian South African
<i>Afrikanertuiste</i>	Home of the Afrikaner
<i>Afsaal</i>	Off-saddle
<i>Bakkie</i>	Pickup truck
<i>Bewarea (bewaararea)</i>	Conservation area
<i>Beeldetuin</i>	Statue garden
<i>Besoekersboek</i>	Visitor's book
<i>Binne</i>	Inside
<i>Braai</i>	Barbeque
<i>Broodbome</i>	Cycads
<i>Buite</i>	Outside
<i>Dorp</i>	Town
<i>Dorpsembleem</i>	Town emblem
<i>Dorpskantoor</i>	Town office
<i>Dorpnuus</i>	Town news
<i>Dorpsraad</i>	Town council
<i>Flitslig</i>	Flashlight, small regional advertising publication
<i>Gemeenskap</i>	Community
<i>Gemeenskapsaal</i>	Community hall
<i>Groot Trek</i>	Great Trek
<i>Gedenkversameling</i>	Commemorative Collection
<i>Grootdorp</i>	Large town
<i>Grootpad</i>	Large road
<i>Geïntegreerde Ontwikkelingsplan (GOP)</i>	Integrated Development Plan (IDP)
<i>Hoofdorp</i>	Main town
<i>Hoofpad</i>	Main road
<i>Hoofweg</i>	Highway
<i>Inwoner</i>	Inhabitant
<i>Kaalvoet</i>	Barefoot
<i>Kartonhuis</i>	See papierhuis
<i>Kenweb</i>	(lit.) Know Web, computer assisted distance schooling programme
<i>Kermis</i>	Fair, fête
<i>Kleine Reus</i>	The little giant

<i>Kleingeluk</i>	Small luck
<i>Kloof</i>	Ravine
<i>Koeksister</i>	Cruller
<i>Konsert</i>	Concert
<i>Koppies</i>	Hills
<i>Krummels</i>	Crumbs
<i>Mannetjie</i>	Little man
<i>Monumentkoppie</i>	Monument hill
<i>Omwoner</i>	People living in the area around Orania
<i>Onderdorp</i>	Downtown
<i>Oom</i>	Uncle
<i>Orania Beweging</i>	Orania Movement
<i>Papierhuis</i>	(lit.) Paper house, prefabricated house
<i>Platteland</i>	Rural
<i>Plek</i>	Place
<i>Prinsevlag</i>	Prince Flag, Dutch (1570)
<i>Randjie</i>	Ridge
<i>Selfwerksaamheid</i>	Self-reliance with regard to labour, performing your own work or people's own labour
<i>Skou</i>	Show, exhibition
<i>Skinder</i>	Gossip
<i>Stad</i>	City
<i>Staat</i>	State
<i>Stoep</i>	Porch
<i>Tannie</i>	Auntie
<i>Tuisland</i>	Homeland
<i>Uitwoner</i>	(lit.) Outhabitant, interested parties
<i>Vaatjie</i>	Barrel, local pub
<i>Vader</i>	Father
<i>Valhek</i>	Boom
<i>Vierkleur</i>	(lit.) Four colours, the flag of the independent Boer republic of Transvaal
<i>Volk</i>	People, ethnic people, nation
<i>Volkskool</i>	School for a particular ethnic group
<i>Volkstaat</i>	State comprising single ethnic group, homogenous
<i>Volkstaatskou</i>	People's show

<i>Volkstater</i>	Inhabitant of the Volkstaat/Oranian publication
<i>Voorgrond</i>	Foreground/Oranian publication
<i>Voortrekker</i>	Those who trek ahead/pioneers
<i>Wynhuis</i>	Wine House, local liquor store



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# Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

I didn't really pay much attention to the first question of the questionnaire: *Vereenselwig u u met Orania se strewe na 'n eie grondgebied vir Afrikaners?* (Do you identify yourself with the Orania aspiration of an own territory for Afrikaners?). The question came from an application form for residence in Orania. In order to maintain cultural homogeneity in the community (*gemeenskap*), the management of Orania applies a selection process for prospective inhabitants of the settlement consisting of the questionnaire and a panel interview. On exhortation from a community leader, I was cheerfully undertaking the interview in the spirit of participant observation.

I didn't think my answer to the first question was controversial (*Simpatiek, maar identifiseer nie* / Sympathetic, but don't identify), but when reviewing the application the interview panel was quite taken aback by my response, and then questioned me thoroughly on how I could believe that a *volk* (people) can survive without a territory. I was really puzzled by what I experienced as polite antagonism, but continued with the interview. Afterwards, I initially felt that the panel interview went well, but the longer I thought about it, the more upset I became about the whole process. However, this incident crystallised my experience of the community and made me aware of the immense importance of physical territory in the construction of the real and ideal Orania. The more I delved into the literature on landscape, place, space, the more relevant the academic input became in helping me gain a personal yet ethnographic understanding of Orania.

Pratt (1986:31,32) relates how opening narratives in an ethnography commonly describes the writer's arrival in the field, anchoring the personal experience account of fieldwork as authoritative. The narrative also positions the subjects of the ethnographic text: the ethnographer, the native, and the reader. While this anecdote is focussed on a fieldwork experience rather than the instance of entering into the field, it did signify the moment when I "arrived" in Orania, when the whole experience suddenly made sense. For me, the narrative also introduces another subject: the place and space.

This chapter starts with some background information on the study, followed by the main aim of the thesis and its relevance and justification for academic investigation. I introduce the main research problem that gives rise to this study. I then point to the various research design elements and methodologies that are used in the study. I also define terminologies used throughout this study, after which I discuss the academic literature that helped shape the study. This includes studies previously conducted in Orania across a range of disciplines, especially important as academic scrutiny has an impact on the experiences and attitudes of Oranians. The chapter concludes with a chapter outline, a summary of main issues to be addressed in the dissertation and the general flow of argument.

### **1.1.1 Aims and objectives of this study**

Orania is a settlement dedicated to a particular expression of Afrikaner identity, based on the right of a community with a shared language and cultural heritage to self-determination within a territorial entity. I propose to examine ethnographically how the physical setting of Orania can be seen as a prime

signifying system through which a particular Afrikaner ethnic identity, as well as a set of socio-cultural values is communicated.

In anthropological studies place is often taken for granted, “just” the locale where other interesting, more significant things happen (De Jongh 2006:79). In order to highlight the importance of place and space I argue that rather than a mere backdrop to activities, the landscape of Orania is significant and that physical place is essential for the construction of an Orania identity. To test this assertion, I will investigate the multi-faceted aspects of landscape as the dynamic embodiment of an expression of cultural identity. Given the many narratives that Orania features in both inside and outside the community, and the associated challenges regarding multivocality, I consider analysis of the landscape and the textual representation of the landscape as strong analytical tools to support this investigation. The final objective is to continuously emphasise that Orania, and by extension this study, is not just an abstract concept, but a product of the lived experiences and opinions of people who are closely connected, for a myriad reasons, to land of their own.

This dissertation focuses on landscapes of Orania: physical, cultural and virtual. The time in the field was spent observing a number of integrated community rituals as well as observing and interacting with select members of the town. This was not intended as longitudinal anthropological fieldwork, but rather a series of cascading visits building upon each other over the course of a year. In total, I spent 6 weeks in the field in Orania, during the following periods: 4 days in August 2007, 4 days in December 2007, 9 days in April/May 2008, 15 days in June 2008, 10 days in August 2008 and 7 days in October 2008. I attended external conferences as a delegate of Orania, namely the Women and Environment Conference 2008 in Polokwane and the Conference on Afrikaner

poverty in August 2008 in Centurion. I also attended an Orania event in the UK in March 2010.

### **1.1.2 Interwoven identities**

Narayan (1993), quoting Bruner (1993), states that an anthropologist carries both a personal and ethnographic self. Being accompanied in the field can bring these identities into sharp relief. My husband accompanied me on my first three trips to Orania, and this had an impact on how I was perceived in the community, and how I myself perceived the community.

Cupples & Kindon (2003) relate how the dynamics of being accompanied in the field can be a catalyst for exploring how the research can be both enhanced and fragmented, and how the multiple identities intersect. This “enactment of hybridity” (Narayan 1993:676) shows the researcher as at least belonging to both the world of scholarship and everyday life. Crang & Cook (2007:207) suggest that this hybridity is crucial and that no “pure” ethnographic knowledge exists but rather that meaning is constructed through the deeply entangled set of relationships between field and academy.

It felt as if my married status afforded me an air of legitimacy, both as a married woman, and because it set me in a particular age category. I found throughout that age played a role in how importance and status is ascribed in Orania. I didn't always quite fit into internal status categories in the community, and the fact that I was doing post-graduate research independently, and married without children provided indicators for categorising me. On subsequent trips without my husband, research participants that I previously encountered would always ask after his health, and his absence became a talking point. There were occasions



where I had been good-naturedly but genuinely berated for “abandoning” my husband or not looking after my “poor” husband well enough. There were practical and personal reasons why he preferred not to journey to the field on later trips. However, his initial reactions to and in the setting provided me with valuable insights and responses to the milieu.

My own interest in the community of Orania, and in anthropological studies, should be contextualised. I have an academic background in Literature, and my previous Master’s degree was based on Afrikaner identity in literature and other cultural forms of expression<sup>1</sup>. For me it was a logical step to move from my interest in literature, to the overarching theme of culture, identity, cultural identity: all themes addressed in anthropological studies.

I cannot separate my own narrative from an academic product such as this one, hence the upfront disclosure of my personal context. It is from my literature background that I remember Bal (1990:732) very eloquently stating that “objective narration is by definition impossible because the linguistic constraints imposed on narratorial voice and the subjective focalization no speaker can avoid adopting shape the fabula or content of the narrative decisively.” This reflexive approach has also become increasingly important in Anthropology.

I am an Afrikaans-speaking female and grew up with and was schooled in a Christian-Nationalist value system. Based on my perceptions of the historical effects and contemporary fall-out of this Christian-Nationalist ideology, I harbour scepticism toward overt Afrikaner nationalist and Christian dogma. I am also

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<sup>1</sup> Hagen, L. 1999. Kulturele Identiteit: Die “Alternatiewe Afrikaanse Beweging” van die Tagtigerjare/Cultural identity: The Alternative Afrikaans Movement of the Eighties. Unpublished Master’s Thesis, University of Johannesburg (previously Rand Afrikaans University).

acutely aware and critical of the inherent patriarchal worldview espoused by conservative Afrikaners. This, however, should not taint the empirical nature of my investigation nor compromise my endeavour to constantly strive for objectivity counterpoised with reflexivity.

I have been conscious of Orania since its inception in my early teens, and have been peripherally aware of activities in the town since. It was when I embarked on postgraduate anthropological studies that I could more fully satisfy my curiosity on both an academic and a personal level. I find that this curiosity allows me to answer questions about Orania, and also experience anthropological issues first-hand, such as the fluid distinction between the self/the other, intersecting identities of the self, as well as becoming increasingly aware that Orania is only one of many examples across the world of the resurgence of ethnicity.

## **1.2 Research Design**

### **1.2.1 Introductory remarks**

In a complex and ambiguous site, relying on a single research method is clearly not adequate for the task at hand. When faced by this methodological challenge I found Crang & Cook (2007) to be particularly useful guides in the research process, as they questioned the formulaic three-stage read-then-do-then-write model for academic research. I could relate to their integrated approach. Due to practical considerations, my fieldwork visits to Orania occurred very early in the study period, and thus coincided with the reading process. The writing, from fieldwork notes to writing the proposal, is a constant process and not just something that happens at the end.

The methodological approach that I employed is consistent with what Kellehear (1993:20-21) calls an ethnographic-inductive research design. This methodological approach is favoured by anthropologists in fieldwork situations, and includes observational techniques, as well as interviews, the use of research participants, and the study of physical objects, geography and ecosystems. Kellehear describes the ethnographic method as an approach to analyse and portray a social system, rather than a mere methodology. With this approach, the ethnographer attempts to understand the social system from the insider's point of view (emic approach). While in Orania, I attempted an emic approach to the research and to this end used a variety of research methods, mostly participant observation, unstructured interviews, as well as focus group interviews. Other methodological tools included unobtrusive methods such as literature research and photographs. These following sections will provide more in-depth explanations of the methodological tools adopted.

This study could not have occurred without the invaluable assistance of members of the Orania community. When talking about my study, I always made sure to stress the fact that this is not "my" study, but rather Orania's study: I am the person writing down a narrative. It is a matter of 'intellectual property' and the data is theirs. I try as much as possible to include direct quotes from research participants. Prior to completion excerpts from this study were distributed to members of the community to elicit their response.

### 1.2.2 Participant observation

Participant observation forms an integral part of the methodological approach. According to Barfield (1997:348) participant-observation is a “long-term, intense interaction with members of a community during which the researcher plunges into their activities as completely as possible.” Marshall & Rossman (2006:100) describe how this emic immersion in the setting gives the researcher the opportunity to start experiencing the world as participants do. While Barfield and Marshall & Rossman gave good academic descriptions of the phenomenon of participant observation, I personally found Hume & Mulcock’s (2004:xi) description the closest to my experiences, whereby “participant observers deliberately place themselves in a series of very awkward social spaces, some of which are more difficult to inhabit than others”. In these awkward social spaces, the social self of the researcher becomes the primary research tool.

Ideally, a researcher spends a significant period of time in the setting. I did not enter the field for a single prolonged span of time, but rather undertook a series of continuous stays totalling 6 weeks over the span of a year. This allowed me to develop the required familiarity in the setting, and facilitated quality interaction and rapport with the people, but also provided regular opportunities to withdraw for academic reflection.

The community became used to my comings and goings, and with each subsequent visit I would essentially pick up where I left off with regard to personal connections and activities. Walking down the road, cars would stop, or while doing shopping I would generally be greeted by a good-natured *Is jy alweer hier?* (Are you here again?). By my last visit people were taking my presence for granted, and would say: *Jy pas al so goed hier in ek sien jou nie eers meer raak nie* (You fit in here so well that I don’t even notice you any more). While I was

very open about my researcher role, it did become difficult to emphasise my status as an “outside” researcher. Davies (1998:62) comments on this phenomenon, where even the most open researchers, during long-term participant observation, tend to in effect disappear from their research role as other social relationships established in the field take precedence.

During participant observation activities, I gathered ethnographic information on ethnic identity markers, with specific reference to the spatial and cultural expression of an ethnic identity. My “formal” participant observation activities included having a stall at the annual agricultural show. I also underwent the interview process to apply for residency in Orania as all potential members of the community have to. I attended the induction training sessions for new residents in the community that runs over two Saturday mornings. The participation activities were based on experiences of new community members, and allowed me to participate in the enculturation process. Through these activities I could be regarded as a new community member, and I endeavoured to ensure that my status as a researcher was continuously reiterated. During fieldwork I slept and ate, talked, engaged and stayed within the community in a variety of locales, as well as attended and participated in whatever activities or events presented themselves. Travel to and accommodation in Orania were my two biggest expenses. However, by staying in different places in town, I also experienced a variety of living conditions and the different qualities of each location. While I had a car for the first three visits, during my subsequent visits I didn’t have transport and I walked everywhere. By walking, and not just driving everywhere, I experienced the community as many younger or less affluent community members without transport experience it. Literally, and figuratively, walking the landscape moulded most of the impressions that form the basis of this study.

### 1.2.3 Interviews

I made use of semi-structured interviews during the research process. Bernard (1994:208) describes how the semi-structured interview has an interview guide that provides a set of instructions that has to be followed in the interviewing process, although the interviewer also has the liberty to follow leads picked up during this process. The interview guide ensures that the interviewer collects reliable, comparative qualitative data. Because the interview is goal-oriented, this technique is ideal for busy research participants who appreciate the structured format. The semi-structured interview is also an example of what Marshall & Rossman (2006:94) call “elite interviewing”. An elite interview focuses on a particular type of respondent, usually an influential, prominent and well-informed person in an organisation or community. While elites can become valuable key research participants, I also made sure to interview a spectrum of members of the wider community in order to gain as much across-the-board information as possible. The interviewing process manifested in two ways: scheduled interviews with elites, and more informal structured interviews with as many consenting community members as possible.

It was during my fourth visit to Orania that I actually realised the value of the semi-structured interview. I had previously conducted interviews with elites, and had spent a considerable time walking around town, getting used to the rhythm, lay-out and people, definitely more observer than participant. I felt that I wasn't really “getting” to people. I would be greeted politely, and we would exchange small-talk, but I was feeling increasingly isolated, frustrated and depressed. In desperation, I shaped an impromptu poll consisting of only two questions, and then proceeded to canvass as many people as possible. The change in the fieldwork experience was dramatic. By doing very overt “research”, i.e. asking set questions and recording the answers, by stating upfront the principle of informed

consent, I was being a bona fide researcher. I was doing something tangible. In a community where everyone was doing something, I had found a niche at last.

I also increased my participating activities, making sure that I helped out wherever I could, whether it was by washing tea-cups after morning tea at the *Orania Beweging* (Orania Movement), or putting up posters for an event. While it fits in with the anthropological approach, I also personally felt obliged to assist wherever I can. This personal/academic attitude was well received in the community, and I received assistance when I required it, because *ons help mense wat ons help* (we help people who help us).

The vast majority of interviews took place in Afrikaans. As an Afrikaans speaker, and having been socialised into an Afrikaans-speaking community, I was able to gain access to details that might escape a non-Afrikaans researcher. My background in language studies also helped since fluency in the language also meant smoothly switching between different language styles. Blomerus (2009:31) described how in a particular instance some Oranians' focus on language purity was slightly at odds with her more informal register. My decision to present the fieldwork experience in English is a deliberate ploy to create distance from the subject matter, as well as to enable me to share the information gained with a wider audience. Temple & Young (2004:168) comment that as researcher/translator the translation process offers opportunities in terms of research methods that are not open to other researchers in cross language research. They also find that "this researcher/translator role is inextricably bound also to the socio-cultural positioning of the researcher, a positioning, whether intended or ascribed, that will also give a meaning to the dual translator/researcher role."

#### **1.2.4 Focus Groups**

The use of focus groups is a widely practiced research method in the social sciences. Morgan (1997:2) describes how focus groups are basically group interviews that rely on interaction within the group, based on topics that are supplied by the researcher who often facilitates the session. The main feature of a focus group is the explicit use of group interaction to produce information and insights that could not otherwise be retrieved. Focus groups in this study were employed in conjunction with a variety of other research methods, in what Morgan (1997:3) calls a 'multimethod' approach. Each method contributes a unique insight to the study, and provides another opportunity for triangulating results.

I asked for and received permission from the organisers of the induction training to ask for volunteers to conduct a focus group discussion with attendees of the induction training sessions. I focussed on attitudes towards space and place as espoused by new inhabitants of Orania. I was planning to repeat the focus group with a group of inhabitants that has been residing in the community for a longer period of time, but found it very difficult to gather enough of these individuals together (an issue that Blomerus (2009:28) also encountered). Long-time residents who are receptive to the idea of a focus group interview were generally extremely busy with official, business or personal activities. At a social gathering I did however manage to gather a group of current and former residents together and conducted a more informal focus group discussion.



### 1.2.5 Unobtrusive methods

My first three visits to the town were structured around certain events, which gave me the opportunity to start orientating myself physically, and introduce myself to decision makers and management in the town. Entering the field for the fourth time, alone, was a daunting experience. Arriving in a still unfamiliar environment, armed with what felt like only an exceedingly thin veneer of anthropological knowledge, unobtrusive research methods proved to be an excellent way to settle into the situation. I did some archival research and textual analysis at the offices of the *Orania Beweging* for the first week of my stay. This gave me the opportunity to structure my day, and get to know at least one section of the town better. It also gave me the opportunity to meet members of the community who come to do business at the offices, and it also gave me the opportunity to have tea and take a lunch break along with other community members. I became a familiar sight trudging along the roads towards the offices. Coupled with the “two questions” of my semi-structured interviews, this became my hallmark.

I experienced what Kellehear (1993:5-7) catalogued as the pros and cons of unobtrusive measures. Through unobtrusive measures I could assess actual behaviour as opposed to self-reported behaviour, thereby providing a further method for me to triangulate information. It was possible to repeat observations and the unobtrusive method also proved to be non-disruptive and discreet. The archival research process involved minimal interaction with other people, but provided me with a wealth of information, and in certain respects I knew more about the community and history than did most inhabitants. In using unobtrusive methods, permission and access is usually not problematic, as permission might only have to be sought once upon entry to the source, for instance archival research. Another benefit is that unobtrusive research is usually inexpensive.

Considering I funded the study (and invested blood, sweat and tears as well!), this was a very important consideration to me.

Some disadvantages of unobtrusive measures are that the original record, especially for archival sources, may itself be (even unknowingly) biased to hide information or to create a specific impression on outsider or even insider readers. Unobtrusive methods are shadowed by emic/etic problems, whereby a stranger's (etic) observations may fail to grasp an in-group (emic) meaning. Other disadvantages relate to common sources of data-gathering error such as selective recording of observational data. While opening up certain areas, unobtrusive methods are still limited, however inventive and creative a researcher might be. Multiple methods remain the best way to ensure accurate information.

### **1.2.6 Textual analysis**

Fairclough (1995:208-209) suggests four reasons why textual analysis can be used effectively in social science research. Theoretically texts constitute an important form of social action and form part of the social structures of social sciences research. Methodologically, texts form the foundation of evidence for claims about social structures, relations and processes. Historically, texts are sensitive indicators of social processes, movement and diversity, and textual analysis can gauge social change. The political reason relates how social control and domination are exercised, negotiated and also resisted through texts.

Textual analysis is of particular value and De Beer (2006) highlights how much of the documentation on Orania is contained in pamphlets, booklets and brochures issued and distributed by the *Orania Beweging*, the *Dorpskantoor* (Town office)

as well as individuals in the community. There is also a substantial number of media reports generated by South African and international media which provide information and context.

Texts generated from within the community that I found useful for archival purposes include the *Voorgrond* (the *Orania Beweging* newsletter), *Orania Beweging* Annual Reports, and the *Volkstater* (community newsletter by Andreas Du Plessis) which includes poems and articles by community members. The Orania website is also very useful, including the virtual visitor's book and the *In Diepte* (In Depth) link on the Orania website which includes an archive of articles by leaders in the community, conference papers and other statement documents. Other external texts include Facebook comments, YouTube comments, and the Orania forum on Yahoo. I have not gone into school curricula for this study, although that aspect in itself could provide ample material for a rich study.

### **1.3 Defining terminologies on and in Orania**

I use Afrikaans terms throughout the study, as that is how the Oranians refer to activities, events and occurrences. I try to provide an English translation in brackets as far as possible, but some international readers might still find certain terms foreign. For a more comprehensive list of terms, please refer to the list of Afrikaans terms (vii).

While some pertinent academic ideas are raised during a review of the academic literature following shortly, I also pre-emptively address concepts and terms that crop up during the course of the study. A multifaceted and value-laden term is already evident in the title of this study, namely *volkstaat* (state comprising a single ethnic group). *Volkstaat* in the context of Orania condenses a few complex

concepts, such as *volk*, state, nation and nationalism, ethnicity and ethnic identity, Afrikaner and Afrikaner identity.

The *Volkstaat* (with a capital that indicates the proposed Afrikaner state rather than just the concept in general) proposes the establishment of self-determination for an Afrikaner minority in South Africa according to federal principles, alluding to full independence in the form of a homeland for Afrikaners. *Volk* has been translated as people, ethnic people or nation. Coertze & Coertze (1996) translate *volk* as people, and can be regarded as two of the main advocates of this translation of *volk*. Anderson (1991:3) observed that nation, nationality and nationalism have proved to be notoriously difficult to define and analyse. However, there is a further complexity when these terms are used in Orania, in that Orania is not a nation. Orania is a small, bounded territory dedicated to the expression of a specific Afrikaner identity, and cannot truly lay claim to being a nation. The goal is that when its territory increases in size and population, Orania will become the core of an ethnically homogenous Afrikaner state.

The definition of state is wider than the aspiration in the concept of the *volkstaat*. Barfield (1997:445) highlights that states are actually ethnically diverse institutions of governance and domination that integrate the diverse populations. These institutions would wield economic, political, military and ideological power. Population size is also typically measured in hundreds of thousands or millions.

Inhabitants of Orania subscribe to a specific ethnic identity, and form, at first glance, an ethnically homogenous group. According to Barfield (1997:152) ethnicity/ethnic groups “refer to a people presumed to belong to the same society and who shared the same culture and, especially, the same language.” Society

refers to the totality of social relations among men and women in their various statuses and roles within a given geographical area or among humankind at large (Barfield 1997:436).

According to Oranians *volk* lacks a satisfactory English translation. Scholars, (Moodie (1975:xix), amongst others)) have found this term and translation problematic. For Giliomee (2003:665) Afrikaners as a *volk* would be an organized ethnic group with kinship and myths of origin, capable of mobilization as a potent force. Given the unsatisfactory translations preference is given to the Afrikaans term, and in Orania there is a general partiality towards the use of 'people' rather than 'nation'. While Moodie, for instance, prefers to use the English translation, I will refer to *volk* in the majority of instances. The term *volkstaat* and related implications for space and place has been under discussion in Orania, eliciting passionate debate for and against the term. It is noticeable that the frequency of the use of *volkstaat* within the community has declined, but more on this in 4.2.2.

Invoking the concept of community adds another layer of complexity and another term that is problematic to define. Rapport & Overing (2000:61) suggest that community can be characterised through: (i) common interests between people; or (ii) a common ecology and locality; or (iii) a common social system or structure. In Orania, stated goals link the community through a common interest in Afrikaner independence, land and a place of their own and the common denominator of *selfwerksaamheid* (self-reliance with regard to labour). Rapport (2002:175) states that regardless what the defining concepts are that defines a group, "people maintain the idea that it is this *milieu* [my emphasis] which is most essentially 'theirs', and that they are prepared to assert their ownership and membership, vocally and aggressively, in the face of opposing ideas and groups."

The constructed nature of communities is particularly relevant in a discussion regarding Orania. Cohen (1985) argues that community should be seen as a symbolic as well as a contrastive construct and that community members construct worlds of meaning. Anderson (1991:6) refers to nation as an imagined community: "(i)t is imagined because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each live the image of their communion". I will return to imagined and invented identities in 5.3.

Adam (1995:457) highlights how South Africa represents a microcosm of major global conflicts and the role that ethnicity plays. Understanding ethnicity in the complex South African context through a general theoretical and comparative interpretation can illuminate the legitimacy of competing claims. Adam (1995:459) also makes the distinction between an ethnic nation and a civic nation. An ethnic nation would be the proposed *volkstaat* based on descent, whilst a civic nation, like South Africa, is based on equal individual rights, regardless of origin, and equal recognition of all cultural traditions in the public sphere

The term *Afrikaner*, as used in this study, focuses on the exclusive rather than inclusive meaning, in other words, as the definition of a white Afrikaans-speaking Christian South African. The definition of *Afrikaner* has been controversial from the earliest documented usage. Giliomee (2003:xix) describes how during the eighteenth century the term *Afrikaner* for whites vied with labels such as *burgher*, *Dutchman* and *Boer*. Steyn (1987:14-15) illustrates how the term has been used with an inclusive meaning as well, meaning any South African who views South Africa as his/her homeland. Du Toit (1970:531) cautions that it is as dangerous to

use a sweeping term like 'the Afrikaner'. As anthropologist, he argues that one should differentiate between several aspects of what constitutes a people, including genetic heritage, linguistic group membership, political loyalties, and cultural groups which may lie in or outside the expectations for political loyalty. Du Toit (1970:532) then defines the Afrikaner in terms of language and culture and also in terms of country of residence and/or loyalty.

The term *Voortrekker* (pioneers, literally “those who trek ahead”) is often used when referring to Afrikaner history. Giliomee (2003:161) describes how families and their servants moved out of the British Cape Colony in considerable numbers into the interior of South Africa from 1835 to 1845. They became known as *Voortrekkers*. This migration is known as the *Groot Trek* (Great Trek).

## **1.4 Literature review**

### **1.4.1 Introductory remarks**

The aim of this section is to provide, through selective reference to some of the literature, a clearer understanding of the different concepts that contribute to the study. Landscape, place and space and ethnic identity are described in separate yet interrelated sections. Landscape as a subject offers an overview of an extensive amount of relevant literature, but I found theory around cultural landscape to be particularly useful in guiding the study, especially how the physical landscape becomes enmeshed with the cultural landscape, and how the physical landscape can subsequently be investigated as a signifying system. Further investigation into the theory of place and space provides background information on just how place can articulate a sense of self for people. Expression of a sense of self delves into the literature on identity and ethnic identity, especially the activities around the creation of a specific identity. A

constructionist model for ethnic identity is used to describe the process and elements of constructing a specific identity. In order to provide a broader historical context for the study, it is also important to refer in particular to Afrikaner ethnic identity. In a further contextualisation, I will review the academic discussions on Orania in order to position my study. The primary goal of this review is to provide the theoretical background on which I base my research, and to briefly critique the research methodology in relation to these theoretical perspectives.

#### **1.4.2 Landscape**

The study of physical landscape was conventionally the domain of geographers, and a significant amount of the available literature is linked to geography. A shift in theoretical perspective over the past several decades puts an emphasis on the central role of social contexts. Through the convergence of disciplines, the importance of landscape, place and space in the constitution of social life is now acknowledged by social scientists, including anthropologists. It is through the physical landscape that the cultural landscape also becomes apparent.

The concept of cultural landscape has been increasingly used in academic writing, and has acquired a diverse range of meanings. For instance, cultural landscape has been linked to explanations such as “cognised environment” (Rappaport 1968), “natural landscape as modified by human action” (Sitwell & Latham 1979:51), and as “ideologically-charged and a complex cultural product” (Cosgrove 1984:11), summarised by Tilley (2006:20) as “both objective physical place and a subjective cognized image of that place.”

For the purposes of this study, based on Mulk & Bayless-Smith (1999:364, 369), I define cultural landscape as the cultural meanings associated with or ascribed



to a landscape, and the metaphors, symbols and artefacts through which these meanings are expressed, which can also be called a cognitive landscape or culturlandscape. Landscape can also be seen as one of many signifying systems through which social and political values are communicated. This is an important point and I return to it in subsequent chapters.

Gupta & Ferguson (1992:11) argue that while anthropologists have known that the experience of space is socially constructed, it is important to politicise this “uncontestable observation” by questioning how spatial meanings are established and contested. Importantly, Cosgrove (1993: 281) demonstrates that landscape as a signifying system is able to contain and convey multiple and often conflicting discursive fields or sets of shared meanings, whose claims to truth are established within a context. Rodman (2003:205) succinctly sums it up by stating that places are not “inert containers. They are politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions”. Tilley (2006:7-8), referring to the work of Bender, also highlights the contested and contextual nature of constructed landscapes:

landscapes are contested, worked and re-worked by people according to particular individual, social and political circumstances. As such they are always in process, rather than static, being and becoming. Landscapes are on the move peopled by diasporas, migrants of identity, people making homes in new places, landscapes are structures of feeling, palimpsests of past and present outcomes of social practice, products of colonial and postcolonial identities and the western gaze, they are places of terror, exile, slavery and of the contemplative sublime. They get actively re-worked, interpreted and understood in relation to differing social and political agendas, forms of social memory, and biographically, become sensuously embodied in a multitude of ways.

Tilley's exegesis is particularly useful in my Orania encounter, providing a significant review of the multi-faceted aspects of landscape; a constant reminder of the dynamic embodiment of what could otherwise be seen as a static background feature.

### **1.4.3 Place and space**

According to a phenomenological view of landscape, landscape is defined by the places that constitute it and make it what it is, and not space as an abstract container (Tilley 2006:20). I subscribe to the importance of both the physical place and cognised image of space. Key to my argument is how Donnan & Wilson (1999:9) link space and place to social sense-making activities whereby space and place become a conceptual map which orders social life. Space represents the imagined physical relationships that bestow significance to a group. Place includes both the idea and reality of the placement of entities.

But lest I assume that the allotment of place and space is trouble-free, I continuously keep in mind Gupta & Ferguson (1992:6-8) questioning the apparent unproblematic division of space of distinctive societies, nations and cultures. As they rightly mention there are aspects that challenge neat divisions, such as border areas and their inhabitants, localities that are "multicultural" and the hybrid cultures of the postcolonial. Geertz (2000:220-221) further argues that modern reality is experienced as dispersed, complex and uncentered, defying "totalizing concepts" such as identity, culture, values, society and people, which have been and continues to be fundamental to the anthropological approach. In Rapport and Dawson's (1998:4-5) terms, they call this fluidity the "migrancy of identity", describing how socio-cultural places are not coherent or contained

“universes of meaning”, but that questions of identity must always be related back and closely linked to fluidity or movement across time and space.

Anthropological inquiry into deterritorialization of identity investigates, amongst others, the ostensible connection between place and culture. Alongside with what Jameson (1984, cited in Gupta & Ferguson 1992) has dubbed "postmodern hyperspace", where a strictly bounded sense of community or locality is rendered obsolete, Knight (1982:526) counters that it is a distaste of perceived cultural homogeneity and cosmopolitanism associated with larger-scale modernizing societies that encourages many people to return to small-scale societies, where, ironically, minority status within a larger society actually provides a sense of identity.

As to the reasons why place and space are important in sense-making in a fragmented world, I turn to Tilley (2006:11-13) who argues that the instability of contemporary modernity causes people to increasingly turn to forms of collective identity such as shared historical traditions linked with ethnic identities to provide ontological foundations. These foundations have to be seen as fixed, solid and beyond question in order to perform a sociopsychological grounding feat. The collective identities are imagined both historically and materially, and can find expression in the notion of a bounded place with which people wishing to find a refuge can identify. Cuba & Hummon (1993:548-549) agree when they argue that people may appropriate the meanings of place to articulate a sense of self, which signifies a significant affiliation of self with place. Sack (1993:329) goes further to state that self and place are mutually constitutive in a fluid process of constraint and enablement. The link between the landscape and place that is produced is bound up with the politics of identity. Both place/space and identity communicate choices about who belongs and who doesn't according to class, ethnicity, gender

and sexuality (Olwig & Hastrup 1997). Cosgrove (2003:260) also finds that there are normalizing connections between landscape and ethnic identity. Differentiation of people by means of biological differences finds both expression and reinforcement in landscape. The visible presence of 'outsiders' within a landscape scene is a visual link with identity, while actual landscape layout can also provide a further (dis)association.

#### **1.4.4 Ethnic identity**

The concept of ethnic identity is one that draws out definitional arguments about significance or usage (Hutchinson & Smith 1996:15, Tonkin et al. 1996:19). According to Gleason (1983:910,930), identity, especially when used in conjunction with ethnic identity, is a relatively new term. Coming into use in the 1950s, it is an elusive and ubiquitous term. The term can be employed in a number of ways: it could mean no more than a person or group that are known by a certain name, but it may also refer to certain distinguishing characteristics marking whatever is known in that way or to the assembly of cultural features that collectively constitutes the larger reality with which a person or group is identified. Cohen (1993:197), amongst others, links ethnicity and identity, and specifically, how ethnic identity refers to a decision people make to depict themselves or others symbolically as the bearers of a certain cultural identity. Winthrop (1991:94) defines ethnic identity as “[t]he existence of culturally distinctive groups within a society, each asserting a unique identity on the basis of a shared tradition and distinguishing social markers such as a common language, religion, or economic specialization.”

Raoul Naroll (1964:284), in his characterisation of ethnic unit classification, summarises six useful criteria proposed for defining whole societies, or other units of comparison:

- (1) Distribution of particular traits being studied.
- (2) Territorial contiguity.
- (3) Political organisation.
- (4) Language.
- (5) Ecological adjustment.
- (6) Local community structure.

Both Winthrop's definition and Naroll's criteria are useful when used to discuss ethnicity, and can be applied in the examination of ethnic identity as found in Orania.

In the literature around ethnic identity, theoretical approaches can be identified namely the primordial and the instrumental approaches. The primordialist approach emphasises the cultural and psychological factors which underpin ethnicity (De Beer 1998:34), while an historical awareness is also important. Fishman (1996:66) states that history plays a big role in the present, especially in giving direction and providing group identity during times of change. Instrumentalists or situationalists regard ethnic identity as a resource that groups employ for different reasons (Hutchinson & Smith 1996:15, De Beer 2006:106). According to a situational approach to ethnic identity, it is the interaction between groups that generates cultural markers of difference (Nash 1996) and then emphasises the creation of ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969).

Nagel (1994:161,162) espouses a constructionist model for ethnic identity whereby identity and culture are fundamental to the construction of boundaries and the production of meaning. The construction is situated on both a formal and

on an informal level and is work-in-progress. New and renovated cultural symbols, activities, and materials are constantly being added to and removed from the existing cultural repertoire in order to “reinvent the past and invent the present”. Cohen (1985) refers to construction activities as the “symbolic construction of community”. Anderson (1991:6) takes this even further and introduces the concept of nation as an imagined community. Hobsbawm (1983:1) refers to the symbolic work of identity creation as “the invention of tradition”- i.e., the construction or reconstruction of rituals, practices, beliefs, customs, and other cultural tools. According to Horowitz (1996:288) language also plays a central role in the actual creation of ethnic identity.

Ethnic identity construction can be employed in what Nagel (1994:165) calls cultural construction in service of ethnic mobilisation. During the cultural construction process, cultural claims, icons, and imagery are used by campaigners in the mobilisation process. Specifically, cultural symbols and meanings are produced and transformed as ethnic movements emerge and grow. Melucci (1996) and Nash (1996) give attention to the strong role that symbols play in the perpetuation of an ethnic identity. Melucci (1996:369) describes how ethno-national movements develop actions to ensure the protection and renewed vitality of group culture. Depending on the group, the actions can be strongly conservative, or the group can develop historical traditions in the context of a changing society. Nash (1996:27-28) succinctly phrases the importance of the construction activities: “In brief, an identity is fashioned by name and symbol.”

#### 1.4.5 Afrikaner ethnic identity

In the late nineteenth century Afrikaner nationalism was stimulated by British imperialism, and more specifically the annexation of territories that Afrikaners claimed and the treatment of Afrikaners during and after the South African War, also known as the Anglo-Boer War (Steyn 1987:13, Giliomee 2003:231). Afrikaners were far from being one people. Giliomee & Adam (1981: 77ff) (cited in Erasmus 2002:99) draw attention to the fact that the boundaries of Afrikaner identity have historically been flexible, but have since fluctuated, depending on ideological factors as well as political and social conditions. It was through organised effort that a nationalist consciousness became prevalent.

After the founding of the Union of South Africa in 1910, Afrikaner nationalists felt the need to define and represent themselves through political, economic and cultural institutions (Giliomee 2003:359,361). The first Afrikaans magazine in 1910, *Die Brandwag* and the founding of the National Party in 1914 provided vehicles for self-representation. Erasmus (2002:93) describes how cultural organisations such as the *Afrikanerbond*, (Afrikaner League) *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge*, (Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Societies) *Rapportryers*, (Dispatch Riders) *Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging* (Afrikaans Language and Cultural Association) were founded to develop and protect the emerging culture. Afrikaner as a term, which was previously used in an inclusive sense, was increasingly defined exclusively in terms of both race and culture. Afrikaans was strongly identified as a public symbol of Afrikaner nationality, and South Africa was seen as its only home (Giliomee 2003:356).

The 1930s saw an upsurge in the interest in Afrikaner history, especially the Anglo-Boer War, which was earlier largely ignored, possibly due to traumatic recollection and painful memories (Giliomee 2003:432). In 1938 the centenary

celebrations of the Great Trek served as a catalyst for Afrikaner nationalist enthusiasm (Giliomee 2003:432, Steyn 1987:179). It can be said that Afrikaner nationalism reached its peak with the establishment of the Republic of South Africa in 1961, and the Afrikaner became synonymous with apartheid. From the 1970s the monolithic view of Afrikaner nationalism started to deteriorate. In the 1980s there was a breakdown in consensus in Afrikaner leadership: the Dutch Reformed Church broke with apartheid with the synods of 1986 and 1990 and the status quo was irrevocably disturbed. This process of deterioration speeded up and culminated in the 1992 referendum (Giliomee 2003:619-621).

The strong and specific ethnic identity that Afrikaners espouse is often criticised as “racist” or “ethnocentric”. As mentioned previously, the definition of who would constitute an Afrikaner or more specifically an Orania Afrikaner is exclusive rather than inclusive. Fishman (1996:63) highlights that ethnicity is a powerful experience but more crucially verbalises a very important distinction, and one that I found very useful when investigating this highly charged topic: “Sex roles are not the same as sexism; religious beliefs are not the same as religious bigotry; and the phenomenon of ethnicity is not identical to ethnocentrism or racism.”

### **1.5 Overview of previous studies on Orania**

Apart from a great many newspaper and magazine articles, Orania has been the subject of a few academic studies, ranging from anthropology and political science to history, sociology and community development. I will highlight studies in different disciplines in order to place this study in context. Very few of the other studies published to date refer to the wider scholarship on Orania, with preference seemingly given to quoting one or two other analyses. A more



comprehensive review of academic literature on Orania could form part of a future enquiry. While not all of the studies references here have a direct scholarly relevance to the current investigation, the academic context thus created shows how this dissertation contributes to academic discourse on Orania. Apart from academic value, the prior studies also have significant practical and methodological implications. It is important to note that anthropologists and other academics working in Orania as an academic fieldwork site have repercussions for the reception of any subsequent studies conducted there.

### **1.5.1 Anthropology**

Vestergaard's (2000, 2001) investigation focused on post-apartheid Afrikaner identities, and fieldwork and interviews were conducted with Afrikaner spokespersons, inhabitants of some Cape Town suburbs and inhabitants of Orania. Vestergaard (2001:19), referring to Bourdieu (1977), distinguishes between heterodox Afrikaners who are open to the new challenges, while the orthodox resist change and cling to established values. He uses Orania as an orthodox expression of Afrikaner identity. Vestergaard's research illustrates how Afrikaner respondents in Orania rearticulate the Christian nationalist identity of early apartheid into a new discourse (Vestergaard 2000:4, Vestergaard 2001:33). The analysis also references the then new South African Constitution and the legal protection it offers Orania as a community sharing 'a common cultural and language heritage' (Vestergaard 2001: 33-34, 43). The timing of Vestergaard's study provided an important and specific slice of time of the community's earlier development.

Opperman (2004), an archaeologist, presented an anthropological paper focussing on Orania as a community with a strong ethnic identity. Based on

casual but immersed observation and semi-structured interviews, Opperman's paper is the first study where Orania inhabitants more directly voice certain opinions. While the sample size is quite small and the paper is of limited scope, the information is very much modelled on and in my opinion indicative of Orania nomenclature and styling.

De Beer's (2006) ethno-historical investigation into the historical roots of the establishing of Orania was coupled with an investigation on the nature and identity of the people of the settlement. De Beer concluded that the establishment of Orania is a manifestation of a cultural resistance movement and reveals features of other nativistic as well as cultural revitalization movements. De Beer's study provides a succinct slice of Orania historical and cultural context, and the article articulates his interpretation of ethnic identity as well as his own relationship with and opinion of the community.

The period following the end of apartheid marked a time of extensive political and social change in South Africa and Todd (2008) offers that the climate of incredible transformation and increased debate concerning the apartheid past had a profound effect on Afrikaner identifications. She discusses how Afrikaner representors, both establishment Afrikaner groups and separatist Afrikaner groups, engaged in processes of ethnic mobilisation. Orania forms part of the examination as a response of a separatist Afrikaner group seeking self-determination. Todd provides a thorough analysis on Afrikaner identity both during a crucial time in Afrikaner history and Orania's settlement and development, with fieldwork in Orania occurring in 1998.

Blomerus (2009) investigated the cultural identity of a group of women in Orania, and how these women maintain and promote their identity through activities and

perspectives. Given the context of Orania, Blomerus also pays attention to the convictions of the women concerning their Afrikaner identity and how identity as a female and Afrikaner is constructed and actualised. Blomerus' fieldwork overlapped slightly with my time in Orania, and while we didn't physically meet, her presence certainly influenced interactions I had with research participants.

In an ethnographic study of a school in Orania in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa, Hues & Morgan (2010) identified a flag-raising ceremony as an example of an event that could illustrate two different frameworks– Turner's (2009) interpretive framework with which to analyse social action as ritual and Reckwitz's (2003) 'theories of practice' approach to see how it could be understood as forming part of everyday life. The article juxtaposes and discusses these two alternative approaches as applied to the observed ceremony using the work of Goffman (1971; 1986), who combines ritual theory with an everyday routine focus. Hues & Morgan conclude that there is a need to examine the underlying logic of practices instead of only describing their evolving dynamics. Hues (2008) also undertook an ethnographic study of the school in Orania to find out about the kinds of institutional practices and dynamics taking place in an atmosphere of 'separateness'. Given the focus on flags in 3.5.1, Hues & Morgan provided a useful illustration of a flag as part of a ceremonial event. Hues & Morgan (2010:35) acknowledged that "some content analysis" on Oranian publications could provide "useful responses" but quite appropriately focussed their experiences as anthropological witnesses to everyday life. However, in Chapter 4 I extend beyond just "some" content analysis and this analytical approach forms a core part of the methodology and subsequent investigation.

In the vein of settler studies, Veracini (2011) discusses De Beer's (2006) article as an extended apology for Orania and a settler colonial document. Veracini argues that as much as Orania is a response to Afrikaner history, it is also an inherently settler colonial response. For Veracini settler colonialism and transfer are intimately connected, and Orania fits in with this interpretative framework as it includes the transfer of settlers to a specific locale, as well as the transfer of prior inhabitants. Whereas most articles and studies may mention prior analyses on Orania, Veracini opens up direct critical dialogue with other studies. Veracini also briefly mentions Orania as a heterotopic locale, one of the few references to and pronouncements of the importance of place and space.

On a panel focused on homelands, Seldon (2012) presented a paper on Orania as an Afrikaner ethnic homeland. She argues that Oranians are influenced by the belief that without this homeland their descendants will have no culture, without Afrikaans culture they have no identity and therefore an indifferent future. This future is being shaped in Orania with a balance of tradition and openness rather than just rigid conservatism, influenced both by nostalgia and idealism (further mentioned in 3.5). Seldon concludes by saying that Orania is a site of social contestation about what it means to be an Afrikaner in the 21st century. Seldon is also completing an as yet untitled PhD study.

### **1.5.2 History**

Pienaar (2007) investigated the Afrikaner right wing's quest for a *volkstaat* (defined by Pienaar as state nation), and specifically the foundation of Orania as a viable option for Afrikaners. She examined the origin and development of the *volkstaat* idea, the different models and role players, in order to ascertain whether Orania would succeed as a possible growth point of a *volkstaat* for

Afrikaners. She concludes that while Orania mostly operates successfully, more support will be required before the town could grow into a growth point for an Afrikaner *volkstaat*. Pienaar contributes both historical context as well as ethnographic input in this study, and is widely quoted in subsequent studies on Orania.

### **1.5.3 Geography**

Kotze (2003) focuses on Orania as a small town in South Africa, and scrutinises the population profile and town development. Kotze concludes that the development and reconstruction in Orania is positive, especially when the aridity of the region is considered, and that the success can be related to ideological and political conviction that has grown into an agricultural economic base. Kotze's investigation adds historical information on Orania and can be seen as enlightening with regard to the small town within the larger South African context.

Steyn (2004a, 2004b) focusses on local economic development. Steyn (2004b:62, quoted in Blomerus 2009:110) describes the Oranian economy as focussed on small-scale farming as well as small business. He refers to the Oranian work ethic as an internal driving force for economic development in the community, with an entrepreneurial focus, as projects are self-initiated and self-funded. Steyn (2006) focusses on the ecological focus of the community.

It is also worth including Van Biljon's 2009 Orania *Geïntegreerde Ontwikkelingsplan* (GOP) (Orania Integrated Development Plan). Every municipality in South Africa is required to produce an Integrated Development Plan, a strategic plan for the short, medium and long-term development objectives, strategies and programmes for the municipal area. Issues considered

include budgeting, management and economic development<sup>2</sup>. Although not strictly an academic study, the GOP is a thorough analysis of Orania: town management, institutional and legal frameworks, land use, infrastructure and social services, economy, demography, physiography, human geography and perceptions. The report and the community feedback that underpins the findings, as well as a strong focus on the physical locality, made an important contribution to my understanding of Orania.

#### **1.5.4 Political, Legal and Economic Studies**

In Biehl's (2001) study he scrutinised the feasibility of private state creation, where privatisation, deemed a liberal approach that can undermine a state's monopoly, can be utilised by pro-nationalist groups for the creation of own nation states. Case studies included Dainfern, a private gated neighbourhood in an affluent suburb in South Africa, Orania as a private town in rural South Africa and the state of Israel as an example of a successfully created state. According to Biehl Orania is a work-in-progress example of how majority occupation and economic sustainability can be utilised in the creation of a private state.

Geldenuys (2006) offers an international perspective on self-determination in South Africa, charting contemporary examples of self-determination through stipulations of international law and in so doing, identify international standards regarding self-determination. He analyses this feasibility with regard to the South African constitution and offers suggestions for the practical application thereof. Geldenuys argues that meaningful, territorially-based self-determination with the goal of protecting and promoting Afrikaans language and culture requires

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cogta.gov.za/subwebsites/annualreport/IDP%20booklet.pdf>, [Accessed 15 October 2012]

something more ambitious than Orania but less radical than an Afrikaner *volkstaat*. He suggests extended regional autonomy for Afrikaans speakers of all races, an inclusive Afrikaner political and cultural entity, similar to Quebec, Flemish or Basque areas where language is prioritised over ethnicity. This article is an amended version of Geldenhuys' presentation *Selfbeskikking: oorsprong, ontwikkeling en benutting* (Self-determination: origin, development and utilisation), presented at the conference on Article 235 and the politics of independence, Orania, 20-22 October 2005.

In Labuschagne's (2008) analysis of *uti possedetis* or the principle of territorial integrity in international law, self-determination is handled with caution, because it has the potential to fragment national states and create instability in the international order. Labuschagne defines self-determination and illuminates the challenging situation of minority groups in the world, and offers workable strategies for minority groups in their battle for stronger recognition with special reference to (an) Afrikaner minority group(s). The *Orania Beweging's* strategy towards self-determination is presented as a case study.

Mears (2009) investigated the Ora as facilitator of sustainable local economic development in Orania, and concludes that the Ora is a working example of a functional local currency. Applying similar solutions elsewhere in South Africa has the potential to address poverty and unemployment in smaller communities.

Cavanagh (2011a) discusses indigenous land rights in South Africa, comparing Griqua Philippolis to the Afrikaner enclave of Orania. He presents a historical analysis of the different land regimes developed in the middle-upper Orange River region of South Africa over thousands of years. The historic case studies used here – Griqua Philippolis (1826-1861) and Afrikaner Orania (1991-2011) –

establish a context in which indigenous land rights, and the system of land restitution developed in post-apartheid South Africa, can be discussed. Cavanagh (2011b) subsequently refers briefly to Orania in context of Griqua land rights.

### **1.5.5 Social welfare**

Winterbach & Botha's (1999) sociological study was commissioned by the *Afrikanervryheidstigting* (Afrikaner Freedom Institute) to provide input into the social course of action for the creation of a *volkstaat* in the Northwestern Cape. The value of Winterbach & Botha's study lies in the comprehensive questionnaires completed by respondents inside and outside of Orania, as well as Winterbach's personal experience in and insight into the community. The Winterbach & Botha study is quoted by Opperman, De Beer and Kotze. However, since the study is in Afrikaans and limited to hard copy versions, it has had limited academic exposure.

### **1.5.6 Film and media**

Scheepers (2011) posted her final project for completion of an honours degree in film production at North West University (Potchefstroom) on YouTube. The short 16-minute documentary offers a short introduction to the community, starting with negative print media impressions and then short interviews with representatives of the *Orania Beweging*. The documentary also re-uses footage from an Orania promotional DVD.

Photo Feature: Orania, is a series of black-and-white photographs by Aubry (2011) included in settler colonial studies, along with Veracini's (2011) analysis. While a variety of photojournalists have published visual essays, this is as yet the



only example included in an academic journal. Aubrey previously (July 2011) published a series of photographs on Orania<sup>3</sup>.

Lindner (2012) presented a documentary as part of the film programme at EASA 2012. The film examines the different motivators that bring people to Orania. Motivators range from idealism to opportunism to desperation. The documentary examines the people and their accounts through life stories and a personal approach against the backdrop of the societal implications.

There are also a variety of studies that refer to Orania, but do not have Orania as the main focus. One example from Van Rooyen (2000) explores aspects of South Africa's growing white exodus with reference to the origins of Afrikaner immigration, the reasons why people are leaving, who is leaving, the numbers, the destinations and the socio-political sentiment towards emigration. Orania is touted as an attractive option for Afrikaners that can't or don't want to emigrate to a foreign country.

A variety of academic disciplines have applied various methodologies to produce an assortment of insights, underpinning the strong interest in Orania as well as the amount of information that can be generated. It should also be noted that some of the academics mentioned above, notably De Beer, Opperman, Biehl and Winterbach, have very open and obvious links to Orania, with Opperman, Biehl and Winterbach as inhabitants at the completion of this study. While a few important studies have been conducted on Orania, I feel that this current ethnography and its focus on the importance of place and space will enhance

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.alan-aubry.com/photo-south-africa-orania-afrikaner-boer/> [Accessed 1 October 2012]

academic understanding as well as hopefully prove to be of use to the community of Orania.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

From the literature, I understand landscape, and cultural landscape, to comprise both a physical place and a cognitised image which is discursive, and embodies multiple meanings. Context is absolutely crucial when investigating the constructed manifestation of meanings. Both the physical place and cognized image of space are important when organising a view on social life within a landscape. While important, these concepts should never be taken as monolithic and unchanging, but rather continuously questioned. Further, to me it becomes apparent that the link between the landscape and produced places and spaces is intertwined with the politics of identity.

Interpretation of the literature confirms that there is a connection between landscape and identity, albeit a fluid and elusive one. I approach identity with the same expectation of fluctuation and flexibility. In my understanding of the concept of ethnic identity, I particularly value the instrumentalist view, whereby ethnic identity is utilised in the construction of boundaries and the production of meaning. In my opinion, landscape, place and space and ethnic identity are but a few separate yet interrelated concepts that provide a means of interpreting a research issue that is context-driven and by its very nature can be seen as contentious.

Throughout this process I am acutely aware of context. Dilley (1999:xxi) cautions that construction of context is closely connected to how we conceive of knowledge and this connection has implications for how we conceive of what

contexts might or might not be appropriate for other people's practices. I will demonstrate that it is exactly this personal context that helps shape my understanding of the subject matter, and provides methodological insight. However, I am also aware that contextualisation is a form of social action that is discursive, expressive and performative (Dilley 1999:xxi) – which is another reason why I am grounding my study in Orania as physical place and Oranian texts in the first instance.

The introductory chapter sets up the research design elements and highlights the academic literature. In Chapter 2 I provide some background on Orania as place. I intend to situate the physical place before continuing with the discussion, especially since many people have not yet seen the actual town, but have created a mental picture and perceptions based on media reports or anecdotal evidence. I would like to stress that I am in no way presuming to provide a total or absolute description. This impression is based on my fieldwork experiences. I am also keenly aware that Orania is not just an academic construct, but the lived experiences and opinions of people who are closely connected to the place. An analysis of the landscape of power, authority and structures then form a valuable core from which to investigate the manifestation of place and intellectual space. In Chapter 3, analysis of the landscape leads me to another way to legitimately make sense of the landscape: landscape as text. I analyse the Orania landscape for symbolic, signifying and intertextual narratives. There is a great level of importance ascribed to ideas in and to the community, and in Chapter 4, I consider the communication vehicles for those. Since a variety of texts are produced on and in Orania, I investigate how the landscape, both physical and cultural, is depicted in these different texts. In Chapter 5 I more closely examine Oranians' attitudes towards landscape and identity, or identity through landscape. In order to come to an understanding of the link between landscape

and identity in Orania, I consider how Oranians themselves describe their landscape.

## Chapter 2 LANDSCAPE

### 2.1 Introductory remarks

Orania is a physically delimited territory with socio-political boundaries where the community creates a distinct identity. At first glance this would seem to be a neat example of “the field”. However, Gupta and Ferguson (1992:6) undermine this “field” when they question the assumption that space, place, and culture are all neatly subsumed as one.

On my first visit to the town it did not take me long to realise that what would seem as a defined area for fieldwork was more than just physical place. As much as Orania is famed or vilified for its territory and boundaries, the physical boundaries are expanded when support groups outside of the settlement become an integral part of the activities in the community, and socio-political boundaries are tested by an in- and outflux of community members and the constant presence of South African and international press, and visitors. In anthropological studies place is often taken for granted, “just” the locale where other interesting, more significant things happen (De Jongh 2006:79). I argue that rather than a mere backdrop for activities, the landscape of Orania is significant. I am also keenly aware that this is not just an academic construct, but the lived experiences and opinions of people who are closely connected to the place.

I deliberately start off with a focus on a description of the physical environment, the infrastructure and community institutions in order to create a place-bound reference to the community. This depiction should be seen in the context as a snapshot in time and experience rather than a conclusive description. Research participants regularly speak about how dynamic and fast-changing Orania is, and

these changes might, and have, over the course of this study impacted on the landscape. I gradually introduce the notions of landscape, place and space to further bolster my argument that the landscape of Orania is important. These spatial notions are tools with which to consider and connect cultural values perceived in and linked to this specific landscape. It should be noted that these concepts are not opposites of each other, but connect and interconnect, and the discussion often touches on and meanders between the concepts. I shall show how the interaction, both fluid and problematic, between physical place and ideational space is significant for physical and ideational orientation within the Orania landscape.

## 2.2 Orania in context: geographically and historically

Orania is in the Northern Cape Province roughly in the centre of South Africa: approximately 250km from Bloemfontein, 160km from Kimberley, 700km from Pretoria and just less than 1000km from Cape Town. While it is situated centrally in the country, it is not located close to major economic hubs.



Image 2-1 Orania in context<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.orania.co.za/images/kaart.gif>, [Accessed 28 October 2008]

According to Acocks (1975:63), the Orania area is in the Nama Karoo Biome, part of the Central Upper Karoo veld type. At an altitude of 1050-1700 meters this area gets an average of 200-250mm rain per annum. The Great Karoo is an extensive area of arid and semi-arid areas with dwarf open shrub land and flat-topped *koppies* (hills) that covers a great deal of the south-western part of southern Africa. The Karoo is traditionally used for extensive pastoralism with other forms of agriculture taking place in areas where irrigation is possible (Cowling 1986:2-3).

The area is characterised by extremes in temperature and great variability in the amount and timing of rainfall. In January, afternoon temperatures usually range between 34 and 40° C. Sutherland in the Great Karoo is one of the coldest towns in South Africa, with an average minimum of -6° C. This geographical and climatological context is important in understanding the locality and contributes to the subsequent experience of the landscape. Van Biljon (2009:55) charts the average minimum and maximum temperatures, as well as the monthly rainfall in Orania, as measured in 2007.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ave max daily temperature, in Celsius	34.3	34.1	30.6	26.2	22.7	17.7	18.9	23	28.2	27.2	30.1	31.7
Ave min daily temperature, in Celsius	17.9	16.7	14.4	12.5	3.8	3.4	1.5	4.2	9.9	12.1	13.4	17.1
Monthly rainfall, in millimetres	65	5	30	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	129

*Table 2-1 Climatological data*

The Great Karoo in large part falls within the Northern Cape Province, which is the largest province in area, covering a vast 30% of South Africa's land mass. However, in terms of population size, it is the smallest province in the country,

since it has only 2% of all the people with an estimated population of 1,147,600 in an area of km<sup>2</sup> 361,830 (Burger 2010:12). About 68% of the population speak Afrikaans and there is an unemployment rate of 25.7% (Burger 2009:14), which is steadily worsening.

Historically, the Orania area offers a slice of South African history spanning the Stone Age, the Great Trek, the discovery of diamonds in South Africa and the Anglo Boer (South African) War. Archaeological evidence shows that the Orania area was inhabited during the Middle and Late Stone Age by nomadic hunter-gatherers. Europeans first settled in the Karoo in the mid 1700's. Gilliomme (2003:30-31) describes how stock farmers beyond the western Cape mountains gradually expanded the Cape colony frontiers in search of grazing for their livestock. Europeans only became evident in the Orania area since approximately 1760. Archaeological evidence includes artefacts, rock paintings, and graffiti from European settlers (Opperman 2005:7).

Regional histories for towns surrounding Orania are useful to sketch geographical and historical context for the settlement. Hopetown is situated approximately 40km west of Orania, connected by the R369. Hopetown was founded in 1853/1854, became a municipality in 1858 and is widely believed to be named after Major William Hope, Auditor-General and Acting Secretary of the Cape (Raper 1987). Hopetown, or more specifically the De Kalk farm about 50km northwest of Hopetown, was the site of the first recorded discovery of an authentic diamond in Africa. Named the Eureka diamond, the diamond was found in late 1866 or early 1867 (Harlow 1998:79-80).



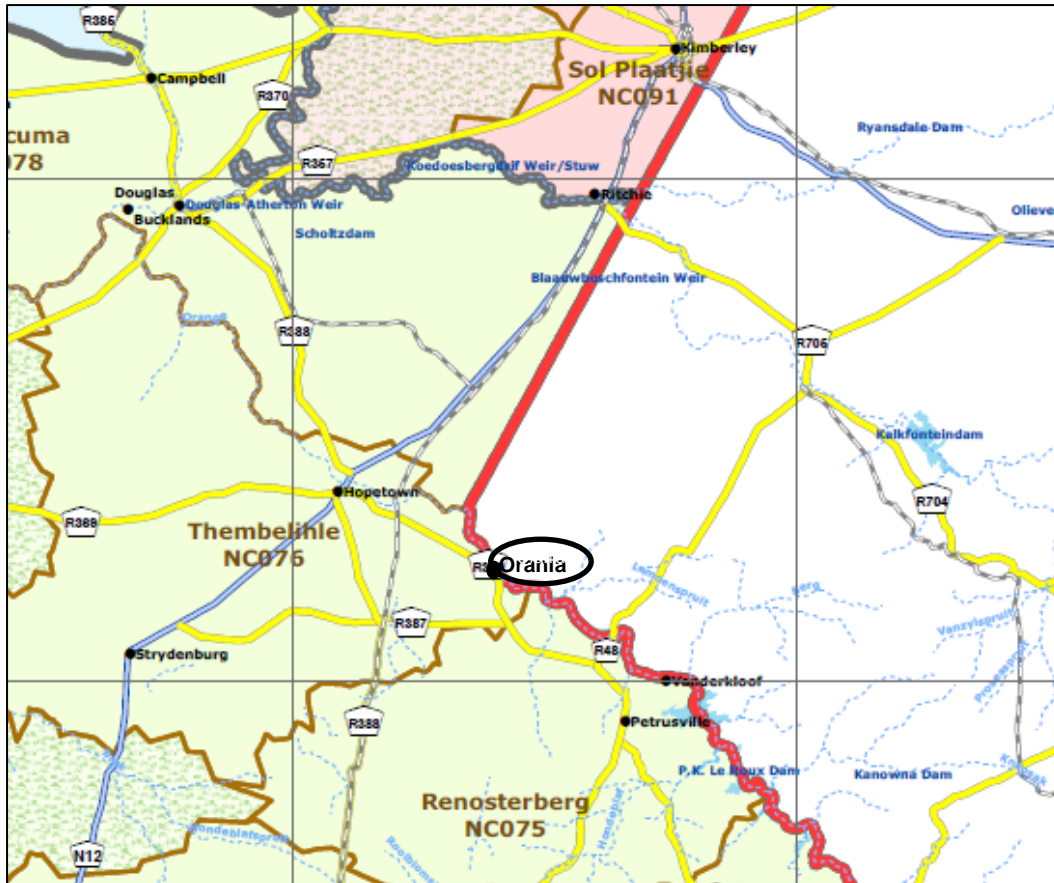


Image 2-2 Detail from Northern Cape Provincial A0 Map

Petrusville is situated 47km south, south east of Orania, and 10km south of the Orange River. The town was founded about 1877 on the farm Rhenosterfontein and named after Petrus Jacobus van der Walt who had bought the farm in 1810 and donated a portion of it to the Dutch Reformed Church in 1822 (Raper 1987). Vanderkloof town is situated 47km south east of Orania. Vanderkloof town was built on the site where the Vanderkloof (previously the PK le Roux) dam is now situated, and is located 9km north-east of Petrusville. It was established to house the labour force constructing the dam, with construction starting in April 1971 and the dam finally commissioned in September 1977. The name is derived from the surname of Petrus Jacobus van der Walt, and a *kloof* (ravine) in the vicinity (Raper 1987). Strydenburg is situated 55km west, south-west of Orania and was established in 1892 on the farm Roodepan. Dutch for 'town of argument', the

name refers to disagreement as to which farm the town should be situated on (Raper 1987).

While Strydenburg is, like Orania, part of the Tembelihle municipal district, very few Oranians refer to Strydenburg. Hopetown, Petrusville, Vanderkloof and are the towns, and Kimberley the city, most mentioned in conversation and upon enquiry about their district. Of the three towns, Vanderkloof is the closest in age and character to Orania, as there are also prefabricated buildings in the town, although the town layout is quite different. Vanderkloof houses are lined up around the dam and against the hillside, whereas Orania is quite flat and situated away from the river. Vanderkloof is also lush with bigger trees dating from its founding. Due to the proximity to the water, the town was always meant to be inhabited post construction, even though initially temporary housing was used for the labour force. The former coloured workers' township, Keurtjieskloof, is situated out of sight of the main town approximately 2km from the town centre.

The history of Orania started when it was originally established as a construction town for the employees of the Department of Water Affairs involved in building canals for a water scheme on the Orange River. The village was built in 1963, halfway between Hopetown and Petrusville on the banks of the Orange River. At first the village was known as Vluytjeskraal, after the farm on which the development took place. However, shortly after its establishment, a local engineer organised a competition for the selection of a suitable name, and Orania was selected (Pienaar 2007:57-59, Kotze 2003:162).

After the work had been completed, the Water Affairs labour force moved on to other projects in 1989, barring a number of coloured people who did not relocate and remained in Grootgewaagd, the workers' township. In 1990 the government

decided to sell what remained of the town, and started auctioning off individual lots. To this day some lots can still be seen with the auction numbers painted on them. However, during the dismantling of the town, individuals and farmers living there petitioned for the preservation of the town. The government then decided to sell the town as a single entity (Kruger, personal communication, June 2008).

In July/August 1990 Orania was advertised in *Landbouweekblad* (Agricultural Weekly) as for sale by tender and initially bought by Jacques Pretorius for R1 million. Pretorius' attorney then contacted the *Afrikanervryheidstigting* (AVSTIG - Afrikaner Freedom Foundation), which had also shown an interest in the town, just before 31 January 1991 when the purchase price was due. AVSTIG assembled a group of shareholders and Orania was bought by the newly developed *Orania Bestuursdienste* (OBD) (Orania Management Services) for R1,5 million. On the 31st of March Orania was transferred to the OBD, and on 11 April 1991 Orania was officially re-opened. The remaining coloured workers were evicted by the end of April 1991. In August 1991 the adjoining farm Vluytjeskraal 272 (approximately 2,300 hectares) was bought for agricultural development. A town council came into being and took over the management of the village from OBD<sup>5</sup> (Kotze 2003:162-164, Pienaar 2007:57-59). In November 2005 a land claim was initiated against Orania by former Water Affairs labourers. In December 2006 the claim was settled with the Government paying compensation of R2,9 million to 80 claimants (Anon. 2006a:1). The land claim created a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety in the community, and the resolution was welcomed. The relieved and firm Oranian response was: *Ons is hier om te bly / We're here to stay* (Anon. 2006a:1).

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.orania.co.za/geskiedenis.asp>, [Accessed 28 October 2008].

### 2.3 Orania in context: the town

At first glance Orania resembles any other Karoo *platteland* (rural) town, but soon the more obvious differences become apparent. There is no customary church with the church steeple and town square in the centre of town. The *Afrikaanse Protestantse* (AP - Afrikaans Protestant) is the only church building with a steeple in town and is not located centrally on the main thoroughfare [6D]<sup>6</sup>. The second feature when driving through most towns, a liquor store, is also not on the main road, but is situated on one of the back streets [5F].

The town is bisected by the R369, alternatively called *grootpad*, *hoofpad*, *hoofweg* (large road, main road, highway) [4A-4J]. The intersection with the R369 forms the small retail centre on the eastern side of the town [4E]. The tenants vary, but the main features are the supermarket (*Ora Supermark*, part of the OK Grocer chain), the *Orania Beweging* office, a small petrol station, the *Afsaal* (Off-saddle) café with a tearoom, *Afsaal Eiendomme* the local estate agent and *Krummels* (Crumbs) bakery. Other retail spaces house Orion *Hardeware*, a butcher, *Klein Parys Klereboetiek* (Little Paris Boutique) and a coffee and gift shop, *Skinki Kofe* (Pour the coffee). The smaller businesses change on a regular basis, and even inhabitants struggle to keep track of the variety of businesses that come and go.

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<sup>6</sup> In order to situate Orania in the physical landscape as much as possible, I will refer to Image 2-3 Map of Orania. The horizontal grid ranges from 1-10, and the vertical grid is from A-J. Grid references are approximate.

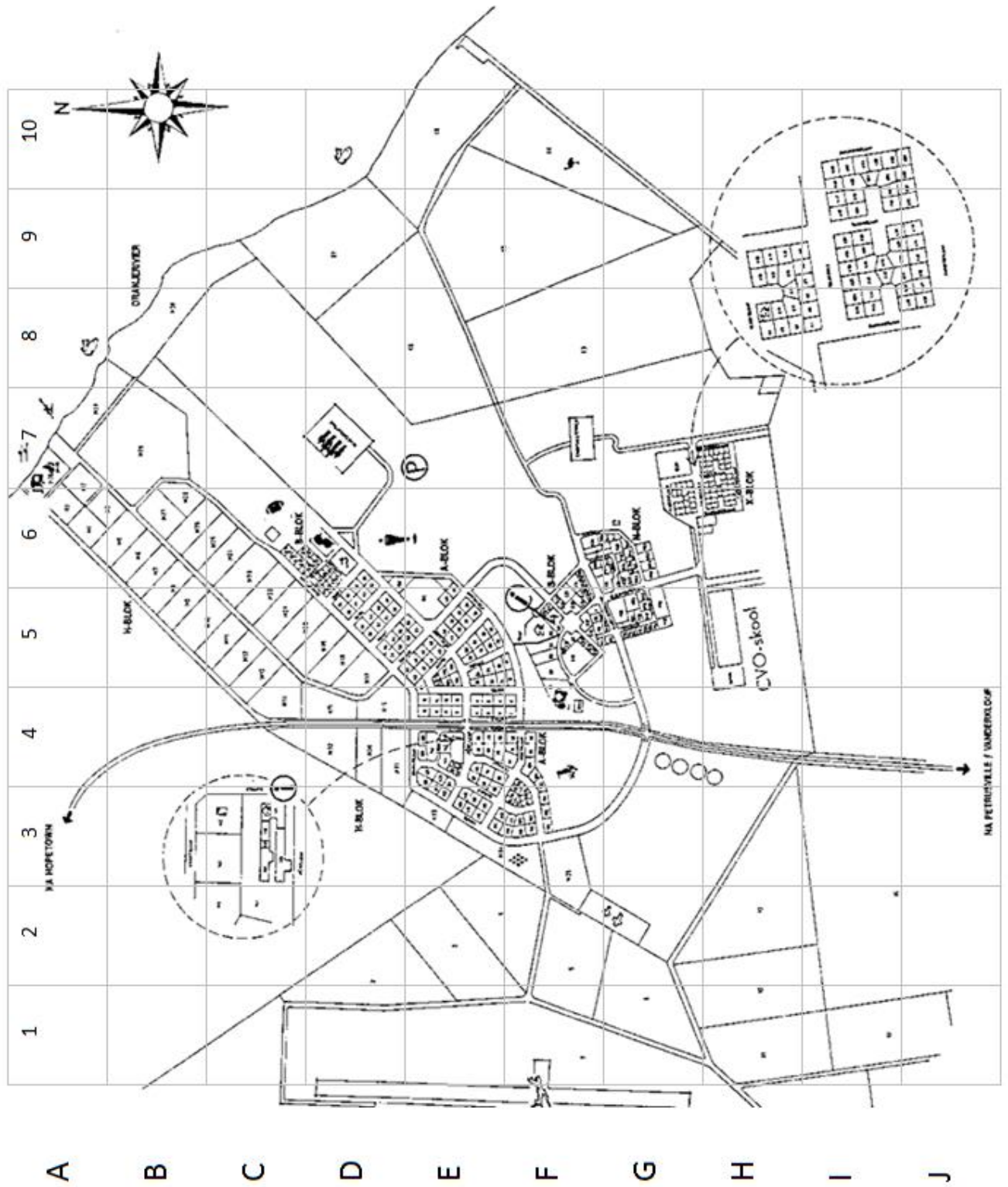


Image 2-3 Map of Orania<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Van Biljon, 2009





*Image 2-4 Google Earth map of Orania*



*Image 2-5 The town is bisected by the R369*

To the west of the R369 is Orania *Wes* (West), also called *Wes Berlyn* (West Berlin) by some inhabitants, due to the road that separates the two halves of the

town [3E, 3F, 4E, 4F]. No formal ideological differences are implied by this nickname, as far as I could fathom. East of the R369 is Orania Oos (Orania East) [5D, 5E], and this is where the *Koeksistermonument* [6D] and the Orange River [7A-10D] are to be found. Orania Oos and *Wes* are called the *grootdorp*, *hoofdorp* (big town, main town). The *grootdorp* has wide pavements, with large houses and yards. There is extensive irrigation to be seen, with some sprinklers almost continuously in action all year round.

All major entrance routes into the town [4E, 4G] exhibit a Private Property sign with a *Dorpsraad* (town council) logo<sup>8</sup>. There aren't fences around the town, but there are open security booms at major entrances that can be closed in an emergency situation. On the east side, close to the 4-way stop entrance to Orania [4E], there is a map displaying major landmarks in town<sup>9</sup>. Other signs dot the Orania landscape, some older, some more recent. Some signs offer inspirational messages, some are approved advertising boards. These signs are discussed further in 3.4.

The roads are made of broad cement slabs and cars make a distinctive rhythmic sound as they drive over the segments comprising the road surface. Image 2-4, the Google Earth map, clearly shows the white cement roads in contrast to the duller grey of the dirt roads. Kleingeluk (small luck) [6G, 6H, 7G, 7H] is situated about one and a half kilometres from the *grootdorp*. Only the main road entering this section is tarred, and there are dirt roads in the suburb itself, resulting in a lot of dust, especially when it is dry.

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<sup>8</sup> See Image 3-10

<sup>9</sup> See Image 3-13



*Image 2-6 Researcher walking along the cement slab roads, or, how Oranians usually saw me*

Most houses are built of pre-fabricated materials, descriptively called *kartonhuise* or *papierhuise* (cardboard houses or paper houses) by inhabitants. While some of these houses have been restored, some houses have not weathered time well at all, creating a negative impression on visitors and inhabitants alike. Research participants have told me that the original architect of the town stated that the buildings weren't supposed to last more than 20 years, as this was a temporary settlement. Accounts refer to a ghost town that was rebuilt (Kotze 2003:163, Pienaar 2007:58, Spies 2004). Volunteers that helped clean up Orania prior to settlement in 1992, as well as farmers farming in the area since before the 1992 settlement all mention the eerie feeling of walking through a town with infrastructure like roads and houses overgrown with vegetation and without any inhabitants.



The physical landscape is expanded through different networks, including the internet. Orania has a presence on the virtual landscape with a website, and there is also a video on You Tube based on a marketing DVD. Some inhabitants feel that the website is misleading and an inaccurate reflection of what happens in the town. The website representation does provide much of the intellectual thinking relevant to the initial establishment and continued existence of Orania, but initially provided very little practical or personal detail. Quite a lot of the information was outdated by a few years, with people having moved out of the community or passed away. Feedback from website users has also indicated a lack of detail around day-to-day living in the community, or fresh news. There was a subsequent website refresh in 2009, but older information can still be accessed. New and more personalised features include the Twitter feed with a local community focus (reports of rain, President Zuma's visit, etc.) as well as a link to the Facebook page and Flickr photostream. While some content and layout changes were made, the masthead stayed the same. The graphic depicts stylised houses, a windmill, a church steeple and picket fences.



*Image 2-7 Banner on Orania website*

The depiction bears no relation to the actual town. The colour orange is used as the main colour throughout the website. The *Orania Beweging* is responsible for updating and maintaining the website. Comments on the website and on the YouTube video provide a good summary of external perceptions of Orania, and will be further analysed in 4.3.

Apart from the people physically residing in Orania, there is a support structure that is situated outside the physical place, and that is the members of the *Orania Beweging* or other affiliated groups. These sympathisers are called *uitwoners* or *buite Oraniërs*, (outside Oranians or outhabitants). *Uitwoners* include Afrikaners in diaspora across the world. This support structure is very important as it provides funding for projects in Orania, as well as moral support, and extends the sphere of influence. One informant summed this up nicely by saying: *Die beweging is groter as die dorp* / The movement is larger than just the town.

## **2.4 Orania in the South African legal context**

Landscape can be seen as one of many signifying systems through which social and political values are communicated (Mulk & Bayless-Smith 1999:364, 369). De Jongh (2006:79) referring to Bohlin (1998) further states that since place features prominently in shaping identity, the assertion of locality can be a manner of political activism. Taking ownership of a town with the express purpose of creating an Afrikaner enclave makes a political statement, especially within the contemporary political structures of South Africa.

Looking at the external power structures that shape the Orania landscape, the town is situated in a unique political place. Orania is not a proclaimed town. With the demarcation of municipalities that occurred in South Africa in 2000, Orania was to be incorporated into the Tembelihle municipality, which includes the towns of Hopetown and Strydenburg. However, with the proclamation of Tembelihle, Orania was not listed in the documentation with the other towns. The community currently functions as a Representative Transitional Council in the Northern Cape Province and the Provincial Government follows a policy of no interference in Orania's internal affairs (Van Biljon 2009:9). The private parent company *Orania*

*Bestuursdienste (Edms.) Bpk.* owns and maintains all the property in Orania. This incorporates a shareholder's company, *Vluytjeskraal Aandeleblok Bpk.* (De Beer 1998:111).

While Orania currently functions within the political structures of South Africa, the uncertainty regarding the continued status of Orania is a theme that comes to the fore in interviews with senior policy makers in the community. In a high-profile visit to the town in September 2010, South African President Jacob Zuma was asked to clarify the town's institutional status (Grobler 2010). No official response was received, which is taken as an indication that the status quo continues. However, in general, most inhabitants don't really speculate about Orania's legal status. They do however express concern that their everyday existence as a distinct community is under threat, although the threat is usually quite unspecific, yet pervasive. For most, everyday life and the inherent challenges of living in Orania take precedence.

Since Orania sits in a nebulous space in the political structures of South Africa, the support of institutions on a provincial and national level is also vague. There is a government-funded nurse that comes bi-monthly. The visit by a clinic nurse is usually a big event in small towns and rural areas, but since Orania has its own small clinic, this visit is not as much in demand as it is elsewhere. It is a matter of pride for inhabitants that Orania does not receive fiscal contributions from the state or provincial government. In the instances where funding has been sought (for instance in support for the recycling centre) the money has reportedly been used as a political carrot for a political direction that the community management did not feel comfortable with. One informant summed the perceived attitude up as: *Hulle boikot Orania doelbewus, hulle wil dit gebruik om ons selfstandigheid weg te vat.* (They deliberately boycott Orania, they want to use it to take away

our independence). This comment reflects a view held quite widely in the community.

## **2.5 Landscape of power, authority, structures**

Structure is an important factor in the community; whether it is the establishment thereof, or rebellion against. There is a variety of community structures, with committees, and meetings, which garner significant negative comment from some inhabitants. Conversely, the structured community institutions are highly rated as a positive by other community members. Pienaar (2007:63) and De Beer (2006) identify some official institutions namely:

- *Vluytjeskraal Aandeleblok Beperk* (VAB, Vluytjeskraal Shareholding Ltd):  
The company that owns the farm Vluytjeskraal 149
- *Orania Bestuursdienste* (OBD, Orania Management Services): The company that bought Orania originally and established the VAB
- *Orania Verteenwoordigende Raad* (OVR, Orania Representative Council): Elected institution voted for by inhabitants during municipal elections. Handles Orania's political interests in negotiations on provincial and national level
- *Orania Beweging* (Orania Movement): Movement to promote Afrikaner freedom and an own territory where a Christian lifestyle can be followed
- *Ontwikkelingsforum* (Development Forum): A discussion forum around Orania's ideals representing all major institutions
- *Ontwikkelingskantoor* (Development Office)
- *Inligtingskomitee* (Information Committee)
- *Toerismeraad* (Tourism Council): Promotes tourism to Orania
- *GroEIFonds* (Growth Fund)
- Schools

- *Koördinerende Onderwysraad* (Coordinating Education Council)
- Churches
- *Maatskaplike Raad* (Welfare Council)
- *Hospitaalraad en kliniek* (Hospital Council and Clinic)
- *Bewarea* (*Bewaararea*) (Conservation area).

Van Biljon (2009:5) further highlights these structures, but also includes the following structures:

- *Orania Spaar- en Krediet Koöperatief* (OSK) Orania Save and Credit Co-operative): The local 'bank' and publisher of the community currency
- *Orania Landbouvereniging* (OLV): Orania Agricultural Association: Promotes economic agriculture in Orania
- *Skoukomitee* (Show Committee): Arranges the annual Orania *Volkstaat* Show and monthly auction
- *Orania Sakekamer* (Orania Chamber of Commerce): Promotes the interests of the business sector in Orania, promotes the use of the Ora.

During interviews with research participants, and specifically those who were involved in the governing of the town, I questioned the sheer number of structures, making the comment that this means that everything feels over-regulated. The response was tinged with disbelief and incredulity, with the reply that these structures were what kept the community running. There are no external organisations and structures that perform these functions, so the community has to create these for themselves. However, there was also an array of reactions from other community members, ranging from mock despair to outright frustration with all the abbreviations, committees, councils and meetings. Meetings, especially, are also deemed to be too long.

During my orientation certain structures were also highlighted, with additional bodies such as the Security Committee and the radio station. While there are many structures, what one informant called a “web” for everyday life, some structures are more prominent. During conversations and interviews these are conspicuous structures mentioned most frequently or which are the most active. I will now discuss some of these institutions.

### **2.5.1 VAB/Dorpsraad**

The *Dorpsraad* is at the centre of power structures in the town, and for years was quite centrally located [5F]. In October 2010 the *Dorpskantoor* moved to the old Hospital building [4F] as town growth has necessitated more spacious offices. The *Dorpsraad* is made up of 5 members and a Chairman who acts as Mayor. There is also a town manager. The Directors are elected by secret ballot at an annual meeting of the shareholders of Orania (De Beer 2006:112).

Overall the people I spoke to were quite happy with the standard of services offered, with many praising their efforts at a time when other municipalities in South Africa are plagued by service-delivery issues. Disgruntled South African residents often engage in peaceful and violent protests directed at municipalities accused of providing poor services. Protest action in South Africa has increased steadily over the years: 2004 (10), 2005 (3), 2006 (2), 2007 (32), 2008 (27), 2009 (105), 2010 (111), 2011 (81), and 1 January to 31 July 2012 recording more protests than any other year since 2004 (113) (Anon 2012). This leads to perceptions of chaos, especially when Orania is compared to the rest of South Africa. Further elaboration can be found in 5.4.

It is a matter of internal pride that service delivery is of a high standard. During President Zuma's visit to Orania in September 2010, the manager of Elim, Willie du Plessis, was asked whether Orania local municipal workers also took part in the recent nationwide public-servant's strike. The response, widely quoted in South African media, was: *Staking? Ons ken nie daardie woord hier nie* (Strike? We don't know the meaning of that word here) (Grobler 2010).

Some people that I spoke to were rather less happy with the strategic management and direction the *Dorpsraad* has been providing, with statements like *Die Dorpsraad is oud en baie eng in hulle uitkyk* (The *Dorpsraad* is old and very conservative in their outlook). In some instances the *Dorpsraad* is perceived as exclusive, and it was felt that the same *Dorpsraad* members were elected over and over. When a new member is introduced, the new and often younger member often feels the pressure of conforming to the set methods of the incumbents and older members.

All residential property in Orania is shared and no title deeds are available. Full title deed, however, is available on agricultural land (De Beer 1998:111). Even though this has been the situation since inception, some people have an issue with the lack of title deed to property. This is also a deterrent for people investigating the possibility of settling in the community as they feel uncomfortable not owning the title deed of their own home. The statement *kaart en transport* (an older phrase for title deed) and the importance thereof is one that I heard in several conversations with inhabitants and *uitwoners*. The perception is that without the title deed the ownership is less real. This perception ties in with what an Orania-based estate agent told me: *Ek verkoop 'n stukkie idee* (I sell a part of an idea).

Pienaar (2007:109) and De Beer (2006:109) highlight the fact that there were internal differences on management principles, which were perceived as autocratic and dictatorial by some members in the community. One such conflict eventually resulted in legal action. According to conversations that I had, these dissident residents have now left the community. However, further examples of discontent with management structures do exist, but has not led to overt confrontation yet.

While law enforcement still falls under the South African Police Services, mostly by the Hopetown, but also by Vanderkloof police station, there are also internal Oranian security measures. The VAB is the entity responsible for maintaining order in the town, which includes traffic monitoring and handling minor crimes like petty theft. Inhabitants pay a small monthly *gebeurlikheidsheffing* (contingency fee) which contributes towards security and other eventualities. A *Veiligheidskomitee* (Security Committee) holds regular meetings on safety and security in Orania and there are Neighbourhood Watch style patrols staffed by volunteers on a rotation basis. On occasion security drills are performed where the booms (*valhekke*) at the major crossings like the R369 and *Pêrelrylaan* are closed and vehicles checked before entering the various residential areas.

Apart from managing the day-to-day upkeep in the town, the *Dorpskantoor* also acts as a central information hub for the community. When I was making enquiries about my initial fieldwork, I was asked to please register my presence in town at the *Dorpskantoor*. Other visitors such as repairmen, furniture delivery vehicles and police are also in first instances directed to the *Dorpskantoor*. More vigilant residents would also phone this office and identify outside companies and vehicles that were seen in the town. This is also where entry interviews are conducted.



### **2.5.2 Orania Beweging (Orania Movement)**

The *Orania Beweging* (also erroneously referred to as OBD<sup>10</sup> by a few individuals that I encountered in town, some of them established residents) is situated centrally at the *Afsaal* crossroads development [4E], and its proximity to the main road and shops makes it a hub for people movement and information. The *Orania Beweging* is the public face of Orania, which maintains the website, as well as a presence on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. The *Orania Beweging* was established in 2001 as an umbrella organisation encompassing the *Afrikanervryheidstigting*, *Afrikanervolkswag* and SABRA (Afrikaner Freedom Foundation, Afrikaner Volk Guard, South Africa Bureau for Racial Affairs), later renamed EPOG (*Vereniging vir Ekonomie, Politiek, Omgewing en Geskiedenis* – Association for Economy, Politics, Environment and History). The website describes the *Orania Beweging* as “an Afrikaans cultural movement with the aim to restore Afrikaner freedom in an independent, democratic Republic based on Christian values and a healthy balance between independence and cooperation with surrounding areas”.<sup>11</sup>

The *Orania Beweging* performs two functions: information and liaison as well as development. Information provided relates to education about Afrikaner goals towards own-state creation, republican tradition and democratic values and steps to restore freedom. The *Orania Beweging* also attempts to promote sustainable development that will establish and strengthen the Afrikaner’s economic, cultural and political independence.

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<sup>10</sup> OBD is the *Orania Bestuursdienste*. OB is the correct acronym for *Orania Beweging*.

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.orania.co.za/english/?page\\_id=418](http://www.orania.co.za/english/?page_id=418), [Accessed 29 April 2012]

The *Orania Beweging* has networks in other provinces as well as support groups internationally, known as the *Buitelandse Vriende van Orania* (Foreign Friends of Orania). The *Orania Beweging* maintains that success and growth of Orania relies on expansion of its support base. The modern state of Israel, and the support of the Diaspora as embodied by the Zionist Movement are often cited as an example of a successful support base (De Klerk 2003). This is the reason why the *Orania Beweging* wants to combine opportunities within and outside Orania to make an Afrikaner “home” of this greater Orania<sup>12</sup>. Ties between the Zionist Movement and Afrikaner self-determination are mostly limited to personal networks. In October 2010 the Orania-Israel Friendship League was established through the Orania Yahoo chat group, with the purpose to renew cultural ties between Israel and the Afrikaner people. The relationship is chiefly based on moral support.

### 2.5.3 Schools

There are two schools in Orania, the CVO (*Christelike Volksonderrig*) School [5H] and the *Volkskool* (*Volk School*) [5E]. While there is generally friendly rivalry between the schools, it can also become quite fierce and has sometimes led to litigation. Adherence to and support of either school is upon occasion a watershed in the community. Changing membership from one to the other i.e. by having one’s children attend one or the other, constitutes a public declaration of allegiance. CVO is a conservative education system aligned to the ideals of the national BCVO (*Beweging vir Christelik-Volkseie Onderwys*/Movement for Christian People’s Own Education). Examinations are *Eksamenraad vir Christelike Onderwys* (ERCO – Examination Board for Christian Education) assessments. It is very closely aligned to Christian nationalist education as it was pre-1994.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.orania.co.za/?page\\_id=10](http://www.orania.co.za/?page_id=10), [Accessed 25 September 2008]

*Volksskool* Orania is more unconventional in that pupils take ownership of their academic progress with teachers acting as facilitators rather than fulfilling the traditional teaching role. The system invests heavily in self-paced learning and the use of technology and computers. *Volksskool* is closely associated with *Kenweb* (Know Web), an Afrikaans computer-based distance learning programme often adopted by home schools. *Kenweb* and *Volksskool* matrices write IEB (Independent Examinations Board) exams which most private schools in South Africa write. Both schools have boarding facilities and children from neighbouring towns and from other provinces also board in Orania. However, not all children in Orania attend these schools, and some parents choose to home school their children. There are also children whose parents live in Orania, but who attend boarding school in cities like Bloemfontein or Kimberley.

#### **2.5.4 Churches**

Even though Orania doesn't have an iconic church building, it does have several church denominations (De Beer 2006:109). The denominations represented are:

- *Apostoliese Geloofsending* (AGS) (Apostolic Faith Mission)
- *Afrikaans Protestante Kerk* (APK) (Afrikaans Protestant Church)
- *Evangelies-Gereformeerde Kerk* (Evangelical Reformed Church)
- *Gereformeerde Kerk* (Reformed Church)
- *Hervormde Kerk* (Reformed Church)
- *Nederduits Gereformeerde (NG) Kerk* (Dutch Reformed Church)
- *Israel Visie* (Israel Vision)
- *Maranata Kerk*<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.oriania.co.za/aktiwiteite\\_godsd.asp](http://www.oriania.co.za/aktiwiteite_godsd.asp), [Accessed 28 October 2008]

External Afrikaner observers take this variety to mean that Orania embodies the inability of Afrikaners to live together harmoniously. One informant contextualised the different denominations, saying that because Oranians originally came from different places in the country, and they brought their different worshiping conventions with them in order to create something familiar in the new setting. In this way Orania becomes a concentrated microcosm for Afrikaners that migrated from across the whole of South Africa. With this variety one could expect a certain amount of friction. While strict adherence to a specific church denomination is a serious matter for some, mostly older inhabitants, I found that especially the younger people would attend services of other denominations. However, an informant stated that a gentleman's agreement exists between the churches not to actively poach members from other churches.

During the early years of Oranian settlement, a small population meant that Sunday worship was attended by members of different denominations, and the services alternate between different preachers. According to a few research participants, this communal worship created a great sense of community, especially in the founding years. As the population increased, the denominational identities became more pronounced and the collective services ended. However, on important religious days such as the Day of the Covenant an interdenominational service would take place, and everyone attending such events is quite positive about this opportunity to mingle. I only attended the interdenominational services in Orania.

With the exception of the charismatic Maranata, which in itself is a collection of charismatic denominations, all other churches in town are protestant. In a discussion on religion, always a sensitive subject, one informant stated that he didn't believe that the Roman Catholic Church is Christian. This very

conservative Protestant view was also echoed by a young man who felt very uncomfortable about the “happy clappy types” (charismatic), and how even the *NG Kerk* was being influenced and include musical instruments other than an organ in their services. This stopped him from participating in church activities. Regardless of the denomination however, the Christian character is of utmost importance in the Afrikaner identity constructed in Orania.

### **2.5.5 Radio Orania**

Radio Orania is the community radio station in Orania situated in the old hospital building [4F]. There is some contact with other Afrikaner radio stations such as Radio Pretoria, initially mostly based on the strength of personal relations rather than institutional contact. However, Radio Orania eventually started broadcasting Radio Pretoria programmes to fill airtime when Radio Orania isn't on air, especially over weekends. There is a national Afrikaans radio station in South Africa called *Radio Sonder Grense* (Radio without Boundaries). I heard a self-aware Oranian wittily refer to Radio Orania as *Radio met Grense* (Radio with Boundaries). This slogan is also associated with Radio Pretoria. With the community radio only broadcasting in a limited area with quite definite boundaries due to signal strength, along with the ideological implications, to me this summed up an acute insider awareness of boundaries. In some instances the transmission would be broadcast quite far, and I know that some reception was possible in Hopetown. So presenters are quite aware that their community broadcasts are not only received by the intended Oranian audience, but also by a wider audience on farms and in nearby towns.

I did a number of broadcasts on the radio, mostly on the youth programme where we would sit and light-heartedly chat. On one memorable occasion I was asked to bring along some food to the presenters and I eventually stayed to participate

in the programme. After a discussion about political terminology and how serious some people regarded themselves in such discussions, I took on the persona of a non-nihilistic, liberal rightwing academic (*nie-nihilistiese, liberale regsgeesinde*). To provide some context around the terminologies we mangled so gleefully, it was around this time that Danie Goosen's (2007) *Die Nihilisme: Notas oor Ons Tyd* (The Nihilism: Notes about Our Time) was published, eliciting intellectual debate, also in Orania. Goosen's book was reviewed in the *Vrye Afrikaan*, a magazine of the FAK (*Federasie vir Afrikaanse Kultuur*), of which Goosen was Chairman. The *Vrye Afrikaan* was often distributed in the orange folders that conference goers received when attending one of the Oranian conferences. It is within this serious academic and intellectually dense sphere that we played on air. The following day more than one listener teased us and asked why we were talking such nonsense on air.

In another series of programmes I also discussed my previous study in Afrikaans Literature. I felt quite hesitant to do this initially, as my topic and readings were very critical of conservative Afrikaans culture, and I felt that this discursive topic would not fit in with a community that prides itself on that self-same conservative approach. However, I was encouraged to be as critical or controversial as I wanted to be, which to me was a lesson in how not to self-censure according to the perceived audience. This is something that I found I had been doing continuously to fit in with the community.

The station was truly a community station, with opening and closing Bible readings and prayer, a programme with stories for smaller children and book readings for older children. The book that was being read during my various visits, and which received a lot of very positive feedback from all age groups, both *inwoners* (inhabitants) and visitors, was a tale from the Anglo-Boer War

(*Ruiter in the Nag / Rider in the Night*) about a young Boer scout and his actions against the British Empire and colonisation activities. While anti-English sentiment such as found in some very conservative Afrikaans communities, wasn't overtly present in the community, the tale of patriotism against overwhelming odds resonated very strongly in the community.

The *Dorpsraad*, *Orania Beweging*, schools, churches and Radio Orania are prominent entities in the Oranian culturescape that are mentioned most frequently by inhabitants in their daily lives, indicating the core function that these institutions fulfil. These structures provide sociocultural shape to Orania and they all contribute to an Oranian identity that adheres to the founding ideals of the community.

## **2.6 Manifestation of place**

Place and space are important elements to make sense of a fragmented world, and Tilley (2006:11-13) argues that the instability of contemporary modernity causes people to increasingly turn to forms of collective identity such as shared historical traditions linked with ethnic identities to provide ontological foundations. Knight (1982: 526) agrees that a distaste of perceived cultural homogeneity and cosmopolitanism associated with larger-scale modernizing societies encourages many people to return to small-scale societies, where minority status within a larger society actually provides a sense of identity. Cuba & Hummon (1993:548-549) argue that people may appropriate the meanings of place to articulate a sense of self, which signifies a significant affiliation of self with place. Orania can be seen as a small scale response to the perceived cultural homogeneity, with localism being a key phrase with which the town is governed. One of the Orania

founding members, the late Prof. Carel Boshoff (2003:12) linked Orania's goal of independence to localism:

*Uiteindelik is lokalisme die enigste waarborg vir die klein volke, die bedreigde minderheidsgroep en die gemeenskap wat sy geestesgoedere wil bewaar... In die goeie sin van die woord moet ons selfgenoegsaam word deur selfstandig, onafhanklik, selfonderhoudend en selfversorgend te wees. / Ultimately, localism is the only guarantee for the small nations, the threatened minority groups and the community that wants to preserve its soul... In the best sense of the word we must become self-sufficient by being independent and self-supporting<sup>14</sup>.*

The Ora is a vehicle to promote localism in the area, according to Lombard (2004a): *'n Eie geldstelsel vorm deel van Orania se fokus op lokalisme eerder as die neo-liberale globalisme* (An own monetary system forms part of Orania's focus on localism rather than the neo-liberal globalism). The Ora is Orania's own medium of exchange or buying voucher. The Ora was launched in April 2004 (Anon 2004a:3). The Ora promotes community financial empowerment<sup>15</sup> and is an initiative to differentiate Orania financially from the rest of South Africa (De Beer 2006:110). The Ora cannot be used for legal tender in the Republic of South Africa (RSA). It is managed by the community bank (OSK). The intention was not only to differentiate Orania financially from the RSA but also to stimulate trade within the community. This goal has succeeded. Mears' (2009) study concludes that the Ora is a working example of a functional local currency with the potential to address poverty and unemployment elsewhere in South Africa with similar solutions. An annual profit via the Ora is realised, and the money is

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<sup>14</sup> Translator's note: I have to point out that there are several synonyms for independence in Afrikaans

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.oriania.co.za/geld.asp>, [Accessed 28 October 2008]



utilised in community development. The recycling facility, for example, was partly financed by the profit shown from the Ora.

When Pienaar conducted her research in 2005, she found that inhabitants of Orania were satisfied with the Ora as it established community identity, stimulated the local economy, profits were used in community development programmes and the Ora was a safe currency, as no-one would steal it (Pienaar 2007:99). In case of theft, the unique serial numbers quickly enabled the notes in question to be traced, and the few instances of theft were quickly resolved. Apart from performing a practical function, the Ora also depicts symbols. The illustrations on the notes represent symbols from Afrikaner history, arts, and culture (Anon. 2004d:3).

The use of the Ora is something that the community promotes internally. Although Rands are accepted in the town, the use of the Ora is given preference. There is a 5% discount on items that are purchased in Ora. The *Dorpsraad* donates 2000 Ora to new parents of babies born in Orania. The Ora is also used in the surrounding towns, e.g. the entry fee to the Vanderkloof Resort is accepted in Ora. Mears (2009) also highlights the fact that labourers from neighbouring farms have been paid in Ora and also exchange Ora for Rands at the shops (most notably the liquor store) in order to qualify for the 5% discount. From an external perspective, the use of the Ora is often taken as an example of Orania's desire to break away from South Africa, especially with article headlines such as "Whites-only' money for SA town" (Anon 2004b). For Oranians, localism, and the vehicles through which it is promoted like the Ora, is a key aspect in creating a place-bound identity.

## 2.7 Intellectual space

Orania as place has been eliciting intellectual discussion. Formal occasions for such intellectual debate include an annual conference (usually in conjunction with the *Burgervergadering* (Citizen's Assembly), the *Voorgrond* (Foreground) publication of the *Orania Beweging*, annual commemorative lectures and the EPOG Research and publishing unit. During my fieldwork, I experienced that everyone in the community has some kind of opinion, often quite standard, but sometimes quite different to what intellectuals or decision makers were verbalising.

On an intellectual level, some discussion has centred on the thought that Orania offers a home to Afrikaners that feel that they don't currently have a home. The *Afrikanertuiste* (home of the Afrikaner) is a grounded metaphor that is further discussed in 5.2. According to Augé's (1995:77) seminal work on non-places, a non-place is principally associated with transit and communication, and is not relational, historical or concerned with identity creation. It is in comparison to this construct of supermodernity that Orania emphasises a local, place-bound identity. The Afrikaans *plek* and *ontplek* (place and un/non-place) are important signifiers here:

*Afrikaners is ontplek, hulle voel vervreemd. Hulle voel magteloos omdat hulle in 'n stelsel is, maar nie deel van 'n stelsel nie, hulle voel betekenisloos en sonder toekomsverwagting, hulle voel geïsoleerd en selfs verwyder van hulleself. Orania kan Afrikaners weer 'bepiek', maar Orania moet die vertrouwe van die Afrikaners wen. / Afrikaners are unplaced, they feel alienated. They feel helpless, because they are in a system, but not part of a system, they feel meaningless and without expectations for the future, they feel isolated and even removed from*

themselves. Orania can place Afrikaners again, but Orania has to win the trust of Afrikaners (Hermann 2008).

However, in describing a future Afrikaner city, Rossouw (2008:22) discusses Orania's shortcomings and reasons why this might not happen in this place:

*...net soos wat die huidige Orania nog 'n ander teenstrydigheid beliggaam: terwyl dit op 'n metapolitieke vlak, minstens in Boshoff [Carel iv Boshoff] se denke, beslis blyke van 'n ander moderniteit en ruimtelikheid gee, is dit tegelyk tans in vele opsigte vergelykbaar met 'n plattelandse dorp van negentiende-eeuse Afrikaner. /...just like Orania currently embodies another dichotomy: while it gives expression to another modernity and spatiality on a meta political level, at least according to Boshoff [Carel iv Boshoff], it is in many ways comparable to a rural town of nineteenth century Afrikaners.*

In Orania, the relationship between the here-and-now, which is the place, and the space of ideas, is closely intertwined. The initial purchase of Orania came to be due to the direct actions of Afrikaner intellectuals. The place was appropriated to articulate a very specific sense of self by a small group of individuals. But each and every person that comes to Orania contributed to the multiple construction of meaning in that place. It is this complex network of relations and interactions between the structures of power and dissident voices that has led to discord in the past. Through a review process and the enforcement of a code of conduct, the current homogeneity of the community is regulated. However, this standard of behaviour is one that is in constant flux, and is also one that is constantly present in the minds of the management as well as the inhabitants.

The interaction between the physical place and ideology comes to head in some contentious spaces in Orania, namely the liquor store [5F], the pub [6G] and the *Elim* centre in Kleingeluk [7G]. The liquor store and the pub are two highly politicised places, even though they are connected to prominent figures in the community. The *Wynhuis* (Wine House) liquor store belongs to the CEO of the *Orania Beweging* and is situated at the Eureka Supermarket, and next to the jeweller. The *Vaatjie* (Barrel), the local pub, is owned by the son of the town manager and is situated in the light industrial area.

The *Wynhuis* does brisk trade, especially on Friday afternoons. It is not only the Orania inhabitants that flock to the store. Farm labourers from neighbouring farms also congregate around the liquor store and in the adjacent car park and use it as a social gathering place. In this way the liquor store provides ingress into the community and in so doing diffuses the tightly structured boundaries. It is this relaxation of boundaries, not only for entry into the community but also for the product sold that makes the liquor store suspect and a disturbance in the social construction. Further discussion can be found in 3.4.3 and 5.5.

The *Vaatjie* is regularly vilified by some members of the community, and held up to be an example of an undesirable place in the community, where alcoholism and loose mores challenge the conservative norm. An anecdote illustrates the feelings of some members of the community. A tender was advertised for a pub in the community, and the town manager subsequently received a call from a very upset *tannie* (auntie), confusing the pub with a bordello. A girl, not old enough to enter the *Vaatjie* legally, also told me that girls of 16 and younger would go and drink there. I was a regular patron, and had never personally seen an under-aged drinker. I frequently chatted with the bartenders, and they also assured me that that would not be allowed to happen. Even though the *Vaatjie*

was a liminal and undesirable space (at least to some Oranians), it was interesting to see self-regulation happening there. A group of local labourers were drinking, and one of them became very drunk. The bartender refused to serve him more alcohol, and when he became insistent, his friends took him outside, “talked” to him very severely (i.e. gave him a few smacks to set him straight) and then sent him home. Fights do break out amongst the Oranians, but it is generally limited to fist fights and rarely involves knives. However, if someone from Hopetown should come to stir trouble, it is a matter of Orania pride to act united against the outsider, I was assured. The *Vaatjie* burned down in 2009, but regulars did not let the lack of structure deter them and had *braais* (barbeques) at the premises. The pub was rebuilt and officially reopened in March 2011. It was never fully established whether the fire was an act of arson or whether it was an accident.

The Elim Centre is an accommodation and labour service for young Afrikaner men<sup>16</sup> seeking work in Orania, described as “bed and sweat”. These labourers are selected on the basis of their support of the Afrikaner culture, religion and personal hygiene and neatness.<sup>17</sup> Elim and its inhabitants are often linked to alcohol use and abuse. During conversation, examples would be given of how the Elim-*outjies* (guys) would disturb the peace or act uncouth, usually at community events, e.g. a *braai* for Prof. Boshoff’s birthday.

The younger men from Elim were usually educated in South Africa. Their education, under the curriculum in the new South Africa, did not include an emphasis on Afrikaner holidays, and they would have had exposure to more multi-cultural curriculae. Their social memory construction would be quite

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<sup>16</sup> The Nerina units for single women were completed in July 2012

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.oria.co.za/english/?page\\_id=104](http://www.oria.co.za/english/?page_id=104), [Accessed 29 April 2012]

different to someone who has been living in Orania for a number of years, or an older person brought up in Christian National Education. Olick & Robbins (1998:133) refer to the utmost importance of this social memory as a central medium through which identities are constituted. They also find that both memory and identity are on-going processes, so it is a continuous process to integrate this often migratory segment of the Oranian population into the community.

The liquor store, the pub and *Elim* illustrate how places are not inert containers and how they are constructed to provide meaning. These places are also examples of Sack's (1993:326) territorial rules about not only what is in place, but also that what is out of place and illustrate how place has power. This argument can be extended to what is deemed inside and outside.

## **2.8 Inside and Outside**

Based on an analysis of stated Oranian ideals and conflict, both on a South African political front and in the stereotypes arising from those stated goals, one of the reasons why Orania is so controversial is that it manifests a physical boundary of a cultural ideology. The limit of a collective identity is set firmly by a management function. Activities such as screening prospective inhabitants and determining and adhering to membership criteria are examples of the boundaries that are established. Barth's 1969 work on boundaries starts with the basic definition that the boundary designates what is inside and what is outside. Paasi (2003:464) describes how boundaries give expression to power relations since boundary creation involves a choice between contesting visions of how to divide up space.

The boundary is especially relevant in the ethnic identity creation process. The ethnic group is defined through its relationships to others, highlighted through the boundary (Cosgrove 2003:260). In Orania, as a designated place for a certain ethnic group, this boundary creation and flux can be identified within the place and space.

Race is an obvious visual marker for self and other and inside and outside in this space. Opperman states that while race is not included in the Constitution of Orania, it is part of the ethnic identity that is reflected by Afrikaners elsewhere (Opperman 2004:3). There is a keen awareness of race and Afrikaner ethnicity in the community, ranging from outright racism to open-mindedness. The tenet of *selfwerksaamheid* (self-reliance with regard to labour) is often mentioned in this context, either as a positive or negative aspect of the community.

According to Cosgrove (2003:260) there are normalizing connections between landscape and ethnicity. Differentiation of people by means of biological differences finds both expression and reinforcement in landscape. The visible presence of 'outsiders' within a landscape scene is a visual association, and landscape layout provides another association. The presence of Kleingeluk is an example of the link between landscape and ethnicity in the Orania of the past. The town was originally built according to apartheid principles. Coloured labourers working on the water projects stayed in a separate area approximately 1km outside the town, called Grootgewaagd. After Orania was purchased, Grootgewaagd was renamed Kleingeluk (Pienaar 2007:58). None of my research participants could tell me why this name change took place. Even to this day, there are physical differences in these two areas in Orania. Houses and stands in Kleingeluk are much smaller and more modest and in some cases quite derelict.

For a long time Kleingeluk was perceived to be an inferior part of town. A 2004 press article for instance reported on a disgruntled and now former inhabitant's views on the *grootdorp* (big town) that is reserved for intellectuals and a downtown which is for *armgatte* (poor bums) working as cleaners, gardeners and farm workers (Anon 2004c). However, this perception has gradually changed, and now Kleingeluk is mentioned by insiders and outsiders as an example of how much progress has occurred in Orania over the past few years.

Based on my observations, I give this basic breakdown of the several degrees of inside-ness. Being accepted as a true Oranian is based on a complex sliding scale and adherence to normative behaviour, such as how long they've been settled in Orania, how much trouble they cause by swearing, drinking or disobeying the community's rules, both official and non-official, the contribution made to the community through, for instance, church activities, or community radio station involvement.

- *Omwoners*, or people living in the area around Orania. This includes farmers from surrounding farms – some whom are seen as members of the community, even though they do not engage in the principles of *selfwerksaamheid* on their farms but do participate in community activities. Some farmers are deemed more distant (even if they are physically closer to the town), so they do not participate in community matters, and are not reckoned as Orania people.
- Coloured farm labourers who come and buy at the shops in the town, and utilise the petrol station. Many farm labourers are puzzled by the situation in Orania. Their money is good enough, but their labour is not good enough for Orania. So, they can buy at the shops and contribute to the community economically, but are not allowed to reap economic benefit from the community themselves.



- Proclaimed *uitwoners*, i.e. individuals connected to the town closely but who are not actual inhabitants. This includes members of the *Orania Beweging*, individuals who might own property in the town but live elsewhere or people who are politically involved and connected (for instance Freedom Front Plus supporters). The Freedom Front Plus (VF+) is a South African political party that aims to protect Afrikaner interests.
- Visitors, such as family members, academics, conference goers, holiday makers. Journalists are treated on a case-by-case basis since Orania has received severe and negative coverage from journalists who played a sympathetic role in order to gain advantageous press.
- Former inhabitants of Orania who stay in surrounding or distant towns, who still come to town every now and again for practical reasons. Post boxes are often kept active even though inhabitants relocate to other places.
- Official outsiders such as delivery truck drivers who deliver supplies and perform maintenance work for institutions like Telkom. These outsiders have to announce themselves at the *Dorpskantoor* before conducting their business in town.
- Passing tourists or truck drivers who stop for cold drinks, food and incidental purchases.

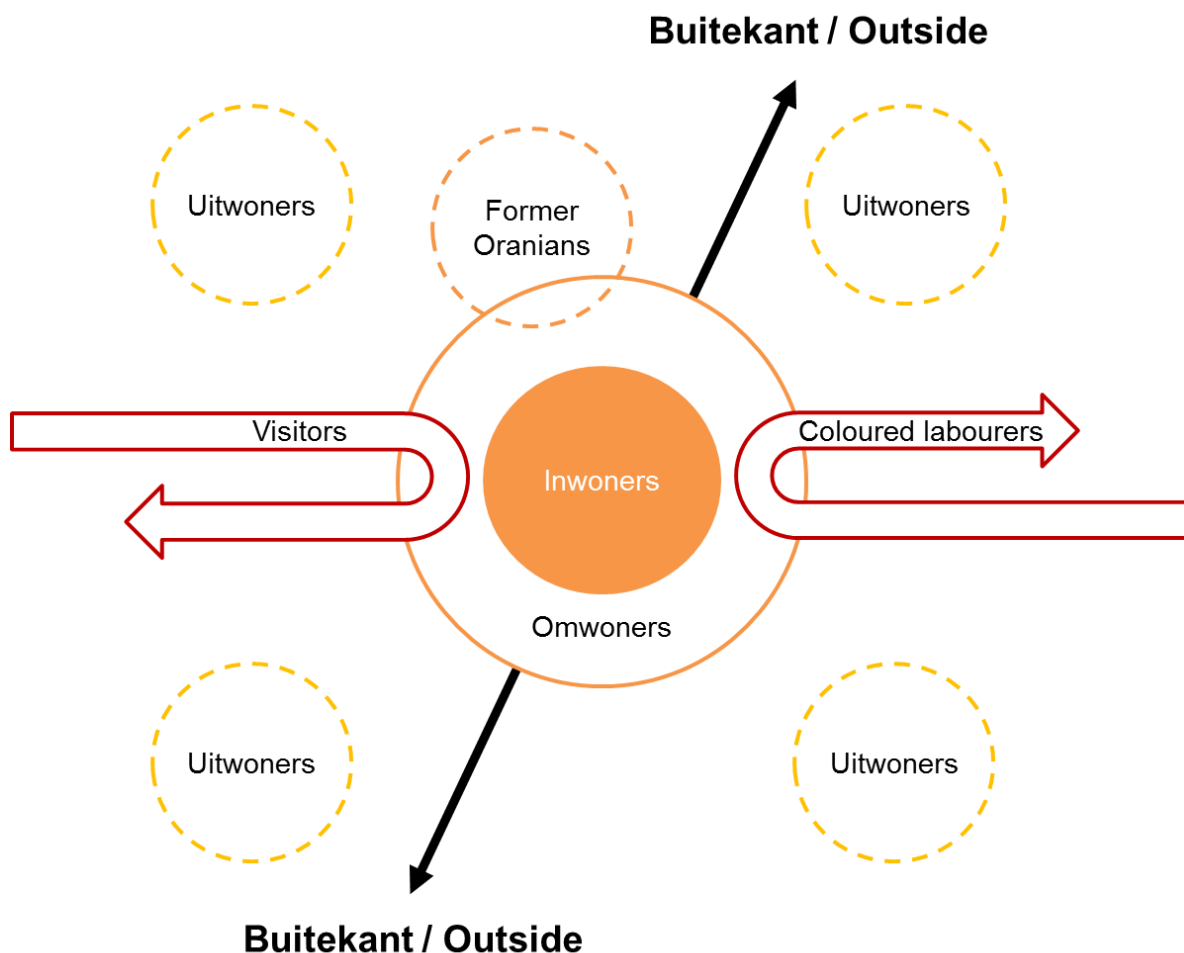


Image 2-8 Inside and outside

Wodak, De Cillia & Reisigl (2009:35) discuss linguistic means in the construction of identity. They find that lexical unit and syntactic devices serve to construct unification, unity, sameness, difference, uniqueness, origin, continuity, gradual or abrupt change, autonomy, heteronomy. This construction can occur through amongst others personal pronouns and quantifiers, as well as spatial reference. In Orania, this comes to bear in a keen awareness of inside and outside as displayed in casual conversation. Inhabitants refer to Orania as *die dorp* (town), and I have also heard reference to *die stad* (city), *tuisland* (homeland). *Die stad* is sometimes used ironically, but it is also used by some to indicate the bustle of the town, where something is always happening, and this attitude is especially evident at the *Dorpskantoor*, Post Office and *Orania Beweging* offices. *Tuisland*

is of course a very laden term, referring to the apartheid Bantustans<sup>18</sup>. But *tuisland* in this sense also links to Orania as *Afrikanertuiste*. Inhabitants would very pertinently refer to the rest of South Africa as *buite, daar buite, buiteland, buitekant, land oorkant die rivier*, (outside, out there, country across the river) creating a very specific boundary between us and them.

If one looks at the context of the larger South African situation, the inside/outside issue also comes to the fore. There are individuals who feel that Orania should be a state independent or outside of South Africa, while others believe that the community is inextricably linked to South Africa and should operate within the greater South African context. The perceptions of people who have never been in Orania also reflect a very definitive stance. Orania is often seen as operating outside of the South African spirit of reconciliation. Internal and external attitudes toward Orania's position on the inside/outside are meaningful in the construction of the place and space.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

At first glance Orania has the appearance of a distinctive community in a seemingly unproblematic demarcation of space. Without the land, without the place, Orania would not be there, even though the thought of Afrikaner self-determination would still persist. I endeavour to illustrate that the landscape does not merely comprise the land, but also includes the lived experiences and attitudes of the inhabitants. Through migration, Orania becomes a concentrated microcosm for Afrikaners from across the whole of South Africa, and in order to

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<sup>18</sup> Also see Seldon, 2012. *The last hope of Afrikanerdom? Orania as an ethnic homeland*. Unpublished Paper presented at the 12th EASA Biennial Conference: Nanterre, France 10-13th July 2012

create cohesion in the community, a specific Oranian identity is required. The place and space becomes a conceptual map which orders social life.

The *Dorpsraad*, *Orania Beweging*, schools, churches and Radio Orania are prominent entities in the Oranian culturescape that are mentioned most frequently by inhabitants in their daily lives, indicating the core function that these institutions fulfil. These structures provide political, social, religious and educational structure to Orania. Localism, and the vehicles through which it is promoted like the Ora, is a key aspect in creating a place-bound identity. These aspects all contribute to an Oranian identity that adheres to the founding ideals of the community. The physical orientations of inside and outside are important indicators of spatial attitudes. These elements are why I feel that the interaction, both fluid and problematic, between physical place and ideational space is significant to physical and ideational orientation within the Orania landscape. In Chapter 3 I will consider methodologies in which to orientate in this landscape and in so doing to further investigate the relationship between place and space.

## Chapter 3 LANDSCAPE AS TEXT

### 3.1 Introductory remarks

It should not be surprising, given my background in literature, that I am interested in analysing an unknown and parse it into “known” academic parlance, i.e. reading the landscape as a text. Ley’s (1985:419) statement immediately focussed my attention on this as a legitimate way to make sense of the landscape: landscape as text, “a medium to be read for the ideas, practices and contexts constituting the culture which created it.” Not quite sure as to where to start on these ideas, practices and contexts, I referred back to textual analysis techniques that look for repetition, anomalies and themes. And if landscape is a text, I asked myself, what narratives does it hold?

At first the landscape of Orania where I conducted research is unremarkable and undistinguishable from any other rural Karoo town. Many first-time visitors, and some who now reside in the town, comment that it doesn’t live up to the hype, both positive and negative. Everything is ordered, the careful allocation of yards and streets creating an exact grid that everything needs to fit into. Signboards create a distinct feel to the town, an ordered and purpose-driven text. But Cresswell (1996:13) cautions that there is never just one way to read this place and landscape. As with texts, the landscape as text is subject to multiple readings, even if some interpretations are encouraged more than others. It is these layers of meaning that have to be peeled away, and as one becomes more familiar with the context, new meanings reveal themselves. As fieldworker, one becomes more perceptive as one becomes more embedded, allowing access to deeper and multiple meanings.

In 2007 a broad cross-section of the community<sup>19</sup> provided feedback by means of a survey contributing to the findings of the *Geïntegreerde Ontwikkelingsplan* (GOP) as regards Orania as place and space. The landscape perception study and analysis draws heavily on Lynch's (1960) *The Image of the City* in understanding the "sense of identity" the landscape provides to inhabitants. Lynch concentrates on the visual quality of the landscape, the clarity or "legibility", a term used to describe the ease with which people can understand the layout of a place. Lynch (1960:8) defines a method of analysing legibility based on five elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. Interviews with a sample of the residents elicited their own images of this physical environment. Van Biljon (2009: 47) utilises these five elements, and categorises landmarks into natural and human-made features:

*Die rivier en sy oewer is die mees spesiale en 'heilige' plek vir Oraniërs. Kort op dit se hakke, is die randjie / beeldekoppie en dan, Oewerpark. Natuurplekke is dus baie spesiaal; dit sal beskerm moet word. 'Stedelike' plekke naamlik die Verwoerdhuis, swembad en die museum volg dan. /*  
The river and its riverbank is the most special and 'sacred' place for Oranians. Closely following are the ridge / monument hill and then, the *Oewerpark*. Natural places are thus very special, and should be protected. 'Urban' places, namely the Verwoerd house, swimming pool and museum follows.

The majority of the landscape features that I investigate in this chapter are human-made features. These observable and tangible features present in the landscape create a culturescape, or the imprint that people leave on the landscape. I will use this culturescape to present multiple readings of the

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<sup>19</sup> This includes management, officialdom, business owners, primary and secondary school children, retirees, farmers, *Kleingelukkers* (people living in Kleingeluk), couples, *uitwoners* and the youth.

intangible aspects such as ideas (independence), practices (*selfwerksaamheid*) and contexts (Afrikaner nationalism). In order to flesh out the multiple reading, I will first provide some relevant background on textual analysis as applied to landscape. These analytical tools will be utilised to analyse the Orania landscape and explore whether the symbolic, signifying and intertextual narratives embodied in the landscape can be seen as establishing ideas, practices and contexts.

### **3.2 Textual analysis**

If one conducts an analysis of a topographical feature such as landscape, Greimas' (1986:25), framework of an elementary model of communication is useful in the analysis of this "text". The model consists of a sender-producer and a receiver-reader, with the topological element, such as landscape, the object-message to be decoded. In decoding the object, Cresswell (1996:13) argues that there is never just one way to read this place and landscape. As with texts, the object is subject to multiple readings, even if some interpretations are encouraged more than others, creating interpretations that range from desired to less desired. A hierarchy of readings can be discerned, with Cresswell (1996:162) arguing that the arrangement of spaces and places can be thought of as a "metanarrative" – a text of established meanings. Porter (2002:12,42) defines metanarrative as narratives that are repeated in a variety of forms and that connect vitally with deep values, wishes, and fears in a text. Apart from establishing meaning, narratives and metanarratives are key to establishing identity, according to Cobley (2001:37).

Fairclough identifies certain tools to aid in critical discourse analysis: the texture of texts, their form and organisation (Fairclough 1995:5); absences from texts

(Ibid. 5); metaphors, and coherence (Ibid. 74). Further items to add to this analysis are conflict and character (Porter 2002:51,124), and Smith's (1993:88) use of displacement, pretension and irony. The importance of intertextuality or dependence of texts upon society and history is stressed by Fairclough (1995:188), Poynton & Lee (2000:5) and Porter (2002: 94). These tools will be utilised to analyse the Orania landscape and explore whether the symbolic, signifying and intertextual narratives embodied in the landscape can be seen as establishing ideas, practices and contexts.

### **3.3 Symbols**

According to Opperman (2004), Oranians are very conscious of the symbols that they wear and support and that they are aware and knowledgeable about the symbols. Boshoff (2007:37) summarises the main Oranian symbols as follows:

*Ons simbole is onder meer die Vryheidsvlag, die kleur oranje, ons dorpsembleem, die sekretarisvoël wat op borde in die dorp verskyn, die seuntjie wat sy moue oprol, selfs die Ora wat eintlik 'n gebruiksitem is, en nog baie meer. / Our symbols are amongst others the Freedom Flag, the colour orange, our town emblem, the secretary bird that is depicted on billboards in the town, the little boy rolling up his sleeves, even the Ora that is actually an item in daily use, and much more.)*

Turner uses the following definition as a starting and working definition, whereby a symbol is a thing regarded by general consent as naturally typifying, representing or recalling something by possessing analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought (Turner 1967:19). According to Turner (1967:50-51), one must consider three fields of meaning: the exegetical meaning, or member interpretation; the operational meaning, based on member observation;



and the positional meaning, which derives from the relation. Turner (1967:284) also classifies symbols as multivocal and polysemous: “they stand for many objects, activities and relationships; there is not a one-to-one relationship between symbol and referent but a one-to-many relationship”.

In performance and event-analysis, Turner (1975:150) describes symbols as agencies and foci of social mobilisation, interaction, and styling of behaviour. Nagel (1994:165) highlights how, during the cultural construction process, cultural symbols and meanings are used by campaigners in the ethnic mobilisation process. It should be noted that while there is an overt awareness of certain symbols in Orania, the cultural performances themselves can also be seen to have symbolic significance. Symbols evident in the landscape include the *Kleine Reus* (little giant), together with the colour orange and tangible landmarks such as the *Koeksistermonument* (Cruller Monument) which require further discussion.

### **3.3.1 Die Kleine Reus (Little Giant)**

The *Kleine Reus* is a symbol of the concept of *selfwerksaamheid*. *Selfwerksaamheid* can be translated as self-reliance with regard to labour, performing your own work or people’s own labour. This means that labour in Orania is only performed by Afrikaners. This official *dorpseembleem* (town emblem) is depicted on flags and in the form of a statue. The image is also used on other merchandise from t-shirts to signboards in town. The *Kleine Reus* depicts a young boy rolling up his sleeves, and is also known to people as *die mannetjie wat sy moue oprol* (the little man rolling up his sleeves), *selfwerk-mannetjie* (little man doing his own work), *moue-op-mannetjie* (little sleeves-up man), or simply as the *mannetjie* (little man). In the 2009 GOP contributions, Van

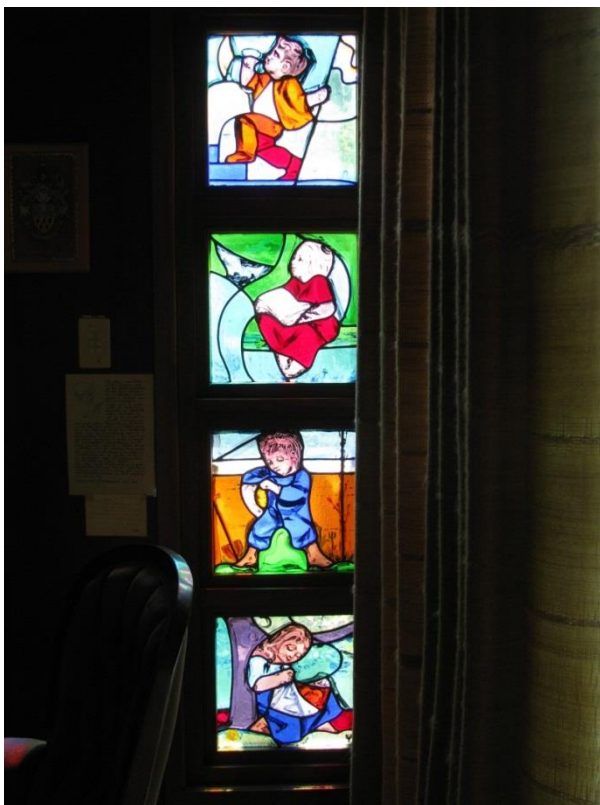
Biljon (2009: 47) highlights that the *mannetjie* and freedom are seen as the primary symbols that Oranians identify with: *Orania se simbole is die Mannetjie en 'Vryheid' met dieselfde gewig* (Orania's symbols are the *mannetjie* and freedom with the same weighting).



*Image 3-1 The Orania flag, depicting the Kleine Reus*

The flag was designed by a local architect and the design submitted to the *Dorpsraad* as a part of a competition. The flag was officially hoisted for the first time as part of the opening ceremony of the sixth *Volkstaatskou* (People's show) on 29 April 2005. A motivation for the design was published along with the announcement in the *Volkstater* of March/April 2005. The colours refer to the origin and history of the Dutch *Prinsevlag* (Prince Flag) (1570), the Orange Free State (1854) and the former South African flag. The colours are in reverse order of blue, white and orange, as opposed to orange, white and blue. This reordering symbolises a new start and a re-evaluation of the Afrikaner's situation (Anon 2005a:5). Superimposed on the blue, white and orange is a stylised figure of a boy rolling up his sleeves. Some visitors to the town have commented that the *mannetjie's* style has an aesthetic connection to early twentieth century images.

The image and statue of the *mannetjie* by artist Cornelia Holm is modelled on a logo Ely Holm submitted to *Volkskas* in 1960 for potential commercial use. After the bank declined the use of the logo, Mrs. Ely Holm presented it to Dr. Verwoerd, where Prof. Boshoff reportedly saw it (Strydom, 2012). The logo was also incorporated into a stained glass window that was presented as a gift to Mrs. Betsie Verwoerd by Mrs. Ely Holm (Anon. 2004d:3) and is currently still on display at the Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling* (Commemorative Collection) [5E]. One of the other figures in the design, the figure of the girl reading, is used on the fifty Ora note. I took a photograph of the panel of four figures that make out the series, only later to find out that photography isn't allowed in the museum. The photograph documents the *mannetjie*'s own design origin, serves as evidence of my inadvertent transgression, and hopefully a sheepish apology as well.



*Image 3-2 Quartet of figures in the Verwoerd Gedenkversameling*

While the *mannetjie* is used as a formal symbol throughout, it is also used to decorate personal spaces, as seen in Image 3-3.



*Image 3-3 Kleine Reus in a personal space*

The *mannetjie* is furthermore also used for commercial purposes, and was designed with this commercial application in mind (Anon, 2005a:5). Products from Orania can use the *Kleine Reus* as a trademark on their produce. Permission to use the symbol is granted by the *Dorpsraad*, subject to certain conditions, such as the quality of the product and the manufacture of the product in Orania.

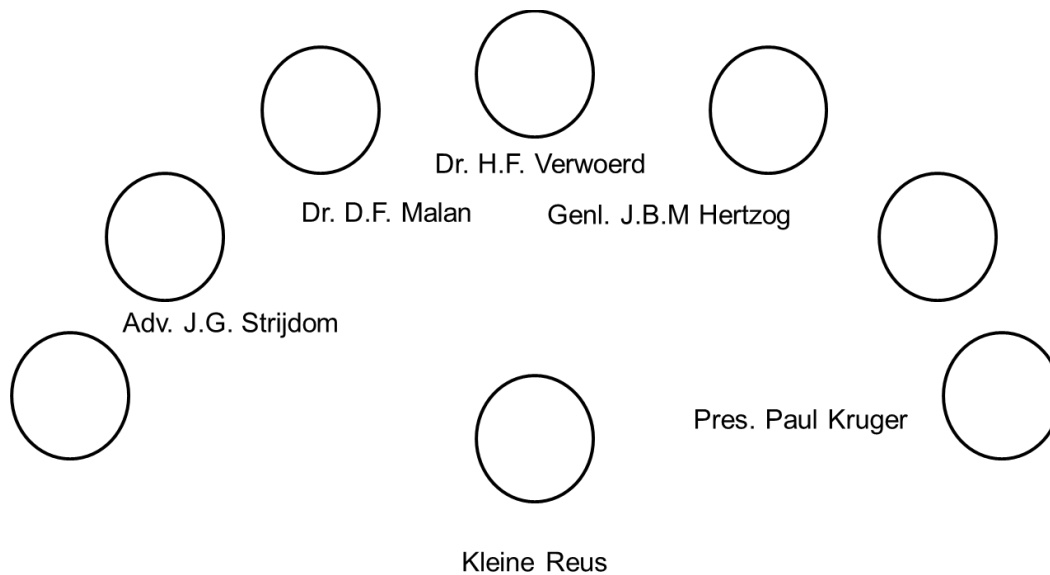


*Image 3-4 Kleine Reus keyring*

During my first visit to Orania, I first saw the Oranian flag in the *Gemeenskapsaal* (community hall) [7D]. I thought about the implied sexism of the boy depicted on the flag: that only men work hard, only male activities have a positive outcome, or that males alone get a flag. When I asked female Oranians about their feelings around the *Kleine Reus*, *selfwerksaamheid* was the primary meaning attributed to the *Kleine Reus*, although the comment was jokingly made that women of course work harder than the men. The *Kleine Reus* could be perceived as a patriarchal device. This interpretation is bolstered by a popular saying that is found as a slogan on ashtrays, keyrings and t-shirts, most often with the *Kleine Reus*: *Orania is nie vir sissies nie / Orania is nie 'n plek vir sissies nie*. (Orania isn't for sissies / Orania is not a place for sissies). When the local tearoom was up for sale, a For Sale advert in the *Volkstater* listed the prospects of the facilities, and ended with this statement (Anon 2005b). Sissy originated as a term for a male who violates or does not meet the requirements for traditional, heterosexual male gender roles, i.e. an effeminate boy or man. While the sentiment of the saying is meant to convey how tough it is to survive in Orania, the inherent and casually assumed heterosexual and patriarchal agenda cannot be ignored either.

The statue of the *Kleine Reus* can be found in the *beeldetuin* (statue garden) on the *Monumentkoppie* (monument hill) [6D], situated in Orania-Oos (east) close to the *Gemeenskapsaal*. In December 2005 it was announced that a *beeldetuin* would be constructed on the *Monumentkoppie*. Orania architect Christiaan van Zyl was tasked with this undertaking (Anon. 2005c:1). The *beeldetuin* was unveiled on 31 Mei 2007, *Bittereinderdag* (Die hard Day), one of the Oranian holidays. The *Kleine Reus* is situated in the middle of the half-circle, and the busts of five prominent male Afrikaner politicians on cement columns are arranged around it. One interpretation that I was given about the *mannetjie's*

location is that *selfwerksaamheid* is central to Orania, with the historical and political spheres forming a perimeter. Two columns are vacant. Some speculation exists about who else should be represented, and I have heard suggestions that the late Prof. Carel Boshoff should be honoured in this manner. Some research participants have offered a more prosaic explanation, in that a suitable bust just hasn't been donated to Orania yet.



*Image 3-5 Layout of the beeldetuin*

The *Kleine Reus* statue is placed on a column of natural stone, with a plaque on the pillar that reads: “*Labore ad Libertatum/Deur arbeid tot Vryheid*” (Through labour to freedom). The plaque goes on to motivate why people’s own labour is linked to freedom in an own territory:

*Volkseie arbeid is die voorvereiste vir volhoubare Vryheid in ’n eie grondgebied. Volksgenote moet verantwoordelikheid neem vir alle soorte werk, soos dit die geval oor die wêreld heen is. Hierdie uitgangspunt is so grondliggend dat dit die waarborg skep vir alle ander vryheidsvoorwaardes. Geen grondgebied vir Afrikaners kan tot Vryheid groei terwyl dit van nie-Afrikanerarbeid afhanklik is nie. Wanneer arbeidskrisse ontstaan in die toepassing van die beginsel van volkseie*

*arbeid, sal mede-Afrikaners mekaar bystaan om sulke krisisse te oorkom en onder geen omstandighede terugval op die vryheidsvernietigende praktyke van vreemde arbeid nie.*

*Libertas: Burgerlike Vryheid, Onafhanklikheid, Geestelike Vryheid.*

*Labor: Inspanning, Moeite, Arbeid, Werksaamheid, Werklus./*

People's own labour is a prerequisite for sustainable Freedom in an own territory. Fellow members of the people's state must take responsibility for all kinds of work, as is the case across the world. This starting point is the underlying principle that creates the guarantee for all other conditions for freedom. No territory for Afrikaners can grow to freedom while it is dependent on non Afrikaner labour. When labour crises originate in the application of people's own labour, fellow Afrikaners will support each other to overcome such crises, and will under no circumstances fall back on the freedom-crushing practices of foreign labour.

Libertas: Civil freedom, Independence, Religious freedom.

Labor: Effort, Difficulty, Labour, Industriousness, Desire for Work.

In an editorial for the *Voorgrond*, Möller (2006:13) recalls a newspaper article that drew a parallel between one of the (now removed) signboards, *Eie arbeid maak ons vry* (Own labour makes us free) and the Nazi slogan, *Arbeit mach Frei*. Orania officially and unequivocally distances itself from racist organisations, amongst those the Nazi regime. However, I would posit that the Oranian focus on community and own labour does correspond with the creation of the German *Volksgemeinschaft* and subsequent attitudes towards work and labour. In discussions around labour, some research participants either jokingly or very carefully referred to the parallels between the Oranian focus on labour and the Marxist and communist focus on the worker. However, further conversation about

this particular strand of the discussion was actively discouraged by group consensus, and no further comparisons were entertained.

In discussing German propaganda and value systems, Welch (2004) provides an overview of *Volksgemeinschaft* that suggests useful characteristics pertinent to this discussion. *Volksgemeinschaft* couples the notion of *Volk* (ethnic people) with *Gemeinschaft* (community) into a homogeneous and harmonious “national community”. This sense of national and ethnic community is central, and the basic tenet for *Volksgemeinschaft* is that the community comes before the individual (Welch 2004:217-218). Welch goes on to state that the conscious experience of inclusion in the community was crucial in creating a sense of “national awakening”. However, the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft* was also as much defined by those excluded than those who were included. Some were excluded on nationality or racial grounds, but others according to their attitude towards the community, such as 'shirkers' and 'spongers' who were not prepared to make the required individual sacrifices to further the goals of the community. The central concept of community also links to important *Volksgemeinschaft* attitudes towards work and labour. There was a focus on the ennobling aspects of work itself through slogans such as *Arbeit adelt* (*arbeid veredel / work ennobles*) and *Arbeit macht frei* (*arbeid maak vry / labour liberates*) (Welch 2004:221). Also importantly, there was a need for the *Volksgemeinschaft* to demonstrate that 'community' was not just a word, but a manifestation of a meaningful inner obligation (Welch 2004:228).

It is always contentious to draw a parallel between Nazism and any other political system, and especially a system such as one that Orania proposes characterised by member exclusivity. However, I am drawing this comparison between Orania and *Volksgemeinschaft* to illustrate parallels in community creation and attitudes



to labour, rather than to demonstrate features of National Socialism in Orania. With regard to overall Afrikaner attitudes towards National Socialism, Giliomee (2003:442-444) states that Afrikaner leaders, including Malan, Verwoerd and Strijdom, as well as the major Afrikaner churches, explicitly rejected National Socialism as an “alien import” and endorsed parliamentary democracy. That said, it should be mentioned that smaller Nazi-influenced organisations did exist within Afrikaner ranks, such as the *Ossewa Brandwag*, a paramilitary and pro-German group.

*Selfwerksaamheid* is central to daily activities in Orania. For instance, after the end of an event or concert at the *Gemeenskapsaal*, people would put away their own chairs. In Pienaar’s 2005 survey (2007:107), *selfwerksaamheid* is a distinguishing factor for Oranians, making them feel different to other Afrikaners. Individuals who support the *Volkstaat* ideal, but who did not agree with the rigid and consistent application of *selfwerksaamheid* as a labour policy, leave Orania (De Beer 2006:110). Some individuals leave the town but stay in neighbouring towns and continue a working presence in Orania or close relationships with Oranians. *Selfwerksaamheid* is demonstrably more than just a concept, but fundamental to the character of and belonging in Orania and a very distinctive way of doing things. This highlights *selfwerksaamheid* as an important metanarrative in the Oranian culturescape, recognizable in Porter’s (2002:12) definition of metanarrative; as a narrative that is repeated in myriad forms and connects vitally with deep community values, wishes, and fears. Along with the repetition in various forms, *selfwerksaamheid* also has layers of meaning. This deep connection positions *selfwerksaamheid* as a key element in the Oranian culture, crucial to its distinctive organisation, or as Ortner (1973:1338) calls it, a key symbol.

Ortner (1973:1339,1340) refers to the interpretation that work can be seen as a key symbol. In her analysis, she orders symbols along a continuum between elaborating and summarising, whereby elaborating symbols perform an analytical function and provide a vehicle to order complex experiences, and summarising symbols compound complex systems into a useful “all-or-nothing” adherence to the full array of meanings. This classification provides a handy continuum against which to measure *selfwerksaamheid*, which in this analysis would fall on the summarising end of the spectrum. *Selfwerksaamheid* sums up and expresses in an emotionally powerful way what the symbol means to Oranians. More than one informant told me, unprompted and passionately, that *selfwerksaamheid is vryheid* (performing own work is freedom). *Selfwerksaamheid* is also a conscious mechanism for exclusivity – a way of keeping the “other” out of Orania.

When discussing work and labour in contemporary South Africa, it is also necessary to reference labour laws and practices that have an impact on the labour force. The most profound impact on Afrikaner labour is the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 Of 1998. In Section 15, of the Employment Equity Act, Affirmative Action measures dictate that employers must ensure that designated groups (black people, women and people with disabilities) have equal opportunities in the workplace. The provisions for affirmative action apply to:

- employers with 50 or more workers, or whose annual income is more than the amount specified in Schedule 4 of the Act;
- municipalities;
- organs of State;
- employers ordered to comply by a bargaining council agreement;
- any employers who volunteer to comply (Republic of South Africa Employment Equity Act, No. 55 Of 1998).

Applying the Employment Equity Act has implications for Oranian enterprises. Any commercial initiative incorporating more than 50 employees will have to adhere to the Act. *Selfwerksaamheid* means that all Oranian firms will always be homogenously Afrikaner and would not include enough black people and people with disabilities to satisfy the requirements of the legislation. Achieving the quota for female workers would be less of a problem, as there are female workers willing to take on a variety of tasks as required, even if hard, manual labour is involved, verbalised on enquiry as *Ons is nie bang vir harde werk nie* (We're not afraid of hard work). The Act does mean that Oranian enterprise will always employ less than 50 employees, be marked as non-Employment Equity compliant by the wider market and subsequently have fewer opportunities for business. In 1998 an ambitious dairy farm was launched, but eventually closed down in 2003. One of the reasons why the dairy failed, I was told by several research participants, was due to the fact that the firm was unable to compete with Employment Equity-compliant organisations in the wider market. A further impact of the Employment Equity Act is that Afrikaner workers, mostly males, are unable to find work in South Africa and come to Orania in search of employment.

Studies have been conducted to map the relationship between specific work beliefs and human values. Anthony's (1977) historical analysis of the development of attitudes towards work details the significance of an ideology encouraging consistent systematic work. The work ethic is a cultural norm that bestows a positive moral value on doing a good job, based on a conviction that work has intrinsic value for its own sake (Cherrington 1980; Quinn 1983; Yankelovich & Immerwahr 1984). On the other hand, work is for many people a means to an end, rather than an end in itself (Furnham 1987:635). Nonetheless, a task may still be motivating "due to its meaning for the individual, for instance in

terms of the affirmation of his or her identity and collective affiliations” (Shamir 1991:409). In Orania work, in the form of *selfwerksaamheid* is a means to an end both physically and ideologically. *Selfwerksaamheid* encompasses a key symbol, a master narrative in Orania, and the origin and use of the *Kleine Reus* supports this narrative.

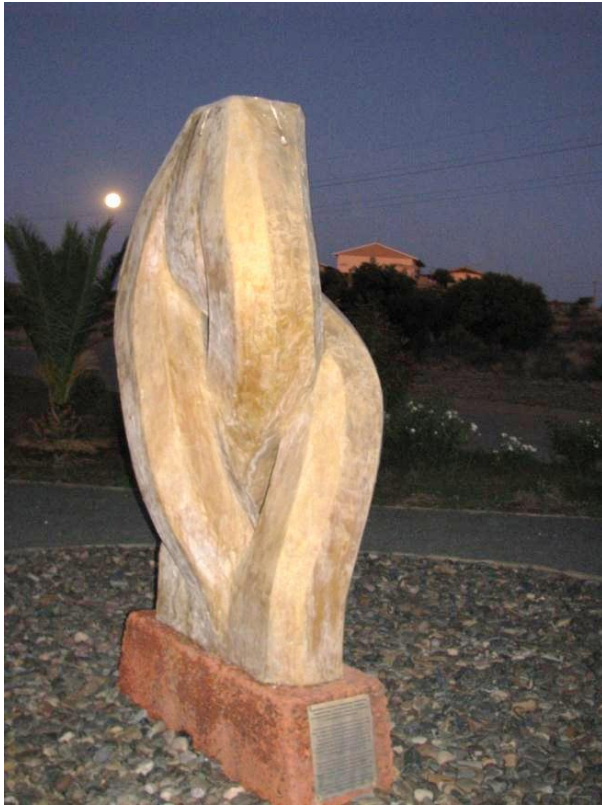
### **3.3.2 Koeksistermonument**

The erection of the *Koeksistermonument* [6D] in 2003 was one of the aspects of Orania that refocused my attention on the settlement, eventually culminating in this study. The *koeksister* (cruller) is a South African syrup-coated doughnut in a twisted or braided shape (like a plait). It is prepared by deep-frying dough in oil and then dipping the fried dough into cold sugar syrup. *Koeksisters* are very sticky and sweet. At first when I heard about the monument, I thought it funny and a bit odd to have a monument to a South African treat. I wasn't the only person to think thus. In the *Volkstater* of October 2003, the front page article (Anon. 2003a:1) featured the media impact that the *Koeksistermonument* had, and while some coverage was sarcastic, Oranians perceived the attention to be positive: *Koeksistermonument het die land weer laat glimlag* (*Koeksister monument made the country smile again*).

When I was eventually able to visit Orania in person, the *Koeksistermonument* was the first place I wanted to go and see, and on my last night in the town, standing in the last glow of sunset on a balmy summer night, watching the full moon rise over the Karoo, it was the last landmark I visited before preparing to go back to Johannesburg. Over the period of my various visits as I sat on the *stoep* (porch) of the *Afsaal Kafee* (Saddle Down Café), I observed many visitors who would race into Orania-Oos towards the *Koeksistermonument*, and 10

minutes later race away, photographs presumably taken, happy in the knowledge that they have ticked the box of I-have-seen/survived-Orania. The *Afsaal Kafee* is centrally located with a view of the main intersection and was an ideal spot for observing the coming and goings of Oranians and visitors. One could identify visitors as casual tourists due to their vehicle number plates from other provinces, the days of their visit which usually coincided with a South African public holiday or a weekend, the amount of travel detritus on the inside and outside of the vehicles and the different pace at which they would drive in an out of Orania (slow, exploratory and hurried respectively). More interested tourists would stop at the Orania *Beweging* offices for further information or a chat, rather than stop for just a quick photograph.

I was slightly disappointed in my first view of the monument. Some visitors that I spoke to had the same reaction. I thought the monument would be cast in bronze, bigger, and while it was recognisable as a *koeksister*, I imagined it to be an elegantly braided, taller edifice. This *koeksister* was only just taller than myself, and is quite squat and unpolished. Of course, this sculpture is an interpretation and not necessarily meant to be a literal representation. The longer I spent time in Orania, in my mind the monument came to embody the same workmanlike and somewhat self-conscious characteristics that I associate with the town itself.



*Image 3-6 Koeksistermonument with the Gemeenskapsaal in the background*

Given that the *koeksister* is widely identified in South Africa as an Afrikaner delicacy, Oranians embrace the *koeksister* wholeheartedly. *Koeksisters* seem to be present at most events hosted in Orania. At the various *Orania Beweging* conferences and events I attended, *koeksisters* were provided as a treat with coffee. During ex-President Mandela's visit to Orania in August 1995, Afrikaans media specifically pointed out that Mr. Mandela had asked for a second portion of *koeksisters* (Snyman 2008). During the summer holiday programmes over the course of December, *koeksister* baking classes are often offered, and the annual Orania *skou* (show) has upon occasion boasted a *koeksister* baking and eating contest.

Iconic dishes are powerful markers of national identity. Palmer (1998:183) defines food as one of the three "flags of identity", along with the body and the landscape, that potentially acts as a casual, everyday conduit between the theory

and practice of nationalism. While the relationship between food and national identity is strong, Bell and Valentine (1997:168) point out that there is no essential national food, but rather that certain foods and styles of cooking continue to be linked with particular nationalities and ethnic groups. Narayan (1997:161) advocates a closer inspection of the relations between iconic dishes and the nationalities they ostensibly epitomise, to allow for a more comprehensive but also more complex understanding of national identities. Avieli (2005) also cautions and reminds one that iconic national dishes are more often than not imagined (Anderson 1991) or invented (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983). The 'invention of tradition' is relevant to creating Oranian identity, and will be further addressed in 5.3.

Orania's take on the history of the *koeksister* is based on the European rather than Malayan roots of the dish, with this focus substantiated by research by H.W. Claassen (2006). This emphasis on European roots of *Voortrekker* and *Afrikaner* activities is something that I picked up in conversation, as well as in the *Voorgrond*, the *Orania Beweging* publication.

*Omdat ons Europese wortels deel van ons Orania-identiteit is, is dit nodig om ons reg op 'n eie groepsidentiteit te beklemtoon. Die bewustheid van 'n eie identiteit gee aan Oraniërs die vermoë om met selfvertroue situasies van kontak met ander bevolkingsgroepe te hanteer, eerder as om dit met angstigheids te vermy. / Because our European roots are part of our Orania identity, it is necessary to emphasise our right to our own group identity. The awareness of an own identity gives Oranians the capability to handle situations of contact with other population groups with confidence, rather than avoiding it with anxiety (Anon 2007a:12).*

However, it is important to note that while Europe was part of the heritage of the Afrikaners, historically Afrikaners identified with South Africa as their homeland – hence the name Afrikaner (Giliomee 2003:22).

According to an article in the *Voorgrond* (Strydom 2007a:8), the *Koeksistermonument* in Orania is evidence that Afrikaner women can work together in a group to provide in the needs of their community. According to Strydom many schools, churches and orphanages were built, and the upkeep was paid for by the sale of *koeksisters*. This echoes sentiments expressed by a former head of the *Vrouefederasie* (Women's Federation), Johanna Raath (Sapa 2003). The name *koeksister* is semantically linked to the feminine. In critical discourse analysis, Fairclough (1995: 5) identifies organisation in the narrative as a useful analytical tool. In investigating the organisation of symbols, it is worthwhile to at least acknowledge the juxtaposition of two major Oranian symbols, between the *koeksister* as a “female” symbol and the *Kleine Reus* as a “male” symbol. No research participants made a direct comparison between the two symbols, except for mentioning these symbols amongst others when describing the physical and cultural landscape.

While baking *koeksisters* can be an example of community support, the idea of collective action to better the community can also be seen in other practices in Orania. The first and most obvious scenario of the collective versus the individual is found in the entry interview, where the wants of the individual are subject to the wants of the community, or at least representatives of the community. This sentiment came across quite strongly in my entry interview. When discussing the entry interview with a few members of the selection committee afterwards, the interaction between the individual and the community came to the fore strongly. Since the person wants to become part of the community, he/she needs to put



the community first in order to fit in, is how one committee member put it. The other very prominent example is that all residential property in Orania is shared and no title deeds are available, except for agricultural land (De Beer 1998: 111). This lack of title deed to property is a deterrent for people investigating the possibility of settling in the community as they feel uncomfortable not owning the title deed of their own home.

Orania has been ridiculed for its *Koeksistermonument*, but it is one of the more accessible and memorable landmarks in town. While visitors might not always be interested in the *Kleine Reus*, which is an Orania-specific symbol, *koeksisters* are items that the average South African can relate to or that an international visitor can perceive as authentically Afrikaner. From my conversations with coffee shop and guest house owners, many visitors request iconic Afrikaner dishes during their Orania visit, which is something that is not catered for since the various eateries around town provide quick meals rather than traditional fare. So the *koeksister* becomes a shortcut, culinary ambassador of sorts.

The *Koeksistermonument* of Orania acts as a symbol that includes various layers of meaning. It refers to an iconic dish associated with a certain interpretation of history, and situated in a culturescape that stresses the practice of community support and the importance of the collective. In the physical landscape it is not featured as an in-your-face monument next to the main road, but rather situated deeper in the town close to other significant features such as the *Monumentkoppie* and *Gemeenskapsaal*, drawing visitors to that part of town.

Collective support for physical activities can also be seen in the *arbeidsbank* (labour bank, or workgroup), where a group of women come together and help each other on a rotation basis around the house or in the garden (Pienaar

2007:99, Blomerus 2009:22). This workgroup seems to be a loosely-organised initiative amongst a circle of acquaintances rather than a formal community project, as some research participants formed part of this group, but most didn't. Another example is the *Gemeenskapsondersteuningsgroep* (GOG) (Community Support Group), a more formal *Dorpsraad* initiative. In one project, a widow, who could no longer do the upkeep around her house that was visibly deteriorating, was assisted by a team of volunteers on a Saturday morning who fixed things around the house, painted the house and cleaned the yard – all before the big rugby game that afternoon.

### **3.3.3 The colour orange**

Wearing orange is an explicit statement of solidarity and identification with an Orania identity. According to an article in the *Voorgrond* (Anon 2008:6), *Orania en oranje is sinoniem, want dis die kleur waarmee Oraniërs aan die wêreld wys wie hulle is. Oranje is deel van Orania se unieke identiteit. Dit is ook toenemend die kleur wat mense kan dra om hulle ondersteuning aan Orania te kenne te gee.* Orania and orange are synonymous because it is the colour through which Oranians show the world who they are. Orange is part of Orania's unique identity. It is also increasingly the colour that people can wear to show their support for Orania.

During the orientation, the symbolism of orange was discussed and the *Voorgrond* (Anon 2008:6) reiterates these interpretations: *Oranje is 'n kleur wat aandag afdwing. Dit kry mense aan die dink en aan die praat. Oranje kombineer die energie van rooi en die vrolikheid van geel. Dit verteenwoordig geesdrif, kreatiwiteit, vasberadenheid en sukses. Dit is 'n sosiale kleur wat insluit eerder as uitsluit.* Orange is a colour that commands attention. It gets people thinking

and talking. Orange combines the energy of red and the cheerfulness of yellow. It represents enthusiasm, creativity, resoluteness and success. It is a social colour that includes rather than excludes.

While this analysis of the colour orange is presented at orientation, no-one that I subsequently spoke to reiterated this symbolic association with orange. Research participants would associate orange with Orania, and through the association with Orania, orange is linked to identity and freedom. Apart from these symbolic interpretations, the historical legacy is also mentioned. The historical reference to orange is very closely linked to flags, as I will subsequently further discuss in 3.5.1.

The colour is worn by young and old, by men and women, by people in different occupations and who live in different parts of the town, during specific Oranian events as well as casually. When asked, some individuals said that they just had so many articles of orange clothing that even if they weren't consciously looking to wear orange, it would crop up in a normal day's outfit. Ex-inhabitants and dissidents stated that Oranians wore excessive amounts of orange, even reportedly orange underpants (Van Wyk 2007). But when deliberately worn, Oranians wear orange as a visual pun on Orania.

I observed how, in everyday speech, Orania [o:rāniA] is sometimes referred to as Oranje [o:rAnjə] (orange) in the wider South Africa. Even more surprisingly, this pronunciation also occurs within Orania itself, by long-time residents. This could be linguistic contraction, or even a subconscious vocalization and alignment with the colour, but I don't have any further linguistic or phonetic explanations for this occurrence. When I asked these research participants why they pronounced the

name Orania as they did, people responded that they didn't even realise that they made the mispronunciation.



*Image 3-7 Orange, white and blue garbage cans close to the jukskei-field [6C]*

Because it can be worn, the colour orange is an obvious marker to be observed in the community. While orange would be more evident when outsiders attended an event, some people would wear the orange T-shirt with the *Kleine Reus* logo as everyday wear, although most people mostly added orange articles of clothing at community events. Community events included formal events such as conferences but also less formal events such as a sing-along. When I wore orange my attire would be remarked on positively, and I was seen as identifying with Orania sentiments.

De Beer (2006:110) observed that on the days of remembrance, the people of Orania hoist their *Vryheidsvlag* (Freedom Flag) and wear dresses and costumes with orange colours as an expression of their distinctive Orania identity. During the Day of the Covenant 2007 celebrations, orange items of clothing that were worn included waistcoats for boys and men, hair ribbons for little girls and

kerchiefs for boys and men. The colour is also worn at other events in Orania, and not just days of remembrance. For instance, at the Identity Politics Conference 2007, orange tablecloths were used, and many attendees and local speakers wore orange ties or shirts. At the orientation for new inhabitants, *koeksisters* were served and orange tablecloths decorated the tables. The programme for the 2008 *Volkstaatskou* was printed on Orange paper. At the *Kaalvoet Konsert 2007* (Barefoot Concert), in an introduction to one of the songs it was stated: *Oraniërs het hulle kleur gekies. Dis duidelik Oranje!* Oranians have chosen their colour. It is clearly orange (Strydom 2007b).



*Image 3-8 Symbols at the Identity Politics conference*

At events away from the town, orange becomes an even more important differentiator. At the National Women in Environment Conference 2008 in Polokwane, Orania delegates all wore orange flowers. The colour, the flowers and the group identity that the flower designated were remarked on positively time and time again by other delegates. At the *Vryheidsfront Plus* Conference on

Poverty Alleviation (*Armoede Verligting*), and specifically Afrikaner poverty, in Pretoria, in August 2008, Orania delegates once again wearing items of orange differentiated themselves from other Afrikaner delegates.

Oranians associate orange with Orania, and through the association with Orania, orange is linked to identity and freedom. This identity marker can be seen throughout Orania, and forms part of the symbolic, signifying and intertextual narratives embodied in the cultural and physical landscape.

### **3.4 Signs**

To me, the salient features in the Orania landscape are the distinctive signboards spread across town. Once I heeded my own attempts at sense-making through textual analysis, the signs became semiotic tools of enquiry, along with conflict (Porter 2002:51,124), and irony (Smith 1993:88). These tools provided me with the means to analyse and explore the narratives embodied in the landscape, as well as a fresh opportunity to revisit semiotic theory.

As in any discussion that mentions both symbols and signs, it is worthwhile to refer to Turner's (1967:25) differentiation of sign and symbol. Whilst a sign summarises a known thing, a symbol expresses a relatively unknown fact, or represents something, often an immaterial something. When referring to signs, even if they are physical signboards, it is imperative to remember that the foundation of all semiotics is the concept of the sign. For De Saussure (1983) the sign is composed of a signifier, or its cultural manifestation or physical, verbal form, and the signified, or the underlying concept which the signifier represents.

The use of signs and symbols to delimit territory and control space is a human universal. Rowntree & Conkey (1980:461) argue that some landscape signs and symbols are encouraged more than others to create shared symbolic structures that validate, and probably also define, social claims to space and time, just like Cresswell (1996:13) cautions that some interpretations of the landscape as text is encouraged more than others.

It was during one of my lengthy meanders through and across town that I realised that, depending on their placement, the signboards were displaying different kinds of messages. Rowntree & Conkey (1980) confirmed my observation by detailing how different narratives are broadcast inwardly and outwardly on different signs. The message on the perimeter of a group's territory differs from the message found in the centre. Rowntree & Conkey (1980:462) find that messages at the borders are directed at outsiders and are aggressive reminders of a cultural boundary, while inwardly directed or home-base messages provide information that nurture and promote group loyalty and identity. These different messages can also be applied to signs and signboards in and around Orania.

### **3.4.1 External signs**

As one approaches Orania (whether from Hopetown or from Petrusville and Vanderkloof town on the R369), there are standard, provincial kilometre boards indicating the distance to the settlement. However, closer to Orania, Orania-specific boards can be seen. On the outskirts of the property there are *Welkom in Orania* (Welcome to Orania) signs with the *Dorpsraad* logo. The signs are new, clear and well kept, in contrast to the provincial signs which are older and faded. Oranians are quite proud to point out the contrast, since it is a tangible reminder



of what they regard to be their own successes, without monetary support from the provincial and national government.



*Image 3-9 An Orania signboard in juxtaposition to a generic provincial name board*



*Image 3-10 All major entrances into the town exhibit a Private Property sign<sup>20</sup>*

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<sup>20</sup> Afrikanertuiste / Home of the Afrikaner. Private Property



All major entrance routes into the town also exhibit a Private Property sign with a *Dorpsraad* logo. The Private Property message is displayed in four languages namely Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa and Setswana. Semiotically, territorial signs such as property signs relate both to the addresser (indicating possession) and the addressee, who is warned against intrusions. Territorial signs also indicate further meanings such as prestige and power (Nöth 1995:413).

Gal (2002:80) points out that public and private are co-constitutive cultural categories, and also importantly, indexical signs relative to the context in which they are used. Of particular relevance is how Gal (2002:81) argues that the distinction between “public” and “private” is not just reliant on the use of the terms private/public. Deictics such as “here” and “there” can also be used to indicate a more immediate versus a more distanced relationship that is a more widespread, pragmatic use of private/public. I have already referenced the importance of “inside” and “outside” to Orania in 2.8. “Inside” and “outside” are deictics that are particularly relevant for Orania, where words such as *buitekant* (outside) are often used to describe the rest of South Africa, and visitors are described as *inkommers* (incomers). Deictics and other contextual expressions frequently use the speaker’s body as an orientating centre, and far from being “merely discourse,” these practices of directing away from self and towards self through speech have a strong materiality and create embodied subjectivities.

While the *Dorpsraad* logo isn’t used in everyday activities when compared to the *Kleine Reus*, the bold display and external message that it conveys has to be noted. The logo is once again the result of a community competition, just like the Orania flag and the naming of the Ora. In conversation with research participants, a variety of interpretations of the logo have been offered. A cross represents the Christian character of the settlement, and could also indicate the

physical crossroad in town where the R369 intersects with *Pêrel Rylaan*. The green fields represent the agricultural base, while the blue shows what a central part the Orange river plays. The landscape is represented by the *koppies* and the plains against the blue skies. The motto of *Afrikanertuiste* (home of the Afrikaner) sums up the settlement's claim of an own territory to provide the Afrikaner with something the community can call its own. External messages are clear markers of the territory as they announce the claim to this specific space for a specific reason, namely, creating a home for Afrikaners. The emphasis on private property strongly supports this territorial marking.

### 3.4.2 Internal signs

Once one enters the settlement, the inwardly focussed messages display information, advertising, governing and motivational signs. Some of these signs are older, some more recent. Since signs in the community were erected at different times, and at different stages of the community development, the signs form strata that track the community's development. Governing signposts include speed limits, promulgating the use of motorcycle helmets which are mandatory, and also the specific 'children playing' signs which are unique to Orania.



*Image 3-11 Governing signs applicable to quad bike operators<sup>21</sup>*

<sup>21</sup> Warning. Only licenced adults with crash helmets are allowed to drive quad bikes. By order Vluytjeskraal Share Block.

Something that I noticed from my first visit to the town was the common occurrence of quad bikes. A quad bike is a type of motorbike with four large wheels that people ride for fun or in races. I first observed the quad bikes parked alongside bicycles in the swimming pool parking lot and later saw children gleefully departing on them to their next destination for the long, warm summer afternoon. I was especially impressed by the autonomy of the children, and the crime-free environment where they could leave valuable vehicles like this parked outside. I later saw older females coming to the shop to do some quick shopping and thought it was a great way to be mobile in the heat and the relatively far distances between features. And of course, the young men race about town, or go to the off-road track, creating a much-needed leisure activity. One young man stated that he felt really sorry for anyone that didn't have a quad, since there wasn't really anything else to do. Since the average cost of a quad bike is approximately R15,000 it is not a cheap toy or just a casual means of conveyance. Possessing and using such a vehicle has implications for wealth, status and leisure options. On enquiry among different research participants, the average wage in Orania was estimated at approximately R4,000 p.m. Van Biljon (2009:28) quoted a figure of R3,000 monthly average income, which is low when compared with income for whites in the Northern Cape. However, it is difficult to judge whether Orania overall is poor or affluent due to the lack of data.

However when quad bikes came up during a conversation with a *Dorpsraad* member, he frowned and shook his head at the use of quads, stating that in case of an accident insurance wouldn't pay out, and that there was real risk of serious injury, especially as the majority of the drivers were not wearing helmets. He was particularly upset by the fact that these drivers were ignoring road signs, driving

above the stated speed limit and without helmets<sup>22</sup>. He vented his feelings that due to Orania's independence drive, people think they don't need to obey South African traffic rules. He hastened to add that Orania works within the South African constitution to further its goals and that South African law is most definitely applied in Orania. But he was particularly perturbed by this overt challenge to law and authority in a community very tightly bound by an expectation to conform. Later, on a tour of a riverside property, the owner apologised for the locked gates, but grouched that the gates had to be kept locked to discourage the quad bikers to race around the property and scare the wildlife.

One long and cold day, after already walking the length and breadth of the town conducting formal and informal interviews, and including an afternoon horse ride, I found myself at the extremity of Orania [6B], having to walk all the way back to my current accommodation in Kleingeluk on the far side [6H]. It was getting late; I was hungry, physically tired and mentally taxed. Trudging up that seemingly never-ending drab dust road I was seriously, and not for the first time, wondering what on earth moved me to do the study, far from friends and family and the familiar. An approaching roar turned out to be a young man that I had interviewed and befriended, driving around on his quad bike.

To my exhausted delight he offered me a lift to the stairs up the *randjie* (ridge) linking the *grootdorp* to *Oranjesig* [5F], saving me nearly 30 minutes' walk. He was on his way to the off-road track [5I] to relax after work. Too tired to worry about dire warnings about safety and the lack of a helmet, I got on and we proceeded to accelerate to over 80kms an hour within seconds. Gone were the lethargy and fatigue in a rush of adrenaline, and yes, as we approached the stop

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<sup>22</sup> The Orania website, for instance, links to a photo of an inhabitant driving around without a helmet, <http://www.oria.co.za/mobiliteit/> [accessed 17 July 2011]

street, he barely slowed down to shoot across the intersection and ramp over the bumps in the road. Getting off at my destination, I asked him whether it was necessary to drive that fast. He just shrugged and smiled a broad, just-watch-me-do-it-again smile, said his goodbyes and off he raced into the sunset. As a visitor in town already established in a defined role of researcher, it was exhilarating to defy the routine, the norms and expectations, even if only for one ride. A complaint that I heard from young people in town is that Orania is *ongelooflik baie boring* (incredibly very boring) and that they do whatever they can to alleviate the boredom, even if it meant committing transgressions of varying degrees. This boredom is a common refrain from young people in small communities, and is not specific to Orania.

The fact that children can safely play in the streets is a narrative that is found echoed across different forums (for instance the online notice boards discussed later). The child-friendly environment is marked by a 'children playing' sign – a stylised young boy on a small play motorbike on a white background within a triangular warning sign. These 'children playing' signboards are used to good effect in the DVD as an opening sequence to indicate a carefree and safe childhood environment. Hermann (2008) uses these signs as a central theme in his conference paper about Orania and its future. He states that Orania is indeed abnormal as many people suggest (a popular view in South Africa and a sentiment that can be seen in the external views found in print media and online sentiment that will be discussed in subsequent chapters), but in a positive sense:

*Wat 'n abnormale samelewing hier in Orania waar my kinders uitbundig in die straat kan afjaag... wat 'n abnormale samelewing waar ek nie doodbenoud voel as my dogtertjies uit my gesigsveld verdwyn nie/ What an abnormal society here in Orania where my children can clamourously*

chase down the street... what an abnormal society where I am not feeling anxious when my little girls disappear from my view.



*Image 3-12 'Children playing'*

The child-friendly environment is one that is echoed in behaviours in the community. As 24% of the Orania population are dependent children (Opperman 2007:4), children are included in discussions, meetings and events from a young age and special arrangements are always made. At events like concerts such as the *Kaalvoet Konsert*, the *Stop die Moorde* (Stop the murders) concert after the Identity Politics conference, and a local sing-along, children are accommodated very readily, and many parents bring along blankets and pillows for a bed on the floor should the children become tired. However, in the festive atmosphere, the kids play freely without strict or authoritarian supervision.

When attending a *Buitelandse Vriende van Orania* (International Friends of Orania) event in the U.K., the hostess' young daughter started fretting and the

mother promptly swept down to remove the child from the gathering, when the travelling Orania representative said not to worry, since the challenges of children at events is one that they are used to, and in fact welcome, since children are the future of the community, and they need to be and feel welcome in the community.



Image 3-13 Information sign with a town map of major landmarks

The information map, erected in December 2007, gives a clear layout of features of the town. The map was a project of the Orania Tourism Committee and sponsored by local businesses (Anon. 2007b:2). The two schools are indicated, but the different churches aren't. From most other angles than from the one which this photograph was taken, one cannot even see Kleingeluk on this map. I find it ironic that the awning literally overshadows Kleingeluk, since some Oranians have perceived it as a "lesser" part of Orania, originating from its designation as location for coloured workers with corresponding smaller houses and stands. The close proximity of houses and thin *kartonhuis* walls means that



you can hear your neighbours' television or conversations and was a great irritant to one inhabitant of Kleingeluk in particular. However, another inhabitant stated that the size of the house makes it easier to clean, even if the untarred roads mean that this cleaning happens frequently.

Kleingeluk has its own Welcome sign, in a different style to the other 'Welcome to Orania' signboards. The Welcome sign here also has a practical purpose, warning motorists to drive slowly to avoid creating dust. According to *Kleingelukkers*, they have a closer self-professed community spirit when compared to the *grootdorp*, in part due to the close physical proximity of their dwellings, and this differentiation can also be seen in the signboards.



Image 3-14 Welkom in Kleingeluk<sup>23</sup>

Advertisements advertise local businesses. Most businesses have a board outside the business premises and in some cases also outside the owner's house. The same look-and-feel, the *Kleine Reus* logo, orange borders and Orania *Sakekamer* (Orania Chamber of Commerce) sponsorship create an almost collective approach, where even more prosperous businesses alongside

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<sup>23</sup> Welcome in Kleingeluk, please drive slowly due to dust



smaller endeavours are promoted on the same level. These boards are the same across the Orania *grootdorp* and Kleingeluk. The message *Betaal met ORA* (pay with ORA) exhorts visitors and inhabitants alike to support the Ora currency and to buy locally. The Ora notes feature advertisements of local business on the back.



Image 3-15 Example of Orania advertising board<sup>24</sup>

While I had encountered Ora before, and received it as change from prior purchases, my first earned Ora will always be a telling experience. In the spirit of participant observation, I spent a day harvesting pecan nuts in the orchards with two other Oranians and the orchard owner. While there is equipment to shake the trees, on this occasion we used sticks to beat the pecans from the trees onto a sheet on the ground, then gathered them in crates on the back of the *bakkie* (pickup truck). It was a beautiful Karoo winter's day with wide blue skies and a freezing wind every now and again, and conversation swung easily between work and casual talk. Work talk was focussed on training initially, since two of us hadn't worked in the pecan orchards before. We discussed the different techniques to get the nuts down (some mechanised, some labour-intensive), the size of the nuts and the yield from the trees. I was proudly given a history of

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<sup>24</sup> Orania Internet Café. Orania Stationery.

different harvests over the years, both good and bad yields, and also a detailed description of the owners of the different rows in the plantation, since the orchards are subdivided. Generally, when only a few women work together, I was told that they generally sort the husks under the tree, which also presented a good *skinder* (gossip) opportunity. However, one day's labour wasn't enough for me to become privy to such a close and familiar communal experience.

After lunch, conversation was more general, including general events like church or plans for dinner, and disapprovingly, an instance where meat was stolen from an outside fridge for the second time. This instance was reported to the *Dorpskantoor*. Orania is often portrayed as crime-free, especially when compared to the rest of South Africa (more in 5.4). However, crime does also occur in the community and also came up as a subject in some of the in-depth interviews I had with *Dorpsraad* members, as well as in informal interviews with a variety of community members. Examples include *broodbome* (cycads) stolen from a garden as well as more serious instances where dogs were poisoned. A break-in at one of the shops was the scandalised talking point for weeks afterwards. In another instance Ora notes went missing from a collector. Since all Ora notes are numbered sequentially and documented when purchased as part of a collection, recovering the missing notes was a simple case of alerting local businesses to monitor their Oras and to track the culprit in that way. The context and limited geographic distribution of the notes and the security that this entails is exactly a reason why the local currency is promoted. There were also examples of small items that were stolen such as cameras. When I asked whether it was reported, the informant asked: to whom? The informant was under the impression that the *Dorpsraad* won't be able to do anything about petty theft, so it wasn't reported. Elim, already a contentious space as highlighted in 2.7, has also been mentioned with regard to theft (Van Vuuren 2002).

At the end of the day I was greatly surprised and supremely grateful when I was paid, especially as I made it clear that I was doing the labour as part of my fieldwork experience. But I was told, fair is fair: I did a full day's work and I was entitled to a full day's wage. My first thought was that it would be great to keep my Ora as a memento, but as I was on an unpaid sabbatical, money was certainly a big concern for me. I promptly went out to the Bistro to celebrate with a proper hot meal that evening. Busy day, all in all. In one day I learnt about pecan nut harvesting and daily activities of some people in the community, contributed to the idea of *selfwerksaamheid*, earned a wage, supported local commerce, furthered my understanding of anthropology and more importantly had an inkling of the tension between idea (memento) and reality (hot meal) in Orania, whether on a financial or socio-cultural level. This is the 'price' that Oranians pay to live in an exclusive, *selfwerksame* community.

The motivational signs are specifically targeting inhabitants and reinforcing values that are deemed core to the community. The signs were sponsored by prominent people and institutions at the beginning stages of the settlement, establishing a hierarchy of importance. Apart from an internal audience, any external visitors who see these signs are given a guide as to some core community messages and values.



Image 3-16 Ek koop in Orania<sup>25</sup>

The *Ek koop in Orania* sign was erected before the Ora was introduced into the community, but already expressed the sentiments for local buying power. This older sign in Image 3-16 is one of the few signs that show traces of vandalism, having been used as a target at some point in time. The board was also replaced in 2011 with a sign commemorating the Orania 20-year anniversary.<sup>26</sup>



Image 3-17 Selfwerksaam – selfstandig<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> | buy in Orania

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.ortania.co.za/wie-verjaar/>, [accessed 23 August 2011]

<sup>27</sup> People's own labour, independent.



Image 3-18 Ek praat en dink in Afrikaans<sup>28</sup>

The community has a strong focus on Afrikaans as language. The greater majority of businesses have Afrikaans names, in contrast to the perception that businesses in surrounding towns have English names. While Anglicisation is prevalent in urban settings, this is not yet the case in the Northern Cape. Apart from the bigger chain stores, Afrikaans business names are still in the majority. In a small regional advertising publication called *Flitslig* (Flashlight) 70% of the advertisers were Afrikaans businesses. *Flitslig* is circulated in the Northern Cape (see Image 2-2) to quite a few towns including Belmont, Colesberg, De Aar, Douglas, Hopetown, Jacobsdal, Koffiefontein, Luckhoff, Modderivier, Orania, Plooyburg, Petrusville, Strydenburg and Vanderkloof. All Orania businesses featuring in the publication are Afrikaans.

The strong focus on Afrikaans does mean that some inhabitants are uncomfortable speaking English. I spent one evening translating political arguments and life stories between some Orania youths and a Norwegian journalist over a few beers and a *braai*. I'll elaborate more on this incident in 5.6. I was also tasked to translate any "difficult" English at the Women in Environment

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<sup>28</sup> I speak and think in Afrikaans

external national conference on another occasion, even though it wasn't necessary.



Image 3-19 *Ons ideaal snoer ons saam*<sup>29</sup>

The message in Image 3-19 of shared ideals creating a sense of community is placed opposite the erstwhile *Dorpskantoor* office [5F], but even though it was close to a prominent place in town, this board becomes obscured by growth in the summer and the angle of placement makes the message visible from only a limited area in winter. When I showed the photo to some of the research participants, all long-time inhabitants, they asked me where this board was. When I explained where, they remembered the board, but not the message. I cannot help but draw a parallel between the message and the real-life development in Orania. The inhabitants, especially the early settlers were brought together by the ideal of a *Volkstaat*, but the growth and challenges inherent in every-day living in a small community and especially a small community facing the scrutiny that this one does, partially obscures the everyday visibility of this pioneering ideal.

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<sup>29</sup> Our ideals bind us together





Image 3-20 *Wenners word nooit moedeloos nie, moedeloses wen nooit*<sup>30</sup>

The *Wenners* sign is actually quite out of the way, and doesn't follow the old or newer Orania "branding". The sentiment, however, is one that is echoed in the community through actions, and the oft repeated phrases: *aanhouer wen* (perseverance will be rewarded) and *boer maak 'n plan* (boer makes a plan). This attitude comes to the fore especially in times of difficulty, such as the floods in early 2011 when the Orange River rose above its 50-year flood levels.

In interviews, when I asked about the signs in town, and more specifically the motivational signs, people had to think about what I meant. These signs are old and are no longer noticed by "old-timers". The older signs are indeed weathered from exposure of close to 20 years. The secretary bird was initially used during the early years of the settlement (Boshoff 2007:37), but that symbol has fallen by the wayside as the years progressed in favour of the *Kleine Reus*. The inwardly-focussed messages displaying information, advertising, governing and motivational messages provide information that nurture and promote group loyalty and identity. These physical elements support the narratives of independence and community, but also underscore inherent tensions and attitudes in the physical landscape and culturescape.

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<sup>30</sup> Winners don't get despondent, the discouraged never win.

Signs provide a means to analyse and explore the narratives embodied in the landscape. Inwardly and externally focussed messages were identified. Whilst external messages are clear markers of the territory, inwardly-focussed messages nurture and promote group loyalty and identity.

### **3.4.3 Irony**

There will always be something that is out of place or incongruous, which Smith (1993:86) refers to as irony. Anything that is speedily cleared up or cleared away because it is undesirable is an irony. Attardo (2000:794) makes a distinction between verbal irony, which is a linguistic phenomenon and situational irony, which is a state of the world which is perceived as ironical. In the situational sense, irony is a representational discrepancy, a symbol out of place, and opens social convention to exploration and critique. An example of situational irony could be empty beer bottles on the church steps on a Sunday morning. An Oranian example can be seen when a supposedly private dispute over money is aired in public against social convention through a disruptive medium: graffiti.



*Image 3-21 Irony in the landscape*



Instead of using the civil dispute mechanism that is in place in the community, a very public question is asked: 'Where is my fucking money'. This public and crude breach of civil behaviour had an impact on how Oranians perceived their surroundings. In the 2007 survey in preparation of the GOP (Van Biljon 2007) negative aspects of Orania's environment, were (amongst others) verbalised as: *Die oom in die sinkhuis wat op sy mure skryf* (The uncle in the corrugated iron house that writes on his walls). Cresswell (1996:42) explains that graffiti flagrantly disrupts notions of order, and comes to represent a disregard for order. This sense of disorder due to one example of graffiti is felt throughout the Oranian community, from the senior management through to school children. I came across and heard of very few other examples of graffiti in Orania, so the mere existence of prominent graffiti is one of the reasons for the perceived disorder. Public obscenities are also not condoned in Orania, and this instance is worsened because it is written down in public for anyone, especially children, to see. Cresswell (1996:22) describes this spatial transgression as something which is "out-of-place", the occurrence of which leads people to question behaviour and regulate what is appropriate or not in a particular setting. The reaction to the graffiti also supports Cresswell's (1996:45) statement that graffiti is seen as rebellious, irrational, dirty and "other" and therefore undesirable, especially in Orania.

Another example that can be perceived as irony in the landscape is not so much a permanent feature, but rather an intermittent, non-Oranian community event. Coloured farm workers sometimes congregate in the parking lot of the café and liquor store [5F] on a Friday afternoon after work to purchase liquor and foodstuff and extend the occasion into a festive get-together. This get-together is also in close proximity to the Bistro, a popular Oranian youth hang-out [5G]. The Bistro ceased trading in 2009 after the owner passed away. These are two distinct

social events and I didn't observe any co-mingling, but I also didn't see any obvious hostility. However, as the evening progresses and more and more alcohol is consumed, both parties get rowdier and rowdier. The Bistro crowd would start muttering disapprovingly about the noise next door, even though they themselves were quite noisy. The farm workers would very loudly talk about the *boere* and then mention *honde* (dogs). I would classify this as social tension rather than hostility in the landscape, typified by a heightened awareness of the other. Only some Oranians that I spoke to were aware of the farm workers from neighbouring farms getting together, mostly young people. The individuals that were aware of it either didn't mind, or disapproved of it, saying it is unsafe to have a crowd of non-Oranians congregating in Orania at night. While these social events in juxtaposition provide the opportunity to explore and critique Oranian social convention, no-one that I spoke to did so.

Irony, in both these instances, is closely linked to conflict. For Porter (2002:51) the representation of conflict in the narrative, whether historical fights for independence or a current situation provides a way for a community to talk about itself, and possibly resolve conflicts that threaten it. This conflict brings to mind an old joke that I heard in various instances whilst in Orania, sometimes with fondness, sometimes with frustration: *waar twee Afrikaners byeen is, is daar drie politieke partye en vier kerke* (Where two Afrikaner get together, there are three political parties and four churches) (See 2.5.4).

Giliomee (1992:363) analyses the evolution of Afrikaner identities associated with major political shifts and splits in Afrikaner ranks, in what he calls the Afrikaner *broedertwis*, the quarrel between brothers. He concludes that the "political schisms in *Afrikanerdom* were not in the first place triggered by material conflicts waged along class lines but by symbolic issues which brought to a head intra-

Afrikaner conflicts about the best ways of ensuring Afrikaner survival.” Another widespread Afrikaner notion around conflict that is mentioned and frequently quoted by Oranian intellectuals is N.P. van Wyk Louw’s concept of *lojale verzet* (loyal opposition or loyal resistance). *Lojale verzet* (Van Wyk Louw 1986) is an influential collection of essays originally published in 1939 which encourages a culture of criticism in Afrikaans intellectual life where disagreement was previously not accepted (Sanders 2002:60). The following is oft quoted during internal deliberation on the nature of Orania: *Opstand is net so noodsaaklik as 'n volk se getrouheid. Dit is nie eens gevaarlik dat 'n rebellie misluk nie; wat gevaarlik is, is dat 'n hele geslag sonder protes sal verbygaan.* / Rebellion is as essential to a nation as loyalty. It is not even dangerous for a rebellion to fail; what is dangerous is for a whole generation to pass without protest (Van Wyk Louw 1986). These two concepts around Afrikaner conflict can be brought to bear on Orania. *Broedertwis* encompasses the different ideas internally ensuring Afrikaner survival, whilst *lojale verzet* is the act of loyal opposition that builds internal rigour as well as a specific expression of Afrikaner identity.

Intra-community conflict shaped the community’s development. The prominence that this conflict received was in part due to the fact that the internal matter was elevated to nationwide news when national Afrikaans newspapers picked up the story (incidentally, given the description of *broedertwis*). In 2005, about 13 years after the foundation of Orania, dissident residents claimed that Orania is managed by a faction they call the “Mafia” and “the family”. On the other hand, Prof. Carel Boshoff maintained that there was a group of reactionaries that wanted to stay within the *uitgediende strukture van die verlede* (old structures of the past) (Van Wyk, 2005). Allegations of fraud and mismanagement were made between these two factions, leading to lawsuits, court cases and police investigations. In the end, no allegations were acknowledged, and some of the

court cases were still being concluded when I did my fieldwork in 2008. In a further fall-out of the conflict, the raid on the original Orania radio station was linked to internal dissenters. In November 2005 the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa shut down Orania's Radio Club 100 radio station, on grounds of alleged racism (Anon 2005d), based on a tip-off received from within Orania (Anon 2005e:1). The public airing of internal conflict was taken very seriously and Oranian authorities perceived it as serious a threat, with exhortations in internal publications, and subsequent orientation sessions for new inhabitants, to use the mediation and arbitration channels available: *Ons moet 'n verenigde front na buite handhaaf. Dit is noodsaaklik vir ons oorlewing* (We have to maintain a unified front to the outside. It is necessary for our survival) (Anon. 2006b:2). In a community with its high number of external visitors, especially local and international media, the disregard for procedures and the public airing of a private matter takes on a double irony. Not only does it disrupt the status quo for residents, it also broadcasts a message of internal dissent to the outside.

Since this high-profile public airing of internal issues in 2005, Oranian news on conflict in national publications was either an external person commenting on internal Oranian issues, or individuals in the community raising issues outside on a one-off basis. Internal conflict seems to have taken on a less media-oriented bent. In 2009 there was an incident where children from the two schools, *Volksskool* and *CVO* school, completed the same task, and one school's pupils performed it to a better standard. After this achievement was proudly highlighted in the school's news circular, lawyers from the other school became involved to halt mention of this issue. Whilst most people in the community were aware of this intra-school conflict, this was not elevated to national news level.

The imperfect human condition means that there will always be something that is out of place, following Smith's (1993:86) definition of irony: irony as a representational discrepancy, a symbol out of place. One can argue, and many commentators have, that Orania itself is the ultimate irony: a deliberate homogenous enclave in a self-styled multi-cultural country, a once-dominant group now marginalised. Examples of irony within Orania are linked to the disruption of order, and since space and place are crucial to structuring a normative landscape, this irony becomes tangible in the landscape. Analysing and exploring irony helps identify normative behaviour in the community and therefore what is deemed acceptable. Examples of intra-community conflict can be seen as instances of how factions sometimes express opposing ideas to ensure Afrikaner survival (see also 5.5).

### **3.5 Historical context, or intertextuality**

While I have given attention to the physical and legislative context of Orania in Chapter 2, the historic context is also closely interwoven with the physical fabric of the landscape and the cultural landscape. It is so strongly interwoven with the everyday that I would refer to the historical narrative's intertextuality. Porter (2002:94) describes intertextuality as the fact that all texts are made out of other texts. To him, interpreting intertextuality reveals how the meanings of narratives are complexly embedded in the culture that it comes from.

History is conspicuously ever-present in the community. It is the physical legacy of the old infrastructure of roads, town layout, and facilities, which a participant in a focus group verbalised as: *Orania is niks nuuts nie, maar tog ook nuut* (Orania is nothing new, yet it is also new). A consciousness of Afrikaner history is present in small material forms: 1988 150th *Groot Trek* commemorative salt and pepper

shakers are found at one of the small cafés and more than one guest house, and the majority of homes that I visited are proudly filled with Africana. An article (Anon. 2005f:11) even states: *Op Orania het die geskiedenis selfs in die naam van die plaaslike gemaakte gemmerbier neerslag gevind: "VAN RIEBEECK GEMMERBIER – 'n produk van Orania'!* (In Orania history has even materialised in the locally produced ginger beer: "VAN RIEBEECK GINGER BEER – a product of Orania"!)). In the landscape, the statues of Afrikaner leaders and the Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling* take a prominent position on the *Monumentkoppie* and in the town respectively.

History and legacy can also be heard in statements of frustration of simmering inter-generational resentment, mostly from young and driven individuals that had experiences of having to bend to the will of the elders: *Dis hulle generasie wat maak dat ons die probleme het wat ons nou het, en nou wil hulle vir my kom vertel hoe om dinge te doen* (It is their generation that created the problems we have now, and now they want to come and tell me what to do). Sentiments of this ilk are generally voiced by young white males who blame previous generations for the problems they are experiencing now. The entrepreneur who verbalised these sentiments, and felt passionately about the *Afrikaner volkstaat*, left the community shortly afterwards. While clashes of personality and political opinion were largely contributing factors to him and his family's departure from the community, a particular attitude towards the historical context also made a subjective contribution in this instance.

The historical context is also top-of-mind for Oranian intellectuals. Lombard (2005) holds history as a lesson to be learnt:

*'n Onvermoë om die lesse van die verlede te leer lei tot die herhaling van die geskiedenis, word algemeen beweer. In die uitbouing van Orania en*

*die breër strewende na die herwinning van die Afrikaner se vryheid in 'n eie grondgebied sal dit daarom sinvol wees om uit hierdie oogpunt na die geskiedenis te kyk... Die pad na die erkenning van territoriale selfbeskikking is nie maklik nie. Dit is daarom noodsaaklik om ten minste seker te maak dat die foute van die verlede nie herhaal word nie.* It is asserted that an inability to learn from the lessons of the past leads to the repetition of history. In building out Orania and the broader goal of the reclamation of Afrikaner freedom in an own territory it is meaningful to review history from this point of view... the road to acknowledgement of territorial self-determination is not easy. It is therefore imperative to at least make sure that the mistakes of the past aren't repeated.

History contributes to the everyday experiences in Orania, both formal (public holidays) and informal. Todd (2008:89) remarked that Oranians masked the relative newness of the settlement with stories from the past. Seldon (2012) described Orania as a balance between tradition and openness, and a combination of the nostalgic and the idealistic. While I will highlight the link between history and the physical and cultural landscape of Orania in this section, such as flags and the Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling*, I remain aware that a historic context can be seen in all of the ideas and practices discussed thus far.

### **3.5.1 Flags**

There is a variety of flags in evidence in Orania in general and at events in particular. These include the *Vryheidsvlag*, the flags of the independent Boer republics of Transvaal (*Vierkleur*/Four Colours) and the Orange Free State, and the *Kleine Reus* (discussed in 3.3.1). In Orania, the discussion about the colour orange is often linked to the historical use of orange in flags, most notably the

Dutch *Prinsevlag* (Anon 2008:6). Providing the historical context of these flags is important since the flags can be seen as embodied symbolic, signifying and intertextual narratives.

The *Vryheidsvlag* combines the design of the flag of the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (South African Republic) or the old Transvaal flag, with the orange-white-blue of the former flag of South Africa, but with a green stripe at the hoist. Reportedly, the flag was used by Cape Rebels during the second Anglo-Boer War, but this claim has not been proved conclusively<sup>31</sup>. The *Vierkleur* was previously the flag of the historic Transvaal Republic, officially called the Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek (South African Republic), from 1857 to 1874, 1875-1877, and 1881-1902. The flag features three horizontal stripes of red, white, and blue (recalling the Dutch national flag), with a vertical green stripe at the hoist, and is known as the *Vierkleur*<sup>32</sup>. The flag of the Boer Republic of the Orange Free State (1854–1902) can also be seen. The flag was designed by King William III of the Netherlands. The Orange Free State flag contained alternating horizontal orange and white stripes (three orange and four white, with the white stripes on the outside) with a version of the Dutch flag (used initially by Boer republican movements at Graaff Reinet and Swellendam in 1795) featured in the canton<sup>33</sup>. The flags that are displayed in Orania, such as the *Vryheidsvlag*, the flags of the independent Boer republics of Transvaal (*Vierkleur*) and the Orange Free State, have a historical link with freedom movements, as well as the favoured interpretation of Dutch European heritage of Afrikaners.

Conventionally, flags are explained as symbols of group solidarity that achieve force through ritual processes. Shanafelt (2009:24) argues that flags are not just

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<sup>31</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrikaner#\\_note-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrikaner#_note-1), [accessed 23 July 2010]

<sup>32</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag\\_of\\_Transvaal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Transvaal), [accessed 23 July 2010]

<sup>33</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag\\_of\\_the\\_Orange\\_Free\\_State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_the_Orange_Free_State), [accessed 23 July 2010]



symbols with arbitrarily constructed meanings, but that they are political signifiers that evoke predispositions related to dominance and subordination. Home base messages promote group loyalty and identity, in-group flag raising evokes social solidarity among those who consent to the flag's authority (Shanafelt 2009:25). In this manner, the flags are used to assert control over place and space (Jarman 2007:97), not just to reinforce a sense of social segregation and difference, but more importantly to reinforce local convention. Jarman (2007:20) argues that the "topographic context" of flags is just as important. The placement of flags at the highest point, for instance at the *beeldetuin* or at the *Gemeenskapsaal*, the lowering of the flag half-mast are examples of lowering and lifting the message.



*Image 3-22 Vierkleur raised in front of one of the houses*



*Image 3-23 Vierkleur displayed at a guest house*



*Image 3-24 Kleine Reus flag displayed at a house*

Flags are also present at the schools, and Hues & Morgan (2010:36) describe a ceremony focussed on the *Kleine Reus*. During my visits, I saw the *Vierkleur*

raised at a small number of houses in the town. When I enquired about the importance of this, a research participant stated that it was definitely not official Orania policy and the individuals have been asked to rather hoist the *Kleine Reus*, but that the individuals preferred to and continued to raise the *Vierkleur*. In displaying the *Vierkleur* these individuals demonstrated their conservative and right-wing political membership rather than an affiliation with the Oranian ideals.

The flags are used in most events in Orania, both casual and formal. For instance, at the *Kaalvoet Konsert* in 2007 the *Vryheidsvlag* was used as a prop in the very first song, and it was also present in the last song. At the church service on the Day of the Covenant 2007, the *Vryheidsvlag*, hung together with the Free State flag, as well as the *Vierkleur*. Some attendees of the church service, who stayed for the *braai* afterwards, also planted a *Vryheidsvlag* at their picnic table. At the *Skou* in 2008 the *Vierkleur* was also in evidence, alongside the *Kleine Reus* and Free State flags. The regular in-group flag ceremonies (Shanafelt 2009:19) could be linked to increased visibility and civilian usage of flags during times of social anxiety (See 5.4).



*Image 3-25 Flags at the Day of the Covenant church service*

Despite the formality inherent in the flags, they were also displayed prominently in less formal settings, such as draped over the counter at the Bistro, one of the popular teen hangouts (not in business anymore after the owner passed away).

The consistent appearance of the flags highlighted these flags as items of importance and pride that are exhibited as a matter of fact. The casual importance that I perceived was underlined by the fact that the flags touch the ground on several occasions. Flag etiquette that I was exposed to during my youth upheld that a flag may not touch the ground at any time. People seemed surprised when I asked whether the flags should touch the ground and their responses indicated that the public display of the flag was so important that this in itself negated any perceived disrespect.



*Image 3-26 Flags at the skou*

The *Kleine Reus* flag was also used at the funeral of Prof Carel Boshoff, and the flag was draped over his coffin. In such instances Jarman (2007: 92) stresses the

symbolic use of the flag to represent the individual as the conjunction of nationality and person.

In Orania, flags are used to assert control over place and space (Jarman 2007:97) through the frequency of display, and the official events that provide the opportunity to display the flags and the more casual, everyday display. From my observations on their placement in the community, flags are mostly used as an internal message to evoke social solidarity (Shanafelt 2009:25), to reinforce local convention (Jarman 2007:97) and promote group loyalty and identity (Rowntree & Conkey 1980:462). Space is evoked through the symbols and historical context that flags embody in the landscape.

### **3.5.2 Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling* (Commemorative Collection)**

The Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling* (Commemorative Collection) is the first major landscape element that a visitor would encounter when entering the *grootdorp* on the way to the river. In a socio-political climate in South Africa where any association with Verwoerd is negatively associated with apartheid, the prominent positioning of the Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling* on the corner of *Ametis Straat* and *Pêrel Rylaan* is significant. The current venue for the *Gedenkversameling* is where his wife, Betsie Verwoerd, spent her final years.





*Image 3-27 Verwoerd Gedenkversameling [5E]*

Hendrik Verwoerd was a major figure in South Africa, and widely regarded as the chief architect of apartheid, and as Posel (2009:332) states, mythically seen as the father of the (white) *volk*. Dr. Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd was born on 8 September 1901 and in 1927 married Elizabeth Schoombee. He fathered five sons and two daughters and died on 6 September 1966. He was Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party of the Republic of South Africa from 31 May 1961 (of the Union of South Africa, 1958–61) (Black & Black 2007).

Posel (2009:331) describes Verwoerd's profound political and ideological impact across South Africa's racial divides. This was due to a combination of his autocratic and intellectually commanding style, political acumen, and the authoritarian, patriarchal fashioning of authority. Verwoerd's impact on Orania is even more profound, as his direct descendant daughter Anna Boshoff and son-in-law Prof. Carel Boshoff, also known as the *vader van Orania* (father of Orania), and family, were involved in the establishment of the community. While especially outsiders disparage the figurehead of Verwoerd, many Oranians have a much more personal connection. This is evident when one looks at the family

tree in the Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling* and sees how many branches and cross-branches of the tree are represented in the settlement. This close connection also comes out in casual conversation, such as references to *oupagrootjie se vakansiehuis* (great granddad's holiday home) or a portrait of Verwoerd on the hallway wall, along with other family photos.

The Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling* is a direct link with a definitive phase of Afrikaner history. While most items in the Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling* are linked to Verwoerd, there are also statues of other Afrikaner leaders that have been donated to Orania. Most of the statues of Verwoerd and other Afrikaner figures come from other places in South Africa where Afrikaner symbols are removed and replaced by post-Apartheid symbols. In this way, the Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling* becomes a refuge for the past. Oranians (Anon. 2004e:2) see themselves as custodians of these Afrikaner symbols: *Die volksdorp Orania word al meer die bewaarplek van die Afrikaner se geskiedenis en kultuur in 'n tyd waarin Afrikanergoed in obskure pakkamers beland of deur vreemdes wat geen waarde daaraan heg nie, tot niet gemaak word./* The town of Orania is increasingly becoming the place that preserves Afrikaner history and culture in a time when Afrikaner goods land in obscure storerooms or are destroyed by foreigners who do not attach value to it.

The *Ierse Monument* (Irish Monument) [7D] is another such refuge. McCracken (2003) details how Irish nationalists used pro-Boer sentiment to denounce British rule in Ireland before and during the Anglo Boer war of 1899-1902. Irish nationalists achieved political gain by taking up the Boer cause, and popular sentiment found similarities with another “colonially beleaguered people”: religiously devoted farmers with a deep-rooted attachment to the land and a democratic system for self-governance (McCracken 2003:42,43). The *Ierse*

*Monument* commemorates the Irish sympathisers that fought against the British in the South African War. A famous Irish figure in the South African War history was Col. John Y. Filmore Blake. Blake, an American Irishman and a West Point graduate who served as the Colonel of the Irish Brigade, a force of foreign born volunteers who assisted the Boers in their resistance to British annexation of the South African Republic (Transvaal) and the Orange Free State (McCracken 2003:123, 124). The monument was slated for demolition in Johannesburg, and was subsequently relocated to Orania where it is situated across from the *Gemeenskapsaal* (Mulder 2002).

The community feedback in the GOP states that the *Verwoerd Gedenkversameling* is seen as a key part of the Orania landscape (Van Biljon 2009:47). In the interest of full disclosure, I only visited the *Verwoerd Gedenkversameling* on my last day in town, having spent most of my time going from one conversation, engagement and social event to the other. The fact that I hadn't visited the *Verwoerd Gedenkversameling* actually served as a good conversation point, and a way for me to gauge the interest in the museum and whether inhabitants advocate a visit or not. I polled research participants, and while some had visited it, quite a few hadn't visited it yet, and also didn't express an interest in doing so.

History contributes to the everyday experiences in Orania, both formal and informal. The historic context is closely interwoven into the physical fabric of the landscape as seen at the *Monumentkoppie*, and the cultural landscape, through the use of colour and flags.



### 3.6 Conclusion

Landscape as text, “a medium to be read for the ideas, practices and contexts constituting the culture which created it” (Ley 1985:419) proves to be a legitimate and constructive way to make sense of the landscape. Textual analysis techniques demonstrate that the symbolic, signifying and intertextual narratives embodied in the landscape establish ideas, practices and contexts of Orania.

Signs and symbols in and around Orania have a strong materiality and create embodied subjectivities in the landscape, whether it is external territory markers or in-group narratives that promote group loyalty and identity. The narratives of identity and independence are reinforced through various symbols (colours, flags) throughout the landscape. The repeated presence of orange in the landscape creates visual texture, form and organisation, internally and externally broadcasting an explicit statement of solidarity and identification. The identity narrative is extended to the *Koeksistermonument* as a marker of a specific identity, as well as the distinguishing characteristic of *selfwerksaamheid* as characterised by the *Kleine Reus*. The *Verwoerd Gedenkversameling*, along with the physical infrastructure of the town embodies the historical context that Orania is steeped in. Symbolically and intertextually the various flags present in the settlement weave the historic narratives together with the context of independence. These are the preferred narratives in the landscape, but certainly not the only narratives.

Sifting through the different layers of meaning, the reality of living in a small rural community is one that cannot be ignored. Orania, and by extension this study, is not just an academic concept, but the lived experiences and opinions of people who are closely connected to the place. The average cost of living is more than

just the expected monthly salary or the sense of community. It includes harsh living conditions, strict adherence to stated norms, petty theft and intra-community conflict. This perspective on the quality of life in Orania is, amongst others, a useful indicator as to the price people choose to pay to live in such an exclusive *selfwerksame* community.

The imperfections in the settlement landscape also create meaning. The lack of a central business district along a main road, the lack of a central church spire or town square have been identified in the GOP (Van Biljon 2009:47). Despite all the progress, the town still exudes a temporary air. *Kartonhuise* and dirt roads are two temporary-become-permanent fixtures. While the cultural landscape through signs and symbols shows cohesion, the underlying infrastructure of the settlement shows a lack of consistency. The ideas, practices and context present in the physical landscape also highlight tension in the social landscape: a tension between laws, authority as well as real-life practicality pitted against the ideals of the founders. In Chapter 4 I will elaborate on a further landscape that can make a supplementary contribution to this discussion, the textual landscape.

## Chapter 4 TEXT AS MANIFESTATION OF LANDSCAPE

### 4.1 Introduction

A variety of texts are produced on and in Orania. Very often the first glimpse anyone would have of the community is through texts in the print media and online. As I investigated the landscape as a text, I also started to think about how the landscape, both physical and cultural, is depicted in these different texts. Would I, for instance, find the same signs and symbols as in the physical landscape? Would the same narratives be used, the same themes? Because of the importance of ideas in and to the community, investigating the communication vehicles for those ideas is also relevant to the enquiry.

Duncan and Duncan (1988:118) suggested that texts “have a web-like complexity, characterised by a ceaseless play of infinitely unstable meanings. This picture is interesting, not only from a literary standpoint, but also because it resembles landscapes in many respects”. And, like texts, Wylie (2007:68) states that “landscape is understood as being always already a representation”. There is a wealth of these representations created on, for and by Orania: by the media, by interested parties and by the general public. Orania, through its institutions and publications both formally and informally, produces a great deal of literature about itself, encouraging and increasing the reach of the community. These texts form a textual landscape with different textures, forms and organisations. In order to ‘walk’ this textual landscape I have adapted the methodology for this phase of the investigation accordingly.

In order to start charting this textual landscape, I conduct a content analysis evaluating internal hard copy publications. While the content differs across the different formats, I consistently analyse it for the two key driving themes throughout this investigation: physical and ideational aspects. After this internally-focussed approach, I shift emphasis slightly to investigate other items often mentioned in the newsletters and publications. I focus on the Orania website, and more specifically the visitor's book and the promotional DVD, *Orania: Waar drome waar word!* (Where dreams come true). I do not present a detailed transcription of the DVD, but rather focus on the comments as posted on YouTube. In April 2012 an updated marketing DVD of 8 minutes called *Nérens anders nie* (Nowhere else) was posted on YouTube, featuring updated content. However, an analysis of this contribution is not included in the study.

## **4.2 Content Analysis**

Fairclough (1995:208-209) suggests four reasons why textual analysis can be used effectively in social science research, namely the theoretical, methodological, historical and political. Theoretically texts constitute an important form of social action and form part of the social structures. Methodologically, texts form the foundation of evidence for claims about social structures, relations and processes. Historically, texts are sensitive indicators of social processes, movement and diversity, and textual analysis can gauge social change. The political reason relates how social control and domination are exercised, negotiated and also resisted through texts.

Carley (1993:81) describes the content analysis as the frequency with which words or concepts occur in texts or across texts. Basically, a list of concepts is applied to a set of texts and the number of times each concept occurs in each

text is counted. Any variances in the distribution of counts across texts offer insight into the comparisons and differences in the content of the texts.

Methodologically, the content analysis was done in two phases: phase one as the collection phase in the field, and phase two, the actual content analysis as the very last part of the ethnography writing. When I set out gathering the texts, I did not understand how pivotal this process would be during the fieldwork. While the textual landscape provides an important perspective on place and space, the process of gaining access to the material was equally important in shaping the ethnographic experience. Accessing the *Voorgrond* archives at the *Orania Beweging* offices helped build my confidence in a new and unfamiliar environment, and it allowed me to create an identity as a researcher with a task. The search for the back copies allowed me to have an in-depth interview with the editor of the *Volkstater* and the *Dorpnuus* (Town News), and the administrative task of making photocopies brought me in close contact with the office of the *Dorpskantoor*. While there was an abundance of material collected in Orania on Orania, during my fieldwork it was not archived in a central location<sup>34</sup>. The media articles are mostly hard copy, often the only copy available. It is not alphabetised, indexed or preserved electronically. When I asked about this lack of organisation, various research participants said that they would love to address the issue, but that it was just too time consuming, and that there was always something more important that had to be done. While the idea was laudable, practicalities about every-day living and business needs needed to be addressed first.

While the *Volkstaatskou* is not a text, it does become a text through reporting in the *Volkstater*. My decision to participate and have a stall at the *skou* offered the

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<sup>34</sup> The Orania Archive has subsequently been established and is responsible for archival activities.

opportunity to become part of the text. While my *skou* participation wasn't directly reported, some of my other activities are mentioned in the texts (Strydom 2008:13). As such, it shows how an anthropologist walks differently in the textual, and becomes part of the narrative.

The sequence and timing of the analysis is also quite deliberate. Leaving the content analysis until last while writing the ethnography gave me the opportunity to carefully put down as many impressions, thoughts and experiences as possible, without the additional lens of the official, written Orania-specific narratives. I returned to the publications after setting down my initial impressions. The published content is very useful in filling in small gaps that I didn't notice in the initial writing, and the year-on-year comparisons give me another view of the rhythm and changing rhythm of living in the community. But I needed to constantly keep in mind the fine line between the sanctioned narratives and the real-life flavour that is the result of every-day living.

Textual analysis is of value since De Beer (2006) and Hues & Morgan (2010:35) highlight how much of the documentation on Orania is contained in pamphlets, booklets and brochures issued and distributed by the *Orania Beweging*, the *Dorpskantoor* as well as individuals in the community. There is also a substantial number of media reports generated by South African and international media which provide information and context. For this investigation I limited myself to three internal publications, namely the *Voorgrond*, *Volkstater* and *Dorpnuus*. I excluded separate official documents such as the Annual Report and the publications from both the schools.

I identified overall themes that present themselves across the internal publications.

Criteria	Description
Administration	Voting, running of the town, committees, property transactions, selection
Advert	Adverts for business, also includes some classifieds
Letters	Letters from inside and outside the town
Businesses	Profile on a business or business owner
Environment	Focus on the environment, such as the <i>Bewarea</i> , permaculture, recycling
Event	Event hosted in Orania, such as the <i>Volkstaatskou</i> , or conference
External	Reference to external nations and events, such as <i>uitwoners</i> , an overseas PR tour, or international independence movements
History	Quote by a historical figure, or reference to the early history of Orania
Infrastructure	Reference to Orania infrastructure such as roads, buildings or utilities
Inhabitants	Mention of a specific inhabitant, birth and death notices, achievements
Poetry	Poetry by inhabitants, usually with a strong Afrikaner slant
Policy	Rules and regulations that are promulgated and enforced
Religious	Reference to biblical situations or verses
Thought leadership	Thoughts and direction for the Afrikaner and Orania future
Weather	Mention of weather, rain, cold, heat

*Table 4-1 Themes in internal publications*

Physical	Mention of physical features of Orania, such as location, reference to property, weather
Intangible	Reference to intangible aspects which Orania is linked to, such as Afrikaner identity, the <i>Volkstaat</i> , community

*Table 4-2 Physical and intangible mentions in internal publications*

#### **4.2.1 The *Dorpnuus***

The *Dorpnuus* is the publication of the *Dorpsraad* and is primarily focussed on inhabitants of Orania, or visitors to the town. The newsletter concentrates on events that touch upon the *Dorpsraad*, reporting on the Board meetings, information on rules and regulations as well as social news that are relevant to everyone in the town. In September 2010 the name of the publication was changed to *Orania Dorpnuus*, with a new editor (Anon., 2010:2). While the newsletter can be found at the *Dorpsraad* offices, it is also distributed to inhabitants in the town through home delivery. On my way to another appointment, I popped into the *Dorpskantoor* to follow up on payment for my stall at the *Volkstaatskou* (see 4.2.2), and at the same time asked about back issues of the *Dorpnuus*. Anticipating a lack of back-issues, I was cheerfully informed that they did indeed have hard copies I could photocopy. More importantly, they would help me because I was supporting Orania with my stall.

I analysed *Dorpnuus* editions 1-39 from November 2005 to May 2008. The format of the newsletter is a black-and-white folded A4 page, printed on both sides of the paper. This means that the publication typically comprises 4 A5 sized pages, but some editions with more news include 8 A5 sized pages. There are no regular electronic copies of the *Dorpnuus*. Although there was mention of publishing the content online in September 2010, this stated goal had not yet been achieved by 2012, with only a few editions sometimes posted on the Orania website.

Visually, the Orania branding that is so noticeable in the physical landscape through signboards is also present, if less prominent. Volume 1-25 (barring 4) has the *Dorpsraad* logo displayed in the top left of the front page in the *Dorpnuus*



masthead. Volumes from 26 to 39<sup>35</sup> did not have that branding. However, from volume 48, the September 2010 edition onwards, editorial change also brought along stylistic changes. The publication name changed to *Orania Dorpnuus*. A black line-drawn logo of the *Kleine Reus* is outlined against an orange disk in-between the two words that make up the publication title. Orange is also utilised as a tint for the front and back pages. The *Orania Dorpnuus* rebranding brings it in line with the visual aesthetic of using orange and the *mannetjie* as seen in the physical landscape. The *Dorpnuus* makes infrequent mention to history and historical events and is limited to reference to historical figures such as the statues of Afrikaner leaders on the *Monumentkoppie*, and holidays in Orania that commemorate historical events, such as *Bittereinderdag* and *Geloftedag*.



Image 4-1 *Dorpnuus* vs. *Orania Dorpnuus* mastheads

When analysing the content of the publication for reference to physical and intangible aspects, 98% of the content refers to physical and 50% related to intangible features of Orania (since one article can make reference to both tangible and intangible aspects, percentages will not add up to a hundred percent). This physical-to-intangible ratio reflects the practical, every-day content

<sup>35</sup> Volumes 1-39 formed the basis for my discussion.

of the *Dorpnuus*. While the theme mix changes slightly year-on-year, the five major themes present in the *Dorpnuus* are administration (28%), infrastructure (20%), event (18%), inhabitants (11%) and policy (8%). The prominent themes echo the local community focus.

Administration issues include details on the number of new inhabitants that have undergone selection, as well as individuals that have left the community. New appointments within the *Dorpskantoor* as well as the annual budget also get coverage. Elections gained a significant amount of coverage, especially since Orania did not only have a ballot for the national municipal elections, but also for their own internal structures. The municipal elections of 2006 were significant in upholding the legislative status quo in terms of Orania's municipal status, and generated significant coverage. Articles focussed on the Orania *Verteenwoordigende Raad* (OVR) (Representative Council), whilst the "official" elections are referred to almost as an incidental event. The quotation marks in the previous sentence are quite intentional, since that is how the *Dorpnuus* referred to the official elections, along with passive tense and language that questioned the validity of the government elections:

*Die ander verkiesing: Daar was natuurlik ook die 'amptelike' verkiesing wat die Gemeenskapsaal as basis gebruik het en waar drie stemme uitgebring kon word: vir die stadsraad van Thembelinie (sic) met Hopetown as setel, vir een van die Thembelinie (sic)-wyke waarin Orania glo val en vir die distriksmunisipaliteit met De Aar as setel / The other election: There was also naturally the 'official' election that used the Gemeenskapsaal as base and where three ballots could be cast: for the municipality of Thembelinie (sic) with Hopetown as seat, one for the Thembelinie (sic) districts where Orania would reportedly fall and for the district municipality with De Aar as seat (Anon. 2006c:1).*

The misspelling of Thembelihle is slightly anomalous, as I have observed that the Orania leadership are usually very exact and correct when referring to and dealing with South African political structures (see 2.5). However, in general, Oranians not in leadership positions are not concerned with or interested in the exact details of their official municipal demarcation, as long as they can continue in their independent fashion.

There were two different polling stations for the two different elections. The Orania-sanctioned polling station was at the *Volkskool*, with a festive atmosphere including stalls and sheep on the spit, whilst the municipal elections for the town council and district of Thembelihle were at the *Gemeenskapsaal*, with noticeably less pomp and activity. The elections are significant to Oranians as tangible reminders that while they live within the South African political system, they also have an opportunity to continue with their own independent activities. The later elections made many of the long-time inhabitants refer back to the 2000 elections with fond memories, and each subsequent election is approached with both trepidation that the Orania municipal status will be revoked, and pride in what they have achieved already.

Another issue that was categorised as Administrative and which generated content in the *Dorpnuus* was internal conflict caused by dissident residents (as mentioned in 3.4.3). Allegations of fraud and mismanagement were made, leading to lawsuits, court cases and police investigations. The conflict escalated from individual dissatisfaction to community catalyst. Spontaneous community action against this behaviour included a petition signed by 272 inhabitants for *sekere inwoners* (certain inhabitants) to desist from actions that reflect negatively on Orania (Anon. 2005g:1). With the intention to counter any future escalations of

internal conflict to this public level, a committee for mediation and arbitration was instituted. While the committee was used to settle some disputes, litigation and court orders remain a way in which grievances are aired between parties at odds with each other in the community.

In order to provide some context to the content mix of the *Dorpnuus*, the closest comparison in the district is the *Kwikstertjie*, a publication published and funded by the Vanderkloof Ratepayers' Association and distributed at shops and guest houses in Vanderkloof. While the focus is on news from Vanderkloof, an important distinction is the pages set aside for news from surrounding towns such as Petrusville and Orania. I didn't focus in-depth on the content of the *Kwikstertjie* and also had less publications to analyse, but in comparison the content mix varies in the two publications. The *Kwikstertjie* is dominated by adverts (38%) and articles on inhabitants (14%), followed by articles on businesses (8%), editorials such as gardening and beauty columns (7%), events (7%) and infrastructure (7%). The large number of adverts (neither analysed as physical nor intangible references) influences the fact that only 24% of articles make reference to physical elements in Vanderkloof. Whilst Vanderkloof doesn't have the same overtly stated focus on ideas and ideals as Orania, 15% of the articles do focus on community growth and support. Articles on *Sorgsaam Bejaarde Trust* (Provident Elderly Trust) in a few editions reference how the Trust helps make Vanderkloof better by extending a helping hand to the community, and how this makes Vanderkloof an attractive place to come and live.

#### 4.2.2 The *Volkstater*

The *Volkstater* is an independent publication that is sent to supporters of the *Volkstaat* idea, primarily outside of Orania. The *Volkstater's* stated goal is: *Volkstater is 'n onafhanklike nuusbrief wat die Volkstaatideaal onderskryf* (Anon. 1998:4) (*Volkstater* is an independent newsletter that supports the *Volkstaat* ideal). *Redaksioneel en andersyds wil hy die onafhanklikheid handhaaf* (Anon. 2005h:5) (Editorially and otherwise it wants to maintain independence from institutions in Orania). This stated goal offers a view independent of the *Dorpsraad*. However, whilst the publication is independent in that it is not funded by the *Dorpsraad*, the editor also edited the *Dorpnuus*. There is also a period where the editor headed the *skou* committee. While this can explain the high volume of *skou*-related articles in the *Volkstater*, it also shows how one person becomes involved in a variety of activities. It also indicates the potential for a lack of diversity of perspective.

After an interview with the editor, I was able to get extra hard copies of the newsletter, and made photocopies of editions that didn't have an extra copy. There were no electronic copies, so all content analysis had to be done manually. *Volkstater* content analysed here includes all 51 editions from October 1998 to January 2008. The frequency changed from monthly to bi-monthly to quarterly. The format is usually 2 A4 pages, printed on both sides, stapled together in the upper left corner, so 4 A4 printed pages for content. Since June/July 2003 (number 28) the content was printed in colour.

The *Volkstater* masthead changes quite often. A noticeable change in the masthead, apart from changing font for the publication name and the use of orange for the name from number 28, is the space in the top left corner. While some editions don't have any content (numbers 1-6, 46-51), the majority of the

editions had Bible verses (numbers 20-44), or Orania-related content like a map of the proposed *volkstaat* (numbers 7-12) or poetry (numbers 15, 16). While the *Dorpsraad* logo would feature in a few adverts placed by the *Dorpsraad*, and the *Kleine Reus* flag is present in photos of events or a photo accompanying an article on Orania, these symbols aren't otherwise included in the publication. This lack of Orania symbols practically expresses the publication's stated aspiration to editorial independence.

73% of articles focus on the physical, and 61% refer to the intangible aspects. While the *Volkstater* makes more reference to the ideational compared to the *Dorpnuus*, the majority of articles are still related to descriptions of physical features, illustrating a more practical focus. There would have been less focus on ideas if every reference to the *skou* didn't also include mention of the *volkstaat*, which was deemed a reference to an intangible idea.

The majority of the articles focus on events (18%), or in this case, the Orania *Volkstaatskou* and related events. Infrastructure plays an important part in the make-up of the publication with 15% of the content dedicated to Infrastructure. 13% of the content is devoted to adverts, and 10% focus on profiles of businesses and business owners. Thought leadership articles comprise 8% of the publication's content.

The major event that makes up the majority of the event theme is the *Volkstaatskou*. The first *Volkstaatskou* was held in April 2000. By naming the event the *Volkstaatskou*, Orania differentiated its show from other rural shows or exhibitions and gave emphasis to the idea of Orania as a *volkstaat* and not only the place where it is held, but as the starting point of the *volkstaat*. In general however, the community refers to the *skou*, rather than the *Volkstaatskou*. The

first event is classed as unique: *Want daar was nog nooit voorheen 'n plek soos Orania nie. En daar was nog nooit voorheen 'n Volkstaatskou op juis so 'n plek soos Orania nie* / Because there has never before been a place like Orania. And there has never before been a *Volkstaat* show at particularly a place like Orania.

The terrain for the *skou* has changed over the years, from the open land at the back of the *Orania Beweging* offices [4E] to the dedicated *skouterrein* in the industrial area of the settlement in 2005 [5G]. I was told that the previous terrain was unsuitable, and the *skouterrein* was a great improvement. In 2012 the event was renamed to the *Orania Karnaval*. This event celebrated the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the community and the site was moved again and held on the sport field behind the swimming pool [6D].

I participated in the 2008 event with a mosaic stall called *Wragtig Pragtig* (loosely translated as Bloody Beautiful). I got the idea after I read about the *skou* in the *Volkstater* on a previous visit to the town, and decided to use this opportunity as a further foray into participant observation. I sold a few pieces, with the crosses of various sizes being the most popular. More importantly, after the *skou* my stock was displayed in the jewellery store and I received a few commissions for other pieces, which I completed and delivered on subsequent visits. As one of the few non Oranians, and with its colourful display, my stall received a good amount of attention. However, this gave me the opportunity to experience Oranian commercial practices first hand, which confirmed my observation from a previous visit that this was not a particularly affluent community. Even though my items were priced very reasonably when compared to city-based craft merchandise, it was still out of financial reach for the majority of shoppers. I also realised that if a purchase would be made based on a limited budget, the visitors to the *skou* would purchase it from an Oranian stall. At that stage during the

series of fieldwork visits I was less well known in and around the community, and I was later told by research participants that if I had attended the *skou* the following year I would have made many more sales.



*Image 4-2 Packing up the stall at the skou*

Image 4-2 shows me packing up on the second day, tired and sick after the cold and unseasonably rainy *skou*. If you look closely, you can see the stack of truffles on the table, traditional *kermis* (fair) and *skou* food we bought from the *NG Kerk* stall just opposite. Illness in the field brought home how different a rural environment is when compared to a (familiar and convenient) city experience with its Sunday shopping hours and emergency chemists. I came down with a severe cold during the fieldwork visit. After I felt better, I was told that I should have ordered medicine from the chemist in Hopetown and they would have delivered the medicine at a communal drop-point at the café. It is this marked difference between city living and the rural experience that comes to the fore in conversations as one of the biggest factors that influence new inhabitants in the town negatively, and one of the driving factors for people leaving the community.



It is in the *Volkstater* that further response to previously mentioned community conflict can be seen. Apart from petitions and legal action as detailed in the *Dorpnuus*, the community also held a meeting in May 2005 to support a motion of confidence in the leadership of Prof. Carel Boshoff and the Orania leadership (Anon. 2005i:1). Part of the allegations of misconduct was that Orania had characteristics of a Mafia organisation and (what I now think of as a typically contrary Orania fashion) the community's response was to hold a 'Mafia' themed ball in July 2005 (Anon, 2005j:5).

History does form an important part of the content of the *Volkstater* (4% of articles). The *Volkstater* weaves in historic narratives through a regular contribution called *Stem uit die verlede* (Voice from the past), with quotes from H.F. Verwoerd, Piet Retief, Paul Kruger and D.F. Malan that are relevant to the Afrikaner and Orania, creating an intertextual narrative. A quote, attributed to Piet Retief's Manifest of 1837, could very well be a contemporary comment on a move to Orania (Anon. 2005k:8):

*Ons vertrek nou uit ons vrugbare geboorteland waar ons enorme skadegely en voortdurend aan ergenis blootgestel is om ons te gaan vestig in 'n woestyn en gevaarlike gebied; maar ons gaan met vaste vertroue op 'n afsiende, regverdige en genadige God wat ons altyd sal vrees en in alle nederigheid sal probeer gehoorsaam. / We now depart from our fertile fatherland where we suffered enormous losses and were exposed to constant annoyance, to establish ourselves in a desert and dangerous area, but we go with the firm belief in a righteous and merciful God whom we will always fear and try to obey in all humility.*

Further reference to history is generally linked to the monuments in town and events such as *Geloftedag* with accompanying photographs, sometimes with the flags discussed in 3.5.1. The *Volkstater* also includes thought leadership articles on Afrikaner history, with content exemplified by articles like *Orania onderskei hom van 350 jaar se doodloopstrate* (Orania distinguishes itself from 350 years of dead ends) (Anon. 2003b:5). More than just reporting on various events and festive days linked to Afrikaner history, there is also analysis of the various activities around and the significance of these days (Anon 2004f:1):

*Volke het hul eie, besondere feesdae nodig waar hulle in erns en pret vir hulle self rekenskap kan gee vanwaar hulle kom, wat hulle is en waarheen hulle wil gaan. Dink ook aan unieke Afrikanerdae soos Majubadag, Bittereinderdag, Taaldag en Kruger- of Helderdag. / Nations need their own, unique festive days where they with gravity and fun account for where they come from, what they are and where they want to go. Also think about unique Afrikaner days such as Majuba Day, Die-hard Day, Language Day and Kruger/Heroes Day.*

Regular articles on Archaeology with specific reference to the North Cape region and Orania landscape also provide a pre-historic backdrop and education pieces.

#### **4.2.3 The Voorgrond**

The *Voorgrond* is the publication of the *Orania Beweging*. *Voorgrond* is primarily a marketing tool and is aimed at members of the *Orania Beweging*. It enables *uitwoners* to keep a close eye on events and inhabitants in Orania, as one letter from an *uitwoner* (Strydom 2004:7) states:

*Dankie ook aan die Orania Beweging wat dit vir ons wat nog net in ons harte op Orania kan woon moontlik maak om ook deel te kan wees van die ideaal wat ons nastreef / Thanks also to the Orania Beweging that*

makes it possible for us that for now can only live in Orania in our hearts to also be a part of the ideal that we pursue.

This relationship building is a successful execution of a stated goal of the publication to create a bond between Orania and its *uitwoners* (Anon. 2009:13):

*Sonder die volgehoue ondersteuning van Afrikaners dwarsoor die wêreld sal Orania nie volhoubaar wees nie. Ons wil die band met julle versterk sodat julle kan weet dat Orania ook julle kosbare tuiskomplek is! / Without the continual support of Afrikaners across the world, Orania will not be sustainable. We want to strengthen the bond with you so that you can know that Orania is also your precious home.*

This goal, and the *Voorgrond* as the tool to enable the stated result, encompasses both the physical and ideational landscape and creates a textual landscape.

I analysed publications from 2003 to March 2009. The *Voorgrond* format has evolved from a photocopied A5 booklet into a glossy, professionally printed (in Kimberley) A5-sized colour magazine, usually comprising 20 pages. The frequency of publication changes over the years, but a bi-monthly schedule has been maintained since 2008. Throughout the different formats, the *Voorgrond* used orange and the *Orania Beweging* logo consistently. Orange is used in headlines, page frames and photograph borders. The *Orania Beweging* logo is the logo that was initially used on posters during the 2000 campaign to retain municipal status. The logo was subsequently adopted by the *Orania Beweging*, symbolising growth, both inward and outward, by the sinuous in and out curl of the green shoot (Anon. 2007c:3). The logo is used consistently throughout the *Voorgrond*, and also marks the *Orania Beweging* offices. It is also used in external communication channels such as the Twitter avatar, and more importantly, the Orania website.



Image 4-3 Orania Beweging logo



Image 4-4 Orania Beweging logo in the landscape

84% of the *Voorgrond* articles mention physical aspects, with 67% focussed on the ideas and intangible traits. The majority of the articles in the publication focus on thought leadership (20%), followed by adverts (13%), profiles on businesses (11%), articles on events (11%) and infrastructure (11%). This mix confirms the publication's focus on *uitwoners* and *Orania Beweging* supporters, since it focuses on the common ideas that attract these parties to each other, but it also provides a glimpse into life in Orania which the *uitwoners* will otherwise not be able to experience.

Articles that have a focus on history form 3% of the content of the *Voorgrond*. Articles include reviews of historical places of interest in and around Orania like the rock paintings and graffiti, Orange River station, the Doornbult concentration

camp terrain, Hopetown, the N12-route, Magersfontein and the *Ierse Monument*. There are also analyses of Afrikaner history, and, like in the *Volkstater*, quotes of Afrikaner leaders pertinent to Orania, amongst others a significant quote, in Dutch, from former President Paul Kruger's last missive to the *volk*, June, 1904:

“Want zie wie zich een toekomst scheppen wil, mag het verledene niet uit het oog verliezen. Daarom: zoekt in het verledene al het goede en schoone, dat daarin te ontdekken valst, vormst daarna u ideaal.” / Because those who want to create a future should not lose sight of the past. Seek therefore in the past all that is good and clean and form your ideal on that discovery.

There are also frequent references in articles to pioneers and a pioneer community. Various research participants also used the term *pioneer* when describing themselves in Orania (see 5.3).

While some pieces of thought leadership on independence with headlines like *Selfstandigheid lei tot sukses* (Independence leads to success) (Lombard, 2004b:3), some articles focus on the practice and practicality of Orania, and more specifically, the balance between the idea and the reality. De Klerk (2003:3) described this balance as two sides of the same coin: *In Orania word “doen” en “dink” ook nie as teenoorgesteldes gesien nie, Eerder as die twee kante van dieselfde munt* (In Orania “do” and “think” are not seen as opposites. Rather as two sides of the same coin).

In an open letter to prospective inhabitants, Grobbelaar (2005:11) highlights three realities that should be considered before moving to Orania. Firstly, Orania is a small town with a limited market for goods and the related logistics for moving products. Secondly, the weather is a factor, with extreme heat in summer and cold in winter. Thirdly, a prospective inhabitant needs to portray certain

characteristics, such as a pioneering spirit that takes on challenges and handles disappointment, realistic expectations about fellow inhabitants with their human foibles, even if everyone has a shared goal. However realistic, a prospective inhabitant should also be idealistic and make contributions to the greater ideal (of Afrikaner independence).

As stated earlier, the process of gathering the data for the content analysis was important in establishing my legitimate presence in the community. Whilst the people in the *Orania Beweging* office were very helpful in getting the back-issues together, there was also a distinct lack of archival due-process. Some back-issues were missing, and softcopies weren't available. When I asked about this incomplete archive, the lack of time, support and infrastructure were given as reasons. The same can also be applied to the print media archive: there are many newspaper and magazine articles that are published by the constant stream of national and international journalists. Whilst visiting journalists (and researchers) are asked to share a copy of their article with the *Orania Beweging*, there is no real way to enforce this or follow up. The clippings that are received from journalists or sourced from local publications are collected on an ad hoc basis in a box, but without index or order. Whilst there is an archive that is reported on in the publications and mentioned in conversation, I never saw any practical manifestation. My time at the *Orania Beweging* made me realise that practicality trumps ideas in most instances.

#### **4.2.4 Publication summary**

Oranian publications exhibit a different combination and distribution of signs and symbols when compared to the physical landscape. Orange as colour is a common marker in the *Volkstater* and *Voorgrond*, with the *Orania Dorpnuus* later

on also including orange in its presentation. The presence of the *Kleine Reus* and *koeksister* in the core sample of editions is limited to article-related photos, although the *Kleine Reus* does appear prominently in later editions of *Orania Dorpnuus*. The *Orania Beweging* logo can be seen in the *Voorgrond* and at the *Orania Beweging* offices.

Finding content comparable to physical signboards is slightly more challenging. However, if I refer back to Rowntree & Conkey's (1980:462) statement that inwardly directed messages provide information that nurture and promote group loyalty and identity, there are certain elements in the publications that qualify as "signboards". The *Dorpnuus* has cartoons that reinforce messages or comment on articles. *Volkstater* includes messages in the masthead, whether short statements or Bible verses. The *Voorgrond* has a limited number of these public service announcement type proclamations, mostly promoting an aspect of *Orania Beweging* services.



Image 4-5 *Dorpnuus* cartoons reinforce article content<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> What is the town office telephone and fax number again? Dummy, call...

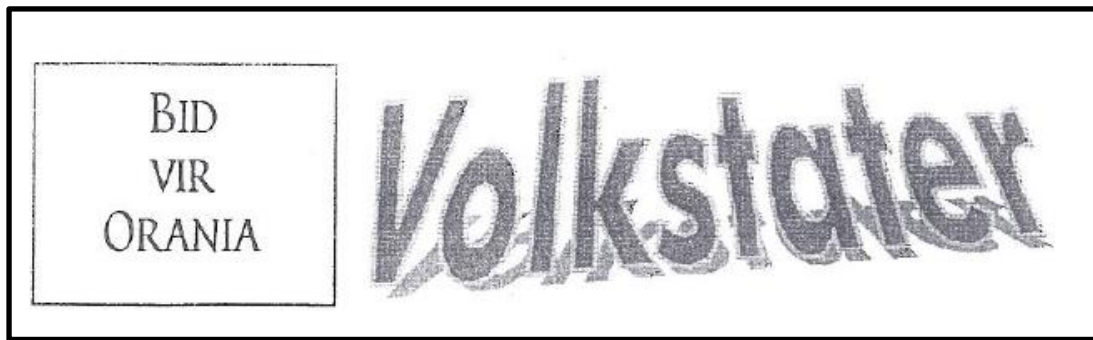


Image 4-6 *Volkstater* masthead includes bible verses or short statements on Orania<sup>37</sup>



Image 4-7 *Voorgrond* mobilises and channels uitwoner interest<sup>38</sup>

Historical references are present in *Volkstater* and *Voorgrond*, but less so in the *Dorpnuus*. The three publications have a different content mix since they cater for different audiences. While the narratives of identity and independence are reinforced, it does not only occur through the colour orange or the *mannetjie*, but rather through the text itself. Across these internal Oranian publications the narratives of independence (strong focus on elections, infrastructure) and uniqueness (frequency of words such as *enig*, *eie/own*) (also see 5.1) are evident.

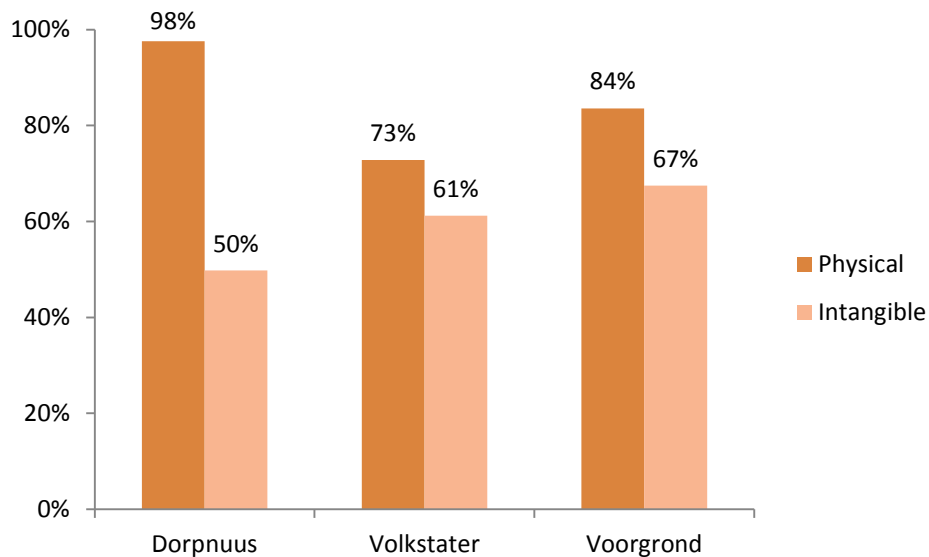
There is a fluid relationship between and awareness of the physical landscape and Oranian ideas and ideals, arguably more so than when compared to publications from surrounding towns. The importance of ideas in and to the community is evident in the percentage of articles (average of 59%) that refer to intangible traits that Orania is linked to, such as Afrikaner identity, the *Volkstaat*

<sup>37</sup> Pray for Orania

<sup>38</sup> Come and talk along about Orania



and the community. However on average, the majority of articles focus on physical aspects (85%). While an idea led to the settlement of Orania, it is the physical place that now dominates Oranian thinking according to the content published by and for Oranians.



*Image 4-8 Publication comparison of physical and intangible mentions*

### **4.3 Digital ethnography and methodology**

Wittel (2000) expands on Gupta and Ferguson (1997), indicating that ethnography is not only moving from “fields” as spatially defined localities towards socio-political locations, networks, and multi-sited approaches, but also from physical spaces to digital spaces. Even though I am not conducting a digital/virtual ethnography or netnography, I am aware of the tensions and complications that can stem from a qualitative review of Internet-mediated contexts and am guided by Markham’s (2007:251) methodology for making decisions around (a) defining the boundaries of the field, (b) determining what constitutes data, (c) interpreting the other as text, (d) using embodied sensibilities to interpret textuality, and (e) representing the other ethically in research reports.

There are a great number of articles, personal blogs of varying quality, tweets and commentary available when one does a general internet search on Orania. Analysing that amount of content falls outside the parameters of the current study. In order to bring the analysis down to manageable and relevant parameters, I selected sites with an official Orania presence, i.e. content sanctioned by the *Orania Beweging*. I have analysed the commentary available for a comparative and exemplary snapshot of how Orania as a locale and as an idea as perceived on the Internet by commenters. I have taken comments from the Orania website *Besoekersboek* (Visitor's Book), as well as comments from the DVD (Parts 1 & 2) that have been posted on YouTube. I have excluded the other internet areas where Orania has an official presence, namely Twitter, Facebook and the online forum in the Orania Yahoo Group. I purposefully focussed on content analysis as opposed to an in-depth online ethnography as the online presence in this study is supplementary to, rather than the focus of the study.

I made an initial scan of all the comments in order to identify any recurring themes, and whether commenters have knowledge of, as well as attitudes and perceptions towards Orania's physical landscape and/or ideals. In order to quantify trends that were picked up in an initial casual analysis, I then analysed the content according to the following coding choices in the comments:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
Attitude	Positive: Support & congratulations Neutral: Neutral questions Negative: Hostile or disparaging comments
Country	Either stated or inferred via profile
SA Place	If from South Africa, was a specific place mentioned
Reason	Criticism (of Orania) Defend (comments made in defence of Orania) General (Arbitrary comments) Personal (Directed at specific individuals) Prank (Ridiculing Orania) Response (to a previous comment) RFI (Requests for Information) Support (for Orania) Visit (Whether the commenter has visited or wants to visit)
Physical	Whether any particular physical features of Orania were mentioned, or asked about
Intangible	Comments that refer to intangible, ideological aspects that Orania is perceived to embody, such as Afrikaner identity, or perceived links to apartheid
Religious reference	Prayers or blessings on Orania

*Table 4-3 Themes in online content*

Since there is very little other identifying context around the comments analysed, the data that are available become more important. For a content analysis such as this one, the individual behind the text is less crucial than for an in-depth online ethnography. However, this analysis does touch upon the ethics of the perception of private and public. Online exposure can be seen to lie on a

spectrum of public to private, with varying degrees of this in between the two poles. McCleary (2007) states that while legally online postings may be considered public domain, the wider concerns around what constitutes ethical and responsible use of someone's posting should also be considered. This would include breaches of confidentiality such as linking subjects' responses to an identifier, using direct quotations that may allow for identification of the poster and tracing a poster's e-mail address and/or identity (Frankel & Siang, 1999). Since it would be impractical to get permission from 700+ commenters, going back to 2004, I have steered away as much as possible from using direct, identifying quotes and have not linked comments to commenters.

#### **4.3.1 Orania Besoekersboek**

The Orania website was first established in 2004. More than just an information hub on the town, the Orania website is a virtual representation of the town. For those unfamiliar with the town it is their first glimpse of the town and the idea behind it. Many visitors to the website had different perceptions of Orania and after viewing the website commented on how their perceptions have changed. For *uitwoners*, it is another way of staying up to date, especially since the website update in 2010 when up-to-date news and photos as well as general goings-on have been posted more regularly as per a few requests. The website becomes a "home site", and a commenter stated that each visit to the website makes one feel as if one is in Orania itself. The website makes it possible to experience Orania, even if it is only through the internet and via the text of the website.

The analysis of the website is based on the 2009 version. While updates have subsequently been made, the underlying structure of the website has remained

the same. The graphics on the page header (see 2.4.1) do not constitute an actual representation of the town. The colour orange and the *Orania Beweging* logo that forms part of the page banner are present on each page, creating a continuous whole across the website. The website consists of a home page and 14 links to News, Market Place, Institutions, Visitor's Book, Diary, In Depth, Activities, Accommodation, Agriculture, Education, Services, Monetary System, Photo Album and Links.

In order to gauge responses to the website and Orania on the internet, I conducted a content analysis on comments in the visitor's book, as that is the page that consistently publishes comments. While there is a function to comment on news articles, the function is relatively new. For as complete a view as possible, I looked specifically at comments on the *Besoekersboek* which go back to the site's inception in 2004.

The *Besoekersboek* is prefaced by a short statement that invites commentary and criticism to stimulate growth and debate, and the right is reserved to exclude comments or edit them before placement. These messages are indeed moderated by the *Orania Beweging*, and very negative or distasteful comments are screened and excluded from the *Besoekersboek*. Based on conversations with a moderator in the team, on average at least one comment a week is excluded, so the comments on the *Besoekersboek* have been pre-screened and do not constitute an unfiltered view. Names and email addresses are mandatory in order to post a comment, although email addresses are not displayed any more.

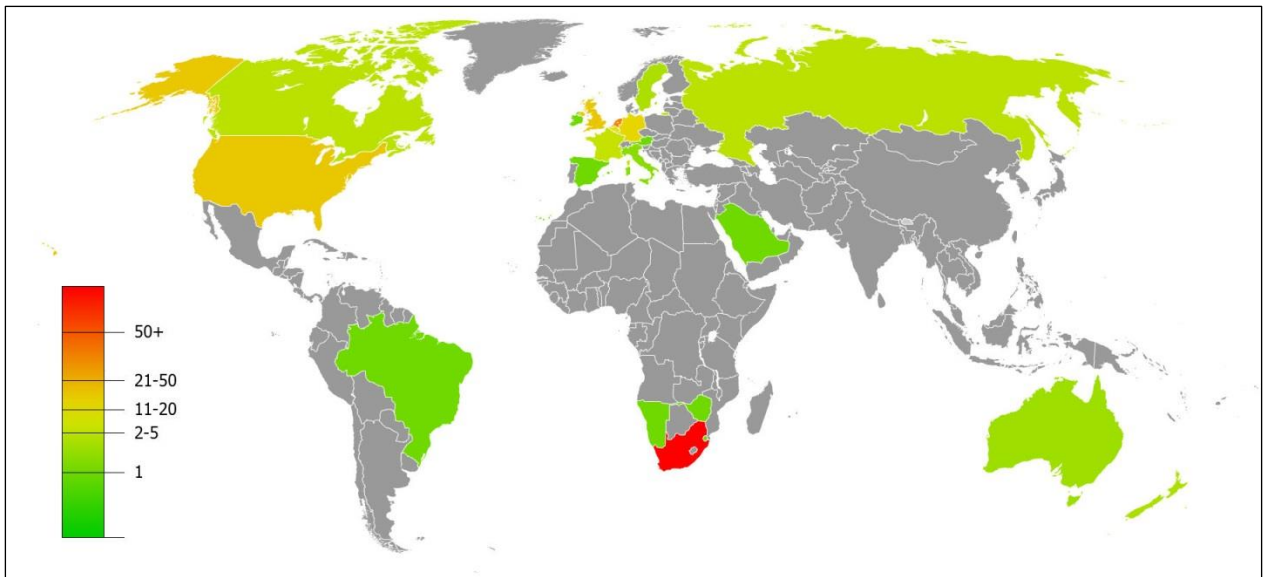
I analysed 500 messages from March 2004 – May 2008 and May 2009 to April 2011 according to the stated reasons. The overwhelming majority of comments

(58%) show support for Orania and the website. Examples of support comments include strong identification of Orania with Afrikaner independence or identity, with the exhortation that Afrikaners must stand together, as in Orania. Orania is seen as proof that the spirit of the *Voortrekkers* is still alive. Afrikaners had built the country (*die land*) from nothing, and can do it over and over again, with Orania as another example of progress. One commenter sums up the focus of this investigation quite handily when he couples the physical and the ideational together and states that he supports 'the idea of an own place to live'. Associated comments of support include comments with a religious reference (13%), mostly offering up prayers and blessings for Orania, its people and the ideals associated with the town, especially the Christian character.

Requests for information form the other big portion of comments (23%), mostly questions about eligibility to enter or stay in Orania, availability of housing and employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. This trend is also one that the *Orania Beweging* office deals with on a daily basis, with constant calls with questions about property in the town, the settlement requirements and job opportunities.

Most commenters from outside South Africa (28%) state their nationality in their comment. While the majority of the comments come from individuals inside South Africa (72%), only 23% of these commenters included their current location in South Africa. The largest percentage of international comments is from the Netherlands (7%), followed by the USA and the UK (3%), and then Belgium (specifically Vlaanders) and Germany (2%). In total, comments were received from 23 countries that were identified. In only 2% of comments is the nationality or location not stated or possible to be deduced. The cultural identity message broadcast by the Orania website attracts strong nationalist sentiments

from a variety of countries, but especially countries with a historic tie with South Africa's colonial heritage.



*Image 4-9 Besoekersboek comment geographic distribution<sup>39</sup>*

While most comments are positive, criticism is also levelled (1%). Due to the fact that the *Besoekersboek* content is moderated, a larger percentage of the posts could have initially included negative comments. Most criticisms deal with the idea of Orania, with comments linking Orania to being racist, sick and backward. On the other side of the scale, some comments criticise Orania for not being independent enough from South Africa and that they are “selling out” to the perceived evil of an ANC government. Some comments also dealt with problems encountered after a visit to the town (for instance, noise due to construction at the caravan park). There are also comments that refer to a period of internal conflict (referred to in 4.2.1) in the town between two opposite power blocks and how detrimental it is to the image and ideals of Orania. However, this is also one of the occasions that the moderators stepped in to give further input:

*Ek is in die versoeking om vir jou te sê: "Lighten up!". Die feit dat ons op Orania twee of drie dwarstrekke gehad het, beteken nie dat dit die*

<sup>39</sup> Image created under Creative Commons license BY-SA3.0 via <http://www.gunn.co.nz/map/>

*algemene gees is nie. 'n Pioniersgemeenskap soos Orania sal maar van tyd tot tyd 'storm en drang' ervaar. Die beste raad wat ek vir jou kan gee, is om 'n paar dae op Orania te kom kuier. Jy sal gou 'n gevoel kry of dit wat jy hier beleef jou aanstaan of nie. Maar wees gerus - ons baklei nie heeltyd met mekaar nie en ons kan lekker vir onself lag!* / I'm tempted to tell you: lighten up! The fact that we've had two or three squabblers does not mean that this is the general spirit. A pioneer community like Orania will experience tempestuous relations. The best advice I could give you is to come and visit Orania for a few days. You will quickly get the feeling whether your experiences here are to your liking or not. But be assured – we don't fight with each other the whole time and can have a good laugh at ourselves.<sup>40</sup>

When a particularly contentious comment is made on the *Besoekersboek* or in the media, some commenters come to the defence of Orania (1%). These defenders do not live in the town, but the town represents either a religious or cultural ideal to them that they identify with and defend personally.

As with any online forum, the *Besoekersboek* also has a share of General comments (1%) that are statements on the state of the economy or family histories that have little to do with Orania specifically. Some personal comments (2%) come through, ranging from finding people that the commenter has lost contact with, to a former resident asking for people to stop gossiping about her. There were also responses (5%) from the *Besoekersboek* moderator to certain personal comments as well as to some requests for information. These moderators' responses aren't consistent in that not all questions get a public response, which seems to confuse people. On enquiry, the *Orania Beweging*

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<sup>40</sup> *Orania Besoekersboek*, accessed 30 May, 2008



moderators do respond directly to most of the standard comments and questions with standard responses.

With Orania's prominent media profile, it is not surprising that pranks (1%) are also found in the comments on the *Besoekersboek*. One prank dealt with opening a gay bar in Orania. As a conservative community, a gay bar will probably be seen as contentious and a challenge to the norm. The prank received heated and conservative response, presumably eliciting exactly the response the prank intended. Another prank was more subtle, using the language conventions of other messages of support to ask whether a fictitious family of non-Afrikaners could move to Orania.

An intangible mention is a criterion allocated to comments that make reference to ideas and ideals related to Orania, whether it is ideology, identity or aspirations. The majority of comments (71%) on the *Besoekersboek* indicate an awareness of such intangible aspects. Themes that come to the fore strongly are Orania's alignment with Afrikaner identity and Christian values, a link to South African history as well as aspirations for the future. The work ethic of *selfwerksaamheid* is mentioned in a few comments and there was one reference to the Oranian symbol of the *mannetjie*. An ex-South African now living abroad wrote that the *mannetjie* profoundly touched her. Orange as a colour is mentioned in a few instances (1%), often in conjunction with history as the *Huis van Oranje* (House of Orange) and like in conversation with research participants, there are two examples when Orania and *oranje* are used interchangeably.

The word Afrikaner is linked to 28% of all comments. According to such comments, Orania is the dream for and inspiration to all Afrikaners, a place where Afrikaners can still be free, a "real" Afrikaner community. In response to

their visit to the website or the town, commenters articulate pride in their Afrikaner identity, with Orania being a catalyst for that pride. Pride is expressed in the town even though the individuals do not live there. Comments are made on how at home (*tuis*) a visitor felt when visiting for the first time, how Orania creates a home where people can feel they belong, “be yourself” amongst Afrikaner people and how Orania can be a home for future generations of Afrikaners. Another word that is often used in conjunction with Afrikaner is dream: commenters want to become part of the dream by aligning themselves and expressing solidarity with Orania.

Orania also represents a slice of an idealised past. Orania is referred to as the South Africa where they grew up, how the commenter used to live and how it makes one yearn for a rounded cultural experience that cannot be found in modern times. Comments also refer to Orania as an embodiment of their childhood experiences like being able to play in the street and living according to norms and standards the person was raised with. Quite a few South Africans living abroad commented (quite idealistically) that they wouldn't have left South Africa for other countries if they had known about Orania at the time of their departure. However, not all history-related comments deal with the nostalgia or static view of Orania. Some comments state that Orania should represent the best of the past but that it should focus on the future.

47% of comments referred to the physical attributes of Orania. Physical attributes enumerated include the inhabitants (usually on how friendly and hospitable they are), along with the tranquillity and peace in the town, the climate, infrastructure (both perceived lack thereof and congratulations upon) and differences between inside Orania and outside Orania. A few references are made to the

*Koeksistermonument*, with compliments for a monument that is cute (*oulik*), and with a request for more information about the monument.

In some comments the spatial distinction between inside and outside is made. Comments often include indicators such as *binne* and *buite* (inside and outside): how people on the outside (*buitekant*) are proud of the town, where the outside is seen as strange (*die vreemde*), indicating a perception of boundaries inherent in the creation of Orania. Orania is also seen as being at the forefront of a perceived conflict. The perception from outside (*buite-wêreld*) is different once Orania has been visited. I have already referred to deictic reference earlier (see 2.8 and 3.4.1), and it is also present in external views of the community. In a few instances a commenter would identify with Orania so much that they would describe their own position as “us here on the outside”, once again reinforcing the sheer impact of Orania’s position as an ideological centre for the *volkstaat*.

Prospective visitors would like to fit in. Questions arise on whether people living in South Africa need a passport to visit the place (objectified as *die plek*), or whether technology such as cellphones and computers are allowed into the town, or whether English people or black people may enter the town. These types of questions highlight the perception that the cultural isolation could be replicated in other areas such as technology. Questions around day-to-day living are also asked, ranging from whether there is a petrol station to where people do their daily and monthly shopping.

A few comments also refer to the development of and progress in Orania pre-1990, in the early days of settlement through to the current status. Development in Orania is compared favourably to other rural towns which do not present as positively. The other external comparison that is made is to the kibbutz system of

Israel. Apart from the physical Israel, commenters also make the symbolic link to the wandering Israelites in the Bible.

### **4.3.2 YouTube**

The ethics around the perception of private and public as discussed earlier are of particular relevance to the comments posted on YouTube. YouTube is an online video hosting service that features user-generated content where registered users (i.e., anyone who creates an account with YouTube) can upload files containing video and unregistered users (i.e., anyone with a connection to the Internet) can view the videos. You have to have an account to post comments, and there is a significant amount of personal information contained in a publically available profile. The profile contains information on the contributor's alias, age and country. It also indicates level of activity on YouTube, such as the date joined, last visit date and viewing statistics.

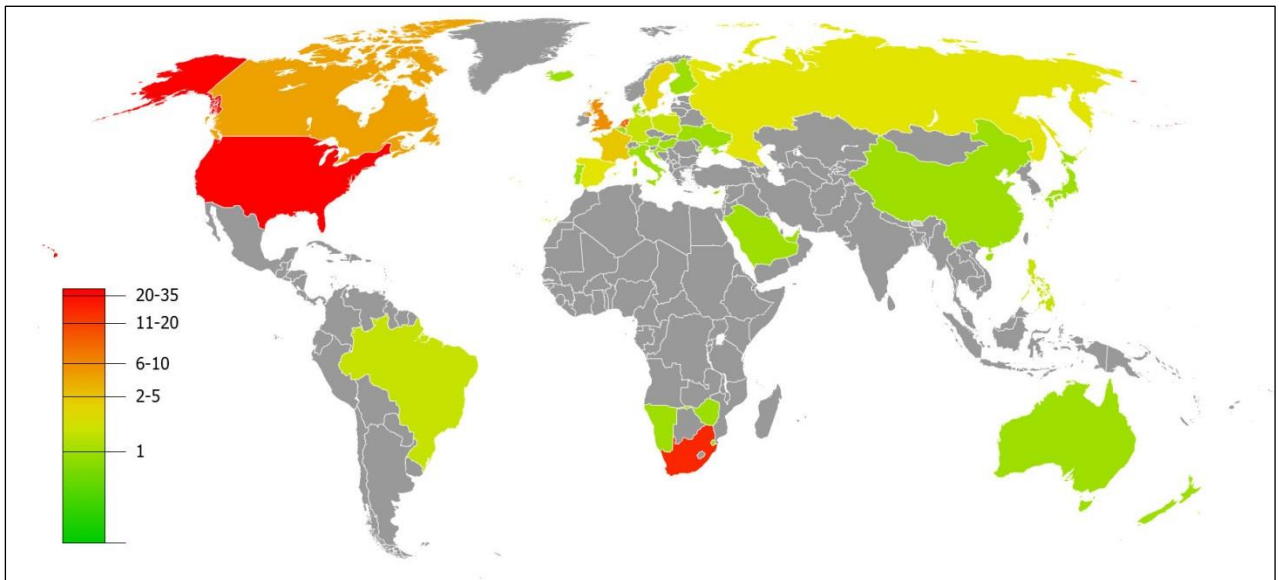
The content posted on YouTube is the 18 minute Orania DVD produced by the *Orania Beweging*, *Orania: Waar drome waar word!* (Orania: Where dreams come true!). The Orania DVD was originally produced in 2005, and the content was uploaded in June 2007. This is the same DVD that is sold at the *Orania Beweging* shop and played to visitors to the town during their tour of the town. While I was attending the *Identiteitspolitiek* conference, my husband spent the morning in town waiting for me to finish. After finishing his coffee in the café, he sat reading a magazine. When it became obvious that he was waiting for a while, the wait staff of the café enthusiastically invited him to view the DVD in the *Orania Beweging* auditorium, which he did.

I had the opportunity to sit in on a few of these viewings with visitors, and heard overwhelmingly positive feedback about the content. I also chatted with more than one Oranian that saw the DVD that friends or family had bought and decided to come see for themselves, so as a marketing tool it is successful. The DVD packaging is consistent with the overall *Orania Beweging* branding. The cover shows the title in white prominently displayed against an orange background of stills from the DVD, with the *Orania Beweging* logo above. The disc itself follows the same format as the packaging, except that a small *Dorpsraad* logo is also included. Anyone viewing this content on YouTube will do so without any of the visual context of the physical landscape itself, or the packaging and the visual links to the community.

The video is a short introduction to Orania and consists of Orania (*Deel 1*) and Orania (*Deel 2*). The video is split in two due to the YouTube limitation to 10 minute postings (which has subsequently increased to 15 minute uploads). As of October 2012 *Deel 1* has been viewed 36,209 times, with 154 likes and 20 dislikes. Orania *Deel 2* garnered 15,815 total views, with 85 likes and 1 dislike. Commenters can also like and dislike other's comments.

This marketing material shows short interviews with some of the key figures in the community and some of the inhabitants, visual shots of the schools, churches and shops in town, as well as some of the Karoo landscape in and around the town with visual highlights on the importance of the Orange River for agricultural and recreational purposes. Comments aren't moderated by the poster of the content, although comments flagged as inappropriate by other users have been removed and replaced with text "Comment removed" by YouTube administrators.

Comments were received from 31 countries. While some commenters would state which country they are from, the majority of the country-specific information can be gleaned from the profile. Some profiles have expired or been removed, which meant an increase in the number of comments where country information is unknown. The diversity in countries of origin is also reflected in the language in which the comments are posted. The majority of comments (68%) are posted in English, followed by Afrikaans (20%) and Dutch (9%). Some international posters make a concerted effort to translate their comments into Afrikaans, while there are also untranslated contributions in Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.



*Image 4-10 YouTube comment geographic distribution<sup>41</sup>*

The majority of the posts (67%) showed support for Orania. Commenters seem to find echoes of their own situation or political opinion in the Orania situation. Orania is likened to an Amish community, or seen as a Zionist movement for Afrikaners. Support for self-determination is a topic that is brought up by a few commenters with stated self-determination goals. However, it is also noticeable

<sup>41</sup> Image created under Creative Commons license BY-SA3.0 via <http://www.gunn.co.nz/map/>

that there are openly racist comments originating from posters from other countries.

9% of comments express criticism of Orania. Criticism is linked to the idea of Orania, with declarations that Orania is an elitist racial experiment, a racist retirement home, has a foolish agenda, and is old-fashioned and antiquated. However, some criticism is quite general, and one comment criticises terminology such as Afrikaner, because it is linked to 'stupid Africa'. However, where criticism is levelled, 6% of comments defend the Orania position or give South African context in response to specific criticism.

General comments make up a small (1%) percentage of the total. Comments range from drawing general comparisons to democratic development across the world, to a comment that straw houses can be blown over by wolves, referring obliquely to the straw-bale building technique used in some Orania buildings. Some comments have nothing to do with the DVD but rather evolve away from the main body of responses. This digression from the subject elicits a specific debate, and commenters would use other commenters' profile data to gather more information to ask more specific and pointedly personal questions. In one instance, a commenter originally from a sub-Saharan country now living in Europe, levels criticism against Orania as an all-white region against majority (black) rule. Apart from a response that defends Orania as a decent and safe alternative to living in the new South Africa which is deemed violent, other defenders very quickly point out the original detractor's expatriate status and question the motivations behind this international relocation.

Requests for information make up only 7% of the comments. The international distribution and geographically removed nature of the majority of the commenters

also results in only 1% of comments linked to a visit or expressing the wish to visit Orania. Requests are also repeatedly fielded for English subtitles to the video, for further distribution by South African expats in other countries, as well as commenters from various nationalities with an interest in self-determination wanting to find out more about Orania.

Based on the analysis of the types of comments posted, it becomes obvious that the YouTube content is often the only exposure that many commenters will ever have to Orania. That said, a few commenters also posted congratulations on the YouTube content on the *Besoekersboek*, which meant that they would have another source of Orania information. This indicates that the YouTube content is a successful marketing vehicle. However, very few commenters will have the context of the landscape and conversations with inhabitants to guide them, so they form their opinions solely on the online representation. It is then not surprising that 79% of comments make reference to intangible aspects related to Orania, whether it is ideology, identity or aspirations.

When viewed in a positive light, Orania is described in idealised terms such as a beautiful utopia and a haven from the madness in South Africa. Orania is seen as an example for other Afrikaners in South Africa, as a realistic translation of the Afrikaner ideal of freedom. This is a key theme in discussing the Oranian idea, as Afrikaner is referenced in 12% of the comments. Views vary from the benign where Orania harms no-one and enriches the rainbow nation with diverse cultures, to outrage at a racial experiment deemed as being in total denial of reality. The right to self-determination is a common statement of support. 16 contributors make comments more than once, and 14 of those identify very strongly with Orania, and they are responsible for 20% of all comments referencing ideals.



While no reference is made about the *Koeksistermonument* or other monuments, one reference is made to *oranje* – although Orania and *oranje* are once again used interchangeably in comments. While no reference is made to the *mannetjie*, 4% of comments do refer to *selfwerksaamheid*, and the power of the work ethic. Comments that refer to history (4%) also include opinions, both critical and supportive of initial settlement of Southern Africa by Europeans. Oranians are seen as following their ancestral roots to cultivate the land.

43% of comments made reference to Orania's physical attributes, with the majority of comments positive. Orania is described as a literal oasis in the semi-arid landscape, and as a place where dreams are turned into reality. A turnaround narrative is supported by comments about a neglected place, a ghost town in the semi-desert that is turned into a thriving community. Orania is compared to other towns in South Africa, and stands out favourably. It is noticeable that especially international commenters have questions on how Orania would defend itself against a perceived threat of attack, often stated across racial terms.

Negative views range from mild dislike to deep animosity. A (presumably city dwelling) commenter disparagingly calls Orania a dusty little town. The town itself is also described as dilapidated and dirty with lazy inhabitants, or a racist retirement home. The comment that Orania looks like a holiday resort could indicate the perception of make-believe or cultural simulation, which is contrasted with the authentic experiences in South Africa such as poverty, crime and murder. The created nature of the town can also be seen when Orania is called a reservation with booms. Since the video doesn't show any of the town entrances with the open security booms at major entrances, that specific commenter has

either been influenced by another media programme or has visited the town. The perceived isolation leads commenters to describe inhabitants as inbred idiots with a don't-care attitude.

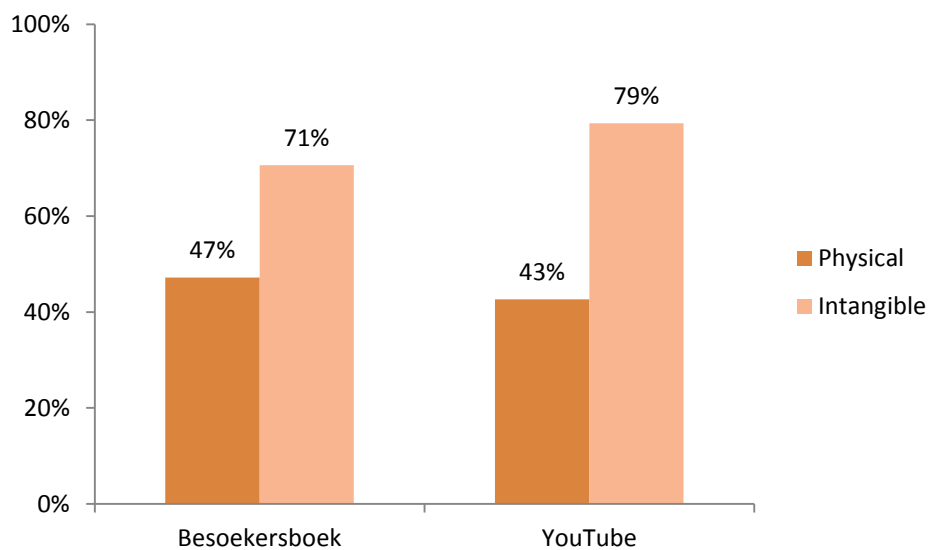
Commenters also make comparisons to other, external communities that they associate with Orania. One commenter likened the video to North Korean propaganda, indicating a deep suspicion of the narrative in the video. Another comparison to an external community links the video to Israel and its kibbutzim, as well as to the Amish. These international examples act as external references and as tools for a largely international audience to place Orania in context.

#### **4.3.3 Online summary**

The two sources of online commentary used in this analysis do have some overall themes in common, but two very distinct types of commentary can be discerned. Comments were received from 23 countries on the *Besoekersboek* and 31 countries from YouTube. The increased international exposure is in line with the wider general and international audience generated by YouTube content. Fewer commenters on YouTube mention their nationality when compared to the Orania *Besoekersboek*. This could be due to the structural difference of and different conventions in the two online platforms (discussion board vs. content hosting service).

I also tested whether specific areas of online presence of Orania are perceived to be an extension of the physical and intangible Orania. While a forum such as the *Besoekersboek* with the Orania website as homepage is closely linked to the settlement, other online forums are less likely to associate the content presented with Orania as physical landscape. The *Besoekersboek* comments made passing

reference to Oranian symbols and landmarks like the *mannetjie* and *Koeksistermonument*, whereas no comments from YouTube did so. *Besoekersboek* reference to the colour orange includes links to the history and independence movements, and in both online forums *oranje* and Orania are used interchangeably. The history thread is mentioned in both forums. Although this is not a major theme in either format, it does support and confirm an audience awareness of the historical context.



*Image 4-11 Online comparison of physical and intangible mentions*

Through content analysis of selected online forums I examined the attitudes of commenters towards the physical and ideational landscape of Orania. More commenters across the two forums associated Orania with the ideas (73%) rather than the physical place (46%). Online, and according to interested outsiders, Orania as idea is more pervasive than Orania as physical settlement.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter I focussed on how Oranians see themselves and their landscape as expressed through text. Interwoven with their own experiences of their own landscape are the experiences and perspectives of people from outside the

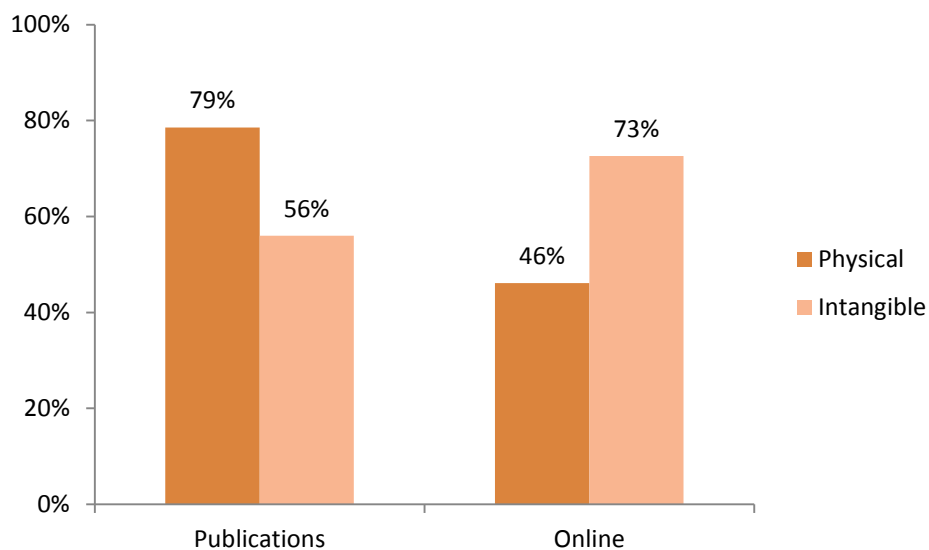
community. The focus on the textual landscape offers an expanded perspective on space and place, and in this case texts also amplify the Oranian space exponentially. The ethnographical process, the search for texts and subsequent analysis gave me the opportunity to “walk” this landscape.

I used content analysis of Oranian hardcopy publications as well as online sources such as the Orania website *Besoekersboek* and the responses to the promotional DVD posted on YouTube. The content might differ slightly across the different media, but the two key driving themes throughout this investigation, the physical and the ideational, are present ubiquitously. Physical mentions refer to particular physical features of Orania. If comments referred to ideas or ideological aspects that Orania is perceived to embody, such as Afrikaner identity or perceived links to apartheid, it was deemed intangible.

The textual landscape created by these texts is quite different to the physical landscape. The differences between the various artefacts are also pronounced, even more so when hard copy and online formats are compared. On initial investigation, the Oranian newsletters did not have the same frequency of signs and symbols that were embodied in the landscape. While the narratives of identity and independence are reinforced, it does not only occur through the colour orange or the *mannetjie*, or reference to history, but through the text itself. This also holds true for the online sources under analysis.

While the different internal publications have their own ratios, on average, internal publications mention physical aspects in 79% of the articles, compared to 46% in the online formats. This difference can be ascribed to the fact that since online commenters are physically distanced from Orania, the everyday experience is less important. Ideas and ideals are mentioned in 56% of the

internal articles, rising to 73% in the online texts. This focus on the ideational aspects of Orania, rather than the physical landscape strengthens the idea that Orania is a symbol: whether a symbol of Afrikaner independence or continued racial segregation depends on how an observer interprets texts about this community. Interestingly, internal publication comments that cover both the physical aspects and the ideas form just under half (49%) of the content analysed. In online formats, only 37% of comments mention both physical and ideational features, indicating a much more balanced outlook and awareness from within Orania, when compared to external commentary. Outsiders aren't situated in the physical landscape and navigate and interpret according to their intangible experience.



*Image 4-12 Combined publications and online comparison of physical and intangible mentions*

More than just two associated and sometimes contending concepts, the physical landscape and the ideas and ideals form an ironic dialectic. Physical place is the ultimate goal and expression of the ideal for a specific expression of Afrikaner independence. Orania is the vehicle for that independence, although the fact that the place ended up to be Orania was quite incidental. While an idea led to the

settlement of Orania, it is the physical place that, on average, dominates Oranian thinking according to the analysis of internal content published by and for Oranians. However, based on outsider comments on online content sanctioned by Orania, the focus is mostly on the ideas. Through this analysis my conclusion is that texts on Orania by Orania are an effort to expand the idea of the settlement. It is Tilley (2006:20) that defined landscape as “both objective physical place and a subjective cognized image of that place.”

Since this textual landscape is so crucial, it would be remiss not to include it in the investigation alongside the physical and cultural landscape. It is in landscape in its different expressions, physical, cultural and textual that I will now further consider identity.

## Chapter 5 LANDSCAPE AND IDENTITY

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I emphasise landscape and identity, or identity through landscape. Creed & Ching (1997:12) propose that place should be a grounded concept where place identities are clearly linked to a particular kind of place, even if identities built upon the land are still social constructions. It is when there are perceived threats to the identity of place and landscape that Tilley (2006:13) states that affected people want to find a refuge and to defend a notion of a bounded place with which they can identify.

As I continued with my fieldwork, various research participants very proudly, and pointedly, told me that their community did not have an equal in the world. This theme of a unique identity is one that can be found in general conversation as well as official publications through the frequency of words like *eie* (own) and *uniek* (unique). An anthropologically aware research participant told me that if I wanted to do a “proper study” of Orania, I would have to conduct a comparative study, and since Orania was so unique, I would struggle to find a comparable site.

When discussing the construction of national identity, Wodak et al (2009:27) describe how the identity-creation process is promoted by the emphasis on uniqueness. Collective uniqueness happens at the expense of individuality, but also compensates for the unfulfilled needs of individual uniqueness. While these discursive elements, like uniqueness, are usually found at the national level, this process can also be applied to Orania considering the independence aspirations for the *volk*.

I came across Siegel's (1970) concept of defensive structuring/adaptation during the early, exploratory part of the investigation. While there were a variety of relevant studies on Afrikaner and ethnic identity (as discussed in 1.4.5), this specific concept resonated with my fieldwork experience. The more time I spent in Orania, the more I became convinced that this concept is a useful way of looking at Orania, its place and space and the impact that defensive structuring has on creating an Oranian identity, and to provide a methodology for the presumably elusive comparative insight. While Orania certainly has unusual characteristics when compared to other minority ethnic groups claiming independence or feeling threatened, there are a variety of groups and communities that can provide comparative elements for reference. As a high-level comparison, I briefly considered other South African communities, such as Buysdorp in northern Limpopo (De Jongh 2006). Internationally I also looked into Amish and Mennonite communities (Redekop 1989, Kidder 2003), as outsiders often compare Orania to the Amish. However, the purpose is not to provide a full comparative study, but rather to illuminate certain Oranian community characteristics further.

In order to come to an understanding of the link between landscape and identity in Orania, I discuss the corresponding aspects of landscape and identity in succession. I move on to how Oranians themselves describe their landscape and culturescape. These descriptions are bolstered by investigating Siegel's (1970) defensive structuring/adaptation. While the discussion focuses on the Oranian landscape, the media's role in creating an extended culturescape also forms part of the identity-creation process.



## 5.2 Perceptions on Landscape

While the focus on Oranian ethnic identity creation is mentioned in a variety of studies (Opperman 2004, De Beer 2006, Pienaar 2007, Todd 2008), very little focus is placed on Orania as place. It is external media that will often focus on the landscape, describing it as a “forsaken little town... curious place... a small speck on the map” (Anon. 2004c) emphasising the rural context. One commenter on the *Besoekersboek* called it “sleepy dusty little town”. This undoubtedly rural identity is one that I argue is an underlying aspect that triggers attitudes and responses towards Orania. This could either be negative focussing on the smallness, or positive with Orania depicted as a rustic idyll. Creed & Ching (1997:30) reason that asserting a positive rural identity, like Orania does, is seen as a negative since the larger society judge rusticity to be culturally undesirable.

Outsiders often criticize the town as having a run-down appearance, specifically the gardens and pavements. Boshoff (2007:35) appropriates this negative external and possibly urban attitude, and uses the example of the gardens to situate Orania in the reality of the Karoo: *veelbesproke voorkoms van ons tuine en sypaadjies (wat ook, soos die res van Orania, in die Karoo geleë is!)* (much discussed appearance of our gardens and pavements (which are also, like the rest of Orania, situated in the Karoo!). Along with the external responses to the appearance of the gardens in the case of Orania, Creed & Ching (1997:20) point out that economics also play a role in the perception of place and desirability: the idyllic country is a place visited by urbanites, not a place where poor people eke out a living.

Some commenters on the *Orania Beweging* website *Besoekersboek* and YouTube see Orania as a construct. Orania is called a “holiday resort”, with the emphasis the artificial construction of the community, and the perceived lack of

“real” problems. Orania is compared to a wildlife park, as a conservation area with distinct borders, but without much “real-world” impact. Schnell (2003:6) counters and states that such perceived constructed places are not “culturally empty theme parks” but rather topical, place-rooted manifestations of the quest for ontological sense-making and identity.

The comments and media representations, of which these examples are a small but characteristic selection, illustrate the often problematic relationship between Oranians and external visitors and their preconceptions. Cannavò (2007:25) highlights that visitors and residents have starkly different perceptions and evaluations of a place. Tilley (2006:16) concurs and states that relations between tourists, visitors and ‘locals’ are far from simple. There is the issue of fluidity in identity, as locals may become tourists and tourists settle and become locals, and the subsequent complex identities which are produced. Regardless of the identity complexities, residents increasingly want to regulate the way in which they and their locality are being portrayed externally since the representation has a direct impact on their lives. This aspiration toward greater control can notably be seen in the relationship between Oranians and the external media, and will be discussed in more depth in 5.6.

It is not only the external relationships and identity creation that is problematic, but also the articulation of local notions of identity. It is significant that during a phase of internal conflict in Orania the disagreeing factions mutually branded each other as *brekers* and *bouers* (breakers and builders) (Van Wyk 2005). These construction metaphors can be linked to Cannavò’s concepts of place founding and preservation. Cannavò (2007:5-7) argues that all places are founded or created, and although significant aspects of particular places are preserved, the environment is also altered according to changing needs.

However, this is an ongoing process, as place is never fully completed. There is a continuous interplay between founding and transformation, and then the preservation of places' significant qualities. This ongoing process is shaped by political and cultural conflict and the exercise of power (Cannavò (2007:31).

Creed & Ching (1997:7) caution against the use of the term "place", and by extension landscape, to encapsulate various identity components without taking into account the crucial role of "real" places in identity formation. They argue for a definition of place that is metaphoric but still refers to a specific physical environment and related socio-cultural qualities, i.e. a grounded metaphor. An aspect of Creed & Ching's place as a "grounded metaphor" comes to the fore in the claim to Orania being the *Afrikanertuiste* (home of the Afrikaner).

Morley (2000:3) defines the concept of home as relating to physical, rhetorical and virtual spaces at the same time, which can serve as 'spaces of belonging'. For Douglas (1991:289), home "is located in space, but it is not necessarily a fixed space... home starts by bringing some space under control." Far from being a passive or benign locale, she also pronounces that a home does not guarantee happiness (Ibid. 209), that even its most altruistic and successful versions exert authoritarian control over mind and body (Ibid. 303) and that it censors speech (Ibid 304). Detractors' descriptions (more in 5.4) can well be related to a home environment described as *outyds* (old-fashioned), *gemeen* (mean), with *dubbele standaarde* (double standards) and characterised by *wanbestuur* (mismanagement). Even dedicated residents allow that the *Afrikanertuiste* is *klein* (small), *konserwatief* (conservative) and *arm* (poor).

Douglas (1991) goes on to describe home in terms that can be made applicable to Orania's settlement: it is an embryonic community (Ibid. 288) and the

realization of ideas (Ibid. 290). She raises an important point around the primary problem of a virtual community, which is to achieve enough solidarity to protect the collective good (Ibid. 299). It is protecting this collective good, as also seen in 5.5, that forms a significant part of the Oranian activities.

Orania is situated in the reality of a rural semi-desert location. Visitors and residents have different perceptions and evaluations of such a landscape, which can lead to complex relationships and identity creation. Even if visitors have the impression that Orania is an artificially constructed place, it is still an authentic place-bound expression of the quest for identity. In creating this identity, the seemingly incompatible forces of founding and preservation contribute to the practice of place and the shaping of the Oranian landscape and culturescape. Orania as *Afrikanertuiste* (home of the Afrikaner) can be seen as a “grounded metaphor”, with the concept of home containing complex reactions for its inhabitants, as well as outsiders.

### **5.3 Oranian Identity**

Cuba & Hummon (1993:548-549) submit that people may appropriate the meanings of place to articulate a sense of self, which suggests a significant affiliation of self with place. Cosgrove (2003:260) also finds that there are normalizing connections between landscape and identity creation. Leach (2006:88) emphasises the manner in which place generates identity, social relations, power relations and community regeneration. Larsen (2004:947) agrees, stating that as residents appropriate a locality, they imbue simple locations with deep meaning as the sites where people make a living and create a life history. It is this link between landscape and identity that forms the core of this study.

A discussion of identity in Orania has to refer to the construction of a specific Afrikaner identity. Pienaar (2007:93) reports various self-created terms in Orania for Afrikaner that can be interpreted as different expressions of being an Afrikaner: Afrikaner, *Boere-Afrikaner*, *Oraniër*, *Boer-Oraniër*. Not only do these different terms indicate the perception of degrees of being an Afrikaner, in Orania there is also limited consensus on the definition of an Afrikaner. One opinion is that Afrikaners have a common religious background and history, same biological origin and an own language and culture. Another view offered a basic definition: any person in Africa speaking Afrikaans (Pienaar 2007:93). This fragmented view is actually a return to earlier perceptions, where Afrikaners were far from being one people. Giliomee & Adam (1981: 77ff) (cited in Erasmus 2002:99) draw attention to historically flexible boundaries of Afrikaner identity, that have fluctuated according to ideological factors as well as political and social conditions. Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) 'invention of tradition' claims that there is no such thing as a traditional identity, only forms of constructing identities that might be labelled traditional by some according to particular, and ultimately, arbitrary criteria. Rapport and Dawson (1998:4-5) describe a fluid construction of identity that they call the "migrancy of identity", describing how socio-cultural places are not coherent or contained "universes of meaning", but that questions of identity must always be related back and closely linked to fluidity or movement across time and space.

There is a vision that Orania should be inclusive to embrace all Afrikaners, however still within their very exclusive definition of Afrikaners (Boshoff 2004):

*Die intellektueel moet hier net so tuis wees as die handwerker, die ryke en die arme, die ondernemer en die werknemer, die bestuurder en die klerk, die pensioentrekker en dagloner, die alleenloper. Die ontheemde*

*wat nêrens elders meer 'n heenkome vind nie, die eenouergesin en die verwaarloosde kind, die idealis en die ontnugterdes, en almal moet saamwerk aan die toekoms van 'n nasie.* / The intellectual must be just as at home here as the labourer, the rich and the poor, the entrepreneur and the employee, the manager and the clerk, the pensioner and the casual labourer, the loner. The displaced that can't find refuge anywhere else, the single parent family and the neglected child, the idealist and the disillusioned, and all must work together on the future of a nation.

In reality, the exclusive selection criteria are among the factors that prohibit many Afrikaners from settling in the town, as I experienced clearly when I underwent the entry interview process. Another contributing barrier to potential settlement from elsewhere is the remote location. In conversation with potential and new inhabitants this reluctance is often attributed to *die vrou* (the wife) that needs to be convinced of the merits of the far-off locality.

Opperman (2004) is one of the few observers that suggest that stimulation of an Oranian identity is influenced by an awareness of the tough conditions of the locality. This awareness could be due to the fact that Opperman actually lives in Orania and is intimately familiar with the landscape and its challenges. Larsen (2004:952) illustrates how place identity derives not so much from inherent qualities based on location, but also from the ways that residents position these markers of insidedness against outsiders. In a resource-constrained environment, outsiders are often perceived to have more power and opportunities than do local residents. One tactic to weaken the supposed authority of outsiders is by demonstrating how only insiders are able to deal with the region's adversities. Oranians use metaphors to emphasise how their adjustments to the region's challenges place them in a unique category. In Orania the metaphor that supports this process of positioning is a common

phrase, *Orania is nie vir sissies nie* (Orania is not for sissies). Whilst I refer to this in 3.3.1 as an underlying patriarchal attitude, it also situates Orania in an environment that requires special fortitude. Adapting to Orania's unique challenges is a way of establishing their own moral authority against the perceived arrogance of outsiders (Larsen 2004:952).

A further grounded identity metaphor is the common Oranian claim of being pioneers which includes a willingness to endure hardship in order to explore new places. This is partly due to the challenging environment that Oranians are exposed to, but Grobbelaar (2005:11) also defines a pioneering spirit as the ability to take on challenges, handle disappointment and have realistic expectations about the experience. While being practical, a prospective inhabitant should also be idealistic and make contributions to the greater ideal (of Afrikaner independence).

In conversation, evidence that Orania is a pioneer town is given by citing the number of young men who are labouring to build the community infrastructure. This labour is linked to *baanbrekerswerk* (pioneering work), for those Afrikaners who could potentially come after. There is a skewed ratio of young men to women, so the lack of younger women as suitable partners raises complaints from the men, as well as the hope that their labours will attract more settlers, and young women, to Orania. In official publications, notably and understandably at earlier times in the community's history, the pioneer theme is used to demonstrate progress that has been made, or to refer to historical situations as a guide for the current situation:

*Oor die afgelope veertien jaar moes Orania as pioniersgemeenskap al verskeie moeilike uitdagings en probleme hanteer. Om 'n nuwe begin te maak is egter nie vreemd aan die Afrikaner se geskiedenis nie. So was*

*dit die geval ná die Anglo-Boereoorlog, aan die einde van die Groot Trek en tydens die vestiging aan die Oosgrens aan die begin van die negentiende eeu. Dit was ook die uitdaging van 'n nuwe begin waarvoor Jan van Riebeeck en sy geselskap so vroeg as 1652 te staan gekom het.*

/ Over the past fourteen years Orania as a pioneer community has had to handle difficult challenges and problems. However, to make a new beginning is not foreign to the Afrikaner's history. This was the case after the Anglo Boer war, at the end of the Great Trek and during the establishment of the Eastern border at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was also the challenge of a new beginning that Jan van Riebeeck and his company faced as early as 1652 (Anon. 2005f:11).

While the pioneer theme is still in use to depict progress, official publications have started to move away from the pioneer phase to indicate that the settlement phase should move on to a growth phase. *Orania moet 2011 tegemoet gaan onder die leuse "Van pioniersdorp tot modeldorp"* (Orania must go into 2011 under the slogan: "From pioneer town to example town) (De Klerk 2011:1).

Political commentator Van Zyl Slabbert (2006) is quoted by De Klerk (2005:4), highlighting that Oranian identity creation activities want to make a break with an undesirable past, but also wonders how and what the implications are for Oranian identity: *Dis verblydend dat Orania doelbewus streef om van 'n rassistiese verlede te ontsnap en verdien alle hulp in dié verband. Die kernvraag is: Wat is 'n Afrikaner en hoe kan ek of enige iemand kwalifiseer om in Orania te kom bly?* / It is pleasing that Orania purposefully endeavours to escape from a racist past and deserves all help in this context. The core question is: What is an Afrikaner and how can I or anyone else qualify to come and live in Orania?



While a link to the past helps in the identity creation process, this link can also been seen as detrimental to Orania in the wider South African historical and socio-political context. Giliomee (1992:343) contends that, “(g)iven the Afrikaner leadership's manipulation of ethnic identities in the apartheid system, it is doubtful whether black groups would be persuaded by a sweeping redefinition of the concept of Afrikaner by Afrikaners themselves. To the extent that ethnic identities are other-defined as well as self-defined, the scope ethnic entrepreneurs have for redefinition may be considerably smaller than modernization theorists commonly think.”

Landscape generates identity, social relations, power relations and community regeneration. Place identity derives not so much from inherent qualities based on location, but also from the ways that residents position these markers of insidedness against outsiders, like *Orania is nie vir sissies nie* (Orania is not for sissies). A further grounded identity metaphor is the common Oranian claim of being pioneers, a willingness to endure hardship in order to explore new places or try out new things.

#### **5.4 In own words**

I was in one of the numerous guest accommodations around Orania, lying on the bed staring at the ceiling on a Sunday afternoon, quite disheartened. My literature search had unearthed a wealth of information, like the questionnaire and answers that formed part of the GOP (Van Biljon 2007) which basically asked all the questions I thought I would have liked to ask. I felt that nothing I would do would be as comprehensive as that. Also, while I was talking to many Oranians, and everyone was polite and helpful, I wasn't getting any substantial ethnographic information. How could I get better information on how inhabitants

describe Orania, what they identify Orania with and how they identify themselves? I sat bolt upright on the bed: I could ask them! Whilst I had come prepared to conduct formal and informal interviews, participant observation, unobtrusive observation, media analysis and focus groups, I hadn't considered just asking. While this seems painfully self-explanatory, for me this was a fieldwork epiphany that re-energized the entire experience.

I was also conscious of the fact that most of the residents in Orania suffer from interview fatigue, so I had to make sure that the questions were focussed, but still easy to answer. One research participant verbalised the copious amount of quite invasive questioning as: *Dit voel partykeer soos 'n "human zoo" soos die joernaliste die plek bestorm* (It sometimes feels like a human zoo the way the journalists storm the place). I simply asked 2 questions: use three words to describe Orania, and three words to describe the rest of South Africa. I asked as many people as possible, and eventually interviewed 67 respondents. These respondents included residents, former residents, *uitwoners*, *omwoners* and visitors. I asked these questions all around town: at restaurants waiting for my pizza or at the bar sitting around, at different shops in town, at the various guest houses I was staying, at schools, on visits to neighbouring towns. I asked the people that gave me lifts. If the respondent was amenable, it also gave me the opportunity to turn a quick question into a more substantial interview.

I was careful to not ask the questions as an either/or bias, and tried to minimise the risk of the question sounding like a comparison rather than just a description. These questions were often asked in groups, so word selection could be influenced by other group members. When describing Orania, *lekker* was a common response. That was one of the suggested responses to media enquiries that new inhabitants were coached to remember. While these questions are by





publications discussed in Chapter 4. Attributes such as independence, freedom, *Afrikanertuiste*, *selfwerksaamheid* and orange are mentioned in 27% of the descriptions of Orania. However, the most obvious markers that Oranians associate Orania with are: safety, quiet, nice, friendly and freedom. In contrast to Orania, the rest of South Africa is typified as unsafe, chaotic and characterised by crime, with overall declining standards. Yet South Africa is also seen as financially affluent.

<b>Orania</b>				<b>South Africa</b>			
	<b>Place</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>Place</b>	<b>Space</b>	<b>Total</b>
veilig / safe	16		<b>16</b>	onveilig / unsafe	16		<b>16</b>
rustig / quiet	10		<b>10</b>	chaos	10		<b>10</b>
lekker / nice		10	<b>10</b>	misdaad / crime		9	<b>9</b>
vriendelik / friendly	8		<b>8</b>	geld / money		5	<b>5</b>
vryheid / freedom		6	<b>6</b>	agteruitgang / decline		4	<b>4</b>

Table 5-1 Top 5 descriptors with place and space allocation

While no direct reference is made to Afrikaner history or historical figures, the more negative associations made with Orania do have a chronological element. Orania is described as a museum and *oumensdorp* (old people's town), *aftreeppek* (retirement place) and *outyds* (old fashioned).<sup>42</sup> However, Orania was also described as *toekomsgerig* (forward looking) with *vooruitgang* (progress), providing a *toekoms* (future) like no other.

While on the whole most respondents described Oranians as friendly, some did experience friction. Although officials and many inhabitants state that everyone is treated as equals in town, some inhabitants report a degree of unease of fitting in, often between old inhabitants and new inhabitants. This tension can be partly

<sup>42</sup> These sentiments echo statements made in Buysdorp, more in 5.5.

due to perceived differences in education and economic levels, as well as the rapid growth of the town. Van Biljon (2009:34) calculated a 17% year-on-year population growth between 2008 and 2009. Tilley's (2006:16) reference to complex identities between visitor and resident, and vice versa, could also come to play in such situations. Some inhabitants experienced an atmosphere that is *neerhalend* (contemptuous) and *uitbouterig* (exploitative). Although some of the negativity can be ascribed to interpersonal conflict, there were some research participants that genuinely felt that they were treated differently because they earned less or didn't have a tertiary education. Even some long-time residents who were very active in and contributed to the community felt that there are barriers to entry into power structures.

Van Biljon's (2009) demographic analysis indicates approximately 10% of the then population had tertiary qualifications. I was told by a few research participants that Orania had the most tertiary qualifications per capita than elsewhere in South Africa. While that claim is difficult to verify, it is easier to confirm the instances when individuals arrive in town with a plastic bag containing all of their worldly possessions. This contrast between intellectuals and workers, presumably well-off versus destitute, is one that detractors from within the community have previously cited as an example of the unbalanced nature of the town where *grootdorp* is pitched against the *onderdorp* (downtown) with intellectuals against cleaners, gardeners and farm workers (Anon. 2004c).

One research participant stressed that Orania should attract the *keur van Afrikanerdom* (cream of Afrikaners), and that everyone should work as equals. In reality, the person found that the *keur* were generally unwilling to do their own work. In a town where *selfwerksaamheid* is a key concept, this attitude towards work will by its very nature cause friction. Another research participant felt

strongly that only those who were serious about Afrikaner independence should remain in key positions, contrasted against people who “just” come and live in town: *Mense wat vir die saak staan moet op die dorp bly, om te sorg dat die wat net hier is nie die oorhand of die hand aan die stuur van dinge kry nie.* (People that stand for the cause must stay in town, to make sure that those who are just here don’t get the advantage or their hands on the rudder of things). This distinction between the serious Oranian and “mere” inhabitants is one that continues to contribute to internal conflict in the community, echoing Giliomee’s (1992:363) statement that intra-Afrikaner conflict is generally brought on by different ideas about ensuring Afrikaner survival.

The two-questions methodology provided me with the opportunity to connect with the Oranians on a structured basis, and also provided the opportunity to draw out personal opinions on the physical setting and Oranian identifiers. The resulting words and opinions provided me with data to compare opinions about Orania with the rest of South Africa. This also produced data on internal and external friction.

## **5.5 Defensive structuring**

When analysing the descriptors that Oranians use to describe their environment, there is a strong sense of safety and order in Orania. In contrast, the rest of South Africa is typified as unsafe, chaotic and crime-ridden. As much as identity is other-defined, this contrast to the perceived safety of Orania indicates high levels of social anxiety. In the words describing the rest of South Africa, crime, BEE (black economic empowerment) and unemployment were mentioned frequently.

In Huscka and Mau's (2006:491) analysis of social anomie in post-apartheid South Africa, they examine the ethnical differences in levels of social anomie in the South African society. They found that, among white South Africans, "affirmative action and the loss of their "given" dominance in all areas of life, it has become more difficult to find or to keep their (still socio economically privileged) place in society. Some Whites have experienced social and economic losses, some are now unemployed and have difficulties finding a new and adequate job. The changes may have raised the level of suspicion and disorientation within their group, especially for those at the lower end of the social inequality structure."

It is these heightened levels of suspicion and disorientation that contribute to the negative descriptions of South Africa, and bear resemblance to what Tuan (1980:6) classifies as "landscapes of fear". Tuan describes landscapes as a construct of the mind as well as a physical and measurable entity, and "landscapes of fear" thus refers both to psychological states and to tangible environments. Tuan (1980:7) describes how a dire threat of any kind induces two powerful sensations: one sensation is fear of the imminent collapse of the world and death as the final surrender of integrity to chaos, whilst the second sensation is a sense of personalised evil. As a consequence of these sensations, local identities can crystallize as a resident group feels its region threatened by "outside" forces (Larsen 2004:952).

According to Siegel's analysis (1970:11), defensive adaptation is when members of a society establish and preserve a specific cultural identity in the face of what they feel is an external threat to that identity. Members of defensive societies see the surrounding environment as hostile and the people with the potential and willingness to engage in destructive or depriving actions. Orania can be seen as



a community that exhibits characteristics of defensive structuring in action. A headline in Orania *Dorpsnuus* typifies this anxiety: *Die Afrikaner word bedreig deur 'n bestaanskrisis...* (The Afrikaner is threatened by a struggle for existence...) (De Klerk 2011:1).

While community members engaged in defensive structuring perceive the surrounding environment as hostile, it does not mean a total withdrawal from the larger society. There is a measure of interdependency with outsiders as the survival of the group often depends on the judgments of those who surround them. This is the case with Orania, which is firmly situated within the South African social, legislative and financial context. The settlement is often accused of being isolationist. Research participants that I spoke to were adamant that they were not isolated, as they received more foreign visitors and media representatives than any of the surrounding towns, or even any other small town in South Africa. It should also be remembered that the town would appear isolated due to its physical location in the Karoo, which has the lowest population density in South Africa. The bias against rural places (Creed & Ching 1997) can also play a part in this perceived isolation. The historical link to apartheid is also perceived to be isolation at work.

Accusations of isolationism are also levelled at the Amish. The Amish are traditionalist Protestants, part of the Mennonite churches. The Amish and Mennonites are Anabaptists, believing in adult baptism. Kidder (2003:214) reflects on how the Amish ideology of separatism, within the American context of the cultural melting pot, is sometimes aggressively accused of as being un-American. In the light of claims of exclusivity, either from external observers or from within Amish ranks, Kidder (2003:214) argues that by "(v)iewing themselves as a people apart, the Amish may be more accurately described as a people

within. They are a sheltered minority preserved in a cocoon – in a symbiotic relationship with the very social world that they reject.” Although the Mennonites are arguably a religious rather than a purely ethnic community, there are similarities. It is a similar interrelated relationship between Orania and the rest of South Africa that is illustrated by the descriptors in 5.4 as well as previously discussed concepts of inside and outside.

Another aspect of Anabaptist movements that could prove useful in the analysis of the oft criticised occurrence of different expressions of Afrikaner identity, is the appearance of discord and disunion through schisms. In discussing the widely occurring phenomenon of schisms between different Mennonite groups, Redekop (1989:265) argues that despite these diverse expressions of Mennonite identity, often through specific group ruptures, the overall Mennonite tradition remains solid or even deepens. Kidder (2003:229) interprets this schismatic activity to bind the convention, uniqueness, and vigour into a distinctive Mennonite identity.

Through defensive structuring, Siegel (1970:12) suggests that a few key values provide a sense of cultural integrity to the group, through degrees of interrelatedness, interdependence or linkage found among elements of the culture. In Orania, cultural integration is provided by the elements of *selfwerksaamheid* which are central to the physical and ideational structure of the community, even if some inhabitants are more enthusiastic about its application than others. The Christian focus provides another source of cohesion.

A central value of defensive groups appears to be subordination of the individual to the group. While I had known that the group is of utmost importance in Orania, it was during the entry interview that I realised just how crucial this aspect is. The

values of the collective are more important than the individual. This was one of the reasons why the entry interview is in place – the individual is measured against the values of the community, and if found incompatible, the individual should not become part of the community. However, the relevance of the entry interview is one that is discussed continuously amongst the leadership in the community. I have spoken to four members of the panel, and while the interview has changed over the years and is now less “formal”, there is still discussion on how best to serve the interests of the community, while being sensitive to the individual. I have also spoken to more recent, and younger, inhabitants that haven’t been through the interview process, often because they gained access to the community through close family ties and their stay in town is deemed to be for a short period of time.

According to Siegel (1970:12), the yielding of the individual to the group is reflected by cooperative effort in in-group activities, the settlement of disputes by knowledgeable authorities, and the emphasis upon steady goal-oriented work habits. The importance of the group over the individual can also be illustrated by cooperative effort in many in-group activities. Some people create cooperative housework and gardening groups, the *arbeidsbank*, to create a sense of community. Orania has an arbitration process, whereby community members can air grievances within the community. Although this arbitration process is in place, more serious issues are addressed by South African courts outside of the community. Work, and how the work is executed, is central to the community as discussed in 3.3.1. During conversations, many community members described Orania as *hardwerkend* (hard working) and praised my willingness to practice *selfwerksaamheid*.

The values of the community are reflected in supporting symbols, which develops an intensive sense of group identification. Siegel (1970:13) also includes the observance of particular rituals as supporting the identity of the community. Certain rituals are more obviously observed than others. Most gatherings, formal and informal, are opened with prayer. This includes big events like the conferences, to smaller meetings such as the meeting of the local book club. During the Day of the Covenant, very few people joined the early morning ceremony, but more people joined the following church service. Public holidays are *vriendelik verplig* (kindly compulsory) - a very Afrikaans way of saying that although it is not enforced, you are still obliged to attend.

For Oranians, to marry fellow Afrikaners is the norm, certainly within Orania. Endogamy in the context of the community is thus prioritised. A young woman working in the OK was asked by an international TV crew whether she would marry a black man. Her response was that she would not marry a black man, but she wouldn't marry a Dutch or French person either, as she would only marry an Afrikaner. The TV crew subsequently edited the material to indicate her adamant refusal to marry a black man, without providing further context of endogamy practices.

Siegel indicates that rules of conduct are likely to be very specific in a defensive group, with a twofold effect: the individual has to control own behaviour, and authoritarian elite which supervises the self-discipline of the individual. Complaints about the "mafia" are highlighted in 4.2.2. Siegel also finds that training for the maintenance of a high level of anxiety is a prominent manifestation of control in defensive groups. This control can be manifested in the use of alcohol. Alcohol and alcohol abuse is a social issue that receives a lot of attention from within Orania. 2.6.1 refers to the spaces that are linked to

alcohol and the community attitudes towards these spaces. Even among young male workers living in Elim, who are purportedly the worst offenders, there are levels of tolerance towards alcohol consumption. *Slegte ouens suip hulle oor 'n mik. Ons is cool – ons kuier 'n bietjie maar is nog reg om te werk die volgende dag / Bad guys booze themselves into a stupor. We are cool guys – we party a bit but we are still fine to work the next day.*

These characteristics of defensive structuring provide certain parallels between Orania and Buysdorp. Buysdorp is a community living on a tract of land in the Soutpansberg of South Africa. The inhabitants are the progeny of Coenraad De Buys and several indigenous wives and co-habitants. In 1888, for services rendered, the Buyses were granted land exclusivity by President Paul Kruger of the then Transvaal Republic (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek) (De Jongh 2006:74). In Buysdorp, development is due to own endeavours, and largely funded from their own resources. The community has autonomous structures and procedures for governance (De Jongh 2006:77), like Orania. The Buysdorp community perceive themselves to be under siege, typified as 'we' versus 'they', similar to the occurrence of *binne* and *buite* in Orania. The 'they' includes the government, municipality, journalists, writers and all strangers. There is the perception that outsiders want to take control of Buysdorp away from the inhabitants, and that the outsiders want the Buysdorp land (De Jongh 2006:80).

I conducted limited fieldwork in Buysdorp, enough to elicit ideas on landscape and identity. Younger Buyses try to get out and go and earn a living in other provinces, and only return for festive and ritual purposes, like funerals and Christmas. For them, the landscape represents backwardness and lack of opportunity. However, the landscape also has natal significance as being a Buys-by-birth entitles one to right of land. Identity is thus closely linked to the land and

the past. The far-flung Buyses eventually return to Buysdorp to retire. The Buys cause is essentially based on space, on 'their' land, a value-based perception of a particular embodied place which is progressively susceptible to 'outside' forces. The Buyses define their ethnicity and identity through their model of space and of their land (De Jongh 2006:81) and these spatial dimensions constitute a moral geography through which to understand tradition and change (Holzman 2004:75). It is this focus on land, as well as the importance of place and space in creating and defining local identity, that Buysdorp proves to be analogous to Orania.

Local identities can crystallize as a resident group feels its region threatened by "outside" forces (Larsen 2004:952). Siegel's (1970) defensive structuring is a useful framework to review a community where members of a society establish and preserve a specific cultural identity in the face of what they feel is an external threat to that identity. Defensive structuring also provides a structure of reference for elements of comparative analysis.

## **5.6 Media**

The media has a big part to play in extending Orania's space and influence outsider perceptions of Oranian identity and identifiers. In Chapter 4 I mostly focussed on internally-created content, but there is a great body of work on Orania in the South African and international media. It would take an entire study just to explore all of the media content that exists on Orania, and is thus not included in the current investigation. However, the effects of the constant media focus, and the impact that that has on Oranian identity cannot be ignored. I earlier referred to Tilley (2006:16) that highlights how inhabitants want to regulate media portrayal externally due to the direct impact this representation has on

their lives. Oranians are wary of journalists. During my fieldwork I was approached by a few people carefully asking me whether I was a journalist, visibly relaxing when I pronounced myself to be a student.

During the new inhabitant orientation programme, one of the sessions deals with media liaison. In the past, the community garnered some very negative or biased reporting, and the session on media relations attempts to prepare inhabitants on how to deal with the questions. I spoke to a few inhabitants who have been quoted, often erroneously, in the media, and their sense of frustration and subsequent wariness was obvious. However, constant contact with journalists, visitors and researchers in Orania has also forced some inhabitants to reflect more deeply about their Afrikaner identity (Pienaar 2007:93).

There has been debate in the community on whether the media should be welcomed. While it would be easy to isolate the community from the media for a short period of time, it becomes untenable over the longer term. Thus Oranian officials, and ordinary Oranians, have had to accommodate the media on a daily basis. While many residents tolerate the attention, they don't always understand the reasons:

*Wat maak Orania nuuswaardig? Dié vraag is al oor en oor gestel, maar of die antwoorde die hele prentjie omvat, is 'n ander vraag. Een joernalis het openlik gesê: Orania is nuus want hier gebeur dinge. / What makes Orania newsworthy? This question has been asked time and time again but whether the answers capture the whole picture is another question. One journalist openly said: Orania is news because things happen here (Anon. 2004g:7).*

In conversation, one relatively recent inhabitant was genuinely mystified by all of the media attention. *Mense vra wat doen ons dan hier. Hierdie is net 'n gewone dorp.* / People ask what we do here. This is just a normal town.

A Radio Orania programme was devoted to the perceived link between Orania and the Amish. The question was asked why people draw this comparison, especially since the Amish do not strive towards independence, which for the Oranian community is a key factor. The commentator reasoned that one reason for the comparison was the fact that both communities have a strong and distinctive group identity. The announcer also compared the generally negative media reception, as these two communities are generally seen as backward due to their strong identity principles.

During all of my different field visits I came across journalists from a variety of countries and with different purposes and agendas. One incident stood out in particular. A young Norwegian journalism student regaled how he arrived in Orania late one afternoon. The first thing he saw in town was two young men on horseback – dusty, tanned and wild-looking - riding through town, and then off into the sunset. He was thrilled: here were the Boers he was expecting: in touch with nature, agrarian, cowboys in the sunset. Later that evening I came across the two riders and the young Norwegian having a *braai* and a few beers outside the guest accommodation. I introduced myself and we started chatting, and the two Oranians asked me to please translate into English, because they didn't think that the foreigner understood what they were saying. The conversation had started with girls as topic, and ended up with religion and politics. The journalist also asked me to clarify some statements, because he thought he misunderstood some comments. The young men had only been in Orania for six months and came with their parents. They were conservative and staunchly right-wing, and



outspoken in their belief that black South Africans were inferior to Afrikaners. When I questioned them on these intolerant attitudes, one looked at me thoughtfully and said, *Hoe ons grootgeword het is die rede hoekom ons nou is wat ons is. Dis al wat ons ken.* / How we grew up is the reason why now we are how we are. It is all that we know.

When I caught up with the journalist the next day, he was still incredulous about the conversation. When I probed a bit deeper, he said that his illusion of the cowboys riding into the sunset was shattered. Our conversation drifted to the controversy around the Danish Muhammed cartoon<sup>43</sup>, and the polarisation that it also caused in Norway, notably damaging the already bad reputations that he thought Muslims had in Norway. He felt that Muslims were too different, that they were wilfully jobless, with alien practices and stinking of garlic, and he didn't understand what they were doing in a country that wasn't theirs. I couldn't help pointing out that his intolerant statements were an echo of what he heard the previous evening. He also looked at me thoughtfully, conceding that I had a point.

What this incident illustrated was that it is quite easy for journalists or visitors to get racist sound bites in Orania if they ask the right (or wrong) people, or phrased their questions in a particular way. Due to the flux in inhabitants, it is also difficult to inculcate new inhabitants with the attributes that the Oranian leadership would prefer to be known for. Especially with the fluidity in inhabitants, the orientation provides important continuity. However, most research participants that I spoke to either arrived in Orania before orientation was implemented, didn't attend the

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<sup>43</sup> The Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy began after 12 editorial cartoons, most of which depicted the Islamic prophet Muhammad, were published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten on 30 September 2005. Danish Muslim organizations that objected to the depictions responded by holding public protests.

orientation initially and kept postponing attending subsequent sessions, or attended but didn't really pay attention.

As discussed in 2.8, awareness of race forms part of the Orania identity (De Beer 2006, Opperman 2004). There is the perception that the media tries to prove that the community is racist, and official Orania communications try to mitigate these attempts by repeatedly reaffirming a non-racial attitude in internal and external media:

*'n Beleid gegrond op rassediskriminasie is moreel onverdedigbaar. 'n 'Wit' volkstaat of 'n 'wit' dorp is onverdedigbaar, omdat dit op ras gegrond is. 'n Afrikanerdorp of –gebied is egter regverdigbaar, omdat 'n etniese minderheid kan aanspraak maak op erkenning van regte en uiteindelijke selfbeskikking. / A policy based on racial discrimination is morally indefensible. A 'white' volkstaat or a 'white' town is indefensible, because it is based on race. However, an Afrikaner town or territory is defensible, because an ethnic minority can lay claim to acknowledgement of rights and eventual self-determination (Lombard, 2005:3).*

During this study I have concentrated on the local, and only very incidentally touched upon issues of cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation. While there is a strong focus on localism and homogeneity as seen in the landscape and culturescape, the *uitwoners* and connections with other minority ethnic groups do indicate an awareness of a globalised community.

Discussing the media does offer egress into and out of the local into and out of the global. Here I find Appadurai's (1990) explanation of the various 'scapes' a useful tool to think about the connections that Orania has in spite of, or perhaps due to, their localised focus. According to Appadurai, there is a relationship

between five main 'scapes' of global cultural flow: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, finanscaples and ideoscaples. Each of these 'scapes' is constructed by particular perspectives, created by social actors. Ethnoscaples arise from multi-directional movements between local settings, including those of tourists, exiles and other migrants. Technoscaples arise from rapid technological circulation and movement across boundaries. Finanscaples arise from rapid monetary movement and the evolving global political economy. Mediascaples refer to both the distribution and dissemination of multi-media information and also to images of the world created by these media. Ideoscaples are linked to political and ideological master narratives based on Enlightenment concepts such as freedom and sovereignty (Appadurai 1990:296-297).

All five these 'scapes' have different roles to play in shaping an Oranian identity. Although Orania has boundaries, the ethnoscape is fluid and draws in a variety of visitors as well as a surprising number of inhabitants who relocate elsewhere and then return. Orania embraces technology as a way to supplement and support *selfwerksaamheid*. The technoscape also offers a way to generate much-needed jobs and related income through some individual telecommuting, as well as small call centres. The finanscape enables appeals to *uitwoners* for financial support for initiatives such as the *Helpsaamfonds* (Support Fund), which provides aid to needy and homeless Afrikaners in Orania. The Oranian ideoscape is firmly entrenched through concepts such as independence. By facilitating a focus on positive or balanced reporting outwards, the mediascape is an asset that the town management tries to capitalise on as much as possible.

The media, and academics, have a huge impact on expanding the space of Orania. The media construction of Orania also has implications for the Oranian

identity. South African and international media create the characteristics, whether positive or negative, that Orania is commonly identified with.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Occupying the physical land is a form of collective identity that helps create ethnic identities which provide ontological foundations (Tilley 2006:11-13). Orania is an authentic place-bound expression of the quest for identity and Oranians define their identity through their model of space and of their land. These spatial dimensions constitute a moral geography through which to understand tradition and change (Holtzman 2004:75).

Defensive structuring offers a useful context that helps place Orania within a specific framework for potential comparative analysis. Indicators are that the Amish, Mennonite and Buys communities are useful analogies. While Orania is certainly situated in a distinctive circumstance, it is also firmly entrenched in the narratives around cultural identity and landscapes of fear. It is within the context of potentially comparative interpretation that Oranian landscape as a signifying system becomes even more significant. Cosgrove (1993: 281) demonstrates that landscape as a signifying system is able to contain and convey multiple and often conflicting sets of shared meanings, whose claims to truth are established within a context. Residents, visitors, tourists and the media have different perceptions and evaluations of such a landscape, which can lead to complex relationships and attitudes towards the landscape and interlinked identity.

Place identity derives not so much from inherent qualities based on location, but also on grounded identity metaphors used by residents to position markers of inside against outside. It is in this relationship between inside and outside that

there are noticeable differences in the perceptions of localities by Oranians. Heightened levels of suspicion and disorientation that contribute to negative descriptions of South Africa bear resemblance to what Tuan (1980:6) classifies as "landscapes of fear". Local identities can crystallise as a resident group feels its region threatened by "outside" forces (Larsen 2004:952), and Siegel's (1970:11) defensive structuring is a useful framework to review a community where members of a society establish and preserve a specific cultural identity in the face of what they feel is an external threat to that identity. The effects of the constant media focus, and the impact that this has on Oranian identity cannot be ignored as inhabitants and Oranian policy makers endeavour to regulate media portrayal externally due to the direct impact this representation has on their lives (Tilley 2006:16).

During the course of the study I progressively highlight three major landscapes: the physical, the cultural and the textual. These landscapes are closely connected. Oranians imbue the landscape with deep meaning through everyday life. While ideas certainly play a role, it is the lived experiences and opinions of people who are closely connected to the place, that create the landscape. It is the interaction, both fluid and problematic, between physical place and ideational space that is significant in the shaping of Oranian landscape and for Oranian identity creation.

## Chapter 6 CONCLUSION

In anthropological studies place is often taken for granted, “just” the locale where other interesting, more significant things happen (De Jongh 2006:79). I argue that rather than a mere backdrop to activities, the landscape of Orania is significant and that physical place is essential for the construction of an Orania identity. I examined ethnographically whether the physical setting of Orania can be seen as a prime signifying system through which a particular Afrikaner ethnic identity, as well as a set of socio-cultural values are communicated.

Occupying the physical land is a form of collective identity that helps create ethnic identities which in turn provide ontological foundations (Tilley 2006:11-13). Orania is an authentic place-bound expression of this quest for identity and Oranians define their identity through their model of space and of their land. The physical boundaries are expanded when support groups outside of the settlement become an integral part of the activities in the community, and socio-political boundaries are tested by an in- and outflux of community members and the constant presence of South African and international press, and visitors. Through migration, Orania becomes a microcosm for, and collectively of a selected group of Afrikaners from across the whole of South Africa, and in order to create cohesion in the community, a specific and characteristic Oranian identity is required. The place and space thus becomes a conceptual map which orders social life.

The literature on landscape, place and space provided valuable tools with which to consider and connect cultural values perceived in and linked to this specific landscape. Landscape comprises both a physical place and a cognitised image

(Mulk & Bayless-Smith 1999:364, 369), which is discursive, and embodies multiple meanings (Cosgrove 1993: 281). Context is crucial when investigating the constructed manifestation of meanings (Rodman 2003:205). Both the physical place and cognitised image of space are important when organising a view on social life within a landscape (Donnan & Wilson 1999:9). While important, these concepts should never be taken as monolithic and unchanging, but rather continuously questioned (Tilley 2006:7-8). I approach identity with the same expectation of fluidity and changeability.

Cosgrove (1993: 281) demonstrates that landscape as a signifying system is able to contain and convey multiple and often conflicting sets of shared meanings. Residents, visitors, tourists and the media have different perceptions and evaluations of such a landscape, which can lead to complex relationships and attitudes towards the landscape and interlinked identity. Place identity derives not so much from inherent qualities based on location, but also on grounded identity metaphors used by residents to position markers of inside against outside. I identified an insider/outsider categorisation of the degree of belonging and argue that these internal and external attitudes toward Orania's position on the inside/outside are meaningful in the construction of the place and space.

It is in this relationship between inside and outside that there are noticeable differences in the perceptions of localities by Oranians. Heightened levels of suspicion and disorientation that contribute to negative descriptions of South Africa bear resemblance to what Tuan (1980:6) classifies as "landscapes of fear". Local identities can crystallize as a resident group feels its region threatened by "outside" forces (Larsen 2004:9). Siegel's (1970) defensive structuring is a useful framework to review a community where members establish and preserve a

specific cultural identity in the face of what they feel is an external threat to that identity. Defensive structuring also provides a structure of reference for elements of comparative analysis, and despite Orania's "uniqueness", I found relevant elements for a high-level comparison in Anabaptist movements such as the Amish and Mennonites, as well as Buysdorp. I gained insight by looking at Buysdorp and the Amish, but although land, past, locale, history are common traits, the settlement of Orania was set in a different time, and subject to different socio-political-historical forces. Orania, from the outset, decided to be exclusive and its founders emerged from conservative, right-wing, disgruntled Afrikaner elites.

I endeavoured to illustrate that the landscape does not merely comprise the land, but also includes the lived experiences and attitudes of the inhabitants. Signs and symbols from, in and around Orania have a strong materiality and create embodied subjectivities in the landscape, whether it is external territory markers or in-group narratives that promote group loyalty and identity. The *Dorpsraad*, *Orania Beweging*, schools, churches and Radio Orania are prominent entities in the Oranian culturescape that are mentioned most frequently by inhabitants in their daily lives, indicating the core function that these institutions fulfil. These structures provide political, social, religious and educational structure to Orania. Localism, and the vehicles through which it is promoted, like the *Ora*, is a key aspect in creating a place-bound identity.

These aspects all contribute to an Oranian identity that adheres to the founding ideals of the community. The narratives of identity and independence are reinforced through various symbols (colours, flags) throughout the landscape. The repeated presence of the colour orange in the landscape creates visual texture, form and organisation, internally and externally broadcasting an explicit



statement of solidarity and identification. The identity narrative is extended to and manifests in icons such as the *Koeksistermonument* as a marker of a specific Afrikaner identity, as well as the distinguishing characteristic of *selfwerksaamheid* as characterised by the *Kleine Reus*. The Verwoerd *Gedenkversameling*, along with the physical infrastructure of the town embodies the historical context that Orania is steeped in. Symbolically and intertextually the various flags present in the settlement weave the historic narratives together within the context of independence. These are the preferred narratives in the landscape, but certainly not the only narratives.

Landscape as text, “a medium to be read for the ideas, practices and contexts constituting the culture which created it” (Ley 1985:419) proved to be a legitimate and constructive way to make sense of the landscape. As with texts, the landscape as text is subject to multiple readings, even if some interpretations are encouraged more than others (Cresswell 1996:13). Content analysis, a textual analysis technique, was utilised in Chapter 4 to evaluate internal Oranian hard copy publications. Analysis demonstrates that the symbolic, signifying and intertextual narratives embodied in the landscape establish ideas, practices and contexts of Orania. As an extension of the focus on narratives, I concentrated on how Oranians see themselves and their landscape expressed through text. I decided to distinguish between written, tangible texts and digital texts. The distinction supported and extended into my physical observations of and in the community. Texts included Oranian hard copy publications; *Dorpsnuus*, *Volkstater* and *Voorgrond*. After this internally-focussed approach, my emphasis fell on the Orania website, and more specifically the visitor’s book and the promotional DVD, *Orania: Waar drome waar word!* (Where dreams come true). While other researchers had referenced content from the Oranian publications (Pienaar (2007), Blomerus (2009), Hues & Morgan (2010)), up until this study

there hasn't been a more methodical approach to content analysis of Oranian publications.

Interwoven with their own experiences of their own landscape are the experiences and perspectives of people from beyond the community. The focus on the textual landscape offers an expanded perspective on space and place, and in this case texts also amplify the Oranian space exponentially. It is Tilley (2006:20) that defined landscape as "both objective physical place and a subjective cognized image of that place." Since this textual landscape is crucial, it is included alongside the investigation into the physical landscape and culturescape.

More than just associated and sometimes contending concepts, the physical landscape and the ideas and ideals form an ironic dialectic. Physical place is the ultimate goal and expression of the ideal for a specific expression of Afrikaner independence. Orania is the vehicle for that independence, although the fact that the place ended up to be Orania was quite incidental. The land came as an "opportunity". Without the land, without the place, Orania would not be there, even though the thought of Afrikaner self-determination would still persist.

Sifting through the different layers of meaning, the reality of living in a small rural community is one that cannot be ignored. The average cost of living is more than just the expected monthly salary, a sense of community or safety. It includes harsh living conditions, strict adherence to stated norms, petty theft and the potential for intra-community conflict. This perspective on the quality of life in Orania is, amongst others, a useful indicator as to the price people choose to pay to live in such an exclusive *selfwerksame* community.

I revealed that different types of landscapes - culturescape, landscape as text and textual landscapes – can be seen as building blocks in the construction of an Oranian identity. Through the analysis I demonstrated that space and place are not opposites of each other, but connect and interconnect. The interplay, both fluid and problematic, between physical place and ideational space is significant to physical and ideational orientation within the Orania landscape. Finally, I would emphasise that Orania, and by extension this study, is not just an academic concept, but a product of the lived experiences and opinions of people who are closely connected to land of their own.

Context is crucial for my understanding of this study, the landscape, the fieldwork experience and my interaction with and sense-making of the anthropological discipline. In this way I feel that the functionalist approach of anthropology came into its own in the different phases of doing and writing. On reflection, this study is also a product of my personal lived experiences, where professional and academic contexts contributed to the research methodology. My approach to the fieldwork experience and skills that I brought from other disciplines enabled me to bring new perspectives of landscape as text and text as a manifestation of landscape.

Applying a personalised methodology allowed me to translate a personal experience into an academic product. Without this approach I would have had a very different, and most likely a less satisfying fieldwork experience. Rather than just arriving in Orania with a preconceived idea of what this study will focus on, it became a matter of coaxing anthropology and ethnography from the context, and eventually the landscape. Decoding the different scapes went hand-in-hand with making sense of identity. Investigating identity construction in post-apartheid South Africa, remains a relevant and necessary undertaking, especially in an

ambiguous and contested site such as Orania. A similar approach could then also be used to investigate other created identities in South Africa, for instance the “rainbow nation” as an imagined community (Baines 1998, Habib 1997).

Mindful of the knowledge of context, as well as the context of knowledge (Dilley 1999:xii), I feel that Orania is weighed down and illuminated by, and subjected to and a manifestation of context. It is context that contributes to the construction of identity, with all its dizzying variety of interpretations and meanings. Identity is inherently complex. It isn't a neat and unambiguous solution. Orania as an unfolding narrative, both as an imagined community and as an everyday lived experience, remains firmly placed within its complex and ambiguous context.

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