

Buying into Kleinfontein: The Financial Implications of Afrikaner Self-Determination

by

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Declaration

I, Johannes Stephanus van Wyk, declare that this dissertation is my own original work. Where secondary material has been used (either from a printed source or from the internet), this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities and the University of Pretoria.

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Abstract

In the years approaching President F.W. De Klerk's announcement in 1990 that South Africa's policies would be reformed a number of the right wing groups realised that apartheid would come to an end. This dissertation deals with one response, by the Boere-Vryheidsbeweging (Boer Freedom Movement). By setting up a settlement styled as a 'growth point for Afrikaner self-determination' in Pretoria's eastern hinterland, in 1992, the movement hoped to avert what its numbers saw as eventual black majority rule. The aim of this study is to probe what has become of this settlement roughly 20 years after the transition to full democracy in 1994. The following questions were used as a guideline to this end: (i) On what legal basis has the settlement's property been occupied?; (ii) Who are the people who moved to the settlement over time?; (iii) How have they generated the capital with which to develop the settlement?; (iv) What is the character of their relationship with each other?; and (v) How have they dealt with external authorities such as the state, province and local municipality?

The findings of this study show that the settlement of Kleinfontein has been kept as a set of undivided properties and that none of the residents have individual title. They occupy the settlement by internal agreement alone, and there is no acknowledgement by either the state or private institutions of the internal divisions that have been made. Over time, the founders of the settlement managed to attract two categories of people to live there. The first comprised relatively old lower middle-class people who moved in because of the settlement's affordability and peacefulness. The second consisted of working age middle-class people with professional jobs who moved in for reasons to do with the ideology of Afrikaner self-determination. As the movement of the second category of people into the settlement accelerated, internal disagreements developed between them and the first category of people, and the settlement as a whole eventually became so paralysed by the conflict that few people have chosen to move there since. The disagreements mainly revolved around the fact that the professionals wanted to transform the settlement so that it meets the middle-class standards found in major South African cities. The lack of consensus eventually resulted in several conflicts with the state, placing a question mark over the settlement's continued existence in post-apartheid South Africa.

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List of Acronyms

ABSA	- Amalgamated Banks of South Africa
ANC	- African National Congress
AWB	- Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging
BVB	- Boere-Vryheidsbeweging
HNP	- Herstigte Nasionale Party
KAB	- Kleinfontein Aandelebelange Beweging
KBK	- Kleinfontein Boerebelange K�operatief Beperk
ILO	- International Labour Organisation
NP	- National Party
OVS	- Oranje-Vrystaat
PAC	- Pan-African Congress
SACP	- South African Communist Party
SADF	- South African Defence Force
SACCOL	- Savings and Credit Cooperative League of South Africa
SARS	- South African Revenue Service
ZAR	- Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek

Chapter 1: The Financial Implications of Self-Determination

1.1 Background of the study

Shortly before negotiations between the National Party and the liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC) started, a small group of people mostly located in and around Pretoria broke away from the *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB)¹. They called themselves the *Boere Vryheidsbeweging* (BVB)² and claimed they could no longer support the direction the AWB had taken, which they saw as being too violent. There was also unhappiness about Eugene Terre'Blanche's affair with Jani Allen. Like many other movements on the far right at the time, the BVB wanted to create a *volkstaat* (homeland) for Afrikaners when they saw that the demise of white rule was inevitable. But unlike the *Oranjerwerkers*³ they patently refused to take part in the negotiation process (Du Toit, 1991:652) on the basis that they saw the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Pan-African Congress (PAC) as 'enemies and opponents of the *Boerevolk*'; and described them as 'anti-Christian insolents and revolutionaries' (*Boere-Vryheidsbeweging*, 1990:17).

The BVB argued that a *volkstaat* should be created in the old Boer Republics of the *Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek* (ZAR) and the *Oranje-Vrystaat* (OVS), and they referred to its prospective residents variously as the *Afrikanervolk* (Afrikaner people), the *Boerevolk* (farmer people) or the *Boere-Afrikanervolk* (Farmer-Afrikaner people). In harking back to the past they said the *Boere-Afrikaners'* republics and freedom had been taken from them unjustly, and that the stain left by the death of approximately 30 000 women and children in concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer War⁴ remained (*Boere-Vryheidsbeweging*, 1990:20).

¹ Translation: Afrikaner Resistance Movement.

² Translation: Boer (Farmer) Freedom Movement.

³ Translation: Orange workers (*Literal*).

⁴ 1899-1902.

Initially the BVB sought to wrest control of roughly 20% of South Africa, located in the old Boer republics, from the National Party (NP) government. The movement wanted full sovereign control over the area so that they could govern themselves and systematically push black people living there out until only white people remained. The NP government had no interest in this and with the support of the 70% of the white population which voted ‘Yes’ in the referendum of 1992, continued with the process of reform that was started in 1990. With their proposal ignored the BVB turned to the idea of a growth point for self-determination, following the example of Carel Boshoff’s *Afrikanervryheidstigting*,⁵ which had purchased the town of Orania in 1991. In this scenario a *volkstaat* would be built through private means, by purchasing additional property and adding it to that which was already owned.

This new idea came to fruition shortly after the referendum when several members of the BVB managed to buy a property located a short distance east of Pretoria. The property had symbolic significance to them; it was a site where the Boer had managed to win a skirmish against the British forces, killing a number of them in the process, toward the end of the Anglo-Boer war. But the property had more than symbolic importance. Because Pretoria has a sizeable Afrikaner population the BVB argued that large numbers sympathetic to their cause would be encouraged to move to the new settlement, because they would not have to give up their jobs and would be close to hospitals and shops in the city. This was different from the isolation of Orania in the Northern Cape, given that people were obliged to give up their jobs and familiar surroundings if they chose to go and live there. Both settlements wanted to offer a refuge for Afrikaners, where they would not have to live under a black majority government. The BVB named their ‘growth point’ Kleinfontein, after one of the portions of the property that they had purchased.

Kleinfontein’s immediate future would prove testing. In the first years almost nobody moved to settle in Kleinfontein because there was no infrastructure such as water, electricity and sewerage at all. A second blow came in 1994 when Constand Viljoen, the influential ex-head of the SADF (South African Defence Force) who supported the creation of a *volkstaat*, joined the negotiating

⁵ Translation: Afrikaner Freedom Foundation.

table, and helped to form the Freedom Front, which took part in the first democratic elections later that year. This gave a far more mainstream voice to the idea of creating a *volkstaat* and thus reduced the power of the BVB's own appeal to do so. In coaxing Viljoen into participation by promising an avenue for self-determination under a new constitution, the NP & ANC negotiating parties succeeded in drawing support from the far right for a future within South Africa, something the BVB had rejected out of hand on the basis that they would not negotiate for a *volkstaat* with either the NP or the ANC. Thus they did not experience the large influx of investment and people they had expected – they had estimated that Kleinfontein would be able to support 6000 people.

After a few years they managed to attract a small trickle of people to move to the settlement and start building houses there. These people were however not the die-hard *volkstaat* supporters the BVB had expected. Instead most were drawn from the lower middle-class and working-class suburbs in Pretoria and Johannesburg, while the rest came from smaller towns in the countryside in the old Transvaal. Many of them were in the process of retiring or had already retired. For some it offered a safe, peaceful refuge among their own; for a number of them it was an escape from suburbs which had steadily become desegregated; and for most the low cost of living in the settlement was a particular attraction. While this had not been the category of people the BVB originally wanted to attract to the settlement, it was grateful for the financial windfall, which allowed them to start servicing the commercial loan they had taken out to purchase the property and to begin building infrastructure there.

But the pitfalls of creating a *volkstaat* through private means were soon apparent. It was only in 2001 that funds were secured to purchase another property of significant size, adjacent to the existing property. This property was approximately 350 hectares in extent and it gave the administrators of Kleinfontein an opportunity to mark out a number of larger lifestyle plots which they marketed to try and attract a different category of Afrikaners, people who wanted to move to the settlement for purposes other than retirement. By the mid-2000s this strategy started paying off and the settlement saw an influx of new residents who were younger than those

already living there. Unlike the older residents many of them were university educated, and most held professional jobs in Pretoria and Johannesburg. There was much excitement at this time because many saw this as the dawn of a new era for Kleinfontein. The excitement was short-lived, however, because the influx of the new residents served to highlight the different interests of those who found themselves in the settlement. The new arrivals wanted better services, more financial security, and acknowledgement from the state that Kleinfontein was a ‘growth point for Afrikaner self-determination’. A fully-fledged schism developed; the older, less well-off, residents who moved in first rallied around the only founder to have remained in the settlement permanently and a number of the younger residents drew support from the influx of new, middle-class residents.

The growing schism came to cost the settlement when changes to the law that Kleinfontein used to legitimise itself came into force in 2007. The inability of the residents to agree on how to reconstitute the settlement under the new legislation eventually led to the category of younger residents succeeding in moving the settlement in a new direction. If it is successful, this direction will see the settlement being transformed from collectively-owned property to a registered land development in the municipality under which it falls. The property will be subdivided and each home owner will receive a title deed. Until this new direction came to be followed, Kleinfontein had been kept under the government's radar in order to reduce the risk of raising unnecessary problems, but the new direction has raised the settlement's profile because it sets out to confront the state directly.

Negotiations to have Kleinfontein registered as a land development have been complicated by a recent incident in which policemen claimed they were refused entrance onto the property because one of them was black. This resulted in an investigation being launched by the Gauteng provincial legislature to determine whether this refusal to admit the police was racially motivated, also whether the settlement in its entirety is in conflict with the South African constitution.

The exchange with the Gauteng provincial government garnered little attention at first, but this changed dramatically after it became known that Kleinfontein's residents want the settlement to be registered as a land development under the municipality. With many in the media condemning the residents of the settlement as racists, the mayor of the municipality was moved to make an intervention of his own. His first response was to state categorically that racial exclusivity would not be accepted in his municipality, but after meeting with representatives of Kleinfontein he toned down his position, and suggested that a solution could be reached by negotiation between the various parties.

1.2 The study of Kleinfontein

This dissertation comprises an ethnographic study of the financial and legal considerations underlying a settlement such as Kleinfontein. In the course of this study a number of questions have guided me. These include: What are the implications for residents that the Kleinfontein property is collectively owned? How did the founders of the settlement manage to build infrastructure on an empty property without large amounts of start-up capital? What are the internal agreements between the residents? Who are the people who have been attracted to live in Kleinfontein? What is the character of their relationships with each other? How has the settlement dealt with external authorities such as the state, the province and the local municipality?

At present Orania is the only settlement of its kind to have received significant attention from academics, with Kleinfontein getting no more than passing mention. Moreover, of all the studies of Orania that have been conducted, the only one to have been 'in depth' is by Terisa Pienaar, an historian who applied anthropological ideas. She states that 'this thesis investigates the Afrikaners with regard to their primal ancestors, the origin of their identity, their identity during the reign of the NP government and their identity in post-Apartheid South Africa' and in particular 'the Afrikaner right-wing's quest for a "volkstaat" and specifically the foundation of Orania in the Northern Cape' (2007: iii). Her concerns were thus with ethnicity, culture, ideology and identity, and most of the other studies undertaken to understand Orania reflected similar

concerns - although Cavanagh (2013) provides a departure from this by taking an historical view of the ways in which the land on which Orania is situated has been inhabited by different peoples over a longer period of time. Pienaar's analysis rests primarily on using historical sources to trace the development of the *volkstaat* idea and she mostly uses official documents produced by Orania officials themselves to look at what has been happening since it was started in 1992.

In my study I have tried to do something different. It is important to acknowledge that ideas about ethnicity, culture and identity have played a significant part in the decision to found Kleinfontein, many residents may have moved to the settlement with these ideas in mind, and the views and beliefs of those living there are continuously influenced by these concerns. It is, however, also important to acknowledge that these abstractions alone do not dictate the way in which the residents think and behave. An appreciation of the practical realities people face is also important, and as I have suggested, these realities have been crucial. This is particularly so when a group of mostly lower middle-class retirees are incapable of meeting the expectations of their younger counterparts who are professional, still working and dream of making a *volkstaat* a reality in the immediate future.

The core of my argument is therefore about the relationship between the residents' practical concerns – to invest their money wisely, have security of tenure and access to an acceptable level of services such as water and electricity, schools and medical facilities – and the grand ideological arguments which other academics have discussed at length.

The best way to see the links between practicalities and ideologies is to undertake ethnographic field research. I undertook participant observation in Kleinfontein for nine months in 2011. Initially, I lived in the home of an elderly lady who had been intimately involved in administering the settlement in the early 2000s. Then during the latter part of my stay I looked after a family's house and pets while they were working in Zambia. During my stay I attended numerous 'public' meetings for the residents, went to church on some occasions, socialised regularly with some of the residents, did a large set of semi-formal interviews, and after some

negotiation was allowed to consult many of Kleinfontein's internal records. By doing the field research in this order I was able, first, to learn what the practical daily concerns of the residents⁶ were and how they tried to deal with them and, second, to probe these matters in more depth during the interviews and through access to the records. Consulting these records allowed me to see how these concerns fitted into the 'bigger picture' of the settlement – the ways in which it is represented by various categories of residents to outsiders, and the way it is perceived by outsiders.

1.3 Outline of chapters

Chapter 2 consists of an overview of the literature relevant to of my study. I give particular attention to various studies that have addressed Orania, given that Orania and Kleinfontein bear close resemblance; and were born from the same kind of history. I also give attention to some whiteness studies literature that has been done about white people in southern Africa who have struggled to come to terms with the fact that the country has become a democracy. A section of this chapter is also devoted to literature about intentional communities, of which Kleinfontein is one. I deal also with literature on gated communities and will show the overlap between writing on gated communities and on whiteness.

In Chapter 3 I discuss the way in which Kleinfontein has developed over time and has been 'peopled'. I do this by dividing the settlement's history into four phases, in which I explore the arrival of different categories of people at different times. The purpose of this is to show the heterogeneous composition of the residents at the time I did field research in 2011.

Chapter 4 builds on the previous chapter by placing focus on the 'underworks' of the settlement. By this I mean the legal history of the settlement and the different forms under which the

⁶ In this dissertation I have assigned pseudonyms to all my research participants unless they are public figures. Throughout the writing I indicate where pseudonyms are used.

settlement has been collectively owned. My intention here is to illustrate how interrelated the social life and the economics of the settlement are.

Chapter 5 is a history of social life in Kleinfontein and sets out, by building on the background in by Chapters 3 and 4, to reveal the roots of the schism among the residents at the time of my fieldwork. The chapter illustrates the way in the schism has had many knock-on effects for the settlement and exaggerated the divergence among its residents. Although it is not expressed here it should be noted that the media attention that the settlement received at the start of 2013 is actually a result of this schism rather than a random occurrence. The chapter ends with the ethnography of a special general meeting that took place in 2011, in order to illustrate how this schism is playing out in the social and economic life of the settlement.

The final chapter of this dissertation deals with two important abstractions that were at play when the settlement was initially founded. In Chapter 6 I will tie the loose ends together by showing the difference between large ideals on the one hand and the practical reality on the other. I seek to fit this dimension into the larger history of Apartheid and what happened in South Africa in the second half of the 20th century.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

While Kleinfontein was founded as a so-called growth point for Afrikaner self-determination the circumstances of its residents and the form of the settlement are woven into a larger literature that seeks to understand the different strands involved. The literature review will thus deal with themes of the issues relevant to understanding Kleinfontein. The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of important works that have been written so that the historical ethnography in the following chapters can be understood more clearly. The first category of writing that will be dealt with is that which deals with the so-called ‘growth points for Afrikaner self-determination’. All of this deals with the settlement of Orania located on the Orange River in the Northern Cape. The second category is the body of writing that grapples with the idea of ‘whiteness’ and is concerned with understanding the discourse, culture and identity of white people. The third category comprises a large and diverse literature dealing with intentional communities and forms of collective ownership. The last category of literature is that which deals with gated communities, and although it can be argued that they are a type of intentional community, the interest in them has risen to such a degree that they will be dealt with separately.

2.2 ‘Afrikaner growth points’

Little has been written about places such as Kleinfontein, with nearly all attention being given to the better known Orania which is located in the Northern Cape on the banks of the Orange River. No detailed anthropological study based on ethnographic research in any such settlement in South Africa has taken place to date; apart from my own study there is only one other (on Orania) that is in the process of being completed.

The first academic publication that analyses anything related to Orania that I am aware of is by Kotze (2003). In his article he considers what role the ‘economic base’ plays in the growth (and death) of a town, using Orania as a case study. He suggests that although there is a general impression that small towns in South Africa are in decline, Orania at the time seemed to contradict this trend. In 1963 the first dwellings were constructed where the present-day town is

located to house workers who were employed as part of the Orange River Water Project. They were involved in the construction of the various dams now found in the area (notably the HF Verwoerd Dam, later renamed the Gariiep Dam). He considers this the first economic base of the town and it lasted until the late 1980s, by which time the construction of the dams were complete and the property on which the town was located was put up for sale. By 1991 it was bought by the *Afrikaner Vryheidstigting*,⁷ which envisioned that the town would be converted into the first town of a future *volkstaat* in the area which would extend all the way to the west coast. This change in ownership and the subsequent moving in of various Afrikaner families gave rise to the second economic base. The third economic base of the town started in 1994 when the *Orania Bestuursdienste*,⁸ the body now in control of the town, bought an adjacent agricultural farm and managed successfully to involve some of the residents in agriculture.

Steyn (2004) elaborates on Kotze's discussion showing among other things that Orania was owned as a shareholder company and that, as such, no person could hold a private title deed inside the town. She considered Orania a 'bottom-up' approach to local economic development. She did not, however, provide many details about why she celebrated the town as being a success in this regard, apart from saying no resources were provided by government, when it was started in 1991. Nor does she mention the fact that those moving to the town brought with them many resources which they had amassed during the apartheid era.

The first anthropological enquiry of any kind to take place was by De Beer (2006). Although not based on extensive field research, he took advantage of a fairly intimate understanding of the settlement and of the contacts he had inside. In his enquiry he attempts to decide whether the ideological stimulus behind the creation of the 'growth point' is strong enough to represent the 'dawn of Afrikaner self-determination' (De Beer 2006:106). He pays particular attention to what he calls the 'ethnic roots' of the people in Orania and how they consciously try to create an 'own' identity. In doing this he describes the kinds of institutions that have been created in the settlement to serve this purpose as well as the policies of strict access control and *volkseie arbeid* (literally 'people/nation's own labour', the use of only white Afrikaans speakers to perform

⁷ Translate: Afrikaner Freedom Foundation.

⁸ Translation: Orania Management Services.

labour). Of particular interest is that he identifies a schism between the residents with a small group claiming that the directors of the *Orania Bestuursdienste* monopolise resources for their own ends. His conclusion is, however, that regardless of the achievements or internal differences in the settlement, it will not result in the ‘dawn of Afrikaner self-determination’ unless large numbers of Afrikaners move there, which had not happened by the time he published the paper.

The first detailed study of Orania to take place was by Terisa Pienaar (2007) who took an historical approach. In her Master’s thesis she traces the development of movements that sought to create an Afrikaner *volkstaat* (homeland) and the various plans they proposed for Afrikaner independence once it became clear that Apartheid was no longer feasible. Based on this trajectory she then places focus on Orania and gives attention to the role that Carel Boshoff played as the leader of the *Afrikaner Vryheidstigting*, the movement which eventually purchased the town of Orania. The purchase of Orania formed part of a plan by the *Afrikaner Vryheidstigting* to purchase private land extending from Orania all the way to the west coast (**Figure 2.1**). Carel Boshoff was a representative of the Freedom Front Plus at the time, and they shared a vision of what an Afrikaner *volkstaat* might resemble (**Figure 2.1**).

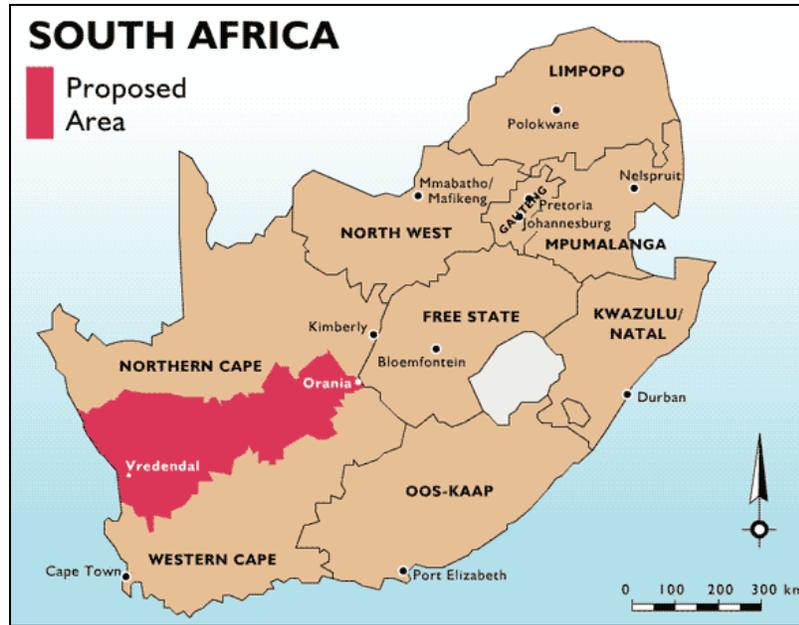


Figure 2.1: Proposed area for *volkstaat* by the *Afrikaner Vryheidsbeweging* and the Freedom Front Plus.⁹

Pienaar focuses on how the management of Orania attempted to accommodate the ideological vision in its everyday running. This includes attempts to gain its own municipality in the Northern Cape, the development of education in Orania, delivering services to the residents, adopting ecologically friendly principles, and serving religious and cultural needs. Her analysis is however limited to official documents created by the management board in control of the settlement, and as such it is difficult to gauge how much this reflects the actual circumstances of living there.

In the final part of the thesis she turns to the residents themselves, through the administering of a survey. Her concern was to investigate ‘ethnicity’ and the degree to which an own identity had taken root among the residents as opposed to a general identification as Afrikaners. Based on the responses she concludes that a singular identity based on living in Orania had begun to develop, separate from a homogenous Afrikaner identity. However she ends the thesis on an awkward note when she argues, like De Beer (2006), that for Orania to be successful it will have to attract

⁹ Picture retrieved from: http://www.vryheidsfront.co.za/english/policy_landmap.asp (last accessed on 10 October 2010)

more people to come and live there, and that at the time of writing it did not seem likely that this would happen anytime soon. The main reason for this, she argues, is the isolation of Orania in the Northern Cape, far removed from larger urban centres in South Africa.

Todd (2008) provides an interesting take on the settlements that were founded as so-called ‘growth points for Afrikaner self-determination’. As her PhD thesis is about a change of identity for more conservative Afrikaners who have struggled to come to terms with the transition to democracy and majority rule in 1994, it does not seek to explain the functioning of these settlements. She places emphasis on Orania and Balmoral (a much smaller settlement found in present-day Mpumalanga), and specifically listens to how members (in leadership positions) of these communities construct themselves through the telling of stories. This is done in the light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which had taken place during her field research at the end of the 1990s. Importantly, however, she shows how the members of the settlements try to legitimate their claims for a *volkstaat*. In the case of Kleinfontein and Balmoral she shows how the people she spoke to claim that they are descendants of citizens of the Boer Republics that existed during the latter half of the 19th century. By claiming that they lost these republics unjustly they say that parts of these territories should be returned to their control. They see their struggle as a continuation of the fight for freedom that those Boers fought for at that time.

Labuschagne (2008) provides the first legal analysis of attempts to establish self-determination and secession by the Orania Movement (those who eventually bought the town). In this exploration he frames those in Orania as a ‘minority group’ that is trapped within the larger South Africa. By comparing the struggles of minority groups internationally to establish self-determination with that of Afrikaner minority groups¹⁰ he tries to establish a potential route that can be taken to establish eventual self-determination. He expresses doubt about the viability of Article 235 in the Constitution of South Africa¹¹ to provide any substantive form of self-determination as it is subservient to other sections in the Constitution, which takes precedence. In doing this he suggests that a human rights approach be taken to self-determination, which moves

¹⁰ He acknowledges the multiplicity of groups by referencing ‘Afrikaner minority group(s)’ as opposed to just suggesting a monolithic group (Labuschagne 2008:79).

¹¹ Act 108 of 1996.

away from an exclusive territorial ambition, by, for instance, linking like-minded Afrikaners virtually and otherwise with a vision such as the one espoused by the Orania Movement.

The first full anthropological study set out to focus on a specific so-called ‘growth point for Afrikaner self-determination’ was by Blomerus (2009). In her dissertation about Orania she mainly relied on Pienaar (2007) and little ethnography was done. Her primary question concerned the role of Afrikaner women, based on a few interviews she did with women in Orania.

Hues and Morgan (2010) produced a rather interesting paper on a weekly ceremony in which a *volkstaat* flag was raised at a primary school during their two months of ethnographic research in Orania. Although they are more concerned with a theoretical discussion about how to understand such a ceremony as educational, they nonetheless illustrate some of the complications involved. The raising of the *volkstaat* flag takes on a militaristic style and stands in contrast to the rest of South Africa wherever the South African flag is raised. They conclude, however, that children show little interest in the ceremony.

Todd later (2011) followed her thesis with an article about members of Balmoral in relation to an attempted artistic appropriation of Fort Klapperkop (in Pretoria) in 1998 during a commemoration. Unfortunately she places philosophical concerns of affection over ethnography and context. She highlights the way in which the residents of Balmoral have experienced post-Apartheid as a situation in which they no longer have the same power that they did before. She also shows how some of them attempt to resist the ‘new South Africa’ by presenting themselves as different from the rest of the country in terms of identity and culture indicating a schismogenic break with other Afrikaners (Todd, 2011:123). The degree to which this event can be seen as a schismogenic break is questionable, however, given that the divergent interests of different Afrikaners had started to emerge long before the 1990s.

The first piece to offer any kind of critical reflection on Orania is by Veracini (2011) who labels De Beer’s (2006) work as an extended apology of the settlement; which he calls a ‘settler colonial document’ (2011:190). He takes exception to the way in which De Beer frames Orania

as a minority or indigenous struggle within a larger struggle of similar groups internationally. This is only accessory to De Beer's primary claim that Orania can only be understood within a wider context of Afrikaner history. Veracini also criticises De Beer's claim that the *volkseie arbeid* policy serves as a radical departure from the Afrikaner past, arguing that the policy is, in fact, a way in which to confer or withdraw the right to reside. He calls this a 'localised conquest of labour' and points out that this policy can serve as a means by which richer residents can exploit poorer ones in Orania (Veracini 2011:193). He concludes by arguing that Orania should not be seen as a throwback or aberration nor as an example of minority struggles for self-determination in a global context. It should instead be seen as a 'settler colonial response and part of a global movement towards segregated sovereign enclaves supervised by communities' acceptance committees' (Veracini 2011:195).

Cavanagh (2013) takes a different approach from the other Orania related studies done thus far. His paper investigates the meaning of land rights by considering a claim that was laid with the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights against the new owners in 2005. In doing this he shows how property ownership and the laws of the market act as a final arbiter to resolve disputes over who can and cannot occupy land; not only this but he also shows how these forces take precedence over how the earlier occupants were dispossessed and dehumanised.

2.3 Discourse analysis, culture, identity and 'whiteness studies'

As can be gauged from the literature discussed, most researchers of late have focussed on the discourse regarding culture and identity that is being espoused in Orania, rather than on what people are actually doing. They do not stand in isolation, however, but rather tie into a larger body of literature that share these concerns when asking questions about white people in Southern Africa. This is especially the case for a relatively new field, mostly referred to as 'whiteness studies' which has its origins in the United States of America, beginning in the early 1990s (Hartman 2004; Steyn 2004).

One of the first authors to employ an extensive discourse analysis in order to probe the way in which the privilege of whites is maintained in South Africa is Schutte in *What Racists Believe* (1995). At the time of publication 'whiteness studies' had not yet been established as a new field

but it can be assumed that had he written a decade later he would have drawn more heavily on the works that came out in this body of literature. In his book he seeks to bridge the gap between the racism espoused by the National Party during Apartheid at the macro level and white people themselves at the micro level, who he argues started to have divergent views from the party well before the transition to majority rule. Interestingly he also suggests this divergence is what is responsible for the discourse around the creation of a *volkstaat* held by right wing Afrikaners. He however limits himself to asking questions regarding race, racism and discourse; and consequently can say little more than that his research participants are racist.

The pioneer of ‘whiteness studies’ as a field in South Africa is Steyn (2001; 2004) (and with Foster 2008), who has been particularly important in trying to establish this method of probing the position of whites. Drawing on research done in America (Dyer 1988; Roediger 1991; Ignatiev 1995) her basic premise is that whites in South Africa share a discourse of whiteness. This discourse concerns itself with maintaining the privileges enjoyed by white people, who take this privilege for granted¹². She argues that this racial hierarchy was created during the colonial era and that it has continued to the present postcolonial world. In South Africa, Steyn (2004) argues that whiteness takes two shapes, one English and the other Afrikaans. The Afrikaans discourse is explicit, and goes back to the Anglo-Boer War and sees itself being threatened by forces beyond its own control. The English discourse on the other hand is more muted and expresses itself as being on the moral high ground because it was always opposed to Apartheid. The way in which she investigates these discourses of whiteness (Steyn 2004; Steyn & Foster 2008) is by analysing what she calls ‘white talk’ in various forums. This concerns the way in which whites constitute themselves in post-Apartheid South Africa in the face of majority rule by black people.

Puttergill (2008) continues the discussion of how the discourse of whites in South Africa can be studied. He argues that studying how perceptions change among white South Africans gives an opportunity to assess how they manage their positioning in their local communities and the larger

¹² In the sense that many white South Africans have argued that they worked hard to accrue the resources they accumulated but at the same time denying that the policy of apartheid created a context within which this could have been done at the expense of non-whites.

society (Puttergill 2008:163). He sees self-representation of whites as a balancing act between a discredited past and safeguarding their position and gains in the present. With this conceptualisation in mind he studies middle-class whites as this constitutes the largest subsection of the white population in South Africa. By conducting interviews with research participants in two settings he calls Edensvlakte and Wesveld he finds that white Afrikaans speakers are keen to dissociate themselves from traditional notions of Afrikanerdom and demonstrate their moderation, while English speakers blame the past policies of apartheid on Afrikaners to absolve themselves of complicity. He furthermore challenges the idea that class has replaced race as the primary identity, demonstrating that in both Pretoria and Johannesburg class and whiteness remains deeply intertwined. And despite their different ways of trying to absolve themselves of complicity in the apartheid past, he finds it important to acknowledge the variability within the Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking groups. He concludes that there is no single identity among middle class whites among his research participants, and that they choose a variety of terms like South African, white, English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking (Puttergill, 2008: 350).

Writing in the wake of the ‘fast track land reform programme’ that started in 2000 in Zimbabwe, Kalaora (2011) investigates the kinds of responses white farmers have in the light of the loss and occupation of their farmland. She shows that white farmers have had one of two options, to leave their farms or to negotiate with black Zimbabweans to remain on their land with the new occupants on terms they do not set themselves. Where white farmers chose to leave their farms they continued to try to maintain their ‘white values’ and labelled farmers who negotiated with black Zimbabweans to stay on their land as ‘mad’ and ‘corrupt’. On the other hand the white farmers who negotiated with black Zimbabweans to remain on their land find themselves in intimate social relationships that they had never been involved in before.

Much like Kalaora, Boersema (2012) approaches ‘whiteness’ from the bottom up by focussing on the local level rather than the macro level as Steyn and Puttergill did. He does ethnographic research on a mainly white trade union called *Solidariteit*¹³ which has its roots in Afrikaner

¹³ Translation: Solidarity.

nationalism. He traces the history of the union and shows how its discourse has changed since the transition to majority rule and democracy. Whereas it used to espouse white supremacy up until the mid-1990s it changed to a discourse on minority rights and belonging, which Boersema argues has afforded *Solidariteit* modest success. Union members did this by co-opting the language of the constitution. Far from having abandoned Afrikaner nationalism, he shows that the union has continued to hold onto elements of nationalism up to the present and sustain a narrative of trying to survive in a country which it sees as being hostile to its main constituents.

2.4 Intentional communities and collective ownership

As a category ‘intentional communities’ cover a range of settlements built for different reasons. Meijering, Huigen and Van Hoven (2007) define intentional communities (in ‘the West’) as being founded in a deliberate attempt to realise an alternative way of life outside mainstream society. Among other things, these communities are characterised by voluntary membership, geographical and psychological separation from mainstream society and a common ideology adhered to by all members. Property – particularly land – is shared, and the interest of the group prevails over that of the individual (Meijering, Huigen & Van Hoven, 2007:42). They define people who choose to move to intentional communities as those who feel excluded because they do not fit into the dominant ideologies that prevail in the societies from which they extract themselves. This extraction often involves moving from urban spaces to rural spaces where their ideals can be realised on small scale. These intentional communities then provide a place where members can feel at ‘home’ or ‘accepted’. Although distanced from mainstream society these communities often continue to share certain characteristics within, and contribute to it in some way. They identify four broad types of intentional communities: ecological, communal, religious and practical (with the latter often located close to suburban centres).

Of the authors who write on intentional communities Kanter’s work (1968 & 1972) has been the most influential. Kanter’s (1968) contention is that the most important factor to consider when studying intentional communities (or utopian communities, as she calls them) is the concept of commitment. She relates this to the way in which the social systems of intentional communities are configured and argues that there are three major problems for such systems: social control, group cohesiveness, and continuation as an action system. A person taking part in such a system

may be committed to continuing the system but may not be committed to the mechanism of control. With this in mind she comments on the way in which many intentional communities end up becoming ‘unsuccessful’ and relates this to the systems in place being inadequate to maintain the commitment necessary from members for the continuance of the communities.

To understand the lifecycle of intentional communities, Andelson (2002) builds on Kanter’s work, which he describes as being mostly about static structures and functions. He turns to the ideas of Van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1969) about rites of passage. He argues that intentional communities often go through phases where they break apart, and in some cases they come back together in a reconstituted form. Following from this he seeks to understand the processes through which intentional communities ‘come together’ and ‘break apart’. He offers two terms to address this, *sociogenesis* (the process through which individuals come together for a common purpose) and *schismogenesis* (the process through which individuals in an intentional community progressively differentiate)¹⁴. The term *schismogenesis* is particularly useful for addressing schisms that develop between the members of intentional communities, and there are two types, complementary and symmetrical *schismogenesis*. Complementary *schismogenesis* is when one group of people in an intentional community is dedicated to upholding the rules, while another group is dedicated to subverting them. Symmetrical *schismogenesis* is when two or more groups of people have the same aspirations and behavioural patterns but are differentiated in their orientations. The latter is particularly common among intentional communities that are founded on an ideological basis.

Although intentional communities are uncommon in urban settings, housing cooperatives and condominiums, as legal forms, can be considered to fall within the range of intentional communities as they alter the way in which living arrangements are controlled (away from individual ownership). Rohan (1966) makes an important contribution to understanding the nature of problems in settings such as these (housing cooperatives and condominiums in America) by focussing on the application of ‘house rules’ by their respective boards. Among other things he discusses the difficulties boards face in enforcing residential restrictions and

¹⁴ See Bateson, 1936, from whom Andelson draws the terms.

combating disruptive individuals. Here the course of action among cooperative boards is usually to turn to the courts for an injunction to remove troublesome lessees. In his overall analysis he shows how peculiar the dynamics are in the way in which the laws governing these forms of ownership are formulated. Rohan shows that the social organisation of American condominiums and housing cooperatives, most of which were apparently located in New York at the time of writing, are in direct relationship with the law.

Bengtsson (2001) also deals with legal forms of collective ownership such as traditional rental estates, tenant management cooperatives, collective housing units, ecological villages and common facility associations. His question turns on the mechanisms responsible for the maintenance of 'success' among such formations. According to him others have suggested that such formations have difficulties in creating common activities among members when there are no prior traditions of collective actions; but he finds that this is not the issue. The critical phase in the life of a housing formation is the point when social norms and practices become consolidated by members. Unless such consolidation takes place the goal of collective action remains vulnerable.

Other studies deal with settlements under the umbrella term of intentional communities such as communes, religiously inspired communities, ecological villages, survivalist retreats, kibbutzim and housing cooperatives. For the most part the empirical studies of settlements such as these have been done in the United States and Israel, with a few from other Western countries. Schwartz (1957) tried to address Lenin's assertion that collectivism necessarily produces a greater degree of democracy by looking at kibbutzim in Israel, and at the time concluded that not enough research is available from other social scientists to answer the question. Fogarty (1975) traces the history of American communes from 1965 to 1914. Siegler and Levy (1986) in turn trace the history of housing cooperatives in the New York area in particular, while Sazama (2000) looks at the history of affordable housing cooperatives in the United States in general. Hansmann (1991) looks at the factors that contributed to the rise of condominiums (a form of ownership that is both individual and collective) in America. Van den Berge and Peter (1988) try to answer why most utopian ventures fail, except for the Hutterites in North America and kibbutzim in Israel. Amiel, Cowell and Polovin (1995) attempt to address questions of inequality

among different kibbutzim in the late 1980s in the face of being founded on the idea of equality, whereas Talmon-Garbier (1952) tries to explain social differentiation within the moshav (a particular kind of cooperative settlement). Bowes (1980) tries to explain the role that volunteer workers play in the life of the kibbutzim. Mulder, Costanza and Erickson (2006) provide an extremely interesting data-set that shows that the quality of life in intentional communities is high and is accompanied by much lower rates of consumption than the general rate in the United States.

2.5 Gated communities literature

One of the leading scholars dealing with gated communities is Setha Low, who has written extensively about them in the United States and has done some work in South Africa. For Low (2008) a gated community is a residential development that is physically enclosed and has a secured entrance. Entrance to these spaces is operated by a guard, key or electronic access card. Professional security personnel or a neighbourhood watch are often present. Restriction is limited not only to people's homes but also to internal public spaces such as roads, parks, facilities and other open spaces. She argues that although gated communities are similar to other exclusive suburban developments, condominiums, cooperatives and doorman apartment buildings they are different too. The built environment is such that the walls and gates are physically visible, as they have social, psychological and physical effects. In addition a homeowner's association is ultimately established that governs the affairs of the community.

According to Low (2008), whose work is largely based on the work of Davis (1990), the rise of gated communities was a response to a transformation in the political economy of late 20th century urban America. This started with the change in labour practices and deindustrialisation in the 1970s and accelerated during the 'Reaganomics' of the 1980s. These changes weakened existing social relations and contributed to the breakdown of traditional ways of maintaining social order. Gated communities became a viable and socially acceptable option to take over social control mechanisms, as schools and the popo¹⁵ were no longer seen as being effective.

¹⁵ Slang: Police.

In her application of this theory and historical analysis about the processes that gave rise to gated communities, she looks at the Greater Metropolitan Los Angeles Region (Low 2008). Of all the areas in the USA, the west has seen a particular rise in gated communities with as much as 11% of households being located in them by 2001. Low argues that the shift from traditional housing to gated communities started when the California municipal government became cash strapped and allowed private corporations to build new housing and provide the infrastructure. In combination with this, riots in Southern California (South-Central Los Angeles) in the early 1990s caused fear and white flight to these new housing forms. Finally, this new spatial pattern of socioeconomic differentiation was reinforced by extreme inequalities in the Los Angeles region. The new spatial pattern was bolstered by the ‘Lakewood Plan’ (in 1954), a Southern Californian state law that eventually morphed into a system where the management of gated communities came to control the money generated through the municipal taxes imposed on their residents – effectively privatising what would otherwise fall within the public domain and using money which would otherwise have been spent on other needs¹⁶.

While the creation of these gated communities resulted in spaces that were exclusionary and in varying degrees controlled by homeowners’ associations they also came to act as places where normativity could be forced upon residents inside. By doing ethnographic studies of gated communities in New York City and in Texas Low (2009) argues that the values produced, reproduced and defended in them lead to the normalisation of ‘standards’ which are white, middle class and male in orientation. This orientation is often presented in the form of ‘niceness’, but there are other silent ways in which ‘whiteness’ is inscribed as well.

In South Africa Landman (2002a) argues that the rise of gated communities has to do with the political transition to democracy and the legacy of segregation. She argues that high levels of crime and the fear of crime have moved many citizens to respond by creating gated communities. This is particularly true in cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town. High numbers of them can be found in some smaller coastal towns such as Knysna and Pletenberg Bay. Gated communities in South Africa take two forms: enclosed neighbourhoods, meaning the

¹⁶ This is an extreme simplification.

closing off of existing neighbourhoods; and security villages, meaning private developments. Both these forms of gated communities have been accompanied by the rise of homeowner's associations which take the form of Section 21 companies – they are responsible for managing the space inside the enclosures and often contract these responsibilities out to private security firms. Although rules and controls are applied slightly differently in enclosed neighbourhoods and new developments, Landman argues that this forms an important part of their life and thus that gated communities are not only about a fear of crime, but also about power. The rise of gated communities in South Africa is connected to broader changes in the way urban spaces are designed, redesigned and managed. While these gated communities alleviate some responsibilities of local government to provide services, this comes at a cost. They give rise to forms of social and economic exclusion which could, at a later point, challenge the very nature of democracy in South Africa, as is evident in the case of gated communities in Brazil (Landman 2002b).

Landman (2004) follows this by arguing that although 'gated' reflects many issues pertaining to the gated communities, there are important differences that require particular attention. At the time of writing, and due to the socioeconomic and spatial challenges, local councils had not taken a clear stance on how to deal with gated communities; at a national level there was an absence of clarity too. The reason there was no clear stance is partly to do with differing points of views within councils on how to respond to gated communities in municipal areas. Councils had not grappled with the fact that enclosed neighbourhoods and security villages are vastly different in nature and require different approaches, and at the time of writing, councils generally treated all gated communities as security villages – but it is enclosed neighbourhoods that pose the biggest problem for urban spatial planning.

Durington (2006; 2009) uses the information generated by Landman and Low to do an ethnographic study of a security village in the north of Durban. His question turns on the 'cultural reasoning' and rationalisations individuals use to justify their living there. By doing this he shows that crime is one of the principle axes upon which the social fabric of the village is built. The perception thereof, however, plays a bigger role than actual experiences of it. Residents inside the community consider it 'safe' and that the outside world is 'unsafe'. This fear

forms a central part of economic life of the community as a number of private companies thrive on providing services and devices for crime. The property in the development is marketed as safe and away from the rest of South Africa where crime is depicted as rampant.

Chapter 3: The Peopling of Kleinfontein

3.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters I have outlined what my project in Kleinfontein was about and I highlighted the literature relevant to my study. In this chapter I will provide some of the historical details I discovered during my research to illustrate how the settlement¹⁷ has developed since it was founded in 1992. To do this I have divided the history of Kleinfontein into four phases for the purpose of explanation. For each phase I will describe the spatial developments that have taken place inside the boundaries of the settlement and the characteristics of the people who came to inhabit the various spaces set aside for occupation. The purpose of this is to illustrate the heterogeneous nature of the people living in Kleinfontein.

Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 illustrate the phases into which I have subdivided the history of Kleinfontein in terms of the people who took up residence in the settlement, and the houses that were built over time. Also included is a sketch map (**Figure 3.3**) of the basic layout of Kleinfontein as I found it in 2011. Some explanation is included. After this I will discuss each of the phases through the rest of this chapter and I will make references to **Figure 3.3** so that the reader is able to orientate my description. When I complete the discussion of the four phases I will discuss the situation I found while doing my field research.

¹⁷ Throughout this chapter and other chapters in this dissertation I refer to Kleinfontein as a settlement. In this context 'settlement' refers to a residential development with accompanying infrastructure that has taken place on an undivided property.

3.2 Demographic graphs and physical layout of Kleinfontein

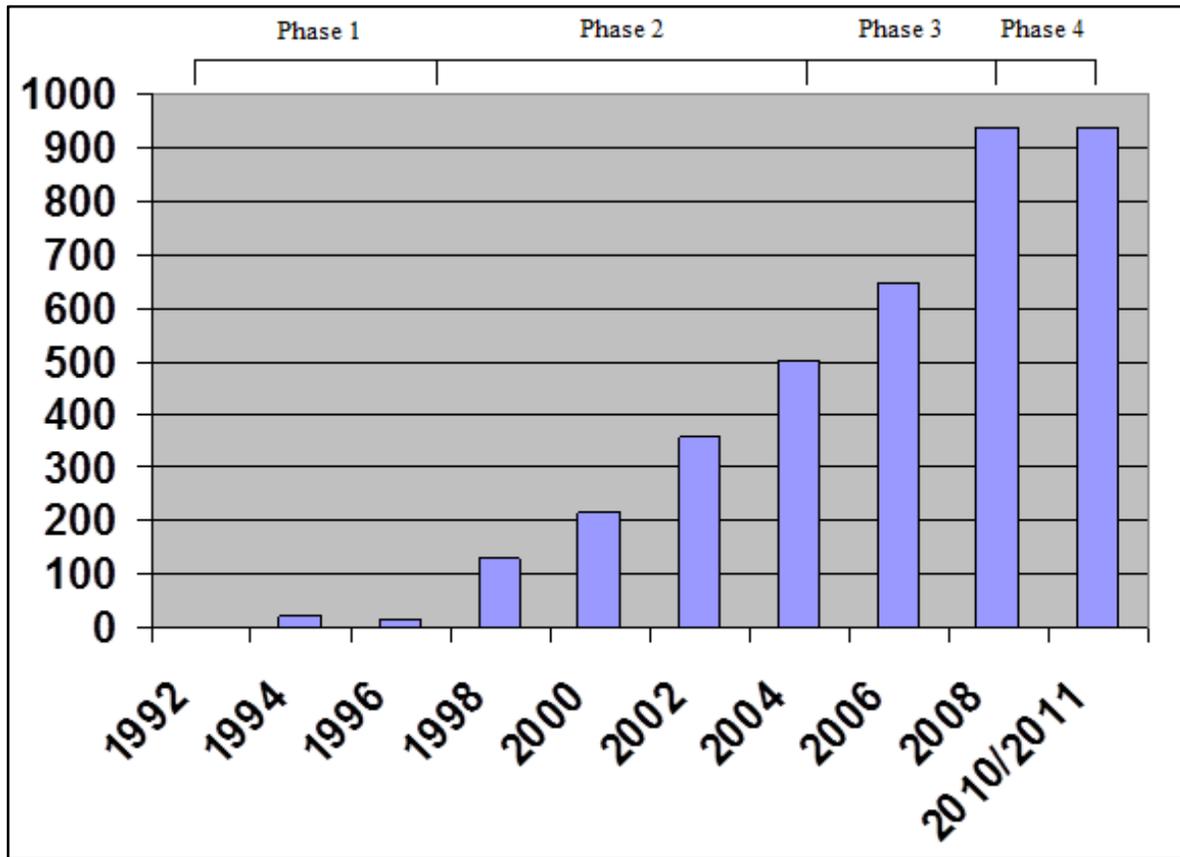


Figure 3.1: Growth in number of residents

As can be seen in **Figure 3.1** and **Figure 3.2**, I have subdivided the four phases as follows: Phase 1 starts in 1992 and comes to an end in 1996; Phase 2 starts in 1996, and comes to an end in 2004; Phase 3 starts in 2004 and ends in 2008; and the Phase 4, starts in 2008 and runs until 2010/2011, the time I did my field research. The reason for creating a column labelled 2010/2011 is because this is the period when I did my field research. The data are drawn from a small booklet about Kleinfontein, compiled by one of the residents, EJM Baumbach (2010), however, the data he provides is only up until the year 2008 and as such the last column is my own addition, based on information given to me by the residents. As this chapter unfolds it will become clearer why 2008 and 2010/2011 are more or less the same, and why Baumbach's information stops in 2008.

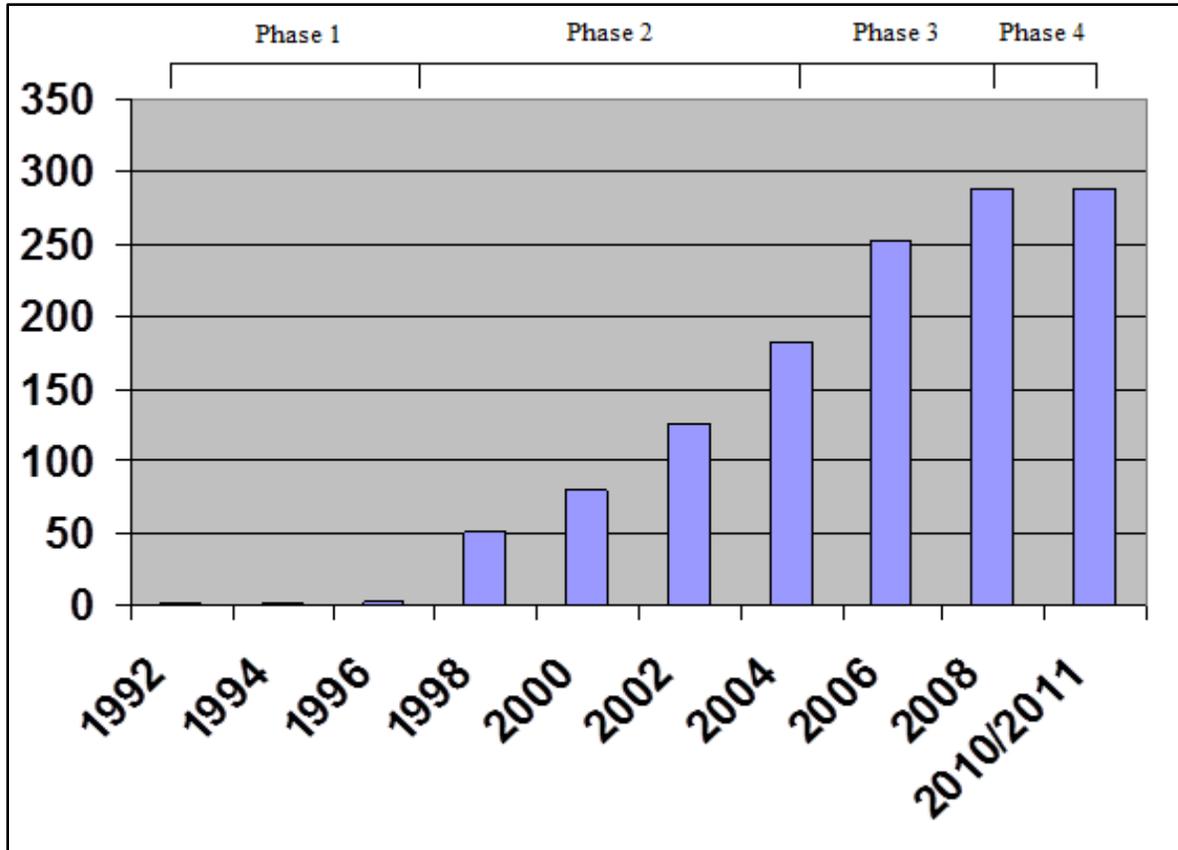


Figure 3.2: Growth in housing

Figure 3.3 gives the basic layout of Kleinfontein. It is situated a short distance east of Pretoria and is located on the N4 highway, the main corridor between Mozambique and Pretoria. As such it is well-maintained by the national government. The R515 in both directions (north and south) is controlled by toll gates which are meant to contribute to the money that maintains the N4. A normal light vehicle paid ZAR10 to get off or onto the N4 in 2011. The R515 is maintained by the local municipality and they were also recently convinced to tar Wagenweg (Wagon Way) and maintain it. The municipality under which Kleinfontein used to fall was the Kungwini Local Municipality in the Metsweding District, but during my field research in 2011 both Kungwini and the Metsweding District were absorbed by the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, to form the largest municipality in South Africa. Some distance to the south of Kleinfontein, about 25 kilometres, is Bapsfontein. Located directly next to Kleinfontein's entrance is the Galagos Country Estate, a wedding and conference venue.

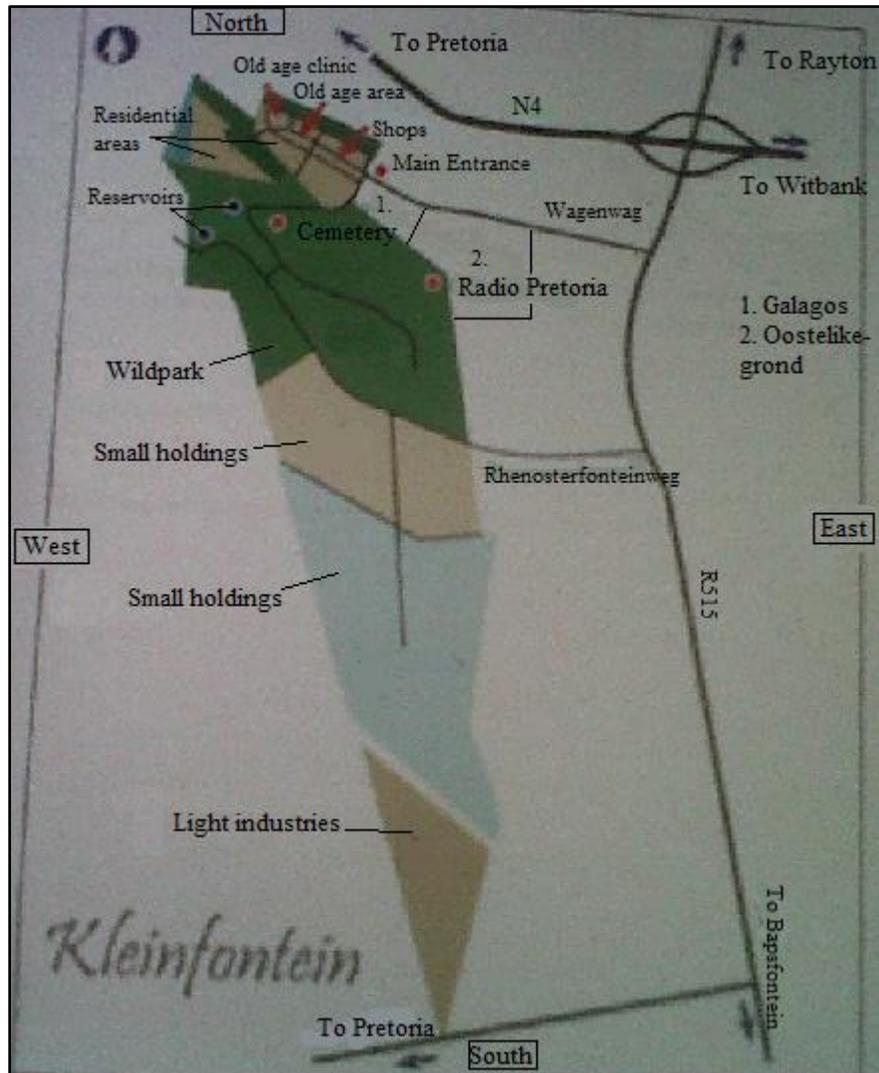


Figure 3.3: Basic layout of Kleinfontein¹⁸

3.3 Phase 1: The founding of Kleinfontein and its roots

The property on which Kleinfontein is situated was bought in the early part of 1992 by Jan Groenewald, Niel de Beer and Hennie van der Walt, all three members of the *Boere*

¹⁸ Baumbach Map (Adapted).

*Vryheidsbeweging*¹⁹ (BVB), from the Reyneke family. The Reynekes had set up a closed corporation as owner of the property and the three BVB members took over this entity. But they soon turned the closed corporation into a company. The BVB was set up in the late 1980s and concerned itself with finding a solution to what they saw as an inevitable end to white rule in South Africa. They were primarily based in the Pretoria-area. Like the *Vereniging van Oranjerwerkers*²⁰ which was responsible for founding Orania in the Northern Cape, the BVB argued that an Afrikaner *volkstaat* should be created. The purpose of this was to ensure the self-determination of Afrikaners, allowing them to make decisions autonomously. Whites who were sympathetic to this cause were also welcome as long as they were willing to assimilate the values of the newly created *volkstaat*. Whereas the *Vereniging van Oranjerwerkers* chose to have their *volkstaat* located in the low-populated Northern Cape, the BVB argued that a *volkstaat* should be created in an area where most Afrikaners were already living – in the interior of the country around the capital city. As such they chose to start the Kleinfontein settlement as the starting point of their imagined future *volkstaat*. Kleinfontein is located in Pretoria’s eastern hinterland in an area considered to be conservative. It is about 35 kilometres from the city’s central business district.

The significance of Kleinfontein was realised well before 1992 when it was founded. A number of members of the BVB had been involved in organising the 150th Anniversary of the Great Trek and some of the celebrations took place on the Kleinfontein property. This happened in 1988 and required the organisers to provide basic infrastructure such as sanitation and water for around 60 000 people who came either to camp, or simply to join the final day’s celebration. One of the founders related the following: ‘This is when we realised the potential that lay in Kleinfontein. It wasn’t just that people were rallying around a common cause, but the way in which we all worked together was a sign of what we are able to do. We provided the infrastructure necessary to everyone who came, literally out of nothing’.

This was not the only reason the BVB chose Kleinfontein. The property also had symbolic value. Located on the property is a cemetery containing the graves of fallen British soldiers from the

¹⁹ Translation: Boer (Farmer) Freedom Movement.

²⁰ Translation: Association of Orange Workers.

Second Anglo-Boer War (1899 to 1902), also known as the *Tweede-Vryheidsoorlog*²¹. These soldiers fought in the Battle of Diamond Hill, or *Die Slag van Donkerhoek*, as it is known in Afrikaans. During this battle Boers managed to slow down the progress of the British while they were trying to capture Paul Kruger as he fled from Pretoria. Kruger managed to escape as a result of this (Baumbach 2010). Later on, the property was one of the sites where the Maritz Rebellion was planned, in 1914, against the government of the Union of South Africa. Many who participated in this rebellion had fought in the Second Anglo-Boer War against the British (Baumbach 2010). While South Africa's invasion of German South West Africa on behalf of Britain during the First World War sparked the rebellion, part of the reason for their unhappiness was related to the fact that Britain had annexed both the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek and the Orange Free State into the Union of South Africa. The BVB symbolically identified with those who had been involved, in both instances, against forces which were insurmountable (the Boers lost the war and the rebellion failed and the government executed some of the leaders). A church minister in his mid-70s related to me that 'we are the descendants of the Boers. We are tied to this area historically and in a spiritual sense, not just a physical sense; we are continuing the very same struggle that started with them. There are things in our history that are wrong. The Boer Republics were ours and they were taken from us by unjust means. We have a rightful claim to them and most Afrikaners until today still reside in their borders'. Kleinfontein's founders have echoed his conviction in this sense.

As no permanent infrastructure existed on Kleinfontein, apart from that which served the original house on the property, people could not immediately move there. It was only Jan Groenewald, his wife Irene and their children who moved there from Pretoria in 1994, the year in which the first democratic elections were held in South Africa. They moved into the original house, known as the *Kliphuis* (literally the 'stone house'). They had put their house in Pretoria on the market and Irene sold her successful real estate agency to help ensure that sufficient finances were available to keep Kleinfontein afloat. They had to help pay off a loan of about ZAR2 000 000 that was made with Volkskas, later to become a part of ABSA (Amalgamated Banks of South

²¹ Translation: Second Freedom War.

Africa), which was used to purchase the property. They also needed to finance the building of their own house in Kleinfontein during this period.

Jan Groenewald had long been involved in what has come to be termed the ‘right’ or the ‘far right’ in political terms in South Africa. These labels refer to white political groupings which had splintered from the National Party (NP) after the late 1960s, when the more conservative members of that party became concerned that it was no longer on track to retain the privilege for whites in South Africa it had promised when it came to power. During the 1970s and 1980s these groups started to argue that if there was ever a transition to majority rule, whites had to have a special status in South Africa. Groenewald was part of the first group, the *Herstigte Nasionale Party*²² (HNP), which broke away from the NP in 1969, subsequently joining the *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB) when it too broke away from the NP in 1973. Groenewald ascended to the position of deputy chairman of the AWB under Eugene Terre’Blanche, but when Terre’Blanche had an affair with journalist Jani Allan an internal schism developed among members of the AWB. Groenewald, along with others, broke away from the AWB and formed the BVB in 1989. This schism was likely due to other internal problems experienced in the AWB at the time when some members became increasingly uncomfortable with Terre’Blanche’s militancy and view that violence was the answer to solving white South Africa’s problems. Groenewald also seems to have distanced himself from the HNP’s view that the whole of South Africa belongs to whites.

The period in which BVB was formed was the time in which many among the ‘far right’ started to realise that claiming the whole of South Africa as the preserve of white people was untenable, and that they would have to make concessions to the black majority if they wanted to maintain some form of white privilege. The idea of a much smaller *volkstaat* gained currency among the ‘far right’. As has been suggested, the BVB wanted this *volkstaat* to be located in the interior of the country, inside the borders of the old Boer Republics, which they had ostensibly lost unfairly. Although there are a few models of this imagined *volkstaat*, **Figure 3.4** more or less represents it:

²² Translation: Reconstituted National Party.

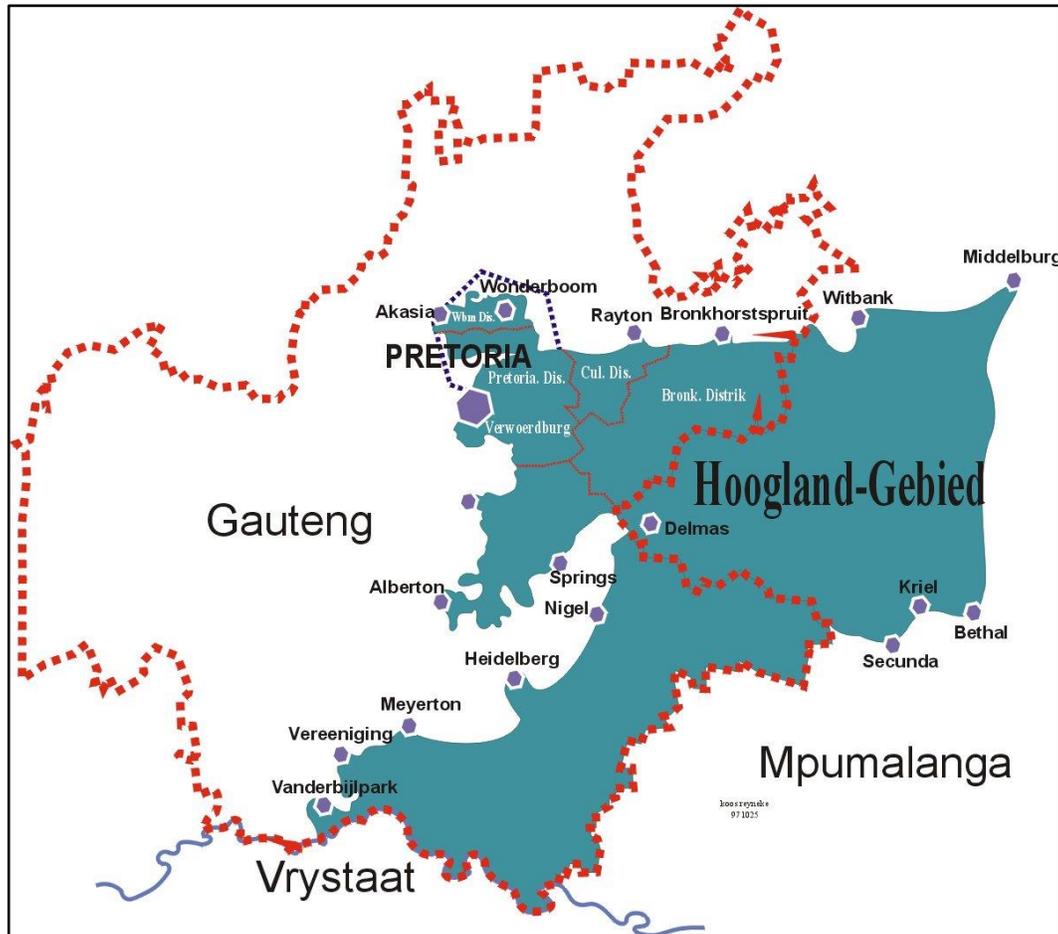


Figure 3.4: One of the proposed areas for an Afrikaner *volkstaat*^{23/24}

It is from this kind of background that the idea of Kleinfontein, located just below Rayton in **Figure 3.4** stemmed. To gain momentum Kleinfontein needed to be based on an established ideological vision and to have people who believed deeply in it, people like Jan Groenewald. He believed that the only way to preserve privileges for white people, and specifically Afrikaners, was to take this route, and he was willing to sacrifice his own material well-being to ensure that a basis was created in Kleinfontein. Without people actually living there it was unlikely that other people would themselves be willing to take risks in order to bring Kleinfontein to life. But the

²³ Picture retrieved from: <http://www.boer.co.za/cyber/dorpe/hoogland/Hoogland.jpg> (last accessed on 10 October 2010)

²⁴ It's important to note that this is not the only model of a *volkstaat* that has been proposed and that initially the BVB proposed an area that extended all the way to down to the southern Cape but they later realized that the claim was far too large, and they significantly revised it.

settlement was slow to take off and did not initially attract many new people. This can be seen in **Figure 3.1** and **Figure 3.2** which highlight the number of residents and the number of houses built during Phase 1 of Kleinfontein.

Over weekends people like Niel de Beer came to help Irene Groenewald draw up the boundaries of the units that were going to be sold to those willing to invest in the dream of a new beginning for Afrikaners.

3.4 Phase 2: The establishment of Kleinfontein as a settlement

By 1996 the business model of Kleinfontein was changed and the founders managed to organise things well enough to start selling units at a modest rate. These units were exceptionally affordable, at about ZAR20 000 each, when compared to any other suburban developments in Pretoria for instance. Initially two types of units were on offer - standard units of 740 square meters, in the residential area (see **Figure 3.3**) near the main entrance, and smallholdings - units of 1 hectare each - in the south. While the settlement was aimed at all Afrikaners, one of the founders related to me that ‘initially we hoped the low prices would attract large numbers of white workers, particularly from the west of Pretoria. According to our calculations Kleinfontein could carry around 6000 people and so we wanted to have that number of people living here, of whom the working class would form the bulk’.

They went further than this. During this initial period (after 1996) they gave people the option of not paying all the money for the units upfront, but letting them pay it off, with interest, over time. This was a further measure to entice people from the white working class to move to Kleinfontein as they may not have had the capital available to pay R20 000 upfront. It was important for the founders to attract white workers because they decided that Kleinfontein would follow a policy of *volkseie arbeid*. This would allow the better-off Afrikaners to establish light industries in the settlement, and to have white labour available to work in these industries. This would make the settlement economically viable and open up the possibility of creating further economic opportunities. *Volkseie arbeid* would apply to all forms for labour, from building houses to working in people’s gardens. Black labour would only be used when the labour required was so specialised that it was not available among the white workers. According to Niel

de Beer, who was largely responsible for giving substance to this policy, *volkseie arbeid* was the only way in which Afrikaners would ever become completely free. He said that

it was a mistake to use *volksvreemde arbeid*²⁵. We lost true independence almost at the time when Jan van Riebeeck landed in the Cape. By using blacks as labour we crippled ourselves and made ourselves dependent. *Volkseie arbeid* is the only way in which we will ever be truly independent. Political independence isn't enough. If Afrikaners want to be independent they have to change their attitudes towards labour and in particular towards white labourers. They have to choose to hire white labour over black labour even if black labour is cheaper.

The move to start building houses in Kleinfontein was initiated by the Groenewald family in this period when the *Kliphuis* in which they had been living was damaged by a devastating veld fire (Baumbach, 2010). They built their house along the main road, close to the main entrance of Kleinfontein and the area around their house became the residential area of the settlement (alternatively referred to as the main settlement). This move was followed by other people who started to build houses in the main settlement, as can be seen in **Figure 3.2**.

The people that the founders mostly managed to attract during the initial period of this phase of Kleinfontein were relatively old - either retired or approaching the age of retirement. They were in their 50s, 60s and early 70s. These people already owned houses and often had paid off their mortgages on them. They were mainly drawn from Pretoria, but some were also drawn from Johannesburg, and smaller towns in the old Transvaal and farms. While some of these people were quite well-off there was a significant portion of them who were drawn from the lower middle-class who resided in the north and west of Pretoria, as well as the west of Johannesburg. Most of the people who were drawn to the settlement in this phase of its development were attracted by the prospect of Kleinfontein's peaceful quasi-rural setting. They felt that the houses they were living in were too large and that they would have to scale down for retirement. And in the case of those who were drawn from the lower middle-class, many were confronted with their suburbs slowly becoming racially integrated as black people started moving into them. This is something they did not like, and as such Kleinfontein's supposed homogeneity appealed to them. It offered them affordable access to what was essentially a security estate with only white people

²⁵ Translation: alien labour.

in it. In many ways, for this category of people, Kleinfontein was the ideal place to retire. Not only did it offer an affordable exclusive neighbourhood but it was also located close enough to Pretoria for them to be able to take advantage of the amenities located there, such as shopping malls and private hospitals.

One of the first families to live in the residential area recalled this period well when I visited them for tea and biscuits one morning. Angus Vermaak and his wife Gay²⁶ recounted how Kleinfontein started to develop from nothing into something with their help. They started building their house in 1996 and they had moved in by 1997. They were one of the first five families living in the main settlement on a standard unit and had used the only builder who was there at the time, De Wet Cilliers. Cilliers would later become Jan Groenewald's son in law. He was responsible for building nearly all the houses found in Kleinfontein and reportedly had around 13 teams of white labourers working under him, something which nobody else had managed to do effectively given that the policy of using *volkseie arbeid* was in place since the start. When they moved in Angus and Gay had both just retired, Angus was about 65 and Gay was 60. They had sold their farm (where they farmed tobacco, cotton and grain among other things) just outside a small town in present-day Limpopo.

Although they hadn't been deeply involved in the 'far right' of South Africa, they were sympathetic to the basis upon which Kleinfontein was founded and wanted to do their part to make it work. They felt an obligation towards 'the *volk*'. Angus was largely responsible for scraping all the dirt roads that exist in the settlement today, using his own tractors that he had brought from his farm. He eventually donated these tractors to Kleinfontein when he became too old to be able to help with the labour necessary to build the infrastructure. At times, using some of the money that he received from the sale of his farm, he made informal loans to Kleinfontein when necessary, without asking any interest, as he recalls that times were initially quite tough for the settlement. Gay also made a contribution by gathering books and eventually having a building erected to house the library in Kleinfontein. They recall that the spirit of this time in

²⁶ Pseudonyms.

Kleinfontein was one of great *gemeenskaplikheid* (communality) where everyone did their part to make it work and when they were a closely-knit community of friends.

Angus and Gay readily admitted that they could have moved somewhere else to retire where the infrastructure would have been better, like an old age home in Pretoria, but they were attracted to Kleinfontein's relative isolation and affordability. The cost of living in Kleinfontein was far below that of an old age home in Pretoria and the fact that it was isolated and fenced made it quite safe. It was not only this but also the rural feel to the settlement that they enjoyed as it resembled what they had been used to on the farm from which they had come.

While some of the people who moved into Kleinfontein in the early years had owned farms like Angus and Gay, this was the case for only a small minority. The settlement's records suggest that many of those that bought units in this period were from the urban lower middle-class. While they certainly owned homes already they were not in a financial position where they could build new houses in Kleinfontein because they did not have the capital available. This meant that many of them had to sell their houses first in order to have houses built in the settlement. As such they often chose to pay for the units on which they built their houses in installments, until such a time that they had the necessary capital to have their new houses built. Many of them were interested in the other security estates around Kleinfontein, but the settlement was the only one that was affordable to them. The affordability that Angus and Gay mentioned played a primary role in many people's choice to move to the settlement during this phase. They had increasingly faced new levels of crime in the suburbs where they stayed before. They rationalised this by arguing that their neighbourhoods were becoming racially integrated, and that the new black arrivals brought crime with them. They did not consider that the reason for the increase in crime levels could also have been due to the state redirecting resources to the country as a whole instead of simply using them to maintain safety in traditionally white neighbourhoods. Kleinfontein was thus the ideal place to go to retire. Given their limited financial ability, it meant an affordable exclusive settlement where there was security. But for them to live in Kleinfontein they had to sell the houses in the neighbourhoods where they had been living. It is only by doing this that they would be able to afford to have a house built in Kleinfontein, as Angus and Gay did. This

was the only way for them to retire with the same kind of privilege that apartheid had afforded them up until 1994.

In 1997, the year in which the Vermaak family moved into their completed house, the Malan family bought a standard unit located close to them in the residential area. This is the same area in which Groenewald family had built their house. Unlike the Vermaaks, however, the Malans waited a few years before building their house. Hendrik and Sarie Malan²⁷ like many others heard about Kleinfontein on Radio Pretoria²⁸. They only moved to Kleinfontein in 2000, once they had built a house there. Unlike the founders of Kleinfontein they did not move there for overtly ideological reasons. They were sceptical that a *volkstaat* could ever be realised because it was not practical to have white people from all over South Africa move there, but they were nonetheless, like the Vermaaks, sympathetic towards the founders. Hendrik, at the age of 72, had retired from his job as a technician and along with his wife was looking for a quiet retreat away from the north of Pretoria where they had lived; they said that the beauty of Kleinfontein attracted them a lot. Their house was small and modest, costing them approximately R320 000 to build. They used the same builder most other people had been using at the time, De Wet Cilliers. Like Angus and Gay they were willing to do their part to make Kleinfontein work. Hendrik offered his technical skills to help out and Marie participated in various projects that were more ‘female orientated’.

While the Malan family’s reason for moving to Kleinfontein during this phase falls into the pattern of people choosing to move there for reasons of affordability and peace, their story brings out one more characteristic of people who bought units during the initial period. While they bought the unit right after 1996, it was not until 2000 that they had their house built. They waited a few years to make sure it was worth investing their money in Kleinfontein, to make sure that an actual settlement would be founded so that they would not lose their money by building prematurely. This was the case for other people as well, with the buying of units, at very affordable prices, outstripping the pace at which houses were being built there. Purchasers had good reason to be cautious at first. The records show quite clearly that many people who bought

²⁷ Pseudonyms.

²⁸ Radio Pretoria eventually built a transmission station in Kleinfontein.

units in this period did not pay all the monies that they owed and were eventually removed from the register. Others made arrangements to have the purchase of their units nullified when they felt they could not risk investing their money in Kleinfontein. It was only much later when the gap between the purchase of units and building of houses narrowed.

When it became clear to the founders of Kleinfontein that the category of people they managed to attract to the settlement initially were mainly retired or approaching retirement they introduced a new range of units to potential buyers in 2000. These units represented a combination of individual units that were substantially smaller than the ones already available and also a set of smaller units connected to an old age clinic which provided services to them. These two unit types together represented a number similar to the standard units that were made available to people.

Ansie van der Merwe,²⁹ aged 69 at the time, was one person who moved into one of these units aimed specifically for retirees. After selling her house and using all her savings she had a house built for about R550 000 in Kleinfontein and moved there with her husband. Kleinfontein was not her first choice for retirement but her husband really wanted to move there and so she agreed to do so. While the situation was not ideal she liked the fact that she knew who her neighbours were and could rely on them when need be. Where they had lived previously, in the west of Johannesburg, this was not case. Unfortunately her husband passed away shortly after they moved in. As she had invested all her money in the house and did not expect that she'd be able to recoup the cost of having the house built there she could do nothing other than stay on, and so she made the best of it. She had worked as an administrative clerk for a bank and received a small pension. With the help of a few small investments she managed to look after herself and keep herself afloat, although she was distressed by the prospect of not being able to look after herself financially in future.

Not only was the cost of living much lower in Kleinfontein than other gated communities or old age homes, so too was the cost of unskilled labour lower than elsewhere. Located in the centre of

²⁹ Pseudonym.

Kleinfontein's residential area is a caravan park which was originally intended for campers interested in enjoying the feeling of the settlement, but after a while it was transformed into a space for poor whites to live. Unlike the home owners, however, they were not owners and for the most part lived in caravans that were made available to them by other residents as a way to help them out. These poor whites paid a nominal fee of about ZAR10 a day to live there but they had to work in Kleinfontein in order to do so. For the most part they either work as domestic servants, gardeners or builders. People like Ansie and her neighbours pay them to help them around the house. But for the most part they complain about the fact that the poor whites are unreliable, showing up for work late, being drunk or disappearing altogether. Ansie, however, found someone from outside Kleinfontein to come in weekly who has proven to be reliable and she pays her around ZAR100 for a day's work.

While the founders were happy that they managed to attract a segment of people who were willing to invest in Kleinfontein they felt that only having older people living there made their dream of a *volkstaat* unrepresentative of the full spectrum of the Afkikaner *volk*. They wanted to attract younger working professionals as well. In this light, and as a general goal to further expand Kleinfontein, they bought an additional farm of about 215 hectares to the south of Kleinfontein in 2001. They used this farm to add additional smallholding units to those that already existed and focussed on marketing them to people as lifestyle blocs. As these units were much larger, at around 1 hectare each, than those in the residential area, it was unlikely that they would be bought by people who had an eye on scaling down for retirement.

This drive to attract a different category of people bore results for the founders, although it took time to gain pace, as will be seen later. The fact that Kleinfontein had by now grown to around 100 households and 250 residents in total gave the appearance that the settlement was viable for investment. This resulted in a segment of middle class buyers purchasing smallholding units. They were working and often employed as professionals. Some of them moved to Kleinfontein with all their belongings while others kept houses elsewhere (mostly in Pretoria).

In the same year that the focus was placed on selling the new units, Johannes Albertus Botha and his wife Christina³⁰ bought a smallholding unit and built a house on it. They were younger than the owners already living in Kleinfontein. Both were just over 50 years of age - before they moved Johannes had been working as an engineer and Christina had worked in the media industry. They had lived in Orania briefly, but found it unsuitable for their needs as one of their children had been gravely ill and the facilities in Orania were inadequate, with no proper hospital in the vicinity. They did, however, keep the property they owned there. Kleinfontein was ideal for them because it offered the same kind of exclusivity as well as a good hospital located in the east of Pretoria.

Unlike most of the older residents already mentioned, Johannes and Christina were strongly ideological. They were not ambiguous about the fact that they believed ardently in the ideals on which Kleinfontein was built. They wanted to be part of the realisation of a *volkstaat*. They saw themselves as ‘Boer’ and said that their house architecturally reflected their *pionierserfenis*³¹. This influenced their choice of a smallholding unit rather than a standard unit in the residential area – they liked the peace that the large expanse of the small holding offered them. They didn’t like the way in which houses had become bunched up in the residential area or the fact that the residential area had become an ‘*oumens dorpe*’³². They did not want to be involved in the lives of their neighbours on a daily basis, as they expected they would have to be if they lived in the residential area, and they wanted a choice about whether or not to engage with them.

In addition to being younger, working and having middle class desires, Johannes and Christina embodied another characteristic that most of the younger residents who moved into Kleinfontein shared. They were explicitly ideological, and this formed the basis of their reason for moving to the settlement. They moved there to pursue the ideal of realising the creation of a *volkstaat*.

A further factor to do with the view that the smallholdings were not part of the main settlement was the fact they were to be serviced in a different way. Electricity for the main settlement was

³⁰ These are pseudonyms.

³¹ Translation: Pioneer’s heritage.

³² Translation: old people’s town.

bought in bulk from ESKOM and then redistributed internally, but the smallholding units did not share this. These units were all connected directly to ESKOM and those who built houses on them had to deal with the electricity supplier on an individual basis, resulting in different electricity prices compared to the residents in the main settlement who were paying substantially less. Moreover, the residents in the main settlement were supplied with water from the natural fountain found there, water for the residents of the smallholdings came primarily from a number of boreholes, resulting in the fact that the quality of water was not as good as that provided to the residents in the main settlement. Finally, whereas the main settlement was fenced only a small portion of the small holdings were fenced, leaving the majority of the units unfenced.

In a parallel development to the new smallholding units another kind of unit was introduced to try to attract a younger category of residents. These were units in the *Wildpark*³³. It was developed as a residential game reserve, located just south of the main settlement, inside the fenced-off area. This area was stocked with wildlife and it overlooked a picturesque valley. These units were aimed, in particular, at the very wealthy and at an additional price of only ZAR60 000 a unit, no other similar property in South Africa could match this. There were differences between these units and others however, like having to adhere to stricter building regulations and there was an expectation of greater expenditure.

Marius Redelinghuys³⁴ bought a unit in the *Wildpark* in 2001. He and his wife had a house built on the unit and moved there shortly thereafter. Like Johannes Botha, Marius was working as an engineer for a multinational company, just outside Johannesburg, at the time he moved to Kleinfontein. He was 48 years old when he moved to the settlement. At the time I interviewed him he was widely considered by the residents of Kleinfontein to be one of the wealthiest people there, if not the wealthiest. His reasons for moving to Kleinfontein were multifaceted. He had lived in one of Pretoria's wealthy eastern suburbs. He railed against the way people in these suburbs, whom he described as ninety percent Afrikaner, were willing to compromise on the language they speak when in the company of English speakers. And he complained bitterly about the way in which they were willing to forsake their cultural background to let non-Afrikaners fit

³³ Translation: Game park.

³⁴ This is a pseudonym.

into the neighbourhood where he lived. He specifically recalls that at the community patrol meetings, in which he was involved, people would often switch to speaking in English even when there was only a single non-Afrikaans speaking person there, as if non-Afrikaners shouldn't have to compromise and adapt.

He moved to Kleinfontein because he wanted to raise his children in a community where everyone spoke Afrikaans and where they could take pride in their cultural heritage and not have always to place it second to a more integrated South African identity. He readily admitted that this environment was an artificial one, but no more artificial than one found anywhere else, as all identity is socially constructed in one way or another. He tied this need for an Afrikaans-speaking community specifically to home, arguing that in the workplace it was a different matter altogether as it was a fair place for everyone to compete against each other, irrespective of racial or cultural background. He also specifically noted that he did not mind Black Economic Empowerment because, he argued, that it was just another form of the preferential treatment that exists in the workplace anyway.

Marius falls into the same new category of younger people as Johannes and Christina Botha. Like the Bothas, he wanted to live close to the city because he worked there. But he also wanted to live in the kind of settlement that Kleinfontein was - an exclusivist settlement for whites and in particular for Afrikaners. His language was extremely sophisticated but he shared the same motivation the Bothas had for moving to Kleinfontein. His understanding of Kleinfontein was that it represented a private sphere detached from the broader South Africa, where, along with the other residents, they could set the rules for their own lives. This kind of configuration was part of the larger South Africa for him and he saw a necessary relationship between Kleinfontein and the larger South Africa, which for him was the public sphere.

Although people from the younger category had started moving in around this time, the rate at which they did so was still slower than the rate at which older residents were arriving. Up until the early 2000s older residents made up about 80% of the residents and the younger residents only about 20%. This situation was to become inverted around 2004, as will be discussed, when a major population boom started to take place.

3.5 Phase 3: Rapid growth

Starting around 2004, Kleinfontein started to experience what can be described as a rapid growth in population. As can be seen in **Figure 3.1** the number of residents jumped from 503 to 648 between 2004 and 2006, and then it jumped from 648 to 936 between 2006 and 2008. To understand this boom in the population of Kleinfontein, the number of houses built needs to be taken into consideration. As can be seen in **Figure 3.2**, between 2002 and 2004 the signs of possible change started to appear. In this period a total of 57 new houses were built. This explains the jump in the total number of residents between 2004 and 2006, 145 residents. The number of new houses built between 2004 and 2006 is the explanation for the immense jump in the number of residents between the years 2006 and 2008. Between 2004 and 2006 a total of 69 new houses were built. This explains the 288 new residents who moved in between 2006 and 2008.

The point of discussing these numbers is to illustrate that a change had started taking place in the period between 2004 and 2008. An explosion in population like this would necessarily have an impact on the kind of social dynamics between the residents living there, both the ones who were already residing there and the new ones who were moving in. The impact on social dynamics will be explained in greater depth in Chapter 5.

When I interviewed the sole estate agent in Kleinfontein, she argued that the reason this boom had taken place in this period was that those in control of the settlement had started to hit their stride. By establishing a place which resembled a viable settlement they created an impression among potential buyers that it was safe to invest their money in Kleinfontein. The marketing strategy was a combination of word-of-mouth advertisement as well as broadcasting the availability of units on Radio Pretoria, a radio station which catered for conservative Afrikaners in Pretoria and its surrounding areas. This garnered greater interest from people outside Kleinfontein, and this interest was supported by the building contractor inside the settlement who was able to cope with the new demand.

The records of Kleinfontein show that between the 2004 and 2008 there was a growth in the number of units being bought in the *Wildpark* and the smallholding area by people of working age. The records also show that many of these new would-be residents of Kleinfontein reflected similar views to the Botha family and Marius Redelinghuis; the reason for this is that they listed ideological reasons for moving to the settlement. The overall result of this new influx was that the number of younger residents started to catch up to the number of old people living in Kleinfontein. By the end of 2008 the balance had shifted so much that the younger working residents of the settlement now made up about 40% and the older residents 60%, of the total residents.

3.6 Phase 4: Slow down and change of business

By 2008 Kleinfontein started running into complications. Those in control of running the settlement had to face up to the problem of the infrastructure not being able to cater for all the residents living there. This was due to the rate of increase in houses and residents outstripping the speed with which services and infrastructure could be extended to everyone. An example of this in this period is that pressure started to build on the water infrastructure, and leaving residents with an inadequate water supply. New reservoirs had to be built during this time to compensate for the new residents. This was done, but from time to time water consumption still outstripped supply. The low cost of the units in the settlement meant that there was not enough money available to build enough additional reservoirs. Other examples of problems included the degradation of the dirt roads and breaks in the supply of electricity.

More important was the need for a new centralised sewerage system, which became necessary for the main settlement because of the growing population density. The use of septic tanks began to pose a risk to the natural fountain. This was perhaps the largest financial complication with which those managing the settlement had to deal at the time, and they were not able to do so.

These problems were compounded by the fact that the international financial crisis that occurred in 2008. While the South African economy was unaffected by the crisis, for the most part, this was not true of the property market. The estate agent argued that this was the central reason for the downturn in new buyers in Kleinfontein. The change in the property market in South Africa

meant that people were less willing to invest their money in properties, and as many people had relied on selling their houses in order to fund the building of their new houses in Kleinfontein, this option was no longer open to them.

These combined problems, along with changes to certain laws affecting Kleinfontein, resulted in a situation where people more or less stopped purchasing new units in the settlement after 2008. Kleinfontein was no longer an attractive option for people. As the selling of new units was the main source of funds to invest in infrastructure, this meant that the backlog of infrastructure could no longer be dealt with, forcing those in control of Kleinfontein to increase the levies they had charged the residents in the settlement. This had to be done step by step, however, so that people could adapt to the new financial burden that they were obliged to carry. It meant that the issue of infrastructure could be resolved only over a long period of time.

This is not to say that business stopped completely, but it took place under a new guise. New people moving to Kleinfontein now did so primarily by buying existing houses, likely at reduced prices because of the various issues the settlement posed. Given that the exchange of a unit had not generated income to the settlement in the past, those managing it now imposed administrative costs on the exchange of units when people bought into Kleinfontein. However this hardly compensated for the money that used to be generated by the selling of vacant units.

As clear statistics about the number of houses and the number of residents do not exist after the 2008, I have used verbal accounts from various people as an indicator of the situation. Without exception, all of them described the fact that Kleinfontein did not grow in terms of housing or residents after 2008.

3.7 The situation during my field research

What remains to be described is the situation that I encountered while doing my fieldwork in 2011. An ethnographic account of the result of this peopling of the settlement will be presented in Chapter 5, but in this remaining section of this chapter I will illustrate, with statistics, the kind of spatial and demographic information that I managed to draw from the records made available

to me. This is important because it points to the conclusion to what I have described in this chapter thus far.

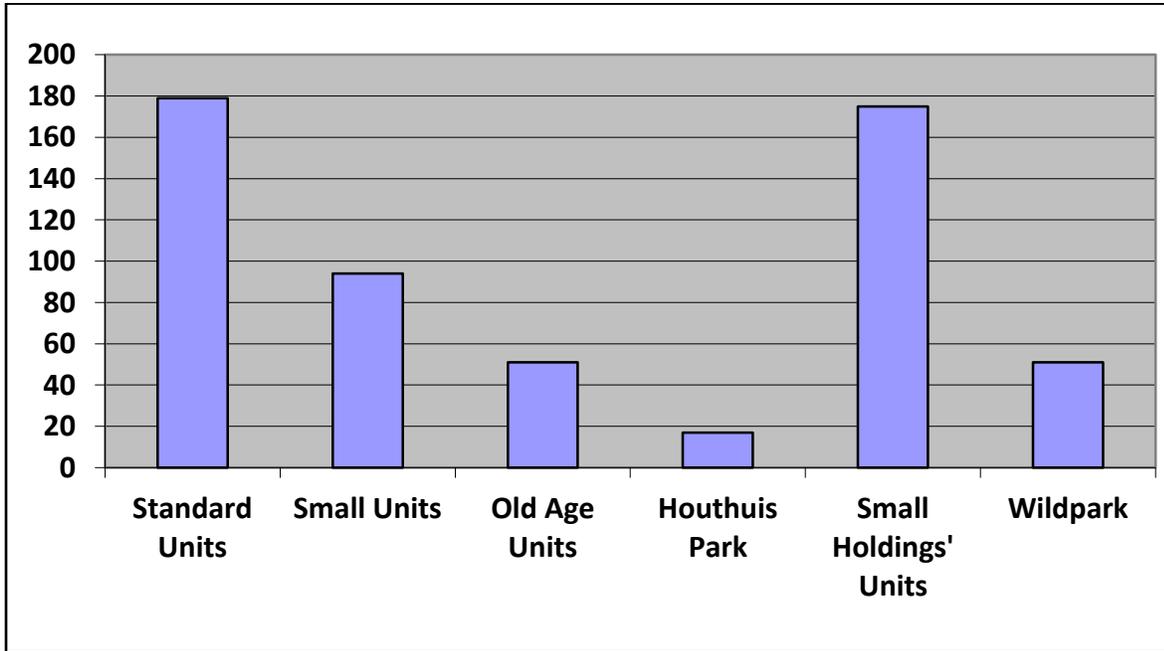


Figure 3.5: Distribution of units in Kleinfontein

Figure 3.5 reflects where all the units that are owned are situated spatially in Kleinfontein. The *Houthuis Park* (“Wood House Park”) is the only type of unit I have not discussed by name; it forms part of the residential area where the standard units are located. The only difference between them and the standard units are that the houses built on the former have to be made from wood. These numbers reveal that roughly 60% of the units are located in the residential area and the remaining 40% are either smallholding units or *Wildpark* units.

If the numbers of different kinds of owned units are added together, in **Figure 3.5**, this results in a total of 567 units. Compared to the roughly 300 houses built in Kleinfontein, this leaves about 250 units that do not have houses built on them. This can be explained by the fact that many owners held back before building houses. With the increasing problems that Kleinfontein experienced between 2008 and 2011, people were reluctant to build houses on these empty units due to the risks involved. Another reason why there is a discrepancy between the number of units owned and the number of houses built is because some people bought multiple units (up to 7 in

one case) as investments, or as a way in which to help the settlement out. These people are not likely to build multiple houses, and a discrepancy will remain unless they eventually manage to sell the units to other people.

Figure 3.6 illustrates the age dynamics that have been described thus far. The majority of the owners (59%) of units were over the age of 60 in 2011 and were, for the most part, retired. The difference between the 50 - 59 column and the 60 - 69 column is quite sharp and can only be considered as a break between those who came to retire and those who were still working. The column named 'Unknown' refers to a trust that owns a unit or indicates that information was missing from the register from which this data was drawn. The 20 - 29 and 30 - 39 columns suggest that there were very few families who were just starting up. Indeed the number of children in Kleinfontein was insignificant compared to the population as a whole.

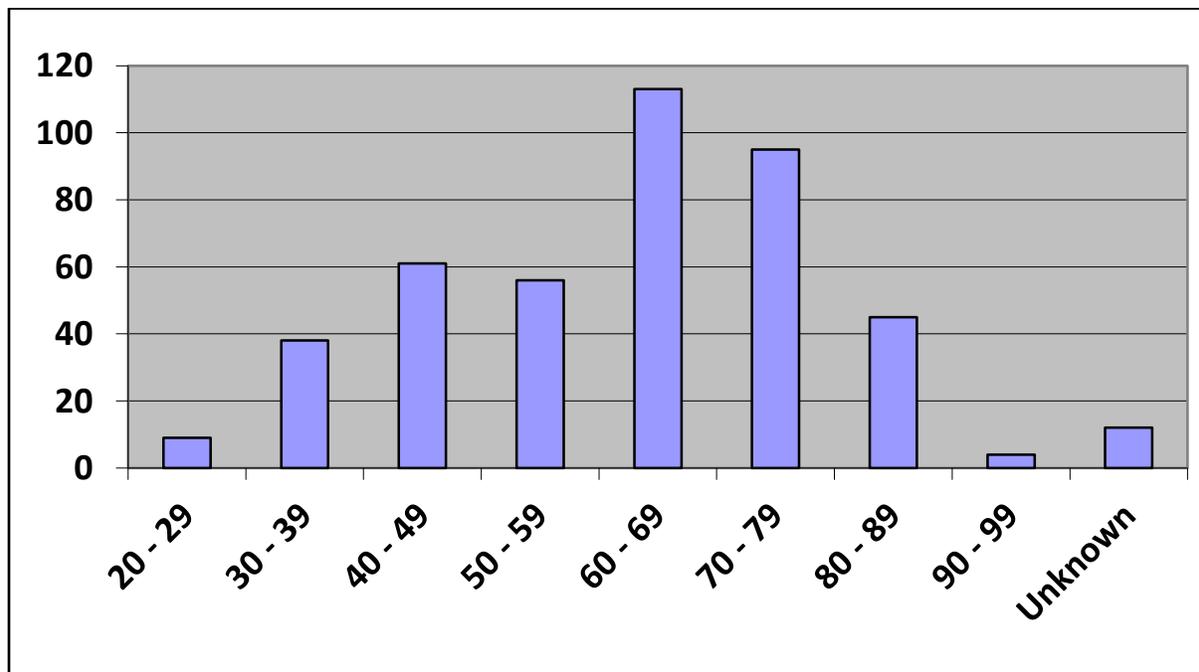


Figure 3.6: Age of owners of units

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I described the way in which Kleinfontein gradually became 'peopled'. It was founded on an ideological basis and was first occupied by one of the founders. Then, slowly over

time, a generation of older people who were retired or who were approaching retirement came to settle in Kleinfontein, a pattern which continued until the early 2000s. The early 2000s is the time when a younger group of working-age people started moving into Kleinfontein, their numbers increasing significantly between 2004 and 2008. The settlement then started to experience difficulties which rendered it near stagnant and this has made the future of the settlement and of the people living there uncertain.

This historical account of the settlement and its people is important to understand the present-day situation I encountered during my field research in 2011. The information, however, cannot be understood without the information contained in Chapter 4, which details various laws that those in control of Kleinfontein have been using to legitimise their project. In this chapter I avoided delving into the legal basis of the settlement because it is more practical to discuss it as a separate topic. It will be seen that this legal basis has had a definite impact on social relationships that exist between the residents. The interweaving of these aspects will be done in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Buying into Kleinfontein

4.1 Introduction

‘Buying into Kleinfontein’ implies that there is more to taking residence in the settlement than simply purchasing a piece of property and then building a house on it. Indeed, individual ownership of property does not exist in Kleinfontein. This is because the properties that make up Kleinfontein are owned by a single entity which is in turn collectively owned by the residents. This is what is ‘bought’ into when people choose to build houses and take up residence there. It is an idea that is bought into, something which a would-be resident has to become used to over time and make work. It is a radical departure from the individual title which the residents had before moving to Kleinfontein. Living in Kleinfontein is thus two-sided, buying into a different type of economic organization and buying into a particular kind of ideology.

In this light, this chapter deals with the system that is bought into when ‘buying into Kleinfontein’. For much of its existence the settlement of Kleinfontein has existed as a cooperative in terms of the Co-operative Act No. 91 of 1981. It did not start off under this piece of legislation, and by the end of my time in Kleinfontein it had undergone some alterations and was in the process of being reformed under a completely new legal framework. Below I will provide an organizational and legal history of Kleinfontein and I will explain how the law has been used to give administrative life to the settlement so that its residents are able to develop the necessary infrastructure.

4.2 The ideological basis of Kleinfontein

It’s important to acknowledge that the basis on which Kleinfontein was founded was primarily ideological, and not economic. The founders of the settlement had to find ways in which to make the idea behind Kleinfontein a reality. The idea here refers to Kleinfontein as a so-called ‘growth point for Afrikaner self-determination’, a starting point for a future Afrikaner *volkstaat*. Based partly on the kibbutzim in Israel/Palestine, growth points were envisioned as places to which Afrikaners would move and in which they would invest money. In this way a majority population of Afrikaners would be created where Afrikaners were previously not in the majority.

This was the same idea which informed the creation of Orania, and it was the idea behind Morgenzon which failed to realise.

Kleinfontein was selected by the *Boere Vryheidbeweging* (BVB) to be one such growth point in 1992, at the same time as the dilapidated town of Orania was bought by those involved in the *Oranjewerkers* to form a growth point there. As discussed in Chapter 3 the BVB argued that a *volkstaat* should be created in an area of South Africa where most Afrikaners, although dispersed, were already living and to which they have an historical tie. And as described in the previous chapter Kleinfontein was ideal for this project because it was located just outside Pretoria and could therefore take advantage of the amenities found in the city, unlike people in Orania who are not situated close to any major city.

In the face of being unable to negotiate with government for the creation of a *volkstaat* the founders had to find creative ways in which to put their ideas into practice. Collective ownership within existing legislation allowed them to take ownership of Kleinfontein and start developing it without the interference of government. This posed certain legal, practical and economic challenges, which will be discussed in some detail below.

The basis on which Kleinfontein was founded was ideological, and any kind of economic activity that needed to take place to sustain the settlement was secondary. To ensure that the settlement remained in possession of Afrikaners those involved in Kleinfontein needed to put in place an administrative system that would allow them to keep non-white people out while at the same time allowing like-minded white people to move in, without stepping on the toes of government.

4.3 1992 – 1996: Ownership as a company

Two tracts of property, a portion of the Donkerhoek farm and a portion of the Kleinfontein farm, owned in the form of a closed corporation called *Kleinfontein Boerderybelange BK*,³⁵ were bought from P.W.J. & J.P. Reyneke in 1992. These two properties subsequently became known

³⁵ Kleinfontein *Boerderybelange* Closed Corporation.

as Kleinfontein, along with the additional properties that have since been added. Upon purchase it was transformed, using a special clause in the Closed Corporations Act No. 69 of 1984, into a company in terms of the Companies Act No. 61 of 1973, and renamed as *Kleinfontein Boerderybelange (Edms.) Bpk*. The reason for this change of status was that a closed corporation allowed for a maximum of only 10 shareholders to be involved, and the founders of Kleinfontein anticipated that many more people would want to form part of the settlement; a private company imposed no such restrictions. By doing this and not subdividing the property upon purchase, keeping it a private entity, the new owners ensured that the state was unlikely to involve itself intimately in the company's affairs because it would likely mean having to become involved in the same way in all other companies in South Africa. This effectively meant that they could exclude people they did not want to have living in Kleinfontein in the future.

There were drawbacks to this model. Part of the ideological underpinning of a *volkstaat*, and by extension a *groeipunt*,³⁶ was that it would be a democratic space where Afrikaners would have an equal say in the decisions being made - in an ideological sense the word *volksdemokrasie*³⁷ describes this. But owning Kleinfontein's land in the form of a company meant that there were obstacles to creating a *volksdemokrasie*, because the balance of power in a company rests on the number of shares that any individual member owns. While it was possible in practice to limit the number of shares a shareholder could own to ensure an equal balance of power between members, this option presented limitations that would hinder the development of Kleinfontein. The most obvious limitation was that it would not be possible for shareholders to invest more money in the company through purchasing additional shares.

This is the background which informed the leaders' search for a new form of ownership which would allow them to maintain control of Kleinfontein, exercise various kinds of development on the two properties, and establish an administrative framework allowing the residents' involvement.

³⁶ Translation: growth point.

³⁷ Translation: people's democracy.

4.4 1996 - 2007: Ownership in terms of Co-operative Act No. 91 of 1981

After consulting legal representatives, two options stood out, transforming the company into a sectional-title scheme or into a cooperative. On the grounds that the two properties of Kleinfontein were zoned as agricultural holdings it could not be transformed into a sectional-title scheme. Sectional-title schemes are allowed only on properties zoned as urban. Therefore a cooperative form of ownership was chosen.

The principle behind cooperatives is that people willingly come together to address common problems by working together. This principle neatly fitted the needs of those interested in creating a growth point for Afrikaner self-determination, as one of the founders described it to me when speaking about this part of Kleinfontein's history. While the conventional purpose of cooperatives was, and still is, to find solutions to economic problems, the same cannot be said of Kleinfontein. The founders managed to attract a few people by 1996, but wanted to bring more together who saw the self-determination of Afrikaners as a problem they all shared. One of the founders explained this move to me:

There's already an established history of using cooperatives to meet cultural needs. The decision we made forms part of this history. Out of all the options we had available to us at the time this was the best option. Look at what the Basques did in Spain. Mondragon is hugely successful.

On 27 January 1996 they changed the status of *Kleinfontein Boerderybelange (Edms.) Bpk.* to a legal cooperative in terms of the Co-operatives Act No. 91 of 1981, renaming it *Kleinfontein Boerebelange Köoperatief Beperk (KBK)*. They did this even though the act at the time had not specifically been tailored for the kind of project they intended. Since cooperatives were first legislated in South Africa they had always been aimed at meeting the trading needs of the white agricultural sector. The Co-operative Act No. 91 of 1981 was no different; it allowed farmers to pool their resources, produce together and sell their produce on the market collectively. This was to the advantage of those in Kleinfontein because they managed to have KBK registered as a trading cooperative with the Registrar of Cooperatives. In terms of the Act, Clause 23 states that a 'trading co-operative may be formed to carry out any object'. There were thus no restrictions on the owners' ability to use the cooperative for purposes other than farming.

The Act also allowed KBK to exclude whoever it wanted, because while the section relating to membership, Section 59, specifies the scope of people who can become members of a trading cooperative, it contains no limitations on who can be excluded. This grey-area was later confirmed when the Registrar of Cooperatives endorsed the statute (alternatively known as a constitution) that the members of the newly formed KBK adopted. In its statute under Section 8 KBK specifies that any person can apply to become a member of the cooperative, but according to Section 9(2) the board of directors had the right to refuse membership without providing reasons. This effectively meant that had black, Indian or coloured people applied to become members of KBK at the time, the board could refuse them membership without needing to provide reasons for doing so, even in the face of new constitution of South Africa being adopted in 1996. The new constitution stipulated that no discrimination based on race would be allowed in the country again.

Given that ownership through the form of a company posed the problem of unequal distribution of power, the cooperative also resolved this issue because the principle of ‘one shareholder, one vote’ applied. Unlike in a company, it did not matter how many shares any individual shareholder owned, the vote of the shareholder remained equal to that of all other shareholders. Through this principle the shareholders had an equal say in who they wanted to have represent them on the board of directors of the cooperative, and where other major decisions need to be taken their votes were also equal. This effectively gave the founders and those shareholders already involved the ability to create and maintain a miniature *volksdemokrasie*, albeit in the form of a private entity.

The lack of restrictions on a trading cooperative also resolved another related issue. With the law in question allowing the directors to do as they pleased, it was possible for them to create an administrative system which allowed them to perform functions which would normally be performed by local municipalities. Having started to internally subdivide the two properties owned by the organization before 1996, the directors now assigned sets of shares to each of the internal units with each of these shares being worth ZAR1000. Initially two sets of units were made available, standard units and small holding units, both which were assigned approximately 20 shares each. When people bought a unit in Kleinfontein, they paid for the number of shares

attached to each unit, in return for which they gained the right to use the surface area of the unit as they pleased. They did not, however, take ownership of the surface area. The statute also enshrined the right of shareholders to continue using their designated units within the limits of the statute for as long as the cooperative existed, and provided that when a shareholder passed away the shares, along with the unit, would be inherited by family members or other specified people. Any outstanding debts were also inherited. In this way the directors of the newly formed cooperative tried to recreate some of the rules that apply to properties under individual title.

There were limits to what they could do, however, and there were therefore certain drawbacks to this system that had to be accepted by the directors, current shareholders and anyone else interested in becoming part of KBK in the future. The most immediate of these drawbacks was the fact that under this system individual title was not attached to internal units. This meant that the unit was not registered in the government's Deeds Office, unlike a sectional-title unit which works in a similar way. Consequently banks would not extend loans to people who wanted to build houses on these units, since they do not extend loans on shares. Even though the certificate of shares given to the shareholder enshrined the person's right to a unit, control was still vested in a third party. As far as the state is concerned KBK is still ultimately the owner of the unit, and KBK is held responsible for whatever happens on the properties in its name. The lack of full ownership of the units by shareholders also meant that the purchasing price of a house built in Kleinfontein under this system was lower than the market price of a similar house with full individual title. This is because the market available for this kind of house was smaller, limited to those who were or might eventually become ideologically committed to living in Kleinfontein.

The tension between ownership and the right to simply use a unit also pointed to the fact that shareholders had to accept that they were buying into a settlement carrying collective risks. Any bonds on the properties owned by KBK had and still have to be serviced by all shareholders, whether or not any individual shareholder agreed to the terms under which a loan was made by KBK. This is significant because it implied that a majority vote in the cooperative could see additional loans being taken out in the name of the cooperative, but those who had reservations incurring the debt would have no option but to participate in servicing the debt. The ultimate risk in this form of ownership was that shareholders risked losing all of the capital they had invested

in Kleinfontein if the cooperative was liquidated for whatever reason, because the liquidator has priority over the assets of the cooperative, not the shareholders.

There was another side to the drawbacks, however, because cooperative ownership involved some fundamental advantages in addition to allowing for a system with which the Kleinfontein properties could be administered. Because these properties were zoned as agricultural holdings and they were owned in the form of a cooperative, KBK faced few restrictions when developing them. KBK did not have to consult local government and submit building plans when they wanted to build buildings or lay new infrastructure in Kleinfontein, and development could take place at a pace chosen by the cooperative itself. The fact that Kleinfontein is collectively owned under this system also means that each individual shareholder does not pay tax on his or her unit; it is only KBK as a whole which has a tax obligation. This tax obligation is negligible. Because no agricultural production takes place in Kleinfontein cannot be taxed, leaving only a small amount to be paid to the municipality. Had Kleinfontein been zoned as urban land the calculations used to determine what it owes to the municipality would have been different, and the taxes far higher.

As can be gauged from **Figure 3.1** and **Figure 3.2** in Chapter 3 (in regard to the number of residents and houses built over time) as well as **Figure 4.1**, the new form of ownership immediately bore fruit. As ownership was switched to a cooperative form at the start of 1996, **Figure 4.1** includes all new shareholders in 1996 as well. The number of shareholders changed from a mere 12 in 1994 to 36 in 1996, and then steadily climbed yearly until 2004, when the settlement started undergoing massive changes, reflected by the large increases in the number of shareholders registered by 2006 and 2008.

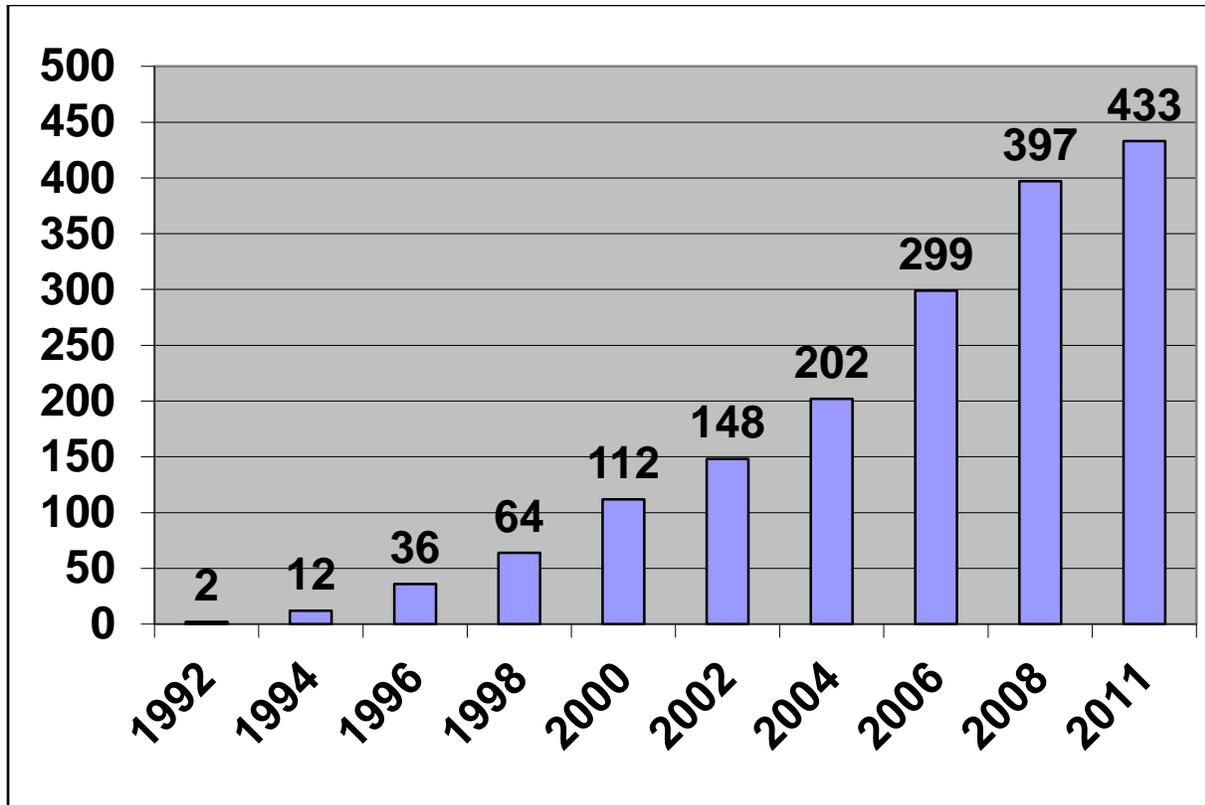


Figure 4.1: Shareholders per year

4.5 2007 – 2011: Co-operatives Act No. 14 of 2005 comes into operation

In 2000 the Cooperatives Act No. 91 of 1981 came under review because it was widely seen, by both government and civil society, as being skewed towards the development of agricultural cooperatives which were mostly white. In this regard the Cooperative Development Policy for South Africa was adopted in 2003 to look, among other things, at ways in which to bring the South African Cooperatives Act in line with international principles regarding the values of cooperatives as defined by the International Cooperative Alliance Statement of Identity and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Recommendations 193 (Satgar 2007:4). In brief these values and principles are about: (i) voluntary and open membership; (ii) democratic member control; (iii) member economic participation; (iv) autonomy and independence; (v) education, training and information; (vi) co-operation among co-operatives; and (vii) concern for community (Philip 2003:7-8). Government had an additional goal, which was to try to use cooperatives as a way to support mostly disadvantaged black people to take the first step towards entering the business sector in South Africa.

This led the Parliament of South Africa to pass the Cooperatives Act No. 14 of 2005, but it was not until 2007 that it was brought into operation. The change of the Act had some fundamental implications for Kleinfontein, because KBK could no longer operate as it had before. In the first place, the provisions in the old act regarding membership of the cooperative were changed. The new Act explicitly stated the grounds on which people could and could not become members of a cooperative. Section 3(1)(a) of the Act states that ‘membership of that cooperative is open to persons who can use the services of that cooperative and who are able to accept the responsibilities of membership’, while Section 3(2)(b) states that membership can be restricted only in the instances in which it ‘does not constitute unfair discrimination’, in line with the Constitution of South Africa. The implications was that anyone interested in becoming a member of KBK and who was willing to conform to the requirements of the cooperative had to be allowed to do so irrespective of race. Furthermore, the section under the Act of 1981, which had given trading cooperatives scope to do as they pleased was removed in its entirety and was replaced by a new set of cooperative forms which did not provide the same leeway.

In line with the operationalisation of the new Act, existing cooperatives were given two years by the Registrar of Cooperatives to draw up a constitution (replacing the statute required under the old act) in line with the new Act. This was later extended by an additional year after many of the cooperatives struggled to draw up new constitutions in time. The new limitations meant that the members of KBK had to find a creative way to remould the settlement in accordance with the new Act so as to be able to continue to perform the functions which brought it to life in the first place.

To address this change the board of directors of KBK first drew up a draft constitution which they presented to the shareholders of the cooperative for comment. By gathering written feedback from the shareholders they wanted to amend the constitution so that it reflected their collective will. When the revised draft was circulated amongst the shareholders in the second year allowed by the registrar, a small group of them complained that their suggestions had been sidelined and insisted that this version could not be accepted formally as the new constitution of

KBK. By this point the Registrar of Cooperatives had announced that an additional year would be given to existing cooperatives to draw up new constitutions in line with the new Act.

Wanting to have all the shareholders accept the new constitution, the board of directors decided that the way to smooth tensions was to form a task team that would be responsible for overseeing another version of the constitution. This task team included two of the directors, two people representing those who were unhappy and, an additional two members who were considered neutral. Shortly before the task team was to conclude its task a dispute broke out within the team which meant that this version of the constitution was not submitted to a vote by the shareholders. What it contained is nonetheless instructive.

The way in which this third version dealt with the changes to the Act was to try to find clauses in the Constitution of South Africa to support the continuation of KBK as an exclusive cooperative for *Boere-Afrikaners*. Article 235 was invoked; this article states that while the South African people, as a whole, have the right to self-determination, this ‘does not preclude, within the framework of this right, recognition of the notion of the right of self-determination of any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage, within a territorial entity in the Republic or in any other way, determined by national legislation’. Drawing on this provision, the third draft argued that the members of the KBK share a common culture, language heritage, community history and Christian religion grounded in the Holy Trinity found in the Bible. It adds that the members of the KBK share a vision for a separate future, and that this future is part of their cultural obligation (*kultuuroopdrag*), a veiled reference to the fact that some members see Kleinfontein as a future *volkstaat*. These statements made in reference to Article 235 are allegedly supported by Article 31 of the Constitution of South Africa which states that ‘persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community, to: (a) enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language; and (b) form, join and maintain cultural, religious, and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society’. The third draft of the constitution of KBK therefore sought to build the ideal of creating an Afrikaner *volkstaat* within the framework of the new co-operatives Act and the Constitution of South Africa.

After the dispute took place and the task team was disbanded the board of directors wanted to test whether or not what had been written in the third draft would pass the muster and consulted a lawyer to give them a legal opinion about whether or not the Registrar of Cooperatives would be likely to accept the constitution in that form. The lawyer was of the opinion that it would not be acceptable, giving the board reasons for this advice that were largely in line with those put forward by Labuschagne (2008) with regard to the likelihood of Orania gaining Article 235 status. Labuschagne argued that the right to self-determination contained in Article 235 would be nullified by the proviso at the end of the Article, which stated that such a right is ‘determined by national legislation’. He said, moreover, that Article 235 is subservient to the founding provision of the Constitution of South Africa, which stipulates that the ‘Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign democratic state’. This is further strengthened by Article 41(1) (a) which states that all spheres of government must ‘preserve the peace, the national unity and the indivisibility of the Republic’ (Labuschagne, 2008:87). Labuschagne made a similar argument about Article 31, given that it has an additional clause which reads that the Article can only be applied in so far as its application does not take place ‘in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights’. No mention was made of this caution in the third draft of Kleinfontein’s proposed constitution and it is likely that its application of Article 31 is inconsistent with Article 21 relating to the right to freedom of movement and Article 18 which states that everyone has the right to freedom of association.

In 2010 - the third year of trying to draw up a new constitution under the new Co-operatives Act - the directors of KBK asked the Registrar of Cooperatives for another year in which to draw up a constitution and have it endorsed by the shareholders. This was granted and they moved to yet another version so that it would be worded in a fashion acceptable to the Registrar. The shareholders voted on the fourth draft in 2011. The directors departed from trying to use Article 235, and simply described Kleinfontein as a community of like-minded Christians. All other veiled references to exclusion were removed and the constitution was written in such a fashion to provide an administrative framework within which to continue developing the properties in possession of KBK. A two thirds majority vote could not be secured when the shareholders voted for the fourth draft and this failure to reach a decision opened the question of what exactly would happen to Kleinfontein when the registrar’s patience was finally exhausted.

4.6 After 2011: New frontiers

The vacuum had already started to be filled before the failed bid to have the fourth draft of the new constitution for KBK accepted. Owing to a number of pressures that had built up over the years the directors of KBK started to consider the possibility to have Kleinfontein ‘formalized’ as a ‘land development area’ by using of the Development Facilitation Act No. 67 of 1995. This Act was created for fast-track development of land into urban property and in many cases has clauses overriding municipal regulations. If successful, Kleinfontein would take on a form similar to that of other private gated-settlement developments along the N4, such as Silver Lakes. KBK would shed some of the responsibilities that it originally had and would be replaced by a homeowners association (a Section 21 company). As is the case in Silver Lakes, the new homeowners association would have to take responsibility for certain urban amenities such as road maintenance which, in return, would give control over access to Kleinfontein. Although the directors of KBK do not know exactly what the future would hold, the lawyer with whom they were working in 2011 to have Kleinfontein ‘formalized’ according to the Development Facilitation Act was of the opinion that the people in the settlement would be able to retain their *eiesoortige*³⁸ character.

According to some residents who commented on the possibility of ‘formalizing’ Kleinfontein at the time, they still considered using Article 235 as a framework for the settlement as a possibility in the future. Coupled with the fact of having Kleinfontein registered as a ‘land development area’, this has a few implications that are important to mention.

In commenting on the likelihood that Orania can gain a measure of self-determination, and ultimately secession, through the use of Article 235, Labuschagne (2008) argues that that settlement enjoys *de facto* recognition from government at the present moment in the sense that those in control there are allowed to do more or less what they want in terms of development. The same can be said of Kleinfontein, because for the better part of the last 20 years or so the board of directors has exerted *de facto* control over the settlement without interference from

³⁸ Translation: own kind.

government. Labuschagne argues that moving from *de facto* recognition to *de jure* recognition will not result in secession, and that if Article 235 can be invoked at all it is more likely that Orania, and Kleinfontein by extension, will receive the status of being some form of local cultural council (Labuschagne 2008:87). This step is unlikely to conform to the ideals of those interested in making use of Article 235 in an attempt develop a *volkstaat*.

In a similar way, moving to *de jure* recognition as a 'land development area' under the local municipality is not likely to result in freedom for the residents of Kleinfontein. While the residents will gain individual title and access to loans from commercial banks in South Africa, this will come at a cost. On the one hand each individual property will become taxed, and on the other hand, even if they are able to retain the *eiesoortige* character of the settlement, the new arrangement will infinitely complicate the power they can exert over developing the settlement further. This is because a whole new set of controls will be added to the system which creates an opportunity at every point for an issue to be raised either by the state or by individuals interested in buying or selling property in Kleinfontein. An example of this is that a person could wish to sell his or her property to someone who does not conform to the membership criteria set by the Section 21 company that is set up to run the settlement. This person could then challenge the company in court, and would be likely to win if discrimination is found to be the basis of refusal.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the laws that have been used to administer the settlement of Kleinfontein over the past 20 years, and the direction in which it is possibly moving in the present. I have tried to detail the financial and economic implications that cooperative ownership has entailed for the residents living there over time, and the way in which this will change if indeed Kleinfontein is 'formalized' as a 'land development area'.

Chapter 5: Utopia not yet reached

5.1 Introduction

As might have been expected the surge in new shareholders who acquired stands in the settlement and built houses there after 2004 posed problems with which directors could not adequately deal. The movement of new people into the settlement meant that their interests were not the same as those of the existing residents. It opened the space for certain individuals to start expressing concerns about the manner in which Kleinfontein was being run. It is through the divergent interests of the older residents who arrived first and the younger residents who arrived in the mid-2000s that a crippling schism developed which could not be resolved. The *modus operandi* of those at the forefront of this changed from one which sought mutual benefits for all to a zero-sum game where the interests of only one group mattered, at the cost of the other group.

I attempt to delineate the schism historically. My intention is to show that social life in the settlement has been severely altered by the problems that arose at the end of 2005. This is important because the fact of the schism has come to affect the decisions made by the directors in charge. In addition to this, I will show the intimate relationship that exists between the class interests of people and the way that these shape their ideological outlook on what they want Kleinfontein to be. Lastly, I provide an ethnographic account of an annual general meeting which took place at the end of 2011 - a forum which has become a symbolic ground of sorts for participants in the schism to contest each other in a battle for supremacy.

5.2 The trust that once existed

In the early part of the 2000s when the younger people started moving into the settlement the relationships between the residents were still good. Some of the older people, like Betsie Beukes,³⁹ remember this period fondly. They were glad that younger residents started to move in because Kleinfontein would never have been able to survive if only old people lived there. She

³⁹ Pseudonym.

remembered ‘how we used to braai⁴⁰ together on the rugby field before the troubles started and how much we enjoyed it. We were all friends and the kids played around us while we socialized’. During this period people still shared a sense of *gemeenskaplikheid*⁴¹. People used to trust each other and they could rely on others to help out when needed without expecting anything in return.

Niel Fourie,⁴² one of the first younger residents to move in concurred with Betsie, and elaborated by saying that:

we did get along back then. It was a little strange that there were so many older people living in Kleinfontein but everyone respected each other and we were keen to improve the settlement. Everything wasn’t perfect though; I should have known something more was going on when *they* (his own emphasis) allowed someone to build a two story house in front of my parents’ house in the *Wildpark* in 2003. When they bought the stand they were promised that their view of the valley below would never be taken away. I was really unhappy then because I wanted my parents to be happy here but we let it go because we didn’t want a distasteful situation to exist. They invested a lot of their money in that house.

When Niel speaks about the fact that ‘they’ allowed someone to build a two story house in front of his parents’ house he is referring to the board of directors of *Kleinfontein Boerebelange Koöperatief Beperk* (KBK). He sees them as being a category of older people who have banded together around Jan Groenewald, the only founding member to maintain a permanent residence in the settlement.

All the pre-2004 residents had moved to the settlement knowing that it was founded on the ideology of creating a separate state for Afrikaners, and not allowing black people to live in it. A kind of mutuality therefore existed between the residents and there was an acknowledgement that minor issues would inevitably crop up in any kind of housing settlement anyway. The trust people had in the board of directors to look after their interests and the understanding that it would take time to develop the settlement properly meant that issues such as these could be

⁴⁰ Translation: barbeque.

⁴¹ Translation: a sense of community.

⁴² Pseudonym.

navigated without them causing excessive damage. With a rapid increase in the populace of the settlement during the mid-2000s, however, the potential points of conflict increased exponentially and during the latter part of 2005 something so severe happened that the escalation could not be reined in.

5.3 Change and factionalism: the *oumense* and the *moeilikheidmakers*⁴³

Having identified that rapid changes were in the process of taking place in the mid-2000s and being very excited about the potential that this could hold for Kleinfontein, the directors decided to draw younger residents onto the board of directors drawn from those who had already lived there for a while and were familiar with settlement. Albert Smit, a town planner, was one such person of whom the directors were particularly fond of at the time. They thought that he was a potential leader who could be relied on to chart a course to a future *volkstaat*. Smit had big plans for the settlement and had, on a number of occasions, shared ideas about ways in which Kleinfontein could be made more attractive for Afrikaners in general so that more of them would be willing to move there.

With Smit now on the board of directors a situation arose in 2005 which required some manoeuvring. Kleinfontein had been in the process, over a number of years, of buying a piece of property to the west of the settlement, known as the *Westelike Grond*⁴⁴. The owner needed to speed this process up because he was buying a farm elsewhere in the country and needed all the additional funds he could get. He gave Kleinfontein the option to come up with the remaining funds or he would reimburse the money they already paid him and would then find another buyer. Kleinfontein's shareholders agreed that it was in their interest to buy the property rather than to let it fall into the wrong hands (someone who did not sympathise with Kleinfontein or, worse, a black person). The board was given a mandate to find a way to come up with the funds. In response the board put together a task team led by Smit. Smit was excited by what was happening as it afforded him an opportunity to offer another way in which to appeal to more Afrikaners to move to Kleinfontein. His idea was to have the *Westelike Grond* subdivided upon

⁴³ Translation: The old people and the troublemakers.

⁴⁴ Translation: Western Ground.

purchase into smaller individual properties, and in this way the properties could be advertised to people outside the settlement – to those who did not want to participate in collective ownership. The task team he led found a way in which to generate the necessary funds.

It seemed that all was proceeding according to plan but not everyone in the settlement was happy about what was going on. The father of the owner of the *Westelike Grond's* lived in Kleinfontein and was a well-respected *dominee*⁴⁵ who had also helped to establish Radio Pretoria as a conservative Afrikaner voice. He was suspicious of Smit's plans and saw that they held a threat for the existence of Kleinfontein, if the purchase was completed according to his plan. If the *Westelike Grond* was to be run as part of Kleinfontein and it was found that the newly subdivided units were being sold exclusively to Afrikaners they could hold the risk of state intervention and destroy all that the older residents had built up over the preceding years. He did not want his son to sell the property to Kleinfontein with Smit at the helm. Having had a good relationship with the other directors, including Groenewald, he did not simply want to lose the opportunity for Kleinfontein to buy his son's property, and so he explained the situation to them. This placed the other board members in a very difficult situation; not only were they at risk of not being able to buy a strategically advantageous property but they potentially risked estranging the *dominee*, someone who they respected and valued.

In the end they decide that the advantages of buying the property outweighed the disadvantages. Groenewald, who was also on the board of directors, came up with an alternative solution to the problem. His own son possessed considerable financial means and offered to help Kleinfontein out. He was willing to buy the *Westelike Grond* and keep it in his possession until such time as the issue of purchase by the co-operative could be resolved; this would have the added benefit of leaving Kleinfontein to spend its surplus capital in a different way for the time being. Groenewald's son was given the go-ahead.

After learning of this turn of events, Smit was understandably furious. He accused the Groenewald and the directors making decisions without his consent behind his back. He also

⁴⁵ Translation: vicar.

accused them of moving outside the mandate the shareholders had given them to purchase the property - they were mandated to make the purchase themselves, not to have a third party step in. The trust that had existed before was no longer there, it was replaced by a feeling of distrust. This trust had been crucial in making decisions because it meant that residents living in the settlement did not have to spend their time wondering whether or not those in charge had their best interests at heart. This event acted as a catalyst that would irrevocably alter the social cohesion that had existed; it affected not only the way in which people in the governing structure of the settlement were viewed, but also how other residents became drawn into the schism.

After the task team's failure to secure the purchase of the *Westelike Grond*, the relationships among the directors of the board broke down entirely. The board consisted of ten members; two of them sided with Smit on the issue of the purchase. Groenewald and his supporters seemed to acknowledge that they had made a mistake in their dealings with the purchase when they put forward a motion for the board to be dissolved on 31st January 2006, so that a new one could be elected by the shareholders. Smit's group refused to accept this because they felt they should not be victims for something they did not do. They vetoed the motion (which had to be accepted unequivocally to come into effect).

By this point the deal between Groenewald's son and the owner of the *Westelike Grond* had already been made and there was no going back on what had been done. Needing to have a functioning authority structure in the settlement, Groenewald's hand was forced to do something more drastic involving the other residents of the settlement. They were determined to make the board functional again by having Smit's group removed from the board, with the support of two thirds of the shareholders during a special general meeting.

They arranged for a meeting of all shareholders to take place on 11th March 2006, without the consent of Smit's group and without informing them of what they would try to do. An announcement was sent to all the shareholders that the meeting would take place. This seems to be the way that Smit's group learned of what was about to take place. They were obviously alarmed and had to think of a way in which to protect themselves from being removed from the board of directors. They believed that the shareholders were being asked to make a decision

without having all the facts and that they were being represented as a small group of directors who were causing unnecessary trouble. They arranged a special general meeting of their own on 18th February 2006 which would serve as an ‘information session’ about the events surrounding the purchase of the property. It would also allow the accused board members an opportunity to make their case to the shareholders. This meeting was a surprise and Groenewald’s group could do little to prevent the February meeting taking place. Apart from discussing the transaction of the *Westelike Grond* Smit’s group used this as an opportunity to highlight other grievances they had about the manner in which Kleinfontein was being run. They felt that the way in which the settlement was marketed to the outside world was far too limited and they had problems with the business interests some of the directors – particularly Groenewald – had in the settlement.

The ‘information session’ meeting was however of little use to Smit’s group. The meeting on 11 March to have them removed served to show the kind of support base which Groenewald’s group enjoyed in the settlement, in particular from the older people who had had a particularly positive experience with Groenewald and his family in the past. Their trust that he had their best interests at heart remained, and they gave overwhelming support to the motion that Smit and the two others should be removed from the board. Betsie recalled these events:

Jan had always been good to us and had given his all for Kleinfontein. He made many personal sacrifices. If it wasn’t for him we wouldn’t have had a peaceful place to stay away from the city. Smit just wanted to make trouble about the *Westelike Grond*. We were in a tough situation and we needed to find a solution to the problem. Jan and his son came up with one which benefited everyone. Smit only had his own interests at heart and when he didn’t get what he personally wanted he got upset. I think the heart of the problem is that he is a deeply unhappy person and he feeds off pulling other people down with him. I voted them out because they tried to spread lies and cause problems.

Not everyone felt the same way as Betsie and there was a small, but notable band of aggrieved people who sided with Smit’s group. They were far fewer numerically, however, and they could not do anything. One of them explained that ‘it was impossible for us to do anything. In Kleinfontein voices of dissent are not allowed and Smit never stood any chance against Groenewald. In this cooperative it is the will of the majority that reigns, just like in the rest of South Africa’. This kind of sentiment was echoed by a fourth person on the board of directors,

the vice president, Nick Pieterse, who had initially taken a more measured approach in the situation and wanted to resolve it. With the passing of the motion to have Smit's group removed he felt he could no longer serve on a board which he saw as punishing people who had done nothing wrong. He resigned at the meeting, shortly after the motion had been passed.

With the residents now also drawn into the fray, and with Smit and his allies off board of directors, the schism became entrenched. Smit and the other former directors felt they had been humiliated. They came to see themselves as dissidents in Kleinfontein, those who opposed the official line of the board of directors. Although Smit and the other directors who left the board denied direct involvement, a small dissident newspaper called *Aktueel*⁴⁶ saw the light shortly after the March special general meeting. A group calling the *Kleinfontein Aandelebelange Beweging*⁴⁷ (KAB) claimed to be the authors of the newspaper and said that they comprised of 21 aggrieved residents of Kleinfontein. In the newspaper they claimed that Groenewald was the mastermind behind the removal of Smit and the others, and that the decisions taken by the rest of the directors revolved around Groenewald's wishes.

Magda Rabie⁴⁸ was one of the people who initially made a contribution to the *Aktueel*. She told me that:

Kleinfontein is poorly managed as a growth point for Afrikaner self-determination and it is because of the way in which people like Groenewald misrepresent what is going on here knowingly and misled people. When we started *Aktueel* we intended it to counterbalance their lies and to tell the people of Kleinfontein what is really going on here. They mistreated Albert [Smit] and misled the shareholders by presenting him as the culprit in what happened with the *Westelike Grond*. They tried and succeeded in covering up the way they themselves lied to all of us. The old people in the settlement don't know any better. We came here because we wanted to make this place work and we gave it our all. By doing what they did they threw our efforts back into our faces because they don't really want to create a *volkstaat*. They really got worked up with what was said in *Aktueel* back then because they knew it was true and they were only interested in

⁴⁶ Translation: Actuality - meaning that it focuses on what is actually going on.

⁴⁷ Translation: Kleinfontein Shareholders' Interest Movement.

⁴⁸ Pseudonym.

protecting their own interests here. This place isn't a growth point for Afrikaner self-determination. Don't waste your time here, they are just going to lie to you as well.

Subsequent to the first edition in 2006 *Aktueel* has been published three or four times a year up to the present.

The dissidents felt they were now part of a protracted struggle and that they could not win because the system in place in Kleinfontein did not favour minority groups making a contribution to the settlement at large. The system in place, in their view, favoured only the majority and that there could only be winners and losers. Another dissident, Herman, described the system of governance in Kleinfontein as

typical Westminster-style. They clearly didn't learn and copied the British, just like the National Party did. There's no room for alternative voices here and you either win or you lose. You saw for yourself at the meeting the other day, they'll do anything to prevent us from saying anything when it matters. This place is no *volkstaat*. You're more free as an Afrikaner outside Kleinfontein than you are inside. Orania is the only place where there is any hope for creating a *volkstaat* in South Africa; I've been there numerous times. Kleinfontein is like a monarchy. Jan Groenewald is the king and all his family members are making money from this place because of the way he manipulates people. His wife is the estate agent and has full control over who can and cannot move here. His son in law is making money as the only person building here and naturally Jan's wife refers any new shareholder to him so that they can have their houses built. They are making money off people who they deceive and make promises to that never come true. We could have done so much more but they always refuse to do anything that might further the cause.

By the following year the dissidents claimed to number about fifty. Some of them put together a court case against KBK in which they claimed that the cooperative was being mismanaged by the directors and wanted the court to investigate the Groenewald family in particular. They wanted the settlement to be placed under judicial administration until there was further clarity and so that problems of management could be resolved. They also wanted shareholders to be given access to the shareholder register, to which they should have had access under the Cooperatives Act. The court case failed. According to Herman it was because 'of a technical error in the case and not because they were found to be not guilty. What the court did find was

numerous problems with the shareholder register and units allocated to people who did not pay for them. Groenewald refused to tell anyone this publically’.

In contrast the directors have repeatedly claimed this court case, which took place in 2007, as a victory. They say that the dissidents often claim that they are corrupt and dishonest but the failure of the court case shows they aren't. They explained the errors on the shareholder register and the errors on the plot register (which the cooperative calls a property register) as something which can happen in any organisation where a lot of administration takes place. It was never done on purpose and they had no problem in making the necessary corrections when errors were pointed out. They acknowledged that the dissidents had grievances but point out that the directors have a responsibility to look after the interests of all the shareholders and that they cannot make decisions that favour a narrow band of residents at the cost of the majority of people living in Kleinfontein. As Kallie, one of the directors, pointed out

they are wilful. They know what the situation is and they know we make decisions with the interests of everyone at heart. They don't care about everyone living here. They only care about themselves and they purposely make trouble knowing it is at the cost of the older residents. I don't know what more they want from us because they simply are not willing to acknowledge or accept the reality.

With the tension running high in the settlement, and in reaction to the court case made against them, the directors put together a defamation case against ten of the dissidents. They claimed that these dissidents deliberately spread lies about the directors, and were tarnishing the image of Kleinfontein. They reportedly wanted around R9 million in damages but the case was eventually referred to the *Heemraad*,⁴⁹ an internal body responsible for resolving conflict between residents in Kleinfontein, because the thinking was that it would be better to resolve the conflict that had arisen internally. This would presumably also have been much quicker than a drawn-out case in the South African courts. The dissidents, however, claimed that the shareholders on the *heemraad* were not impartial because they had connections with some of the directors. They wanted an independent body to settle the dispute between themselves and the directors. The settling of the dispute moved to a case of arbitration between the parties. This case, too, failed

⁴⁹ Translation: district council.

after the dissidents allegedly refused to acknowledge that the then board of directors was the legitimate authority in Kleinfontein. This arose from the fact that replacement directors were nominated to the vacant posts on the board of directors, and the shareholders had no opportunity to vote for them. The dissidents saw this as favouring the agenda of the directors that were left, while the directors themselves argued that they needed the duties that could no longer be performed by the former directors to be taken over. The dissidents refused to accept the legitimacy of the arbitrators, claiming that they had connections to the board in so far as Groenewald's son knew some of the arbitrators. This attempt to broadly resolve the issue between the two groups was not pursued further.

The result of these skirmishes was that the two groups became discernible in Kleinfontein, and residents started to differentiate between 'us' and 'them'. The older residents, siding overwhelmingly with Groenewald and the remaining directors, saw Smit's group as upstarts and referred to them as *moeilikheidsmakers*⁵⁰ (as if they were young children who were being naughty and in need of punishment). Many were angry that the younger residents were unwilling to appreciate what the older residents had put in place because they moved to Kleinfontein first - they invested the little they had to build houses and tried to make the place work. They were proud of their efforts, and those who moved to Kleinfontein at the very start remembered how barren it was:

There was nothing here when I came. I was one of the first. It was only Jan Groenewald who had been living here. I have the world of the respect for him and his family. His children were still young, and I could see how hard it was for Jan and Irene [Groenewald] to give up what they had in Pretoria. Together we made it work.

The expectations of the younger residents were seen as being too high; it was not just that they did not understand what it took to make Kleinfontein what it was by 2011, but that the younger residents wilfully did not want to understand. They changed the acronym of the KAB to stand for *Kleinfontein Anti-Betalers*,⁵¹ because some of the dissident residents eventually refused to pay their levies unless the board of directors stepped down. In other cases the dissidents were simply

⁵⁰ Translation: troublemakers.

⁵¹ Translation: Kleinfontein Anti-Ratepayers.

referred to as the *ander groep*,⁵² showing how clear the difference is to the older residents who identify with Jan Groenewald. Kallie was again instructive when he said that

we have tried so many times to accommodate them and listen to their grievances. They repeatedly claim that we don't listen but we listened to them. Even after they slandered us we still extended our hand to them to try and fix things. Who is it that actually does anything in Kleinfontein? It's old people and they do it without expecting anything in return. Smit and his friends have so much expertise that could be used to benefit Kleinfontein but they do not even try to help us out, and then they turn around and say we don't provide them with adequate services. I told you already, they are wilful. They just make trouble to bring everyone down.

For their part the dissidents commonly refer to the older category of people as the *oumense*⁵³. Underlying this reference is a view that the older residents of Kleinfontein hold world views that do not match up to the present and that their views stifle the kind of progress they younger residents would like to see. Much like the word *moeilikheidmakers*, the term *oumense* is used in a negative way. In a conversation with Magda she asked me the following: 'Don't you experience living in the main settlement as stifling? It's only *oumense* living there and they don't do anything. They won't be able to tell you anything about what's going on. They believe every word that Groenewald tells them. All they do is gossip to each other; they don't have anything else to do'. In saying this Magda was expressing a perception about space that plays a role in how the two groups are imagined - the older people are seen to be living in the main settlement and a certain kind of mentality is attached to this space. There is also a second element at play here, the view the dissidents have that Groenewald is the lynchpin of the older residents - they commonly refer to the older residents as *Groenewald se mense*,⁵⁴ suggesting that they do exactly what he says and that they 'belong' to him.

The fact that the two groups distanced themselves from each other in 2005 and 2006 resulted in complications when the Cooperatives Act No. 14 of 2005 replaced the Cooperatives Act No. 91 of 1981, and came into law in 2007. As already mentioned, extensive changes were made in the

⁵² Translation: other group.

⁵³ Translation: the old people.

⁵⁴ Translation: Groenewald's people.

new act. The new act no longer had a grey area about membership. The only reason a person could be refused membership under the new act was if he or she posed a financial risk to the cooperative, and in all cases of such refusal reasons have to be given for the refusal.

The change meant that all existing cooperatives had to write new constitutions and have them approved by the Registrar of Cooperatives. This proved to be challenging terrain for KBK. Up to this point both groups sounded more or less the same on an ideological level, but having to rewrite the constitution meant that each group had to think about how it wanted to give expression to its views in words. Whereas previously it had not been necessary to commit to any specific policy, it now became necessary. The fluidity that had existed was undermined by the growing conflict between the two camps of residents. The problem, of course, was that only one view could be committed to paper and presented to the registrar.

A general meeting was the only forum at which a decision could be taken on the constitution. At least two thirds of the shareholders had to support the proposed constitution. The general pattern was that support had to be gathered before the meeting so that motions presented at the meeting would be accepted or rejected. One such meeting took place on 19 February 2011. At this particular meeting 276 shareholders were eligible to vote, including the proxy votes that could be gathered beforehand. 170 votes were cast for the fourth version of the constitution, which supported the approach that Groenewald and the other directors had taken, and 106 votes were cast against. The necessary two thirds majority was not reached. This meant that the support for the dissidents had grown to around 38% of the people eligible to vote, a large increase from the 21 people that formed the KAB in 2006.

The older residents had generally been in favour of finding a way to meet the conditions of the new Act. This is what was represented in the fourth draft version as discussed in the previous chapter. Their approach was to try to write the constitution in such a way that it would give them enough room to deter black people from wanting to settle in Kleinfontein and they wanted to do it in a way that was unlikely to provoke the authorities. Groenewald was the main representative in this formulation. This might seem ironic - he is the only founder to remain permanently resident in the settlement and he was the one most interested in establishing a *volkstaat* - but he

had grown older along with the other older residents, and he understood their concerns. Among the older residents he was the best versed in *volkstaat*-speak and probably the best-read on the subject as well, but he values the contribution the older residents around him made in bringing Kleinfontein to life and says that he owes them for it. He is a man who stands by his values and he feels he shares those values with the other older residents. He is also able to ‘read’ the government and knows that pushing them too far will force them to intervene in the affairs of the settlement - something neither he nor the government (probably) wants.

The best effort in this regard was exemplified by the fourth version of the proposed constitution. It put forward the argument that Kleinfontein is a community with a 'shared Christian faith'. This does very little to exclude black people, but owing to the fact many Afrikaners (including the residents) have long switched from one of the Dutch Reformed Churches to a more charismatic alternative, the directors cannot easily narrow the criteria down further. With their ability to exclude people being exceedingly flimsy, it leaves them with no other option but to hope that black Christians will simply not want to live with conservative white Afrikaners in Kleinfontein. There is even some confidence in this assertion; one of the directors said to me: ‘What black person would actually want to live here with us? I don’t have anything against black people but we are simply different’. But his view is not shared equally by all directors; another told me that ‘...it’s difficult. We consulted lawyers and they tell us we shouldn’t try to say anything provocative because that could lead to unforeseen difficulties down the line. I don’t know if this approach will work but it is all that we can do in this situation. We just have to have faith that this will work’.

But this version was clearly not what the younger residents wanted. Some of them had been part of a team that worked on the third version, and they preferred the way in which the cooperative had been constituted in that instance. Most of them were averse to the fact that Kleinfontein was collectively owned but some among them thought that it was still possible to ‘fix’ the cooperative so that it could function properly. They presumably also valued the idea of bringing the older residents into line with their own views so that the transition to the future would be smooth. By the time the directors of the cooperative refused to pursue the third version further, it had already resembled the kind of approach the younger residents wanted to take in Kleinfontein.

It presented the settlement as an 'Article 235 community' with the support of Article 31 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. By adopting clauses from the Constitution they suggested that they wanted to express a shift towards minority rights for Afrikaners within South Africa. One of the younger residents explained it to me as follows: 'This version wasn't perfect but I was proud of it. The Constitution of South Africa clearly stipulates that we have a right to self-determination. If it is contained in the Constitution then the registrar has to consider this when he makes a decision about our constitution. This version came close to our view of what Kleinfontein should be. We want recognition in law'.

With the directors refusing to work on the third version any further with the dissidents, and instead settling on writing the constitution themselves, they provided ammunition for the dissidents. For the dissidents, this was further proof that the directors and the older residents were unwilling to accommodate them in Kleinfontein. It meant that they had to resort to more drastic measures to get what they felt was their right. Smit, along with eleven other shareholders, drew up a second court case with which they threatened the directors. This time they did not simply accuse the directors of being corrupt and mismanaging Kleinfontein, they claimed that the settlement as a whole was an illegal development. They did this on the basis that the sewerage system in the residential area did not meet municipal standards and that the population density there required centralised sewerage disposal. Smit said that:

We had no other option left. Nothing we said was ever listened to. I tried hard to re-establish trust with them but they do not care about us. I'm not doing this because I want to. I'm doing this for the other people who feel like me. They have persecuted us and make as if we are the only ones guilty in this situation. Threatening them with a court case and keeping the court case hanging is all that we have left. We don't talk to them directly now, we let the lawyer talk to their lawyer.

After the directors failed to enforce the fourth version they decided to engage with Smit's court case. They did not want to have the case go to court because that would result in a confrontation with the state, the precise thing they wanted to avoid. They admitted that they no longer had the power left to push through decisions in Kleinfontein. They consulted one of their lawyers again and he was of the opinion that if the case reached court, it would probably succeed. The dissidents had long wanted Kleinfontein to be declared as an officially registered town under the

municipality because it would give them greater legitimacy and it would also address their desire for each person in the settlement to have individual title. Furthermore, it would also include something which they had long wanted, an improvement to infrastructure such as the sewerage system and the roads. It is for this reason that they came up with the idea of using the Development Facilitation Act to have the land on which Kleinfontein existed fast-tracked as a land development.

5.4 Analysis of a Social Situation in Kleinfontein⁵⁵

In of the previous section I described the ‘triumph’ of the dissidents over the directors and their supporters. In this section I will describe what happened at a meeting that took place on 26th March 2011, where the shareholders decided collectively to take the path that the dissidents had wanted them to take for the past few years. The point of this is to show the very real way in which people living in the settlement experience day-to-day politics. In order to get to this point I have relied primarily on historical ethnography to reconstruct the economic and legal factors that animated the decisions that the various role players have taken. This section of the chapter aims to address what has hitherto been neglected.

I will use a method of analysis that was employed by Max Gluckman’s in his *Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand* (1940). As with other formally organised events, they do not occur in an isolated period of time. As already discussed, there were many occurrences that led up to the meeting and what happened at the meeting cannot be seen as a conclusion to the way in which history unfolds. Nor do events like these occur in isolation from other larger impinging processes at play outside Kleinfontein. The stakes being spoken about are inherently tied to the larger economic and legal realities in South Africa - a stark contrast to the purported goal upon which the settlement was founded. It should also be pointed out that although the people in Gluckman’s case did not have a choice in participating in the bridge-opening

⁵⁵ Pseudonyms are used to refer to most people in this section of the chapter but the real names of public figures are used. In terms of the latter it will allow the reader to understand what has been written about the public figures elsewhere. In some cases I will be vague about the identities of people, as the meeting which I describe in this section was at times extremely chaotic; and describing it in this way adds to an understanding of it.

ceremony, the case was not the same in Kleinfontein. Those who participated in the meeting had all chosen to buy into Kleinfontein in one way or another.

This meeting came about after the directors had exhausted all the resources at their disposal to try to subdue the dissidents, to no avail. This was not just any meeting; it was a special general meeting, something which is organised to address issues which cannot be solved without the consent of a sufficient majority of the shareholders. As is the case with other meetings of this kind in Kleinfontein the shareholders of the KBK were formally notified of the meeting and of what was on the agenda beforehand. By now they had already become accustomed to the process; they had to register to vote before the meeting otherwise they would not have been allowed to vote on the matters upon which decisions were to be taken.

As with other formal meetings in the past, this meeting was to take place in the *Gemeenskapsaal*⁵⁶ a place that had seen a number of skirmishes between the two sides in Kleinfontein since the mid-2000s. The hall is located on the main road leading into the main settlement where most of the older people live, close to the main entrance of Kleinfontein. The hall is located next to a primary school and some small businesses. The *Gemeenskapsaal* was built by the *oumense*. It represents what many of them consider to be ‘theirs’. This venue had been open to everyone in Kleinfontein when they had all been part of the same fold. It is a fairly ordinary rectangular brown brick building with a corrugated iron roof. The *oumense* are in the process of adding a kitchen and a storage area to the back. The hall has two entrances, one facing the road outside, which serves as the primary entrance; and the second located at the side of the building. Lining each of the side walls are large windows. The roof has no ceiling; the bare corrugated iron is visible, and a few dysfunctional fans hang from the rafters. The front of the hall vaguely resembles that of a school hall, another of its uses, with a raised stage and large curtains that can be opened and closed. Finally, mounted next to the primary entrance is a large glass case containing a copy of the *Volksgelofte*,⁵⁷ a supposed covenant the Voortrekkers made with God before the Battle of Blood River (on 16th December 1838). In return for God’s help the

⁵⁶ Translation: community hall.

⁵⁷ Translation: People’s Covenant.

Voortrekkers promised that they would observe the day as a holy Sabbath forever on and that they would build a church in his honour.

The hall is used to host various events. The most important of these are the church services. Sunday morning services are dedicated to the *Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk*⁵⁸ while the *Gereformeerde Kerk*⁵⁹ and the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*⁶⁰ take turns to host services during the evening slot. Apart from this the *Kleinfontein Inwoners Aksie*⁶¹ (KIA) meetings are also held here, a small community organisation founded with the intention of finding ways to combat the dissidents. The hall also hosts *Gemeenskapsraad*⁶² meetings, a council that was set up with the intention of integrating all the various role players in the settlement so that a forum is created outside general meetings where residents could participate in the running of Kleinfontein, but this council does not seem to function as had been intended. Finally, special events are also hosted in this hall such as Republic Day celebrations.

On the day of the special general meeting I arrived at the *Gemeenskapsaal* around 09:00 with the woman with whom I had been staying in Kleinfontein. Since I had arrived in the settlement a few months earlier she had graciously tried to act as a guide and to introduce me to the various elements at play in the settlement. She had been a director of the cooperative at one time and had a good relationship with the current board of directors, as she had served with a number of them during her time in Kleinfontein.

As we walked from the dusty parking space to the primary entrance we found that a few other people had already arrived and were chatting outside. As I was about to enter I was met by one of the local *dominees* who introduced himself to me and said that he had heard of my arrival. He was very curious about my study and wanted me to explain to him what I was doing in Kleinfontein, something which I had become accustomed to by then and I had a rehearsed story for just such an occurrence. He was especially excited about my relative youth, being 24 at the

⁵⁸ Translation: Afrikaans Protestant Church.

⁵⁹ Translation: Reformed Church.

⁶⁰ Translation: Dutch Reformed Church.

⁶¹ Translation: Kleinfontein Resident's Action.

⁶² Translation: Community Council.

time, and enquired whether or not I'd consider staying in Kleinfontein as I'd make a fine addition to the corpus. In the background an urgent, but calm, conversation was taking place between two people about *volmagte*⁶³. They were discussing whether or not their constituency had each gathered the maximum number so that they could swing decisions in their favour during the meeting. I would only realise the gravity of this later, however, as each of the two sides in the settlement tried to gather as many *volmagte* before each meeting as possible because this was crucial for getting a decision passed or not.

As one enters the hall one encounters a set of four tables, with a woman sitting behind each. These tables are used to administer the registration process for the day. A shareholder who has followed the correct steps of registering to vote beforehand has to sign a list here and ensure that all the details for his or her participation on the day are correct. An observer, such as myself, has to sign a separate list. After I did this I took a seat at the back of the hall, with the *Volksgelofte* towering over me.

While silently sitting and waiting for 10:00, the time at which the meeting was supposed to start, I was approached by an elderly woman whom I had met on a few occasions beforehand. She sternly warned me against 'them' (the dissidents) and even cautioned me to not speak to them as they could wrongly influence me by twisting my thinking about what was going on in Kleinfontein. She also offered me some of her refreshments, as she had become accustomed to the meetings being particularly long. After this I spoke to one of the current directors' children, who had been in good standing with the older people. He also made particular mention of the dissidents being a *verleentheid*⁶⁴ and said that the whole situation in Kleinfontein had become distasteful. After this I had a few more brief conversations with people about how things were going.

At 09:48 it was announced by the chairman, Jan Groenewald, of KBK that the registration process would be stopped temporarily so that the number of people who had registered up to that point could be counted. This was done to ensure that the necessary quorum was present, without

⁶³ Translation: proxy votes.

⁶⁴ Translation: disgrace.

which the meeting could not be constituted as legal and no binding decisions could be taken. Around this time it was also realised that an insufficient number of chairs had been set out for everyone to sit on. More people had arrived for the meeting than was expected. Additional chairs were brought in and the rows of seats around me were bunched up together, making space for more rows but cramping everyone's legroom.

As I had learned from a previous meeting of this magnitude, the way people arranged themselves in the *Gemeenskapsaal* also reflected the schism between the two groups of residents. The chairs were separated by a passage leading all the way to the front. I had been sitting on the right hand side of the hall. This side of the hall was overwhelming filled with older people in support of the directors (and Jan Groenewald). On the other side of the hall, the two back thirds of the area was occupied by the dissidents. The front end of that area was filled by a mixture of residents from the two groups.

By 10:00 the meeting was finally opened with *skriflesing en gebed*⁶⁵ at the announced time. It was the *dominee* who had spoken to me earlier who was presiding over the procession. He chose a text from Jeremia 2 and related it to a story about how the *volk van Israel*⁶⁶ had walked around aimlessly in the Egyptian desert. After having spent many years walking in the desert they started to wander without direction or purpose. God never forgot them, however, and eventually gave them direction and purpose again when they repented. The *dominee* related this story to the people living in Kleinfontein and asked who still remembered the glory of the past. He answered that it is the old people who remember. They should be part of restoring the peace and the freedom of the past, and everyone should work together to do this, but it can be done only through God. After this he prayed, during which it seemed as if someone in the audience purposely coughed repeatedly, overpowering the *dominee*'s voice.

After this it was announced that a total of 277 shareholders had been registered by the time the count had stopped. This was out of a total of 430 shareholders who were the members of the cooperative. Of the registered number, 115 were proxy votes (41% of the total) and 162 were

⁶⁵ Translation: scripture reading and prayer.

⁶⁶ Translation: People of Israel.

registered shareholders who were present (59% of the total). As many had come with their partners to the meeting, the latter number can be multiplied roughly by two to get the number of about 320 people present at the meeting on the day.

The chairman opened the meeting by stating the main agenda for the day. He said that the meeting had been organised primarily to address what would happen to Kleinfontein given that the shareholders had been unable to reach consensus on the issue of a new constitution for the cooperative earlier in the year on 19 February. The board of directors wanted to introduce the option of transforming Kleinfontein from a cooperative to a ‘formal’ land development under the local municipality, as the dissidents had been pushing them to do the last number of years. A secondary purpose of the meeting was to ask the shareholders whether the cooperative could request a loan to service and expand the existing infrastructure. Groenewald finished by stating that as with any other meeting there were rules to be followed. No cheering, booing or any other disruptive sound making would be tolerated. Shareholders were allowed to participate by asking questions within the framework of the law, and by permission of the chairman.

As he finished this opening statement a man named Adriaan Venter arrived through the main entrance at the back and people turned their heads to see. He was accompanied by one of the local lawyers in service of the board of directors. Venter was the man with whom the directors had started to consult before the meeting about how the cooperative could transform Kleinfontein without giving up too much of what had been built up. Venter represented a company which had experience with ‘formalising’⁶⁷ other land developments in the past and they were chosen by the cooperative bank⁶⁸ in Kleinfontein to investigate such a possibility. The reason for the cooperative bank’s involvement was due to the risk posed to the investments of its members by the pending court case lodged by the dissidents. The bank wanted to ensure that whatever happened its members would not lose their money. If the shareholders of KBK

⁶⁷ At the time of doing fieldwork there was a dispute between the two groups about how the process of registering Kleinfontein as ‘land development’ should be referred to. The leaders of the older group preferred the term ‘formalisation’ while the dissidents preferred the word ‘legalisation’.

⁶⁸ The bank is called *Kleinfontein Spaar en Krediet Koöperatief*. It was founded just before 2010 and was meant to address the problem of people being unable to apply for loans from commercial banks in South Africa to build houses in Kleinfontein. Its impact has been limited as a number of rules place restrictions on its abilities.

accepted the motion to ‘formalise’ Kleinfontein then Venter’s team was to be responsible for overseeing the process.

Venter was ushered forward. He was a well-built man and towered over those walking alongside him. He was immediately given a chance to speak to the shareholders about what his company was proposing. He was out of breath and bent down to reach the microphone and stated that he did not prepare anything for the meeting but would try his best to explain what ‘formalising’ Kleinfontein would entail⁶⁹. He had first been approached by the bank to investigate the claim in the pending court case against KBK by the dissidents that Kleinfontein was an ‘illegal development’, as asserted in the 2010 court case by Albert Smit. The finding was that there was some truth to the claim and that the case would be won if argued in court. In this light his company was asked what could be done to address the ‘illegality’ of Kleinfontein while still maintaining the character of the settlement. Venter’s company proposed that KBK use the Development Facilitation Act (DFA) to fast-track the properties it owned into a ‘land development’ under the municipality. He explained that this option was weighed up against the normal municipal procedure to incorporate land into urban areas, but they were of the opinion that the length of such a procedure would expose Kleinfontein to risks. Fast-tracking land with this method came at a certain cost. The application to do this would cost the shareholders ZAR1.5 million and that excluded any additional costs incurred to ensure that the settlement’s infrastructure complied with municipal standards, a prerequisite that would have to be met for it to be fast-tracked. The shareholders would also have to decide on whether they wanted to take this route quickly as the DFA was set to expire in the middle of 2012.

Once Venter finished his speech the floor was opened for members to ask questions about the process. By way of a show of hands the chairman lined up who could ask questions. The first question was how much the additional costs would be if the settlement was successfully registered as a ‘land development’ under the municipality. Venter responded by saying that it was hard to give an exact number upfront because a team from his company would first have to

⁶⁹ One of the dissidents later claimed that Venter had not actually been notified about the meeting until earlier that morning, when one of the dissidents had contacted Venter to ask whether he had remembered that the meeting was to take place.

assess the quality of the infrastructure in Kleinfontein present at the time. Had the settlement been a vacant property it would cost around ZAR72 million to build the necessary infrastructure, according to the standard required by the municipality. The audience audibly gasped and started chattering in panic. Venter intervened and said that the cost carried by the shareholders would likely be much lower than that because of the infrastructure already in existence. From a cursory assessment his team estimated that the shareholders would have to pay around ZAR35 million but a proper assessment would have to be done and this number might be revised down. This allayed the audience somewhat but the distress was not gone.

The next question asked was with regard to the form of ownership that would exist after the settlement was transformed to a ‘land development’ according to the proposed legislation. Venter said that the properties currently owned by the cooperative would be subdivided according to the current internal agreements with each shareholder. A surveyor would come to come to Kleinfontein to ensure all measurements were correct and once the settlement was ‘formalised’ and the owner of each unit would receive individual title.

The next person asked what other laws would have to be considered when having Kleinfontein registered as a ‘land development’ because changing the form of ownership would likely be a complex process. He framed this in terms of additional risks to the settlement that had to be considered. Venter answered that there were several problems with the settlement at that point. One was that some of the illegal developments in Kleinfontein included the existing water, electricity and sewerage infrastructure, as argued in the pending court case. Before he could continue one of the dissidents bellowed from the floor ‘*Het ek jou reg gehoor? Is Kleinfontein ‘n onwettige ontwikkeling*’ (Did I hear you right? Is Kleinfontein an illegal development?). The floor erupted in anger and chaos in response. The dissidents and the older people started shouting at each other across the hall and several of them got up in a threatening manner with their bodies posturing violence. The dissidents had long claimed that Kleinfontein was an illegal settlement but their opinions were disregarded by Groenewald and the other directors. When Venter got a chance to speak he leaned down and answered in a deep voice saying that the audience heard him correctly, but that it was in the interest of none in the room to speak about what it meant for

the settlement to be an illegal development because the court case was still pending. His answer acted as an arbiter and the audience was immediately subdued.

One of the dissidents was given an opportunity to formally ask a question. He asked Venter whether any penalties would be incurred in the process of subdividing Kleinfontein's properties. He also asked whether the small holding units would follow a different process compared to the main settlement, given that there were differences in how they received services. He ended by asking whether any further development could take place in Kleinfontein considering the pending court case. Venter responded by pointing out that the population density differed between the main settlement and the small holdings' area. The difference meant that the small holdings' did not necessarily have to form part of registering Kleinfontein as a 'land development'. He was of the opinion that no penalties could be levelled against any of the shareholders because the Kungwini Local Municipality under which the settlement had fallen until recently⁷⁰ carried full knowledge of Kleinfontein's existence and had done nothing to level additional taxes and all taxes on the properties registered as agricultural holdings had been paid as required. Venter addressed the question of further developments in Kleinfontein by saying that the *status quo* would apply until registered as a 'land development'. In practice that meant the cooperative could continue making upgrades to the existing infrastructure and initiate new development projects if it so wished. His answer was met with some disappointment from the floor and a few dissidents muttered that spending more money on infrastructure on an uncertain future was unwise.

Nick Pieterse, the former vice chairman,⁷¹ was the next person to ask questions to Venter. The older people on the floor weren't happy and complained that Pieterse had a tendency of being drawn out and hard to hear. Groenewald requested that Pieterse ask his questions on stage behind the microphone so that all could hear. Groenewald asked Pieterse to only ask questions related to transforming Kleinfontein to a 'land development'. Pieterse took out a collection of unorganised papers and positioned himself on the podium. He opened by stating that Kleinfontein had had an

⁷⁰ As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the Kungwini Local Municipality was absorbed into the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality in 2011.

⁷¹ Pieterse resigned as vice chairman in 2006 in protest to the shareholders removing Smit and two others from the board of directors. See earlier part of this chapter for details.

opportunity to register the settlement as a town but that the plan to do so had never been implemented. Before he could continue Groenewald stepped in next to him, took control of the microphone and angrily said that his chance to speak was not one for him to make accusations and offensive statements. Groenewald said that the meeting's rules were made very clear, and he was only to ask Venter questions about the process of 'formalisation'. Pieterse again stepped up and asked Venter who would be responsible for paying any fines⁷² if they were incurred, would it be the directors or the shareholders? He also asked how the residents in the small holdings' area would be affected when Kleinfontein became a 'land development'. Venter did not respond to the first question, saying that those with small holdings' units would continue their current relationship with ESKOM because they did not form part of the same electricity redistribution network found in the main settlement. Pieterse returned to the floor and joined the other dissidents.

The next person given an opportunity to speak said that in the past some attempts were made to have Kleinfontein registered as a town but that had not materialised. Some of documents were likely still lodged with the municipality however, and he asked if there would be any potential conflict between those documents and an attempt to transform the settlement into a 'land development'. His second question was whether Kleinfontein would lose its *eiesoortige* character when it became a 'land development'. Venter responded by saying he that was aware that some documents were lodged with the previous municipality under which the settlement fell and that these would be recalled before starting the process to 'formalise' Kleinfontein. He also stated that the *eiesoortige* character of Kleinfontein had always been a key part of the KBK directors' approach in all their dealings with him and he was of the opinion that it would be fairly easy to retain this character. The role of the board of directors would change as many of the functions they had performed at the time would be taken over by the municipality. Whereas residents previously paid levies to the cooperative they would now pay taxes on their individual

⁷² The question about fines was related to an issue with SARS as nobody had been taxed when they bought internal units in Kleinfontein and no policy in SARS had existed in terms of collective ownership such as found in Kleinfontein. SARS was in the process of forming an opinion when this meeting took place but a position taken to tax such internal properties would have wide ranging effects on other low-cost housing cooperatives in South Africa and additional costs to development such as this would run counter to the new Cooperative Act implemented in 2007. A legal opinion confirmed that SARS was unlikely to level such a tax.

properties to the municipality based on the latter's calculations. This meant that in some cases people might pay more than they were currently paying. This statement was met with unhappiness on the floor by the older residents.

Someone asked if there was a possibility to avoid 'formalising' the settlement. Venter responded that there is no such possibility because the illegality of the settlement would have to be addressed.

At this point Venter had to leave as he had other obligations. Groenewald stepped in and triumphantly concluded that Kleinfontein would retain its *eiesoortigheid*⁷³ and that the residents of the settlement would continue building its independence, and added that what they were doing might offer some solutions to the problems faced by Orania. He heartily thanked Venter for coming to the meeting and for taking the time to answer questions from the audience. Everyone loudly applauded and Venter was escorted out of the building.

Groenewald announced that the local bank, *Kleinfontein Spaar- en Krediet Köoperatief* (KSKK), would be given an opportunity to speak so that it could state its position on the events surrounding the 'formalisation' of the settlement. The chairman of the bank, dressed in a suit and tie, stepped up and thanked Venter again in his absence. He announced that the special general meeting was a watershed moment for bank because it had been grappling with restrictions placed on it for being part of KBK. The arrangement they had as a cooperative bank in Kleinfontein meant they were allowed to provide only limited services to its members, namely savings and credit services. At the time they were registered as a cooperative bank with the Savings and Credit Cooperative League of South Africa (SACCOL), but this arrangement, he said, was very costly for all who were members of the bank. The bank had wanted to change this situation and approached the Reserve Bank (RB) to register with it as a cooperative bank. This change would mean reduced costs, an increase in the range of services the bank could offer and an increase in security it to its members.

⁷³ Similar to *eiesoortige* character but a single word is used.

KSKK was allowed to exist on the basis of it being tied to KBK. The pending court case initiated by Alberty Smit placed additional risks on the bank, leaving those who had invested money in it (all of whom resided in Kleinfontein) in danger of losing their money. It was for this reason that they had approached Venter's company, because they had been looking for alternative forms under which Kleinfontein could exist so that the investments that had been made would be secure. The bank chairman thanked all parties involved in Kleinfontein for buying into the 'formalisation' process up until that point to solve the problems they faced collectively. He stated that although people differed in their views they seemed to all agree that the correct processes should be followed to address the settlement's problems. He concluded by stating that members of KBK should not be alarmed by the ZAR72 million mentioned by Venter because the value of their newly subdivided properties would go up substantially once the process was completed.

Groenewald took over from KSKK's chairman and asked members in the audience if they could proceed to vote on 'formalising' the settlement. The members on the floor agreed to this and Groenewald asked whether there were any questions before the vote took place.

What followed was chaotic and difficult to document. Members on the floor asked questions and other members screamed angry answers. One man asked if the taxes on the small holdings would increase if the property was converted to a 'land development'. He said that privatising the individual units could also mean rezoning the area from an agricultural holding to an urban area. He was met with an answer on the other side of the room which said that it depended on how the municipality zoned the area but that he should not worry because the increase in value of his property would offset any additional tax he might have to pay.

Another man asked whether using the DFA would not in itself pose a risk because there had reportedly been some concerns with the implementation of the Act. In one particular case an application, elsewhere in the city, to have a property fast-tracked failed. Someone else answered him by saying that in that instance the owner himself had delayed the process and that was the reason for the application failing. He added that the state was likely to delay abolishing the DFA.

The last question I heard being asked was about a piece of property KBK bought to the east of Kleinfontein in 2008 and what role it would play in the process of ‘formalising’ the settlement. Groenewald stepped in and answered over the microphone saying the question would be addressed later in the meeting, and that it was time for the members to vote on ‘formalising’ the settlement.

The meeting immediately moved to voting. Unlike with some other big meetings in Kleinfontein this motion would be voted on by show of hands and not secret voting ballots. The motion to ‘formalise’ the settlement was approved by an overwhelming majority. There was only one vote against the motion and the man insisted on having his opposition noted in the minutes of the meeting. Groenewald announced that it was a monumental moment in Kleinfontein’s history, marking the first time in the last half a decade that the settlement could agree on something. He saw it as a good omen and as something which could set the tone for a better future in the settlement.

By now the meeting had already lasted several hours and it was adjourned for a short break so that the members could regain strength.

When the break was over Groenewald announced that the next topic on the agenda was a request for permission by the directors to borrow an additional ZAR1.5 million to do maintenance work on the infrastructure and some additional upgrading on it. He explained that the directors wanted to build additional water reservoirs, have more electricity lines erected and also service an existing loan which was borrowed to do other work on the infrastructure. The hall was noticeably emptier and many of the older residents who had been sitting around me did not return after the break. It was only a handful people left, with the main protagonists on each side of the schism still being there.

Niel de Beer, one of the founders, was the first to be given an opportunity to speak. He had been the main engineer in Kleinfontein since it was founded and was mostly responsible for overseeing the development of water infrastructure. He explained that the settlement at present had more water available in its water sources than what could be used at the time. The license they

had with government to use their underground water sources only allowed them to extract at a certain rate and much of the excess water in the fountain was flowing out of the settlement. Building additional reservoirs would mean more storage space for the settlement during non-peak hours and that would also mean more water would be available during hours of peak use. De Beer estimated that the settlement would exceed the rate at which the fountain replenished itself within 5 years and wanted to best maximise its use. By building additional reservoirs the settlement could triple its water capacity. He also stated that the filtration system needed to be upgraded.

The current vice chairman, Louis Pretorius, was the next person given a chance to speak. He was responsible for developing the electricity infrastructure. He said money was needed for additional electricity lines and that the residents had to work on a way to better use the bulk electricity bought from ESKOM, this applied particularly to winter when electricity use was high. Before Pretorius could continue one of the dissidents stood up and loudly started screaming that the discussion about an upgrade of the infrastructure was out of order because Venter's team should handle all necessary upgrades in the future. Pretorius lashed out angrily on the microphone that he was not out of order. The meeting descended into chaos again, with members slinging insults at each other across the hall. Groenewald stepped in, also visibly angry, and exclaimed that the meeting was not out of order because Venter had stated the *status quo* remained in Kleinfontein until the settlement was formalised. After some time the tension dissipated and Pretorius was given an opportunity to continue. He explained that the current supply of energy wasn't enough to meet the needs of the residents and all additional infrastructure built in the settlement would be added to the calculations made by Venter's team, the money spent would not be lost.

Pretorius then told the hall that he wanted to address the them personally because several people in the settlement had made accusations against him that he was rich and could easily lend money to Kleinfontein. He turned angry again as he said this and his voice was tense. He referred to an incident in the past where he was able to facilitate an interest-free loan to the settlement. A friend of his had transferred money to him which he then made available to Kleinfontein. Many people thought this was his personal money but it was not. He had to take the money from his friend in

that manner otherwise the cooperative would have had to pay an interest. He said that he was hurt by all the accusations made by the people in the settlement against him. He was 70 years old and could not retire because he had to continue working in order to look after himself and his wife. He spent a lot of his energy to help Kleinfontein without asking any money for his services and that he did not appreciate it when people who did not help at all were unreasonably critical of him. There some silence after this.

A session for questions and proposals about the motion to acquire a loan followed. Various questions were asked and some alternative strategies were proposed. Albert Smit proposed using JoJo tanks to temporarily store water instead of building additional reservoirs. De Beer answered that the cost of 20 JoJo tanks would be R100 000 and this would be a cost greater than having to build a reservoir. Using 20 JoJo tanks would be harder than using an efficient reservoir and it would be a permanent investment. A question was also raised about using alternative energy sources such as solar panels. Pretorius responded by saying that solar panels take too long to pay themselves back and that they were very faulty.

Someone stood up and spoke about the *Oostelike Grond*, a piece of property KBK recently acquired next to the settlement's main entrance. The person said he knew many people were unhappy about it but before he could continue Smit calmly intervened and said that the *Oostelike Grond* could now have become a boon for the settlement and would not be a burden anymore. By subdividing the property KBK would be able to resell the individual properties at a premium as they are located next to a tarred road. He said that some estimates had been made on the possible value of resale and KBK could get as much as ZAR30 million. Some people in the audience responded happily when he said this. Smit went on to say that the money could be used to cover almost all costs incurred by Venter's team. He felt that conflict over the property should no longer continue. When he was done an old man said he had gone for a walk on the *Oostelike Grond* and found that the soil was as hard as rock, and that building houses there would be difficult. He also stated that it was located next to Galagos Estate which was 'black' and that KBK had no control over it. He suggested the directors instead consider selling some of the other

properties owned by KBK. Groenewald responded by saying the directors would consider all options available to them before any decision is made.

Smit raised the issue of building infrastructure again and asked the directors whether they could hold back and let Venter's team do their investigations first before they proceeded with any of their own plans. De Beer responded by saying that Kleinfontein's needs would have to be met irrespective of Venter's findings and that it should be taken into account that the longer KBK waited the more water the settlement lost. He stated that the fountain's water was the only natural resource they had and that it should be used in the best possible way.

Someone suggested that the people who refuse to pay their levies should finance the loans being requested by the directors because non-payment had crippled the settlement. Some of the others in the room agreed with him but the directors did not respond with much.

Pieterse commented that the problems faced in Kleinfontein had a long history. He said that the units in the settlement were sold for too little in the founding years and that this had now started to catch up with them. The first residents were the ones winning because they were benefitting from the fact that other people paying increased levies were making up the initial investment that the first residents did not make. Groenewald responded by saying that Pieterse had a point but during the founding phase of the settlement their aim was to get as many people to move there as possible. By making the units inexpensive they managed to attract more people.

It was 15:00 at this point and everyone in the room was clearly tired. Someone proposed a motion to continue this part of the discussion at a later stage. Groenewald agreed that it was a good idea and it would also give the directors more time to provide the members a better presentation on what was needed in the settlement. He put the motion to the floor and it passed by show of hands. He asked that the meeting be concluding by singing the fourth verse of *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika*, and so they did:

*Op u Almag vas vertrouend het ons vadere gebou:
skenk ook ons die krag, o Here, om te handhaaf en te hou--*

*dat die erwe van ons vaad're vir ons kinders erwe bly:
knegte van die Allerhoogste, teen die hele wêreld vry.
Soos ons vadere vertrou het, leer ook ons vertrou, o Heer:
Met ons land en met ons nasie sal dit wel wees, God regeer!*

6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have highlighted several things which are important for understanding how the settlement of Kleinfontein came to be where it was in 2012. It is important to again highlight the context within which these events have taken place - Kleinfontein was founded in 1992 and had been maintained as a whites-only settlement since then by using various laws which were, on the face of it, at odds with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. While it is quite clear that the founders were explicitly interested in creating something that would become a *volkstaat*, this had not happened and in fact the situation at the end of 2011 suggested that they had taken several steps backwards, by becoming more incorporated into the general administration of post-apartheid South Africa. The social situation I described above shows that the residents were in fact more concerned with issues relating to finance than with the goal to creating self-determination for Afrikaners.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

At the start of my research I did not know what I would encounter when I arrived in Kleinfontein. I did, however, have certain expectations. Having read the available literature on Orania and other literature relating to what a 'growth point for Afrikaner self-determination' (Van Heerden 1990) is meant to be, my expectation was that there would be concerted efforts in Kleinfontein to have established some form of industry that would allow the settlement to have its own economic core. The theory in the literature was that these 'growth points' would have to become economically viable and independent from the rest of South Africa, in order to be self-sustaining.

But upon my arrival in the settlement to start doing field research, it became clear that there was no such industry, and instead nearly all of the local employment, following a policy of *volkseie arbeid*,⁷⁴ was concentrated in being employed by the cooperative or by private individuals. Had there been any such industry, it would have allowed me to investigate this aspect concretely, as I had thought the use of *volkseie arbeid* would be a big departure from the relationships between employers and labourers in the rest of South Africa. This reality forced me to focus on the most glaring and obvious aspect of the settlement, the disputes affecting the practicalities of running the settlement on a day-to-day basis outlined in Chapter 5.

Although it is not conventional to add new information in the final chapter of a dissertation, the point about creating an alternative economic model is too important to be left unmentioned. The fact that such industrial development has not occurred is an integral part of the way in which Kleinfontein has developed into what it is at present. Because this is so, I will spend some time outlining what such an alternative economic model might have meant. Thereafter, I will dwell briefly on what has in fact happened with regard to employer-employee relations in Kleinfontein.

⁷⁴ Translation: people's own labour.

It is with this in mind that I devote the remainder of this chapter to understanding the continuities that exist between Kleinfontein and the policy of apartheid. The way in which the policy of apartheid was applied in practice was never in accordance with the ideals on which the policy was built. Instead, 'apartheid' in practice was a watered-down form of the original ideal and it is also this reality that informed the creation of Kleinfontein. Most of the studies relating to settlements such as Kleinfontein have relied on applying concepts such as ethnicity (De Beer 2006), culture (Pienaar 2007), identity (De Beer 2006; Pienaar 2007; Blomerus 2009), race and ideology to people and seeing how these people fit into those categories. I suggest that while there is some merit in considering the role of these categories, the way in which they have been applied obscures a thorough understanding of places like Kleinfontein. Instead, research concerning such settlements should, first and foremost, be informed by ethnographic field research which considers the day-to-day activities of the people.

The chapter starts by considering what an alternative economic model of Kleinfontein might have been had it been created. This is followed by a brief history of the idea of apartheid. The chapter concludes by engaging with the studies that have already been conducted about similar settlements. Hence I make some alternative suggestions for analysis.

6.2 An alternative modernity and Kleinfontein

Kleinfontein's mission statement reads as follows:

To develop the property in our possession into a living space for its freedom-loving members of the Boere-Afrikanervolk, where all facets of their unique volksbestaan (nationality or volk-existence), of which the Christian faith, language and culture are the most important, can be lived without threat or hindrance in a thriving local economy that is based on volkseie arbeid (own labour).⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Mission statement of Kleinfontein found at <http://www.kleinfontein.net/> (last accessed on 30 November 2012).

As can be seen from this statement, part of Kleinfontein's mission is that it wanted to develop the property in its possession into a 'local thriving economy that is based on *volkseie arbeid*'. When the settlement was envisioned, the idea was that *Boere-Afrikaners* with the energy and resources to create light industries would be attracted to go and live there. **Figure 3.1** in Chapter 3 shows that these light industries would have been located at the southernmost point of the settlement. But these light industries were never created and this area was never used. The reason for this is a combination of two sectors. First, the initial wave of residents – lower middle and working class people from the north and west of Pretoria – did not have the resources to start light industries in Kleinfontein and had no particular interest, given their age, in the *volkstaat* story told by the ideologues. Second, the second wave of residents may, in many instances, have had the financial resources to start light industries, but were more interested in remaining in the formal South African economy.

As light industries were never established in any sense in Kleinfontein, the idea related to what a 'local thriving economy' was never developed. During my field research I did, however, pick up minor hints of what it might have entailed if it had been started. The founding of Kleinfontein was premised on the idea that Afrikaners would have to accept 'less' as part of the quest for 'self-determination'. This meant that they would have to accept a small portion of South Africa located within the old Boer republics. It also meant, as can be seen in **Figure 3.2** in Chapter 3 that they would have to give up the economic core of South Africa, located in Johannesburg, and settle instead for creating their own economic core which, initially, would also entail accepting 'less'. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, there was a concerted effort since founding Kleinfontein to adopt a different form of labour relations. Niel de Beer acknowledged needing to forego cheap black labour. Light industrialists would instead have to employ more expensive white labour to ensure the homogeneity of the future whites-only separate state, as well as to maintain the 'moral basis' of such a state. Implied in the use of white labour is that not only that they would have to be paid more, but that the relationship between employers and employees would have to be reconceptualised completely. The employees would have to be relatively skilled, however, as the large supply of unskilled black labourers in the rest of South Africa would make it impossible to

expect light industrialists to hire unskilled white labourers at much higher cost. The idea was that the industries themselves would be centred on the use of skilled labour. In this regard founders of Kleinfontein hoped to take advantage of the fact that skilled white workers in the west of Pretoria had recently lost their jobs as a result of deindustrialisation in the 1980s and 1990s. The establishing of Kleinfontein coincided with the privatisation, downsizing and eventual closure of state owned industries in the west of Pretoria and scores of white labourers had been left jobless (Sharp 2014; Sharp & Van Wyk forthcoming). At the time when Kleinfontein was founded this new model would have been a substantial departure from the existing economic model in South Africa, as it would not have been aimed at the maximization of profit on the part of the owners of industry. It would have involved a partnership – or a sort of venture – between small-scale employers and skilled labour (all of them white).

Barnes and Gilman (2012) note that right wing movements, in some regard similar to the one that founded Kleinfontein, have latched onto alternative economic models to try to build an alternative future. Their particular approach is to suggest that a departure from the dominant economic model is necessary to deal with the impending catastrophe of global warming. They term this model 'industrial modernity'. They suggest that if global warming is to be averted in any substantive way then wealthy industrialised nations would have to accept that the only solution is to accept 'less' (meaning cutting their emissions substantially) and that developing nations would also have to accept 'less' (meaning they have to accept that they cannot emit much more greenhouse gasses than they do presently if they want to develop further). They argue that this will require imagining an alternative modernity to the present one because the primary problem in climate change negotiations has been the inability of countries to accept the political requirements necessary (instead they try to adjust carbon prices and use incentives so that people will use cleaner technology).

Although they cannot foresee precisely what this alternative modernity should be, Barnes and Gilman suggest looking at the 'petty-bourgeois political culture of the North Atlantic capitalism's early and middle industrial eras. This tradition did not call for revolutionary

overthrow of capitalism but rather argued for a modest and cautious (in a sense more “conservative”), more egalitarian and democratic, more decentralised “producerist” capitalism’ (2012: 60-61). They argue that from the American Revolution through to the 1930s the United States had ‘a rich history of democratic populism among skilled craftsmen, artisans, family farmers, and lower-middle-class business people, professionals, and intellectuals, reaching upward into the middle class and downward into the working classes. What these traditions had in common was the demand that self-managed, self-enhancing work and political citizenship be valorised and protected from the depredations of the federalist aristocracy, slaveholders, Wall Street, and monopolies and other large corporations’ (Barnes & Gilman 2012:61). They ‘wanted to promote and support widespread small production, linked together in a “cooperative commonwealth” through large-scale producer co-ops and vigorous political organisation. Political and social identities were rooted in such cooperative and communal arrangements of production, rather than in privatised, individualistic practices of consumption’ (Barnes & Gilman 2012: 61-62).

While the founders of Kleinfontein certainly did not envision their ideal as an answer to global warming they shared many of the sentiments mentioned by Barnes and Gilman about an alternative modernity. In Chapter 4 I showed that one of the founders cited the history of cooperatives as part of the reasoning behind switching the form of ownership from a company to a cooperative. Embedded in his use of Mondragon as a cooperative example was, in all likelihood, the idea that it would offer an economic alternative to privatised and individualistic practices. This makes that collective ownership could have meant more than merely control over the settlement had they been able to attract small-scale industrialists willing participate in a ‘cooperative commonwealth’ and willing to employ *volkseie arbeid*. On this basis they could then have engaged with the market for the benefit of all in Kleinfontein rather than for the financial gain of individuals.

The reality in the settlement today is far different from this ideal. The people who moved to Kleinfontein initially weren’t economically active, but were encouraged to move there on the

basis that they would provide the start-up capital necessary to create a settlement. By the time that the settlement managed to draw people who could potentially start small-scale industries it was apparent that this new set of people were not interested in an alternative modernity and were not going to set these industries up in Kleinfontein. Instead, the newcomers continued to participate in the formal economy outside the settlement, particularly in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The resultant disputes that ensued shortly after they started to arrive were thus not about the creation of a 'local thriving economy' but instead centred on the form of ownership (they wanted individual title) and the quality of services they were accustomed to.

This reality has also meant that white workers employed in pursuit of *volkseie arbeid* play no significant role in the settlement (Sharp & Van Wyk forthcoming). Instead the relationship between workers and employers is the same as the relationship found in the rest of South Africa. Workers in Kleinfontein feel deprived of full personhood and they experience themselves as being marginalised by the shareholders who see them as irresponsible, untrustworthy drunkards. On one occasion a worker emphasised this to me in conversation when he repeatedly referred to himself as a *wit kaffer*. He said this in a sarcastic and humorous sense but was nonetheless serious. His experience, and the experience of other workers in Kleinfontein, is that they are less human than the shareholders of the cooperative who 'own' the homes and for whom they work. Shareholders who treat workers as people who have feelings are the exception rather than the rule. Instead, the relationship between workers and employers is primarily utilitarian, and deprived of substantial interaction apart from the expectation of service. Contrary to the logic that workers are untrustworthy, one worker put it to me like this: 'It was so shit working under that man (a shareholder in Kleinfontein) that I'd rather starve than go back to work for him. People like him don't care about us. The other day one of the workers died at work and they didn't even care, the only thing they cared about was making sure it didn't come out in public. They didn't even allow him to be buried in the cemetery, that's how little they care about any of us'. This puts into question the degree to which white workers in Kleinfontein are really 'drunk, untrustworthy and irresponsible', because the workers are acutely aware that they are really only there on the basis that they can provide a service. There is little reason for workers to have any

real allegiance to their employers. Unlike the shareholders living in Kleinfontein, they have no illusion that the settlement could succeed in any of its raions and would gladly accept work elsewhere if the opportunity presented itself.

6.3 Grand vision of Apartheid, reality and Kleinfontein after Apartheid

As I already suggested, the vision that the founders had about Kleinfontein when they founded the settlement is very different from the way it has turned out. This is not is new: the way in which apartheid was imagined before it was implemented was very different from the way in which the policy of apartheid was applied in practice. The idea on which Kleinfontein was founded is itself not dissimilar to the original idealist vision of apartheid.

In the 1930s and 1940s a debate took place among Afrikaner nationalist intellectuals about 'race relations', 'the native question' and 'the poor white problem'. One manifestation of the debate was the exchange between the *volkekundiges*⁷⁶ who had nationalist sympathies and Alfred Hoernle, a prominent liberal philosopher based at the University of the Witwatersrand⁷⁷. In 1939 Hoernle gave a series of lectures that later formed the body of a book called *South African Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit* (Hoernle 1939). In these lectures he explored how liberals in South Africa could orientate themselves to the policy of segregation. In the face of white domination over the black majority, he argued that liberals should choose a stance that would offer black people the greatest political and economic freedom. They had three options: (i) *Parallelism* - the maintenance of the multi-racial society as the inclusive unit; (ii) *Assimilation* - the maintenance of the multi-racial society but one in which racial differences are abolished through completest fusion, or amalgamation, of the races within each other; or (iii) *Separation* - the breaking up of

⁷⁶ *Volkekundiges* practiced a branch of anthropology which viewed people as having distinct ethnicities which each had distinct cultures. This form of anthropology was practiced at all Afrikaans-medium universities for most of the twentieth century.

⁷⁷ He was also partner to Winifred Hoernle, intellectual descendant of Radcliffe-Brown and influential anthropologist at what would later become known as the department of social anthropology at Witwatersrand University.

the multi-racial society into several racial components as mutually independent social units (Hoernle 1939:158).

Hoernle raised the last point out of awareness that there was a support base among whites for the idea of sundering all ties between the black and white population. This was likely informed by an argument which he had put forward in the early 1930s when he opined that there was a fear among whites that racial mixing would lead to economic competition between white and black people and would lead to suffrage being extended to black people (in which case they would outnumber the whites) (Hoernle, 1934). He considered *separation* to be ‘a complete sundering of association so complete as to destroy the very possibility of effective domination’ (1939:168). He argued that the moral ground for this solution was that in other cases where caste-structures exist they always show tension, friction, conflict, ill-will and bitterness, because of the divisions between the castes, and ‘because in the struggle for exclusive ascendancy the dominant group refuses “rights” to the dominated groups which the latter are not willing to do without’ (Hoernle, 1939:168-169). From this it follows that separation then implies that each of the castes be divided into genuinely separate, self-contained, self-governing societies, each in principle homogeneous within itself. On the basis they could co-operate on an equal footing in recognition of each other’s independence.

Hoernle did not think that *separation* was tenable because it could not be implemented in practice. Whites, he argued, would never be able to do without black labour. But this explanation of the principle of separation sparked the interest of P.J. Coertze, who was later to become the most influential *volkekundige* in South Africa, and who wrote in a publication called *Ons Eie Boek*⁷⁸ that ‘we have confidence that, if separation is the right solution between White and Black in South Africa, then it will be realised. The *will* to realise it will be found’ (1940:20). Hoernle responded to Coertze in a personal letter by saying ‘I say only this: if you and your friends can realise a real and fair separation, so that whites are not dependent on black labourers anymore,

⁷⁸ Translation: Our Own Book.

and still allow black people to own land where they can have an adequate economic life, then I can assure you of my sympathy and support' (Coertze 1991:31).

The exchange between the two eventually led to Coertze co-authoring the first publication (*Die Oplossing van die Naturellevraagstuk*,⁷⁹ with F.J. Language and B.I.C. van Eeden) in social science language that explicitly endorsed the idea that a policy of apartheid should be pursued in South Africa to deal with the 'native question'. Their argument was that apartheid as a policy should be implemented on the basis of ethnic difference between people in South Africa, given that ethnic unit had its own culture and desired its own territory in which it could give expression to its own unique culture. They proposed that blacks had to be steadily withdrawn from the white economy, transferred to reserves and replaced by white labour. They also advocated the regeneration of traditional institutions in these reserves so that each group was 'healthy in the *volkseie*' (Giliomee 2003:385).

As history has shown the ideals that informed the policy of apartheid were never implemented in practice. Application of the policy resulted in the economic, social and political deprivation of the black majority of South Africa, largely through the homeland system which denied black people any meaningful urban rights or any share in the economy which they laboured to build. The white 'caste' of which Hoernle had spoken was maintained throughout apartheid, and by way of excluding black people from meaningful participation in the economy they furthered their material wealth. This was not merely a case of ideological dishonesty. 'Apartheid' as a policy was never clearly defined before the National Party won the election in 1948, and they had to define it more clearly in order to put it into practice. It is in this regard that they commissioned F.R. Tomlinson to devise a scheme through which 'apartheid' could be made practicable. Ultimately the Tomlinson report, heavily influenced by the contributions made by *volkekundiges* such as Coertze, argued that a wide range of financial and social investments would be needed to create self-contained separate areas for black people. In the event the National Party government proved itself to be unwilling to follow this recommendation. The result was a miserly form of the

⁷⁹ Translation: Solution to the Native Question.

idealised apartheid of the 1940s, where black people were restricted from citizenship in urban areas and where negligible capital was invested in the homeland areas.

The ideological foundation on which Kleinfontein was started bears considerable resemblance to ideas espoused by Hoernle, Coertze, Language and Van Eeden. The difference, however, is self-evident. Where ‘thriving’ homeland areas were to be created during the apartheid era, Kleinfontein is now to be developed into a ‘thriving local economy’ where *Boere-Afrikaners* can live out their ‘freedom’ in their own ‘living space’. This is an inversion of the ‘homeland’ system (Vestergaard, 2001: 2; Chidester, Dexter & James, 2004: 305).

But how does one understand what has been happening in the settlement since it was founded in 1992? Is it possible to analyse it in terms of the discourse of self-determination for Afrikaners? Is it sensible to investigate Kleinfontein’s ‘success’ using the historical development of the *volkstaat* idea? Can the prism of ‘Afrikaner identity’ take into account the different material interests that people have? Does the use of the concepts of culture, ethnicity and ideology further an understanding of the day-to-day lives of the Kleinfontein residents?

6.4 Failure of Kleinfontein, Pienaar and the pitfalls of discourse analysis

Although not interchangeable, discourse, ideology, identity, culture and ethnicity are all related in so far as they are socially constructed and are instances of the ‘bigger narratives’ of particular people. The application of these ideas as analytical tools has been the primary way in which academics have tried to understand Orania (De Beer, 2006; Pienaar, 2007; and Blomerus, 2009; this is true for Todd (2008) to a lesser extent). This is not to say there have not been other marginal studies that have touched on other aspects of Orania (such as Kotze, 2003; Steyn, 2004; Labuschagne, 2008; Hues & Morgan, 2010; and Cavanagh 2013), but these studies were not done in an attempt to understand Orania as a settlement.

The timelessness of Afrikaner identity that ties white Afrikaans speakers together is a central theme of Pienaar's analysis, even though she acknowledges there is no coherent idea of what the identity of those in Orania is. She even acknowledges that not everyone moved to Orania to create a *volkstaat* but that some were attracted to it for reasons of affordability and security. More than this, she makes mention of internal differences in Orania. All of this is dwarfed, however, by her obsession to attempt to understand this against the backdrop of Afrikaner identity as something all encompassing. It is unclear where she draws the boundary of Afrikaner identity. Although she underlines the fact that she focuses on right-wing Afrikaners, she lapses, repeatedly, into superimposing an Afrikaner identity that is not limited to right-wingers. Moreover Pienaar uses this notion of Afrikaner identity as an argument for the ideal of creating a *volkstaat*. She even goes so far as to describe this ideal of giving expression to Afrikaner identity in a *volkstaat* as 'a beautiful ideal [which] could easily be smothered' (2007:112).

Pienaar had two main sources at her disposal. One was the result of a questionnaire administered by Orania's management. The other consisted of historical documents and the official news documents produced about the settlement. Her exclusive reliance on these proved to be the greatest challenge to understanding Orania. Her sources of research informants were unable to capture the nuances of daily life in the settlement. A reading of her dissertation creates the impression that the *volkstaat* ideal and the identity of the residents were the issues people dealt with on a daily basis. She ignored the fact, mentioned in her own writing, that this was far from the case.

There is nothing wrong, of course, with considering questions of ideology and identity. Orania cannot be understood without understanding of the ideology of Afrikaner self-determination that animated its founding and continues to animate the minds of the leaders and those who dream about transforming the settlement into a *volkstaat*. Nor can it be understood, without understanding that those managing the settlement want those living to have a shared, homogenous Afrikaner as well as sharing the same cultural characteristics. The idea behind its creation was clearly in line with Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, where each

‘national’ group has its own territory, language, religion, culture, history and identity (1991). In this line of thought it ‘freedom’ can only be experienced when a national group has its own national state, for without it there is unfreedom and oppression. This was the premise, indeed, that informed Pienaar’s study and her conclusions.

Pienaar is not alone in her approach. In similar vein De Beer (2006) openly acknowledged his involvement in the movements that seek to establish a *volkstaat* in South Africa, one of which is the *Boery-Vryheidsbeweging*. Unlike Pienaar he did conduct some participant observation field research. His entry point into Orania was that it is an ethnic project and that it should be studied in such terms so that an assessment can ultimately be made about how viable the settlement is. He disregards the ‘economic potential’ of the region and chooses instead to ‘ascertain whether on-going stimulus of the ideological conviction of the key role players is maintained’ (De Beer 2006:106). In doing this, he found that some success has been made in terms of establishing a settlement where the way of life was maintained with ‘predominantly homogenous cultural features’ (De Beer, 2006:113) but the ethnography he cites to support this is thin. As with Pienaar (2007), he hints at underlying differences among the residents but does not pursue them further.

Over-reliance on the notions of ethnicity, culture, identity and the ideology of Afrikaner self-determination detracted from the ability of Pienaar and De Beer to reveal the realities that make Orania as it exists today. In an ironic twist, although it was not my aim, my approach to consider the practical realities faced by those living in Kleinfontein, as well as their class backgrounds, has provided a better opportunity to assess the ‘success’ and the ‘challenges’ of such a settlement.

A ‘bottom-up’ approach based on doing ethnographic research offers a better means to capture the nuances that concern the residents of such a settlement. While a leader or an ideologue may debate the state of Kleinfontein as a ‘growth point for Afrikaner self-determination’ and its

progress towards this goal, it does not mean that others in the settlement share the same concerns. As I have noted, many of the older residents were sympathetic to the creation of a *volkstaat* but moved to the settlement primarily for reasons related to affordability and security. The prospect of their eventual death in the settlement shows that their focus is on this phase of their life, and that they would rather leave the battle for self-determination in the hands of the younger residents as long as it does not infringe too much on their lives. Even the ideologues readily acknowledge that the daily realities of dealing with the practical problems experienced in the settlement overshadow the attempt to bring such a *volkstaat* to fruition. It is from the practical problems around property rights and the quality of services that ideological divergence has emerged among the residents. This does not mean there is now a coherent agreement within each of the two groups of people about the ideology to which each subscribes; the fluctuation of opinion about what Kleinfontein is and should be is likely to continue as practical difficulties manifest themselves.

The ethnographic approach is important because it is able to take account of the similarities between apartheid and the present attempts to create a *volkstaat* through the market. It also exposes similar reasons as to why the latter cannot be made to work in practice, although the differences must be taken into account as well. Unlike the rulers during apartheid, the leaders in Kleinfontein do not possess the power to set the terms on which residents inhabit the settlement, and do not possess the political leverage to negotiate a deal with government to establish a legally defined *volkstaat*. For them to maintain the settlement to a degree acceptable to government, they have to maintain the settlement as an undivided property, and this has set severe limits on what they are able to do. Nor can they control the laws governing the settlement's ownership and they are forced to try to adapt when these laws change, as was seen when the Cooperatives Act was changed. Collective ownership raises a secondary problem that they face; the interests of all the residents have to be taken into consideration when decisions are made, but any decision taken may be at the expense of residents who do not share the same interests as the majority living there. The potential for internal disagreement and consequent paralysis is built into the system of collective ownership in this way. The decision-making

mechanisms in place in the Cooperatives Act imply that there are winners and losers when voting takes place at general meetings.

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