

**Dance to Advance: The *Rieldans*, Identity and Empowerment in
Williston (Northern Cape)**

Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology
(Honours Research Project)

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

1.1. Research problem and rationale

This research project looks at the *Rieldans*,¹ a traditional Nama dance form, and its significance as a source of identity and community empowerment in Williston, a town in the Northern Cape. A qualitative research methodology was adopted, as it best served the exploratory nature of my research design.

When the first permanent European settlers established themselves at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, they found the land inhabited by indigenous KhoiKhoi and San groups. The Nama people of the Northern Cape are a KhoiKhoi grouping who trace their origins back into the deep pre-colonial past (Freedman, 1973:688). In the apartheid era the state classified them as ‘coloured’,² but elements of Nama culture, including their language, have survived. In recent times, traditional Nama dance forms have begun to receive renewed attention in the public sphere. The *Nama Stap* is one such dance form that has been handed down over generations (Johnson-Jones, 2011:1). According to Van Wyk (2014:184), it embraces symbolic movement sequences and serves as an identifier of Nama-Khoisan culture and heritage. The *Rieldans* also finds its roots in Nama-Khoisan tradition, but is a hybrid form of the *Nama Stap* and originates much later (Van Wyk, 2012:52).

Van Wyk (2012:52) claims that what the *Rieldans* might have looked like in its purest form is not known. What is known is that it is similar to the *Nama Stap* in terms of its cultural heritage, and was being performed by youth in working-class communities in the Northern Cape from the 1940s, as a form of socialisation (Van Wyk, 2012:52). Today it is still a predominantly youthful and working-class phenomenon that has taken off to such an extent that its newfound popularity has allowed it to be displayed on international stages. Locally the *Rieldans* is performed as a form of entertainment at social events at schools and festivals and, more recently, at dance competitions at the Grahamstown Festival, the *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* (the Oudtshoorn Festival/KKNK), and the *Oesfees* at the Solms-Delta estate near Franschhoek (Hauptfleisch, 2007:83). However, despite its growing popularity and some attention in the popular media, it is still a relatively under-researched phenomenon.

According to Hauptfleisch (2007), the rise of local arts festivals has provided a platform for the emergence of new hybrid dance forms and the promotion of cultural identities through the

¹ Very little is written and known about the origins of the term *Rieldans* However, Van Wyk (2012) states that it is through the merging of Khoisan and Nama dance traditions with contemporary influences such as Scottish reel dancing that generated the term *Rieldans*.

² I place the term ‘coloured’ in inverted commas in recognition that it is a contested term.

resurrection of ‘traditional’ practices as well as the encouragement of new enterprises. Thus, the performance of the *Rieldans* at local festivals can be linked to the re-emergence of Nama-Khoisan identity. At the same time, Hauptfleisch also insists that the festival circuit provides an opportunity for local tourism, which has encouraged an interest in ‘traditional’ cultural practices among local people as well as tourists from elsewhere. According to Kay (2000:415), this has encouraged community development workers to consider the potential that artistic expression has for enabling community empowerment and a stronger sense of community identity. This, coupled with my own interest in the potential of the performing arts in community development, has sparked my interest in this under-researched topic.

In the rest of this chapter, I discuss my research objectives, provide some background context on Williston, and reflect on my research methodology. In chapter 2, I set out the general conceptual framework that has informed my study, beginning with an historical framing of Nama and ‘coloured’ identity as well as cultural hybridity within South Africa and the Northern Cape. Thereafter, I reflect on the performing arts as tools for positive cultural expression in post-apartheid South Africa, and the issue of personal and community empowerment through development. In Chapter 3, I discuss my research findings based primarily on field trips, first to Williston in the Northern Cape, and then to Clanwilliam and Lambertsbaai.

1.2. Research objectives and key research questions

As already indicated, the primary objective of this research is to explore the *Rieldans* phenomenon, through a case study of a dance group based in Williston in the Northern Cape Province. I am interested in the meaning(s) this cultural practice has for the individuals who participate in it, and to consider the potential that it has for community empowerment, including economic development through, for instance, cultural tourism.

My primary research questions were thus as follows:

- What meaning(s) does the *Rieldans* hold for participants?
- Does the *Rieldans* contribute to a sense of personal and/or community empowerment through development, and if so, in what way(s)?

Subsidiary questions included the following:

- Why do people participate in the *Rieldans*? Is it voluntary, or is it something that they are required to do by, for instance, school educators or family members?

- Are there economic benefits for the local communities, e.g. local recreational activities, sponsorship, and tourism? If there are economic benefits flowing from this, are they going to the participants?
- Who is promoting the *Rieldans* and why?³

1.3. Introduction to the Karoo and my research site, Williston

1.3.1. Background

The Karoo is a vast arid and sparsely populated region in the western interior of South Africa that covers about 40% of the country's land surface (approximately 400,000 km²) (Atkinson, 2016:200). Towns in this inland desert are generally located between 60-70km from one another. The Karoo is comprised of two unique biomes: the Succulent Karoo and the Nama Karoo.

The *Rieldans* group that is the subject of my research is based in Williston, a small town on the Sak River in the mid-western Karoo. In 2004, Williston had a total population of 4,177 people, making it one of the smallest of Karoo towns (Nel, Taylor, Hill, & Atkinson, 2011:402). Williston was initially called Amandelboom, after an almond tree that was planted there by a Dutch settler, but it was renamed in 1883 to honour the former British Cape colonial secretary, Hampden Willis (Robins, 2016:70).

According to Robins (1997:27) and Penn (2005:20), land dispossession in the Northern Cape can be traced back to the late 17th century, thus providing the area with a past deeply rooted in colonial occupation. In 1845 the German Rhenish Mission Society established a mission station at Amandelboom, in order to minister to the semi-nomadic Baster people; the latter were largely the offspring of white Boer fathers and KhoiKhoi mothers (Robins, 2016:70). Following bloody skirmishes in the 1860s in what was then a violent frontier world, virtually all 'bushmen' (San) were exterminated from the area by the joint forces of the Basters and Afrikaner trekboers. Subsequently, the Basters lost their land to the very trekboers that they had fought with, and were in turn pushed northwards into present-day Namibia. Today, Robins (2016:70) notes, the history of the bushmen and Basters in Williston is barely visible: '[i]t is a forgotten past whose only contemporary traces are in the beaten faces of the Williston poor'.

According to Statistics South Africa (SSA) (2016), although people classified as 'coloured' today account for only 10% of the population nationally, they account for over 40% of the Northern Cape

³ Given the limited scope of an Honours research project I was not able to explore this set of questions in great depth so my findings need to be considered preliminary in nature.

population, which totals just over 1 190 000; the white population only accounts for around 8% of this, and the black population for over 50%, but located mostly in its eastern area. In the Karoo region, Nel *et al.* (2011:404) present statistics showing that the 'coloured' population has grown the most (669%), followed by the black population (463%). In contrast, the white population has declined by 67% between the same periods of time (Nel *et al.*, 2011:403). Williston is a town with an increasingly large 'coloured' population; in this context the purpose that the *Rieldans* serves for the community, and especially for its participants, is called into question.

1.3.2. My introduction to Williston

On Wednesday the 31st of August 2016, I drove to Williston from Stellenbosch University to attend the annual Williston *Winterfees* [Winter Festival] at which a number of *Rieldans* groups would be performing; they were competing in the preliminary rounds of the annual Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuur Vereeniging (ATKV) *Rieldans* competition that was to be held during the festival. I was bubbling with excitement at finally being able to explore a new landscape that I had never been exposed to before. Driving north and east through towns such as Piketberg, Citrusdal, Clanwilliam, Vanrhynsdorp, Nieuwoudville and Calvinia, I began to feel increasingly vulnerable as the landscape changed from mountains laden with vineyards and greenery, to vast expanses of barren land and stony silence. This flat, dry, and quiet environment immediately captured my attention; its unique beauty, unlike any place I had ever seen before, gripped me. As I neared Williston, I found that even from just 10 km away I was still unable to see the town and began to wonder how small it really was. Then almost as if it had a mind of its own, the horizon revealed the small town to my left, placed at the base of a large hill with the name 'WILLISTON' spelt out on it in white stones.

I managed to spend the last few hours of light before nightfall in Williston walking around the town. The houses were quaint and beautiful in their own way, and the storekeepers of the one supermarket that I walked into were very helpful and friendly. From the moment the first 'native' resident greeted me, a distinctive power dynamic was clear. The 'coloured' residents referred to me as *Baas* [boss] or *Meneer* [mister] several times in one sentence, and this despite my introducing myself by my first name. I noticed that several 'coloured' people were clustered outside the local bottle store; once they had caught sight of me, a number of them, ranging in age from approximately five to 50, flocked towards me in search of a hand-out. I tried to neutralize the situation and engage in general conversation but with little effect on their intentions with regard to me.

Once the sun had set, I decided to grab a light meal at local restaurant called Mannah, where I saw a number of white customers having a drink at the bar and some well-dressed black customers at a table enjoying a meal. Every now and again a young 'coloured' boy would come into the restaurant and ask for money from the customers, until the manager would ask him to leave, but in a kindly manner.

Later the manager began speaking to the boy, referring to him by name and cracking a joke here and there. Inside this small restaurant, I met a couple of the local white inhabitants of the area, including the soundman for the festival, the local doctor, and the husband of the secondary school headmistress, who happened to also be the former municipal manager. Everyone was extremely hospitable and interested in my project.

As I left the restaurant after my meal, at about 8.30pm, a young 'coloured' man in his early 20s pressed me for some money. I told him that I had none, but asked for his name. He replied 'My name is Mario, *Baas*'. I told him that a man of his age need not call me *Meneer* or *Baas*, to which he responded: 'But that's what we are taught to call white people'. It was at this moment that the reality of the cross-cutting divisions of race and class in my research site became apparent to me.

1.4. Research methodology

I chose to adopt a qualitative methodology due to the exploratory nature of my study and my interest in understanding the meanings that people in Williston attribute to the *Rieldans*. Qualitative research methodologies are particularly well suited to the study of meaning, because they lend themselves to viewing the social world through the eyes of the people that one is studying. Bryman (2012:399) has highlighted how conducting research in a less-structured way, using qualitative research methods, enhances the possibility of revealing the perspectives of the people one is studying.

1.4.1. Research design

I decided to adopt a case-study design, because it would allow me to conduct an in-depth investigation of one example of what I wanted to study in its particular setting. In this case I was able to identify a school-based *Rieldans* group in Williston called '*Die Stofskoptrappers*'⁴ whose teacher and members agreed to participate in my research project. This allowed me to study key social processes of the respective *Rieldans* group, whilst taking into consideration the various concepts and ideas between the relationship of dance and community empowerment and identity that have influenced me. The unit of analysis in this project was thus the selected *Rieldans* group, which included all the individuals involved in or with the group, including the musicians, the teacher, the festival/competition planners, and of course the dancers themselves.

Single-case case studies have commonly been misconceived as being a method that prevents a researcher from making generalisations and is highly susceptible to the subjective interpretations of the researcher. In choosing a case study method, and distancing myself from this misconception of

⁴ Directly translated as 'the dust kicking steppers'.

case study research design, I have been influenced by Flyvbjerg (2016). He argues that the case study relies on falsification, rather than verification, and that the criticism of subjectivism can apply to all methods. Furthermore, all experts in any field operate on the basis of intimate knowledge of thousands of concrete cases – it is only through experience with individual cases that one moves from being a beginner to being an expert in a field. According to Flyvbjerg (2016:224), the case study is best utilized when the purpose is not to prove something in particular, but rather, to learn. Here the case study has the advantage of being able to ‘close in’ on real-life situations, testing views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in the field.

Flyvbjerg (2016:230) also argues that just because knowledge cannot be formally generalised does not mean that it does not contribute to a collective process of knowledge accumulation. Depending on one’s research problem, a ‘representative’ case or a random sample is not necessarily the most appropriate research strategy, as atypical or extreme cases may often be far more revealing of information about local meanings and relationships in their specific context, as they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied.

1.4.2. Selection of group and participants

The preliminary scoping trip I made to the area in September 2016 enabled me to identify possible dance groups for further follow-up. Only seven groups participated in the Williston *Winterfees*, from three different areas (Williston, Calvinia, Brandvlei), and none of them had any adults participating, although I had been told that this would indeed be the case. All of the dancers were ‘coloured’. Six of the seven groups were mixed-gender groups, while one was an all-girls group from Williston. The seven groups were split into junior and senior categories. The group that I was most drawn to was ‘*Die Stofskoptrappers*’, a group from Williston that was taught by a white lady called Elmarie (a pseudonym).

‘*Die Stofskoptrappers*’ claimed second place in the *Winterfees* competition and this impressed me immensely. There were eight dancers, four young women and four young men. I was surprised that a *Rieldans* group under the leadership of a white teacher could place second in a *Rieldans* competition, something I had deemed only to appeal to ‘coloured’ participants. When I spoke to the teacher, she offered to let me do my research with her group. The group was younger than I had originally intended to study, but with no adult groups in sight, this seemed a good opportunity to pursue, provided that I could negotiate the ethical issues around working with adolescents and secure the consent of their parents. Only one of the dancers was over 18, while one was 12 and still in Primary School. The others were between 14 and 16 and all in high school.

1.4.3. Data collection methods

Observation

I used observation of the *Rieldans* group and its activities as a major data collection method. I was able to observe ‘*Die Stofskoptrappers*’ compete in the preliminary rounds of the *Rieldans* competition, at Williston in September 2016, and interact with some members of the group. This was followed by a further field trip in October 2016 when I was able to stay with the group over three days, first during their practice sessions in Lambertsbaai before the ATKV *Rieldans* Semi-Final competition, as well as during the competition in Clanwilliam on the 22nd of October, and afterwards back in Lambertsbaai. The group was housed in the Lamberstbaai High School hall where I also stayed, with the authorisation of the school and the group’s teacher, who was also present. During both fieldtrips, I was able to observe the social circumstances within which the group competed, as well as conduct more formal interviews with some of the older dancers and interact informally with the group, their teacher and the musicians.

Semi-structured and unstructured interviews

I supplemented my participant observation with in-depth semi-structured interviews with key players in the group, as shown in Table 1 below. I conducted four in-depth semi-structured interviews with two male and two female dancers. In addition, I was able to conduct unstructured interviews with the group’s dance teacher, both musicians who toured with the group, (John and Karen, not their actual names); the Williston *Winterfees* organiser, and a judge from the ATKV *Rieldans* semi-final competition (Carel, also a pseudonym). The demographic information of participants is shown in Table 2 below. All interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, the home language of the participants.

Focus groups

In addition, I conducted one focus group discussion with all eight dancers, also shown in Table 1. This created a good space for the joint exploration of the meaning that the *Rieldans* holds among the group. The focus group discussion was conducted in Afrikaans.

Table 1. *Interviewees for focus group and in-depth semi-structured interviews.*⁵

| Interviewee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Participation | I & FG | I & FG | I & FG | I & FG | FG | FG | FG | FG |
| Age | 19 | 15 | 16 | 14 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 12 |
| Gender | M | F | F | M | M | M | F | F |
| Race | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |

⁵ I – semi-structured interview; FG – focus group discussion; M – male; F – female; C – ‘coloured’; HSW – Hoerskool Williston; WPS – Williston Primary School.

Table 2. *Interviewees for unstructured interviews.*

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------|------------|------------|--------------------|-------|
| Interviewee | Elmarie | John | Karen | Peter | Carel |
| Gender | F | M | F | M | M |
| Race | W | C | C | W | C |
| Role | Teacher | Musician 1 | Musician 2 | Event Organiser | Judge |

1.4.5. Data processing and analysis

I decided to use thematic analysis for my interviews since I had already developed certain ideas regarding hybridity, empowerment and identity through my literature review, but wanted to be open to whatever emerged through my observations in the field. According to Bryman (2012:580), a theme is a category identified by the analyst through his/her data that relates directly to the research focus and, often, the research questions as well. These themes were identified through rigorous phases of transcript and field note filtration, where the responses that I received were initially coded into broad categories, for example: the meanings of *Rieldans*; personal and community empowerment and development; and tourism and sponsorship. After I had clustered all my responses into these broad categories, I proceeded to recode the responses within the broader themes, to create more refined sub-categories. I used the broader themes to build on the refined sub-categories/codes identified in my transcripts and field notes, providing me with the basis for a theoretical understanding of my data, thus, allowing me to make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus.

All the interviews and focus group discussions were digitally voice-recorded and manually transcribed, whilst the observations made in the field were jotted down onto a note pad and later written up more formally. The findings that developed have been presented according to the objectives that were set out for this study, namely, determining the meaning(s) that the *Rieldans* holds for participants and exploring whether the *Rieldans* contributes to a sense of personal and/or community empowerment among its participants.

1.4.6. Ethical considerations

In order to ensure that this study was conducted in an ethical manner I adhered to the principles of ethical research laid out by the International Sociological Association (ISA) (International Sociological Association, 2001) as well as the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of Stellenbosch University. This required that my research is ethically sound regarding not only my research

procedures but also with regard to the possible publication and the communication of my research results. None of the participants in this study were given false information about the objectives of the study, nor was this study designed to deceive the informants in any way whatsoever. The privacy of the dance group was protected through giving the dance group a fictitious name after discussion with the group's representatives, and all participants in this research were given pseudonyms.

Before conducting my research I received departmental clearance from the headmistress of the high school that all the dancers attended (see Appendix 4). I was required to send the following documents to the headmistress: a copy of my research proposal, both my informed consent and assent forms (see Appendix 2 and 3), and my aide memoire for the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 5) and focus group discussion (see Appendix 6). I provided all participants with the relevant informed consent or assent forms one week prior to conducting the research, allowing them to review the documents before I proceeded to conduct my research. Participants who were below the age of eighteen were required to have their parents or guardian review the assent form during the week prior to the research. Alternatively, participants over the age of eighteen were allowed to sign the consent form themselves, or simply provide verbal consent before the research was conducted. Parents or suitable guardians signed all assent forms before personal data was collected, and all participants over the age of eighteen in this study chose to either sign the consent forms or provide verbal consent.

1.4.7. Limitations

This study is specific to a *Rieldans* group called '*Die Stofskoptrappers*' who are based in the geographical location of Williston in the Northern Cape province, although I was able to observe other dance groups from different provinces and areas in the competitions. The major limitation to this project is that I had a very limited time to spend on the project. Given the limited time frame for and scope of my study as an Honours research project as well as the distances involved in travelling to my research sites,, I was unable to spend as much time with the dancers in their home environment as I would have liked. Moreover, I was unable to do follow-up work on the economics and community empowerment potential of the *Rieldans*, thus, this section is less developed.

As stated earlier, following my initial trip to Williston in September, I followed the group to a competition in Clanwilliam in October and stayed with them for two nights in a school hall in Lambertsbaai. This was the only time that I could conduct interviews and discussions with the group members, and with a tight practice schedule, and the keen desire amongst participants to spend their free time at the beach or socialising amongst themselves in the minibus listening to music, it was difficult to complete all the in-depth semi-structured interviews that I had initially aimed to achieve. Moreover, all interviews had to be undertaken in Afrikaans, which meant that it was often difficult to accurately capture sentiments when translating them into English.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

In this section, I set out the general conceptual framework and review the literature that has informed my study of the *Rieldans*. Through my initial literature search I identified the following bodies of literature as important for my study: firstly, the literature around ‘coloured’ and Nama identity, as well as cultural hybridity; secondly, the literature on the performing arts as tools for positive cultural expression in post-apartheid South Africa, and thirdly, the issue of personal and community empowerment through community development. Key concepts are identity, hybridity, and empowerment.

2.1. Cultural hybridity: ‘coloured’ and Nama identity

This section will commence with discussion of ‘coloured’ identity and will then proceed to connect this to Nama identity and heritage. According to Oakley (2006:492), whose work focuses on the former ‘coloured’ reserve of Steinkopf in Namaqualand,⁶ to the west of Williston, people currently regarded as ‘coloured’ in the Northern Cape have experienced racial and ethnic classification at four discrete levels:

first, in their dealings with ‘outsiders’ through early wage work experiences; second, with the state’s macro classification of ‘coloured’ in 1950; third, through the state’s reinforcement of ethnic groups or nations over racial groups in the late 1950s; and fourth, in the post-apartheid context of transformation from a communal reserve into a municipality.

According to Adhikari (2006:468), the term ‘coloured’ in South Africa depicts a ‘phenotypically’ diverse group of people who are largely descended from Cape slaves, the indigenous Khoisan population, distinct sub-groups such as Malays, Griquas, Namas and Basters, and other people of African and Asian descent – all of whom were assimilated into Cape colonial society by the late 1800s. ‘Coloured’ people were also partly descended from European settlers and have thus stereotypically been regarded as being of ‘mixed race.’ According to Hendricks (2001:35), ‘coloured’ people began to occupy an awkward ‘interstitial’ or intermediate space in the racial hierarchy, being valued for their approximation to ‘whiteness’, yet despised for their association with bastardization/hybridity in a world that considered purity to be more privileged. Thus Adhikari

⁶ An arid region of Namibia and South Africa extending along the west coast, that is split into two: Little Namaqualand to the South, in the Northern Cape region of South Africa; and Great Namaqualand to the North, in the Karas region of Namibia.

(2006:469) states that ‘coloured’ people have always seemed to lack significant political and economic power, thus always forming a marginal group in the nation. As Erasmus (2001:14) accurately put it:

Being ‘coloured’ means being the privileged black and the ‘not quite white’ person. It means a distinction between being ‘sleek’ or *kroes* haired, and between being *kris* (Christian) or *slams* (a derogatory term for Muslim). Being ‘coloured’ is about living an identity that is clouded in sexualized shame and associated with drunkenness and jollity.

Oakley (2006:499) states that during the segregationist and apartheid eras of the 20th century, the people of Namaqualand did not identify with the ethno-racial labels that were imposed on them, as groups with very different histories were all grouped together under the label ‘coloured’. At the same time, due to the fact that ‘coloured’ people were deemed to be inferior to white people, many individuals adopted ‘European’ ways and downplayed their links to the Nama people of the past (Oakley, 2006:500). According to Johnson-Jones (2011:3), the Nama language was already losing momentum in the 19th Century and this continued into the 20th century, whilst Afrikaans became the main language in this area. He explains that in order to ensure an easier working relationship between landowners and their ‘coloured’ workers, Afrikaans was expected to be spoken by the inhabitants of the area. However, not everyone in areas such as Steinkopf gave into the dominant ‘European’ culture, with church choirs that sang in the Nama language one of the ways in which local people affirmed and revitalised Nama culture,(Oakley, 2006:500).

South African history is saturated with discrimination based on race and gender, and this persists today (Coovadia *et al.*, 2009:817). The dominant perspective about the colonial Cape perceives religion, class and origin to be the primary cleavages, and racism (attaching different values to race-based identities and then treating them accordingly) was merely attributed to the experiences that the Afrikaners had at the frontier (Hendricks, 2001:30). Thus liberal historiography assumes that racialism (ascribing a racial essence to an identity) and racism were not established in the Cape in this period. Thus the development of a ‘coloured’ identity is seen to be a twentieth century phenomenon alone. However, this overlooks the extent to which the racism that was common currency in the frontier developed from much earlier forms of social thought that were engraved into the Cape by Dutch and British imperialists before the frontier.

Adhikari (2003:158) notes that the literature related to the issue of ‘coloured’ identity since the 1980s has strongly opposed the racist perspectives that dominated earlier work. These earlier works tended to focus very narrowly on issues such as the racial oppression of these people, as well as on ‘coloured’ protest politics, thus, ignoring crucial questions related to the very nature of ‘coloured’ identity and how it operates as a social identity. In line with this notion, Erasmus (2001:16) emphasizes that

‘coloured’ identities are not about ‘race mixtures’, and any attempt to define them as such buys into notions of ‘race purity’ that originates from eugenic theories dating back to the nineteenth century. Such literature minimizes the role that ‘coloured’ people have played in the creation of their own identity. In similar vein, Adhikari (2003:159) believes that viewing ‘colouredness’ as a product of miscegenation is fundamentally racist, as it is no different to any other social identity, since all identities are culturally hybrid. Thus, rather than simply accepting ‘coloured’ identity as either ‘something inherent, and the automatic by-product of inter-racial procreation’, or a ‘false identity imposed upon weak and vulnerable people by the ruling white minority’, it should be seen as no different to any other identity (Erasmus, 2001:16).

However, ‘coloured’, in contrast to other identities, is not characterized by ‘borrowing *per se*’, but rather by cultural borrowing and creation under the conditions of creolization (Adhikari, 2003:159). This means that ‘coloured’ as a cultural identity was created through the use of ‘ruling and subaltern cultures under conditions of marginality.’ Thus Adhikari (2003:160) rejects the notion of ‘coloured’ merely being a category of white-imposed categorisation. Rather, it is necessary to see ‘coloured’ identities as:

...comprising detailed bodies of knowledge, specific cultural practices, memories, rituals and modes of being... that were all formed ‘in the colonial encounter between colonists, slaves from South and East India, and from East Africa, and a conquered indigenous people, the Khoi and San (Erasmus, 2001:21).

Currently, in post-apartheid South Africa, Nama cultural forms have continued to be marginalised. Johnson-Jones singles out the fact that despite post-apartheid South Africa adopting numerous (eleven) official languages, Nama was not included among them (Johnson-Jones, 2011:3). According to him this has encouraged the depletion of Nama cultural heritage. However, he also recognises that as much as spoken language is a major part of the identity of this group, a potential for the revitalisation of Nama heritage exists in dance (Johnson-Jones, 2011:3).

According to Robins (1997:23), Nama identity in the Northern Cape Province was given a boost in the late 1980s, when local ‘Namaqualanders’ won a Supreme Court case that ensured the reinstatement of communal land tenure in the ‘coloured’ reserves. This legal victory was achieved through drawing on Nama identity, as well as exploiting legal technicalities (Robins, 1997:23). Boonzaier and Sharp (1994) have argued that this tactic of drawing on Nama identity was an instrumentalist manipulation to obtain material resources on the basis of a primordial cultural nostalgia, but Robins (1997) disagrees. He argues that rather than being an instance of ‘staged ethnicity’, Nama ‘ethnic revitalisation’:

emerged out of land struggles that drew on both modern discourses on legality and democracy, as well as cultural resources and subaltern histories and identities that had been silenced through colonial domination and apartheid. Furthermore, the hybrid tactics that were evident in local responses during the land struggles, are indicative of the more generalised cultural hybridity, contingency and instability of 'coloured' identity in South Africa (Robins, 1997:24),

Despite Robins' (1997) critique, Sharp (1997:9) maintains that what he and Boonzaier witnessed in the Richtersveld was an instrumentalist call to an authentic Nama past by the current inhabitants, who perceived themselves to be heirs to the pre-colonial people of the region. People who had previously identified themselves as 'coloured' people were now exploring the possibility of a continuity of identity between themselves and the 'autochthonous inhabitants of the region' (Sharp, 1997:9). However, this 'rediscovery' of Nama identity was a new phenomenon, the result of the new circumstances that prevailed in the region; the people claiming this identity could not be seen as the same as the nomadic pastoralists who came before them. Rather, they were the product of the colonial encounter: they had part-settler ancestry, became Christians out of choice and spoke very little if any Nama (Sharp, 1997:10). Furthermore, they did not follow Nama traditions in their daily lives, and in many instances had no desire to do so in the future. The fact that these people were not the pre-colonial Nama, and were fully aware of this, meant that they were in control of the construction of this new identity. According to Sharp (1997:10) they knew all too well when it was suitable to assert Namaness and when it was not; making this 'a claim not simply to an imagined identity but, in fact, to an 'imaginary one'.

According to Sharp (1997:7), in the 1980s, criticisms of apartheid ideology drew a distinction between the 'reality' of racial divisions and the cultural or ideological 'representation' of those divisions. The vision of apartheid ideologues was that society was 'naturally' divided into discrete races, tribes and ethnic groups. Their critics, in turn, argued that this claim was a representation of reality rather than a simple description of it: a distortion of social reality, thereby rendering it 'unreal' (Sharp, 1997:7). Sharp (1997), however, goes on to argue that because races do not exist 'in nature' does not mean that people are race-conscious by mistake, or that race has no place in common social reality. Thus, it is mistaken to consider 'reality' and 'representation' as being easily separable. Rather, 'representations are part of the reality they discuss; they constitute social reality rather than simply reflect it'.

'Coloured' people in Namaqualand, as well as in other parts of South Africa, entered into what Robins (1997) describes as 'the fluid and hybrid character of people's political tactics in the 1990s', where Nama identity came to mean various things to various people, and, more importantly, to the same people at different times. This is exemplified through the way that 'coloured' denoted either a

claim to the exclusive inhabitation of the land in Namaqualand and a Nama identity, or to a claim of solidarity with a larger category of indigenous people in South Africa (Boonzaaier & Sharp, 1994). The political strategy of mobilization around tradition while using the weapons of the modern society to outwit the state was thus simply a reflection of the cultural hybridity of the Namaqualanders themselves (Sharp, 1997:16).

This emphasis on hybridity allows one to consider the *Rieldans* as a celebration of hybrid identity, whilst also acknowledging its place in Nama history. Thus, in relation to *Rieldans*, it is important to consider the tendency it has to claim solidarity with broader contemporary dances, but in turn to acknowledge ties to a traditional Nama culture that many participants may not even know anymore. Moreover, through considering ‘coloured’ identity as creolized and hybrid, its relationship to *Rieldans*, which is rooted in a pre-colonial Nama-Khoisan past, has to be considered in a context of universal cultural hybridity.

2.2. The performing arts: a tool for cultural expression

2.2.1. Dynamics of indigenous forms of cultural expression

My research project has also involved engaging with the growing literature on indigenous forms of cultural expression, including that of dance, and how they are changing in post-apartheid South Africa. During apartheid white South Africans dominated not only economically and politically, but also in the cultural sphere (Sichel, 2012:107). Black South Africans were even prohibited from performing on certain stages. In this time activist dancers, choreographers and festival programmers often channelled considerable energy into circumventing these restrictive laws (Sichel, 2012:108). Today, in post-apartheid South Africa, this trend continues among choreographers who work with certain dance forms to draw attention to previously and/or currently marginalised cultural traditions, rituals and realities (Sichel, 2012:108). An interesting example of this is the way in which *Rieldans* is sponsored by the ATKV (2016), which has hosted the annual competitions since 2006 in an attempt to promote a dance form that was previously associated with racial inferiority. Amongst other activities, the ATKV seeks to encourage the performing arts in South African communities that are linked to Afrikaans. However, the support of *Rieldans* by the ATKV – using *Rieldans*, which has Nama roots, as an expression of Afrikaans identity – strikes me as inherently ironic.

In relation to traditional African dance more generally, Rani (2012:73) states that dance in ‘African cultures’ is considered to be a way of life and is passed down from generation to generation for religious, social as well as ceremonial purposes. It is associated with both everyday activities and ritual moments, such as birth, puberty, death, and war, serving as a way to communicate certain messages. Thus, dance in African traditions functions as a community’s tool of artistic expression.

However, in a rapidly urbanising world, traditional dance has tended to lose a degree of meaning in urban areas (Rani, 2012:83). That said, more hybrid styles of dance that have begun to emerge in urban areas still possess a great deal of positive value, and allow people who now live in townships and have never experienced traditional rural life to construct new meaning in this new context. Rani (2012:83) emphasises that this kind of approach to dance encourages the formation of new and valued identities at the confluence of African and western traditions. Moreover, it is important to note that these new types of dance that have borrowed from several different cultures have indeed developed historically and therefore hold social and cultural significance.

Coetzer's (2005:81) work on *Langarm*⁷ dancing in Grahamstown is also useful for comparative purposes here. *Langarm*, which is similar to *Rieldans*, has been reported to have been around for decades, having initially been promoted by white Cape Town employers as a form of controlled 'rational recreation' that was seen as a means of building morale and loyalty amongst staff members. At the same time the dance became a way of asserting an independent 'coloured' identity (Coetzer, 2005:71). Coetzer's work shows how despite being viewed as an inherently 'coloured' genre by the majority of its audiences, the dance involves a fusion of diverse music and dance forms. While rooted in the Nama-Khoisan tradition, *Langarm* has found a way to actively integrate itself with British and Afrikaans dance forms. Thus, the music and dance styles in *Langarm* are 'a synthesis of past knowledge and on-going appropriation' that is able to adapt to changing social norms, whilst still maintaining its roots in the Nama-Khoisan cultural heritage (Coetzer, 2005:71).

In an interview with a local *Langarm* dance group in Grahamstown called 'Coysan', Coetzer (2005:71) notes that the obvious play on the term Khoisan in the name of the group comes from the group's desire to affirm the shared heritage that they have. This shows a desire to be identified with the indigenous peoples of Southern Africa. Coetzer's work prompts the question whether similar dynamics may be at play with the *Rieldans* as well.

2.2.2. Popular Culture

[There is a need to challenge] the notion that your politics, or simply your alliances and right to speak can be read from 'who you are' and 'what you look like' (Erasmus, 2001:25).]

Dolby (2001:1) argues that instead of treating culture as rigidly bounded under a certain set of values, it is better to think of it as a set of processes 'imbricated in the production and circulation of images and as a site of the development of identities in a new globalizing context'. With the Karoo in its entirety experiencing a total population growth of 76% between the years 1911 and 2004, and with an overwhelming rural to urban shift in the population taking place as well (Nel *et al.*, 2011:401), the

⁷ '*Langarm* is a very close relative to *Rieldans* and in some circles is considered to be the same thing' – interview with Carel, ATKV *Rieldans* semi-finals judge.

effects of the globalizing context are more central now than ever before. Despite, the figures showing a clear net urban growth across the Karoo, not all its towns have grown, specifically not in the case of smaller towns such as Williston (Nel *et al.*, 2011:403). However, Williston, is still located within a modern nation-state and not completely isolated from greater South Africa, and understanding contemporary culture still needs to be considered in a context of globalization.

Dolby (2001:2) argues that the 'auratic' status of race in terms of defining it by reference to origins has been shattered, as it has been overwhelmed by the process of hybridity that is constantly unleashed in contemporary life. Dolby (2001:2) also highlights current levels of alienation common amongst South African youth and a shift away from their local and national contexts towards the cultural offerings of the global arena. South African youth have used new cultural forms such as rap music (associated with American urban ghettos), levi jeans and rave cultures (associated with suburban white youth of Europe), to redraw the lines of distinction amongst themselves. This ultimately weakens old forms of affiliation linked to ethnic ancestry. Dolby's analysis offers insight into the potential of a shift in South African youth towards replacing geography and culture (understood as unity of distinctive folkloric group practices) with 'taste' as a preferable carrier of social distinctions.

2.3. Personal and community empowerment: The key to sustainable development

2.3.1. Community development through empowerment

Given my interest in community development, an understanding of both terms becomes necessary. According to Bhattacharyya (2004:5), a community can be defined as a social unit that possesses a shared identity and norms, while community development initiatives aim to build empowering principles such as solidarity and agency among the members of the community. Similarly, Gegeo (1998) argues that development that is responsive to the needs of third world people should come from within their own communities. Thus, in development theory, rural development is a process of growth that is generated from within rural society, involving 'a growing individual and collective self-reliance, not only focusing on material and economic needs, but also on emotional, ethical, and political empowerment' (Gegeo, 1998:297). Swanepoel and De Beer (2011:29) argue that development programmes are not always the most effective methods through which the empowerment of participants can be achieved, especially if these programmes do not allow the participants any decision-making power and influence within them. On a more critical note, Brint (2001:19) states that the concept of 'community' is a highly loaded term that is often seen to be limiting to human freedom and hostile to change, as it assumes that one ought to belong to a community. While acknowledging

Brint's scepticism, I consider the issues of shared identity and norms that Bhattacharyya (2004:7) highlights as useful for understanding how communities function in the context of my study.

According to Gegeo (1998:308), 'the positive discourses associated with development include enlightenment and empowerment, and lead to a long-term commitment to succeed', which is a symbiotic relationship between the doer and the project, where the project becomes part of the doer's life, emerging from within. What this has meant for my study is that an important issue to consider is the ability of the members of the dance group to direct the initiative themselves at every level, including its ability to generate revenue through cultural tourism.

2.3.2. Rural tourism in the Karoo

Karoo towns such as Williston were established slowly from the late 1700s and in many cases were originally 'church towns' that served the surrounding farm communities (Atkinson, 2016:200). With an economy based on livestock, the Karoo was vulnerable to the effects of drought and overgrazing, which, along with the ravages of the Anglo-Boer War, were catalysts for its decline in the 20th century. By the 1970s the Karoo presented high levels of out-migration and was considered a stagnant and deteriorating region when compared to the rest of South Africa. However, the image of the Karoo has changed dramatically for middle-class urban travellers since then. From having a reputation of being a desolate, grim and rather frightening landscape, to simply being a boring expanse of emptiness that had to be traversed in a well air-conditioned vehicle, the Karoo has today become an attractive spiritual space that allows people an escape from the crowded enclaves of the urban centres (Atkinson, 2016:201). Thus, the Karoo has in recent times been transformed from being a perceived liability, to a touristic asset that allows its visitors the opportunity to escape into its vast quietness. Tourism in the Karoo has also come to pivot on a growing interest in festivals, which allow people to rejoice in the remote and arid conditions with which they have to contend.

An important body of literature focuses on rural tourism in South Africa. Researchers such as Briedenhann and Wickens (2004:189) point out that rural tourism has undergone fundamental changes since the advent of democracy in 1994. It holds the potential of bringing beneficial amounts of revenue into poor rural communities, by attracting large numbers of tourists in search of new and exciting experiences in areas with rich cultural resources. The authors caution, however, that although tourism is often considered to be the potential solution to the economic problems within poor rural communities, this is not necessarily the case. They emphasise that tourism should be viewed as a supplement to the growth of the local economy, rather than its sole source. Furthermore, the ultimate success of rural tourism as a supplementary source of economic growth and job creation will depend upon the people on the ground. They need to ensure the compatibility of projects with their local

needs, rather than depending on governmental and other initiatives to run these projects from the outside (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004:192).

While the primary economic sectors of the Great Karoo remain livestock and game farming as well as government services, tourism is clearly becoming an important economic sector. Another key question for my study, then, is whether the *Rieldans* has a role to play in this. At the same time, a number of studies point to the dangers of the commodification of indigenous art forms in ways that are not empowering for local people. Koots (2015:5; 12) argues that there is an inherent insecurity around white identity in post-colonial Southern Africa, where there is an increased tendency to deny whites 'autochthonous' status as an ethnic minority, and are often presented as inauthentic. This has led to these white citizens scrambling to assert their belonging. Koots explains that Namibian whites in tourism strengthen this sense of belonging through their paternalism towards bushmen, showing a strong attachment towards them. In light of a global indigenous movement, and through a desire to strengthen claims of belonging, whites essentialise bushmen as people of nature through the use of paternalist relationships in tourism, and subsequently view themselves as the protectors of the 'traditional' culture (Koots, 2015:12). Ultimately, he argues, belonging becomes an important strategy for white Namibians, in which paternalism and (essentialised) bushmen are crucial tactical elements within tourism. The key point for my study is the potential for traditional identities (in his case, that of bushman in Namibia) to be appropriated by others (in this case whites looking to assert claims to belonging).

In turn, earlier work by Robins (2001:838) in the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve in the Northern Cape, shows how the Reserve's management were accused of 'passing off non-bushmen as the genuine article for the gratification of tourists', which was later justified as their being employed in an attempt to keep the 'bushmen business running'. Moreover, San traditionalists and 'western bushmen' or 'coloureds' are simultaneously entangled in donor/NGO projects of cultural recuperation/revitalisation and the 'civilising mission' of liberal democracy (Robins, 2001:852). Developmentally, this could make indigenous groupings increasingly dependent on powerful donors, thereby undermining local community empowerment.

2.3.3. Dance for development

With regard to the arts as a tool for development, Johnstone (2012:162) argues that the discourse of 'dance as social action and development' has been insufficiently problematized in the South African context in order to achieve nation-building goals. He notes that in South Africa the cultural scene is 'characterised by a struggle about the nature of art and who are indeed entitled to call themselves artists' (2012:147). It is often community dancers such as those who perform the *Rieldans* who are marginalised in the field of dance within South Africa, as there is a patronising image of them as

amateurs who are thrown together to perform. According to Johnstone (2012:148), in South Africa what is considered to be ‘culturally marginal’ or ‘low art’, and ‘culturally central’ or ‘high art’ often reflects the legacy of colonialism and apartheid in the country. However, today in post-apartheid South Africa, arts and culture are seen to be important tools in attempting to bring South Africans together and promoting nation-building and social cohesion through building values of respect and attitudes of inclusivity.

Within the context provided above, the *Rieldans*, which is regarded as having deep roots in traditional Nama-Khoisan culture, needs to be considered with regards to the use-value of its performance for tourists. In turn the paternalist relationship that donors have towards the dance form is of interest. Rani (2012:84) warns against the false expectations that people have of contemporary African reality, as they are often blinded by the expectations of the past. However, it is unrealistic to expect African dancers to continue presenting ‘old’ traditions in a ‘new reality’, unless they wish to continue perpetuating western stereotypes. There should, rather, be a call for ‘continuity within a living tradition’, serving to conserve rather than preserve traditional rural dance forms, which will ensure that tradition is not frozen in time leaving no room for evolution. Thus, when considering the *Rieldans* phenomenon, the ability of its promoters to work in support of conservation rather than of preservation should be assessed.

Chapter 3: Findings and Discussion

This chapter reports on my findings and reflections that emerged from my two fieldtrips to Williston and to Lambertsbaai and Clanwilliam. As already noted, the purpose of my first fieldtrip, to Williston, the home of ‘*Die Stofskoptrappers*’ (the *Rieldans* group that is the subject of this research), was to become acquainted with the *Rieldans*, as well as to make contact with an appropriate dance group for my study. The purpose of my second fieldtrip, to Lambertsbaai and Clanwilliam, was to observe and interact with the *Rieldans* group as I followed them through their preparation for and participation in the competition.

In what follows I have organized my findings broadly into two sections: 1) personal and community development and empowerment and 2) the meanings of *Rieldans*. Within each section I have identified a number of sub-themes that address the research questions that were laid out in Chapter 1. However, it should be noted that there is considerable overlap among themes, which opens the possibility for my discussion to be structured differently. This discussion is followed by some reflection on issues of race, gender and belonging, which emerged quite prominently during my fieldwork, and proved to contribute significantly to my ideas around meaning and empowerment. Following this, I report my findings that directly relate to the capacity of the *Rieldans* to generate tourism, and the issues around sponsorship, and how these affect the capacity of the group for empowerment and meaning making. In the final section of this chapter I pull together my conclusion.

3.1. Personal and community development and empowerment

3.1.1. Rieldans as a way to conserve and celebrate one’s roots

On Saturday the 22nd of October, around 7am, I drove through to Clanwilliam from Lambertsbaai with ‘*Die Stofskoptrappers*’ team. As we approached the town, we could see all the busses of the other teams parked on the side of the road, gathered together to be briefed about the proceedings of the day by a representative from the ATKV. There were journalists hanging around, many of whom proceeded to interview some of the members of the various groups. I received many stares from the surrounding participants, but all of them would smile at me once I caught their eye. The teams were all told that despite it being a competition, they should all remember why they were there, and that the ultimate goal of the day was to allow *Rieldans* to be carried forward and be the ultimate winner of the day.

At about 9am the busses drove into the town in single file. The atmosphere became increasingly electric as we entered the town. There was a pickup truck with speakers on the back playing *Rieldans* music, and many competitors would leave their vehicles to dance alongside the busses. This was as a means of inviting all the people who were in the town to come and support the competition. As people rushed out of their houses to wave at the arriving groups, it became clear to me how community-centred the dance form is, and how central it is to the culture of the areas that practise this dance form. One of the dancers in my group whom I interviewed explained this to me with reference to Williston:

Everyone in Williston, it doesn't matter who, if Rieldans is danced you will always see if the music starts playing, the community gathers around and stands to watch just to see how the children dance... They love the Rieldans (interviewee 1).

I also learned that the *Rieldans* involves a narrative. Each dance group has to tell a story in their dance, dancing about ‘*what happens on the farms from where [their] people come from*’ (Interviewee 4). Stories vary according to the region that each group comes from. For example, as explained to me by another dancer whom I interviewed:

The one guy was acting as if he was catching fish, like the people who come from the Western Cape who act out Grape harvesting. However, when it comes to us in the Northern Cape, we will act out things like sheep shearing (Interviewee 4).

I discovered that this principle of telling a story about the traditions and practices of an area is not limited to past events, but is carried forward into the present as well, to tell a ‘*story about something that is apparent to [them]*’ (Interviewee 1). This led me to enquire more about the narrative process of the dance and whether it was simply a means to entertain the crowd, or whether there was an underlying purpose. I was then informed that ‘*it's about [the] pride*’ (Interviewee 6) that inhabitants of the respective areas have for their place of origin, ‘*basically taking it as seeing the Karoo as being [their] tradition, and the Western Cape taking what they do over there as their tradition*’ and being proud about it (Interviewee 2).

I was very impressed after being exposed to my first *Rieldans* performance at the Williston *Winterfees*; it was addictively energetic, rhythmic and entertaining. The first group that I observed were all young girls, and their costumes were distinctively ‘traditional’ being made from porcupine needles and leather cloth. This conformed with my expectations, having never seen *Rieldans* before. In fact I was surprised to see teams like ‘*Die Stofskoptrappers*’ wearing luminescent coloured waistcoats and hats. In retrospect, however, the all-girl group at the Williston *Winterfees* were the only group to wear costumes that were so conventionally traditional. I queried the significance of this

to members of ‘*Die Stofskoptrappers*’ and was informed that ‘*it's just because they are dressing like the Khoisan*’ (Interviewee 1); ‘*the other teacher’s children in Williston show a different type of the Karoo Northern Cape tradition, they wear those porcupine spikes*’ (Interviewee 2).

These responses provoked me to ask how the dancers, most of whom were in their mid-teens, had decided to dedicate a great deal of their young lives to celebrating the places they came from through dance. Thus, I discovered that several participants had first learnt the dance form from their parents; as Interviewee 2 stated proudly in relation to her mother, she ‘*has danced from when she was young and she taught me.*’ Furthermore: ‘*Her brother was the Carnarvon champion. That uncle of mine dances dangerously.*’ In other cases parents had not taught the dance to their children personally, but had ‘*been motivating [them] to do that the whole time*’ (Interviewee 1). Interviewee 1 also explained:

But where I actually saw the Rieldans was through my family because lots of my family live on farms... and just through the way that they dance they tell stories about how they in earlier years cooked food, hunted animals, and then make animal movements and that is what we try and do now in the dance (Interviewee 1).

I subsequently enquired about the understanding that the members of my dance group had about the ‘earlier years’ that they referred to, and whether the animal movements and narrative styles of their dances were ever further explained. However, I discovered that other than learning the motions and movements of the dance form, very few participants actually had a clear idea of its deeper roots. They simply knew ‘*that the dance started with them (the Khoisan) but more than that [were unable to] really say anything else*’ (Interviewee 1); ‘*all we know are stories that have been told to us and it sounds very interesting*’ (Interviewee 6). Rather than identifying with the Khoisan, the dancers had a tendency to view the Nama/Khoisan people as separate from who they were, referring to them in the following way:

Teacher Mietta said to us that... the same people who would do the rock paintings from those times back then... they would dance the Riel in this area. People from: Carnarvon, Williston, Fraserburg. From that time already the Riel was being performed. That's actually where the origin of the Riel comes from (Interviewee 1).

3.1.2. Competing and performing

The local support at the competition in Clanwilliam was outstanding, with approximately 2,000 spectators present. There were three age-group categories: the juniors, the under-18s, and the seniors. Despite still being schoolchildren ‘*die Stofskoptrappers*’ were competing in the senior group and

managed to place 5th out of eight groups. This placing was in fact a great achievement as the group had only been together for two years and they had never made it to the semi-finals before.

In the course of my fieldwork I learned that in true *Rieldans* fashion, ‘one of the conditions to get points in the competition’ is that ‘you must tell a story’ (Interviewee 1). However, this is technically challenging, because whilst telling the story in a dramatic fashion, one still has to dance in unison:

there is some movements that you do in a specific way that are supposed to be done the same by the boys and girls in unison. The steps often need to start and finish at the same time in the competition routine. If we speak about points then the way that you do the steps and the footwork and how you do that together counts a lot for points (Interviewee 1).

There is a huge sense of motivation to ensure that the routines are perfect come competition time, because ‘the more chaotic your story is, and unstructured, the worse your points will be’ (Interviewee 5). At the same time, I noticed that there was no clear choreographer in the group; rather, the entire production of the performance was a team effort, where each individual would have their say.

This implies that a great deal of time and energy needs to be dedicated to practising the art of dramatic dancing, and, as I witnessed, the best groups are those that can do both with equal amounts of attention to detail. In the case of my group, ‘*Die Stofskoptrappers*’ practiced ‘for an hour or two hours every Wednesday’ (interviewee 1), knowing a few months before the competition date whether they had qualified to participate. However, as the time drew closer to the competition, ‘say now two or three weeks before the competition, then [they] practice[d] like three times a week’ (Interviewee 5). I also realised that the preparation put into making the performance possible came not only from the dancers, but from the teacher and the musicians as well.

Live musicians often accompany the *Rieldans* groups in the competitions, although the dancers can also perform to pre-recorded backing tracks over a sound system. The two musicians accompanying my group would practise and travel with the group as well. Both musicians were older individuals who had children in the group. According to Interviewee 4, ‘There is definitely a certain type of *Rieldans* music; otherwise the tempo will be way too fast or too slow that you can’t *Rieldans* to it. It’s basically about the beat and rhythm of the music.’ After being exposed to the *Rieldans* music I was struck by its unique style that sounded like a fusion of *boeremusiek* (Afrikaans country music), and afro-jazz. I was interested to learn more about where this music comes from and how it fits into the whole picture, but none of my respondents and the people I engaged with really seemed to know, other than indicating that it had changed over the years:

I don't know where this music comes from, but when I started Rieldans I just knew that this is Riel music. The first time I heard the music was with Boeta Gammie in Calvinia (Interviewee 1).

3.1.3. The reshaping of *Rieldans*: modernisation and individualisation

During my fieldwork I began to pick up on a distinct tendency that current participants had in separating the past and present style of the *Rieldans*. There was always a clear respect for the journey that had brought the dance form to life; however, equally, there was also a certain desire to individualise the *Rieldans*. Thus, when enquiring about the understanding and sentiments people had about the history of the dance form, I received responses such as the following:

*That's now many years ago [laughing] way before my time, way before my grandfather's time. My grandfather would tell me that in those days they would sit around the fire together and tell stories and they would dance and just slowly step and step and then they began to get rhythm and from that time as the culture began to move forward the *Rieldans* began to develop. But in those days they didn't move so fast, [laughing] like we can now move nice and fast. It was a little bit slower back then (Interviewee 1).*

*... you see... the fast movements like how we dance now. Our people never used to dance like this, they used to dance flatfoot. We have changed the *Rieldans* to become faster and with more action (Interviewee 3).*

The participants felt that the *Rieldans* did not need to be mimicked in the same way that it had initially been danced, but was open to adaptation and reshaping, ultimately better serving the audience with '*steps [that] look better*' (Interviewee 3) and were '*more interesting*' (Interviewee 5). In turn, it fitted more appropriately in a world that had become '*more modern [desiring] more musical things*' (Interviewee 4), and this was not seen to detract from the purpose or identity of the dance.

Another aspect of the *Rieldans* that has been subject to the reshaping of modernisation and individualisation are the costumes in which teams compete. I was able to speak to some of the more experienced *Rieldans* experts, such as judges and team coaches, who highlighted the way that dance costumes have changed over the years. What these people were referring to, however, was not the change from the pre-colonial Khoisan period to the present, but the change from the overalls and servant clothing worn by the farmworkers who performed the *Rieldans* in the segregationist and apartheid eras, to the present. When I spoke to the younger participants they summed up the current position with regard to costumes as follows:

basically a situation of if you like the colour orange then you take that colour. And if I like a certain colour then I get that colour... then we just tell the teacher that we as boys want this colour waistcoat and then the teacher must just match the colours to the girls uniforms (Interviewee 1).

The young dancers seemed to care very little about preserving the dance form in its earlier state, but rather sought to conserve the tradition of the *Rieldans* as a dance form that tells a story, and thereby expresses who they are, and aspects of where they come from, both in the past and, importantly, in the present.

For the most part, then, current dancers did not know much about the history of the dance form. All that they know is that the dance embodies *'stories that have been told to [them] and [that] sounds very interesting... and because the stories are so interesting [they] want to do what they used to do back then and do it better and want to see it flourish'* (Interviewee 1).

3.1.4. *Rieldans* as a way to expand one's horizons

While the *Rieldans* is connected to stories of the past, participating in the group is also a way of socialising as young people in the present. Participating in the competitions also opens up opportunities for the young dancers to travel beyond the confines of Williston.

On the Friday before the competition in Clanwilliam I joined the dance group in a very cold and misty Lambertsbaai at about 3.30 pm, after which we all proceeded to go down to the beach, a much-awaited event for the group. Despite the cold weather, the bewilderment on the faces of the group members was priceless, with the boys and girls suddenly beginning to run after each other in the sand and explore the icy water. Some of the individuals kicked up the beach sand as they performed some of their dance moves, an action that quickly became contagious among the others.

Later that evening, when asked what was rewarding about doing *Rieldans*, Interviewee 2 proclaimed that it was just *'that pleasure that you get, and opportunities that you get to go forward. Like we would've never been able to come to the sea and experience this weekend if it wasn't for real dance.'* This made me realise just how much the change of environment meant to the dance team. I found that many had a degree of love for Williston, with one describing it to me as *'very nice, even though it is a very small town'* (Interviewee 2). However, there was still a great desire to explore the world beyond the town and *Rieldans* was a vehicle to ensure the attainment of that dream.

One team called *'Die Nuwegraskouwtrappers'* from Wuppertal have played the lead role in this fairytale. In 2015 they were selected to compete in the United States of America and came back winners of the competition. One of the dancers in my group from Williston told me that *Rieldans* is *'something that can go across the whole world'* (Interviewee 3). Moreover, the whole group enthusiastically

believed that they were definitely ‘going forward’ (Interviewee 4) in their attempt to achieving that goal, stating, ‘last year we fell out at Calvinia, This year we made it to Clanwilliam (Interviewee 4); this meant ‘so next year we are going to Paarl’ (Interviewee 1).

3.2. The meanings of *Rieldans*

3.2.1. A unique form of identification

What began to emerge for me during my fieldwork was the deep value that the ‘coloured’ people with whom I interacted attributed to the *Rieldans*, even though the precise meaning differed from person to person. It seemed that anyone who gave attention to this dance form would be swayed in its favour and attach importance to it. It was as if the *Rieldans* was placed in a separate category of expression from other dances, as one of the dancers noted:

Ever since a young child I had a big passion to dance, doing dance forms such as Kwaito, house, a little bit of break-dance (1). But that wasn't really for me and then after that, from about grade four, I found Rieldans very interesting; just the way that it gets danced then performed, it makes something awake in me (Interviewee 1).

I began to realise that the sentiments towards this dance form were often very personal. It was as if ‘the *Rieldans* [was] something that was made just for [them]’ (Interviewee 1); it was ‘actually [their] passion’ (Interviewee 2). Some of the members in the *Rieldans* group felt that ‘school [was] not for [them]’ but ‘if [they] just think about Riel [they] become happy’ (Interviewee 5). Alternatively, other participants professed that they actually ‘like school work’ ‘but *Rieldans* or music... just wakes something up inside [them]’ (Interviewee 4); ‘the *Rieldans* is something that has value for [them]’ (Interviewee 1).

3.2.2. Dancing to make a mark

The dance form has managed to establish an extremely loyal fan base within the Western and Northern Cape. This was clear during the ATKV semi-final competition in Clanwilliam that I attended, with over 2,000 spectators and around 130 participants at the event. This popularity arouses a sense of pride in the dancers, causing them to feel as if they are responsible for keeping the dance form alive, *because [they] love the Riel and want to make Rieldans something big in this world* (Interviewee 4) and make its mark in the national community. As another respondent put it:

... because at the moment only so few people do it (Rieldans) so I see that the few people who can do Rieldans take Rieldans very seriously. We who do the Rieldans do it with a passion, we want to help everybody else to learn the Rieldans and just take the Rieldans forward. We don't want the dance to die out, we want to dance to go everywhere in the world (Interviewee 1).

The competition provides a platform for excellent individual dancers to be called out at the end of the day to compete against each other and showcase their talent. 'Die Stofskoptrappers' managed to have three of their members called out, two of the boys and one of the girls. This was an eagerly anticipated part of the day, and certain individuals insisted on keeping their costumes on, despite having already performed earlier in the day, in case they received the much-respected call-out. The *Rieldans* is considered to be a skill that *'lots of people want to dance... but they don't always have the rhythm or they don't always know how to do the moves and they don't always want to keep learning and pushing through'* (Interviewee 1). Thus, receiving a call-out could result in fame within the *Rieldans* community, often with news reaching all the way home to peers. Some of the dancers stated that their friends would *'tease and laugh at them'* (interviewee 2), but this was considered to be due to the fact that *'they can't do the thing like [they] do that thing'* (Interviewee 5). There was also agreement that *'some friends... will encourage you and motivate you to keep going, even though they can't do it themselves'* (Interviewee 2). Interviewee 1 explained that *'at about grade 9'* after having been called out during a dance competition *'the people in Williston knew me as the person who could dance Rieldans, and loved dancing.'*

However, the ability to assert themselves as a team worthy of respect was also central to the goal of 'Die Stofskoptrappers'. Following some of the members of the group around the grounds of the competition, as well as listening to their discussions, I picked up that there was a strong competitive spirit. 'Die Stofskoptrappers', being *'new to the competition group'* (Interviewee 1), and having *'only been together for two years'* (Interviewee 1), were deemed to be the newcomers who needed to prove themselves. The group's members expected that the other groups would think very poorly of them, and that *'they think that those at the bottom cannot get to the top'* (Interviewee 1). However, Interviewee 4 said:

We know that we can, we want to this time. I mean the past few times we couldn't progress nicely in the dance... But this time we practised on a fast tempo and we have the fast music to accompany us. So now at the semi-finals we expect something big.

The expectation to achieve something big and make it through to the ATKV *Rieldans* finals in Paarl could ensure that the participants *'get to be on the TV and on the news'* (Interviewee 3). This was seen

as being a victory for the dance group and for Williston, giving them a degree of publicity, and allowing them to make their mark.

3.2.3. *Rieldans* as a way to socialise

On the second day of the ‘Williston *Winterfees*’ (in September 2016) a *Rieldans* workshop was on offer. White festivalgoers were poorly represented but several young ‘coloured’ children took part. The Coca-Cola stage was also used to host school choirs and local ‘coloured’ musicians. Once again, the audience at the Coca-Cola stage was predominantly ‘coloured’. Family members were seen sitting on school chairs and benches under the hot sun drinking litres of box wine that they were allowed to purchase at the back end of the bar that serviced the Williston Mall customers. I was struck by the level of support from the local ‘coloured’ community, and soon realised that the *Rieldans* event was also seen as a way to ‘*get to meet a lot of new people*’ (Interviewee 2).

I discovered that during the segregationist and apartheid eras, farm workers would ‘*drink on Friday and Saturday nights on the farm, then people [would] come and have a party*’ (Interviewee 5). Thus, *Rieldans* was based around socialising, where ‘*the old people used to drink, and then one person would start dancing, and that's how they learnt*’ (Interviewee 3). Certain groups such as the ‘*Calvinia Trappers*’ affirmed this in their routines. They showed some individuals in the group ‘*making food in the pot and then the other person came with the horse cart*’ (Interviewee 1); ‘*... then the guests came and [had a] party ... and would drink and dance and often they would fight*’ (Interviewee 3). Later I found out that an important theme in the story-telling nature of *Rieldans* was to ‘*dance what happens on the farms from where [their] people come from*’ (Interviewee 4). At the same time, it was very easy to notice how these narratives were not simply reserved for stories about the past, but played themselves out quite distinctively around the competition grounds, with ‘coloured’ locals drinking, dancing and socialising in the background.

One resounding factor that contributed towards individuals’ rationale to participate in *Rieldans*, interestingly, had very little to do with the Nama-Khoisan heritage of the dance form. The *Rieldans* was in some cases seen to be ‘*just a traditional dance, and for everybody it's really nice to do*’ (Interviewee 2). Other respondents thought its value lay in ‘*the way that it is performed, and the dance moves*’ (Interviewee 1). Respondents expressed a great deal of enjoyment out of the dance, reasoning that ‘*it makes a person fit*’ (Interviewee 7), and it is ‘*not that difficult to do... and you learn very quickly at least. So it's easy and fun to do.*’ (Interviewee 2). The fact that the dance was so enjoyable for the participants seemed to make it easier to perform for an audience, as Interviewee 3 said: ‘*You enjoy yourself around people so you shouldn't be nervous when you perform*’.

3.2.4. Life outside of *Rieldans*

When I asked Interviewee 1 whether he did any extramural activities other than *Rieldans*, he replied, ‘yes I do, I do. I do drama, I do robotics, I play rugby, I do everything that the school offers, since we are not such a big school, but everything that they offer I do.’ To the same question Interviewee 2 replied, ‘I also really, really like singing, you will see me singing every single day wherever I am going...if I don't have [earphones] with me then I'll just sit around and be unhappy. I'm always singing.’ Furthermore in some cases, other forms of cultural expression were viewed as equally important, such as rapping, dancing and hip-hop. I also found out that not all of the participants had learnt to *Rieldans* from their parents or grandparents, and in some cases they had never even tried it before they witnessed their first public performance.

3.3. Race, gender and transformation

3.3.1. Racial and social inequality

I noticed that all the white attendees at the Williston festival in September 2016 came across from the main stage to observe the *Rieldans* performance, after which they immediately returned to the main stage area to continue drinking and socialising. After the *Rieldans* was over Karoo sport competitions, drama and choir performances were undertaken at the Coca-Cola stage by local ‘coloured’ school children with little support from white festivalgoers. Throughout the festival a distinct racial split between the two stage areas was noticeable, and the lack of interest on behalf of the white attendees towards any performances by the ‘coloured’ locals other than the *Rieldans* was clear. This displayed similarities with the case explored by Robins (2001) in the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve, in the sense that the use-value of the traditionally associated *Rieldans* seemed to lie in its ability to draw tourists.

On the third and final day of the festival, the *Rieldans* competition took place. In contrast to the earlier events, this event was extremely well attended by white locals and donors, as well as by local ‘coloured’ people. I couldn't help thinking that the way *Rieldans* was used as a form of entertainment for white farmers during apartheid still existed today, as many of the dance gestures and moves were purposefully directed at several of the white people in the audience. What was interesting to observe was the pride that was vocalised by two white donors and several white locals at the event, who were identifying themselves with the dance form, and thus showing congruence with Koots' (2015) argument.

I managed to have some very interesting conversations with some of the local inhabitants during my stay in Williston, and many expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that the Coca-Cola stage would close at 6 p.m., whilst the main stage, located in the Williston mall, would provide entertainment until 10 p.m. or later. Once the Coca-Cola stage closed, all the 'coloured' members situated themselves outside the doors of the main stage area on benches and continued socialising to the music that could be overheard in the background.

The main stage was only accessible to people who had bought a weekend pass, priced at R300, or for people who were performers at the event; however, *Rieldans* performers were excluded from this area, which was strange. Moreover, anyone unable to pay the R300 still had to pay R20 to access the Coca Cola stage. There was a projector that screened the concerts on the main stage for the locals, but it was far too small to be seen and was paid no attention. The main stage area was clean and offered supreme seating, as well as performances by several well-known white South African musicians. In addition, the Williston Mall provided much better bathroom facilities than the public ablution facilities outside.

On one of the evenings I decided to sit outside the main stage area with local 'coloured' inhabitants, which placed me at the centre of attention. I was complimented for my willingness to integrate, and was told that it was uncommon for a white man to sit outside with them, rather than be inside with the other white people. I brushed the comments aside, attempting to make light of the situation. However, I struggled to come to a point where I felt no differences between myself and the 'coloured' people around me, as they made me feel different.

At the same time, while the racial divide between white and 'coloured' was both evident and strongly normalised, people with whom I interacted also adopted different stances on their own identity in terms of race. During this time I saw an opportunity to raise a question regarding the way the people at the table identified themselves, to which I received three varying responses. The first response was from a middle-aged male who immediately barked, 'I am a person!', a response that I came to feel I deserved. The lady sitting next to him believed that she was Afrikaans, and the girl next to her smiled proudly and said, 'I am Nama.' In contrast, the younger dancers in the '*Die Stofskoptrappers*' referred to themselves as being 'coloured'. These various responses appropriately reflect the theories of hybridity posited by authors such as Robins (1997 & 2000), Adhikari (2003), and Erasmus (2001), showing how the identification of 'coloured' people could be tactical, self-appropriating, or creolized.

After first witnessing '*Die Stofskoptrappers*' at the Williston *Winterfees*, I was also struck by the fact that a white woman was able to coach a group that practiced a dance form that was rooted in the Nama-Khoisan heritage. I learnt that the group had chosen her to coach them, and that after she had declined several times, the young men in the group had gathered some girls to rehearse a dance piece which they performed for her, at which point she decided to accept. The teacher admitted that the

group had been teaching her far more than she had been teaching them, and that her role was supportive and administrative in nature. Interviewee 1 told the story as follows:

... in grade 10, at the Prize giving I told [our teacher], 'I think that we can make a Rieldans group in the school.' So she said, 'okay we can talk about it next year,' and then we started the group and we signed up for the competition and were admitted into the ATKV (1) and ever since last year we have been dancing in the competition.

Throughout the second field trip the dancers treated the teacher as an older sister, and she appeared to embrace the role whole-heartedly. To see a white, middle-aged woman accepted and loved by the team in this way was striking, and certainly made a huge statement. I found that most dancers had 'only seen 'coloured' people and very few white people' (Interviewee 6) and 'haven't seen black people do it' (Interviewee 1). While I was told that 'you can be older, young, middle-aged [or] any type of person' (Interviewee 2) to do *Rieldans*, whenever a white individual would attempt to *Rieldans* it was considered a big deal amongst the dancers, something which they enjoyed watching. Their main criticism was that white people never did the moves the way they were meant to be done; in particular they 'didn't put [their] feet into the ground, [but rather] ...slid over the ground, and that's the problem, [because] people don't dig their feet into the ground, you have to stick your feet' (Interviewee 4).

3.3.2. Gender

Important issues around gender emerged during both of my fieldtrips, with a clear perpetuation of traditional gender roles presenting themselves in various routines. Thus, most of the activities portrayed by the female members of the dance groups in the competitions reflected conventional female activities such as cooking, cleaning, washing, picking, hosting, and being suitable caring wives who looked after their husbands and children. However, I was informed by Interviewee 1 that:

Sometimes you get girls that feel more manly and who have shaved hair and act more manly. Then they can do the dance of a male (1) but strictly speaking most groups must have and be made up of four boys and four girls. However, in unforeseeable circumstances there can be more of boys than girls. In some places that really want to do Rieldans, there are not enough boys or girls that can dance (1) and then they just change like that.

Despite being told that this was acceptable, the tone in which this was said suggested that this was something unnatural. During my fieldwork I did not notice any transgression of gender roles among the dancers . . .

However, a group from Brandvlei exposed me to a dance promoting sexual health education and female affirmation in one of the dance routines. Their routine was aimed at encouraging women to only have one sexual partner at a time, and to protect themselves against men's persuasive sexual advances. Although this narrative portrayed the woman as being solely responsible for her sexual health, and overlooked the possibility of rape, its underlying message was refreshing nonetheless.

3.4. Tourism and sponsorship

With regard to my interest in the potential of the *Rieldans* in relation to cultural tourism, I was only able to scrape the surface during my fieldwork. Nevertheless, this section attempts to show that there is clearly potential in this regard as shown by the Williston *Winterfees*. The question is: who is managing and benefitting from this, and how much is it actually transgressing the racial divide?

3.4.1. *Rieldans* as a form of tourist entertainment

The Williston *Winterfees* boasted various stalls, with some offering tastes of their food products as well as others displaying their paintings, homemade crafts, and T-shirts. The festival was certainly a very popular event and was destined to make a profitable turnover for the organisers, taking place for over five years in a row, with a consistently growing rate of attendance. Thus, with the higher inflow of tourists into Williston one of the biggest recipients of financial inflow were the bed and breakfast owners. However, most of these owners were white, and seemed to have no affiliations to the *Rieldans* community directly.

I found that dancers looked forward to the event, believing that the festivalgoers had come to see them.

I just know that there are always people when I think of the festival I think of the people. They are there to see us. When they see that there is Rieldans happening then they gather around, and then enjoy it extremely (Interviewee 2).

However, despite appearing to be a major draw card at the Williston *Winterfees* the *Rieldans* groups were not paid to perform, as their performances were incorporated into the national ATKV *Rieldans* competition. Thus, the distinction between the festival and the *Rieldans* was quite blurred, with both events conveniently taking place in the same location, and able to play

off each other's presence. This seemed to ensure that the competition received promotion and a wider spectrum of audience, and the festival made more money.

During the festival, I become acquainted with a sponsor of sorts, who would host the winning team at his game farm for a few days, provided that they performed on the farm. This was an enticing offer for the dancers, as it gave them an opportunity to travel, and was obviously of benefit to the farmer as it allowed him to offer a form of 'traditional' entertainment for the tourists traveling to his farm; it is also possible it allowed him a more established sense of belonging as argued by Koots (2015), but this was not an issue I was able to explore.

3.4.2. Sponsorship and funding

Funding was certainly a huge challenge for '*Die Stofskoptrappers*' and much of their travelling had to be sponsored. They often found themselves in a very precarious financial situation, trying to find accommodation for up to 15 individuals when travelling. In the case that a group was able to attain some form of sponsorship, '*then the teacher [would] take [them] on outings and buy clothes or something like that*' (Interviewee 1). If the group was unable to find any sponsorship, then the teacher would have to make the costumes herself, find the cheapest accommodation possible, and rely on a taxi for travelling. This was the case during the semi-finals in Clanwilliam.

The group stayed in a school hall at Lambertsbaai Primary School, where initially the Headmaster had requested that the group pay R1000 to sleep on the floor in the hall for two nights. This was far too expensive and after some discussion the Headmaster decided to sponsor the group's stay. There was no hot water at the school hall, so showers were taken in the basins and with buckets; however, this did not seem to bother the individuals at all, with even the white teacher comfortable with the situation.

3.5. Conclusion

What my fieldwork has shown is that despite the roots of the *Rieldans* lying in the distant pre-colonial Nama past, it is still a valued cultural form for the people performing it today. People who live in globalising contexts are able to develop new identities; as Dolby (2001) has argued, they are thereby constructing new meanings from the world and people around them, through a confluence of indigenous and western traditions, yet still conserving their roots. The beauty of the *Rieldans* is that it does not seek to preserve a cultural heritage in its original form but draws on the principles that underlie those traditions to conserve them, in a way that is relevant to the performers today. This can

be seen in the way that the participants feel that the *Rieldans* does not need to be mimicked but can be adapted and reshaped to better serve an audience in a world that has become modern.

Moreover, while there seems to be a general recognition that the narrative form and some of the steps and stories in the *Rieldans* today derive from an older time, the history is not clear and both the pre-colonial and the more immediate past (when the forebears of my dance group were living as farmworkers) are not clearly delineated. Thus, very few of my respondents had a clear idea of the deeper roots of the *Rieldans*, simply knowing that the dance had started with the Khoisan and was a traditional dance form, where one would dance about things that were apparent to you. My findings suggest that there is no desire among the youthful members of the dance group that I studied to revitalise their Nama identity through the dance; rather they would like to promote the dance form as something that enables identity appropriation and expression within a dynamically changing modern globe. They are proud of the dance form, and see it as a way of reaching people around the globe. However, the dance form is also considered to provide a platform for individual talents to be showcased as well.

Thus the the *Rieldans* is not only about the celebration and conservation of a group's history, but is also about individual performers' sense of their present and hopes for the future. Thus, the rationale behind individuals' participation in the *Rieldans* has very little to do with its history; rather its true value lies in the way that it is performed, the opportunities it offers for socialising, and its ability to expand dancer's horizons. Many of the sentiments expressed towards the *Rieldans* were very personal, even while there was recognition of its place in the life of 'coloured' communities in the Northern Cape. These findings are consistent with the ideas of the self-constructed hybridity of 'coloured' identity theorised by Erasmus (2001: 21), where the detailed bodies of knowledge, specific cultural practices, memories, rituals and modes of being that were formed over a long and multidimensional history, constantly revealed themselves. Thus, the nature of the relationship between the Williston dance group and the *Rieldans* seemed to affirm Adhikari's (2003:159) belief that viewing 'colouredness' as a product of miscegenation is fundamentally incorrect.

That said, as noted in chapter 3, '*Die Stofskoptrappers*' had no clear choreographer within their group, allowing the entire performance to be a team effort, with each individual having their say. Thus, a degree of personal empowerment was present in the group, whereby participants were given the agency to decide how to conduct their own project as suggested by Swanepoel and De Beer (2011) and Bhattacharyya (2004). Furthermore, the substantial amount of time that is devoted to the dance form by its participants additionally serves to affirm Gegeo's (1998) requirements of a symbiotic relationship between the dancers and the project, with the project becoming a part of their lives.

At the same time, despite, the *Rieldans* serving to promote the empowerment of its participants, it also served to promote a negative reality of a 'coloured' past which was 'clouded in sexualized shame and

associated with drunkenness and jollity' (Erasmus 2001: 14). *Rieldans* festivals and competitions still seemed to revolve around the drunken socializing out of which they grew during apartheid, having more in common with the segregationist and apartheid era than with the pre-colonial period. Perhaps this was simply a part of its adaptation, whereby it continued to express the reality within the time in which it fell – thus, changing very little with regard to its underlying purpose of explaining what is apparent to you in your place of origin and its surroundings.

The sincere acceptance of Elmarie into the hearts of 'Die Stofskoptrappers', and their treatment of her as a member of their family, displayed the potential that the *Rieldans* has to promote nation-building and social cohesion through building values of respect and attitudes of inclusivity across races as Johnstone (2012: 148) has theorised. The fact that the group was taught by a white teacher, and the obvious bonds of affection towards her demonstrate that strict racial boundaries are being eroded.

Moreover, *Rieldans* proved to still benefit white people involved in tourism in Williston on two levels. Firstly, by allowing the white inhabitants to develop a stronger sense of belonging through their paternalist attachment to the dancers, claiming to promote the survival of the dance form. Secondly, tourism in Williston was certainly affected positively through *Rieldans*. However, this did not appear to benefit the *Rieldans* community itself greatly, nor the broader Williston community specifically; the financial benefits from tourism in Williston seemed to be severely skewed towards local bed and breakfast owners, who were primarily white, and the Festival management teams.

In conclusion it appears that the meaning of the *Rieldans* dance form does lie in its function as a vehicle for artistic expression within the 'coloured' community of Williston, in much the same way as Rani (2012) has theorised about African forms of cultural expression more generally. In a rapidly changing world, this traditional dance can be seen as a hybrid art form that yet speaks to its Nama roots of its performers and thus can play a positive role in conserving Nama heritage.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Participants

In-depth semi-structured interviews

21/10/2016 – Interviewee 1

21/10/2016 - Interviewee 2

21/10/2016 – Interviewee 3

22/10/2016 – Interviewee 4

Unstructured/informal Interviews

01/09/2016 – Peter (event organiser)

22/10/2016 – Carel (competition judge)

22/10/2016 – Karen (Musician 2)

23/10/2016 – Elmarie (Teacher)

23/10/2016 – John (Musician)

Focus Group

23/10/2016 – Interviewee 1, Male, ‘Coloured’, age 19

23/10/2016 – Interviewee 2, Female, ‘Coloured’, age 15

23/10/2016 – Interviewee 3, Female, ‘Coloured’, age 16

23/10/2016 – Interviewee 4, Male, ‘Coloured’, age 14

23/10/2016 – Interviewee 5, Male, ‘Coloured’, age 16

23/10/2016 – Interviewee 6, Male, ‘Coloured’, age 16

23/10/2016 – Interviewee 7, Female, ‘Coloured’, age 15

23/10/2016 – Interviewee 8, Female, ‘Coloured’, age 12

Appendix 2: Consent/Assent Form English



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CONSENT FORM AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Good day. My name is Andre Gerard Breytenbach. I am a Honours student in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Stellenbosch University, South Africa. I am asking you to participate in a research study which will contribute to my Honours degree. The aim of the study is to look at the *Rieldans* and what it means for the people who participate in it in Williston, and whether it may contribute to community development. As part of this study I wish to collect information from people like yourself who are participating in and/or knowledgeable about *Rieldans*.

If you agree to take part in this study, I will ask you to respond to some questions and engage in conversation with me/participate in a group discussion, in which you draw on your experiences and knowledge concerning issues related to my study. Our conversation should take approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Before I proceed, I need your agreement, either orally or by means of your signature, that you are aware of the following:

1. Participation in the study is voluntary, in other words, you can choose whether to take part or not.
2. If you agree to take part, you are free to stop and also withdraw at any time, without any negative consequences. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with and still remain part of the study.
3. There are no foreseeable risks to you in this research. There will also be no direct benefit to you, including no payment of money for agreeing to take part. However, I expect that my study will add to our understanding of *Rieldans*, and it may contribute to promoting its practice.
4. You will not be identified as a participant in the study unless you give me express permission to use your name or you are responding in your official capacity (in which case the requirements of your institution around this will be respected). Otherwise, your identity will remain confidential and protected through the use of a pseudonym/made-up name.
5. If you agree, I would like to record my interview/discussion with you. This makes it easier for me to be sure my notes from our discussion are accurate. If you agree to being recorded, you may still ask for the recorder to be switched off at any time during the interview. The recordings are intended for research purposes only and will not be given to anybody else in the community.
6. All the data I collect will be stored securely and only be used for legitimate research purposes.
7. I may publish the results of my study in an academic publication. As with the dissertation, unless you have given permission for your name to be used, your identity will remain confidential in any such publication, through the use of codes or pseudonyms.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact one or more of the following:

Researcher: Andre Gerard Breytenbach; cell: +27 (76) 854 1680; email: breytes7@gmail.com.

My supervisor: Prof. Cheryl Walker, Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology, Stellenbosch University, Private Bag XI Matieland 7602, South Africa; (tel: 021 808 2420; e-mail: cjwalker@sun.ac.za).

Research Division: Ms Maléne Fouché, Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University, Private Bag XI Matieland 7602, South Africa; tel: 021 808 4622; e-mail: mfouche@sun.ac.za .

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT'S PARENT/GUARDIAN IF
APPROPRIATE (BELOW 18 YEARS OLD)**

* _____
Name of parent/guardian

* _____
Signature of parent/guardian

* _____
Date

ORAL CONSENT/SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

The information above was described to me by Andre Gerard Breytenbach in English // Afrikaans //Xhosa. I was given the opportunity to ask questions which were answered to my satisfaction. I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given/ have been offered but not accepted a copy of this form.

Note any conditions (e.g. participant agrees to be identified):

* _____
Name of Participant

* _____
Signature of Participant

* _____
Date

OR Oral consent given and noted by the Researcher [TICK]:

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I have carefully explained the information given in this document to

_____. He/she was encouraged to ask questions about the interview procedure. This conversation was conducted in English // Afrikaans // XHOSA This respondent chose to give consent via:

Signature OR Oral Consent [CIRCLE AS APPLICABLE]

Signature of Researcher

Date

NB: This form will be translated into Afrikaans before being administered to the research Participants.

Appendix 3: Consent/Assent Form Afrikaans



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TOESTEMMINGSVORM OM AAN 'N NAVORSINGSPROJEK DEEL TE NEEM

Goeiedag, my naam is Andre Gerard Breytenbach. Ek is 'n honneursstudent in die Departement Sosiologie en Sosiale Antropologie, Universiteit Stellenbosch, Suid-Afrika. Ek wil jou graag vra om deel te neem aan 'n navorsingstudie wat tot my honneursgraad sal bydra. Die doel van die studie is om te kyk na *Rieldans* en wat dit beteken vir die mense wat deelneem daarin in Williston, en of dit bydra tot gemeenskapsontwikkeling. As deel van hierdie studie wil ek inligting insamel van mense soos jy wat op die gebied van *Rieldans* werk en/of kennis daarvan het.

Indien jy instem om aan die studie deel te neem, sal ek jou vra om op 'n paar vrae te reageer en met my/in 'n groep te gesels oor jou ervarings en kennis van kwessies wat met my studie verband hou. Ons gesprek sal ongeveer 45 minute tot 'n uur duur. Voordat ek verder gaan, moet jy hetsy mondelings of met jou handtekening bevestig dat jy bewus is van die volgende:

1. Deelname aan die studie is vrywillig, met ander woorde jy kan kies of jy wil deelneem of nie.
2. Selfs al stem jy in om deel te neem, kan jy in enige stadium ophou en selfs onttrek sonder dat dit enige negatiewe gevolge vir jou sal inhou. Jy kan ook weier om enige vrae te beantwoord waarmee jy ongemaklik voel, en steeds in die studie aanbly.
3. Hierdie navorsing hou geen voorsienbare risiko's vir jou in nie. Dit hou ook geen direkte voordeel vir jou in nie, en jy sal geen finansiële vergoeding vir deelname ontvang nie. Tog verwag ek dat my studie ons begrip van *Rieldans* sal uitbrei en moontlik lei na die bevordering van dié vorm van dans.
4. Jou identiteit as deelnemer aan die studie sal nie bekend gemaak word nie, tensy jy my uitdruklik toestemming gee om jou naam te gebruik, of tensy jy in jou amptelike hoedanigheid deelneem (in welke geval die vereistes van jou instelling in hierdie verband nagekom sal word). So nie, sal jou identiteit vertroulik bly en beskerm word deur die gebruik van 'n skuil- of denkbeeldige naam.
5. Indien jy instem, wil ek graag my onderhoud/gesprek met jou opneem. Dit maak dit vir my makliker om te verseker dat my aantekeninge oor ons gesprek akkuraat is. As jy toestemming gee vir die opname, kan jy steeds in enige stadium van die onderhoud vra dat die opnemer afgeskakel word. Die opnames is slegs vir navorsingsdoeleindes en sal nie aan enigiemand anders in die gemeenskap gegee word nie.
6. Alle data wat ek insamel, sal veilig bewaar en slegs vir werklike navorsingsdoeleindes gebruik word.
7. Ek kan dalk die resultate van my studie in 'n akademiese publikasie publiseer. Soos met die verhandeling, sal kodes of skuilname gebruik word om jou identiteit in enige sulke publikasies te beskerm, tensy jy my toestemming gee om jou naam te gebruik.

Vir enige vrae of probleme in verband met die navorsing, kontak gerus een of meer van die volgende:

Navorsers: Andre Gerard Breytenbach; cell: +27 (76) 854 1680; email: breytes7@gmail.com

My studieleier: Prof Cheryl Walker, Departement Sosiologie en Sosiale Antropologie, Universiteit Stellenbosch, Privaat Sak XI, Matieland 7602, Suid-Afrika; (tel: 021 808 2420; e-pos: cjwalker@sun.ac.za).

Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling: Me Maléne Fouché, Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling, Universiteit Stellenbosch, Privaat Sak X1, Matieland 7602, Suid-Afrika; tel: 021 808 4622; e-pos: mfouche@sun.ac.za.

HANDTEKENING VAN NAVORSINGSDEELNEMER SE OUER/VOOG INDIEN VAN TOEPASSING (ONDER 18 JAAR OUD)

* _____
Naam van ouer/voog

* _____
Handtekening van ouer/voog

* _____
Datum

MONDELINGE TOESTEMMING/HANDTEKENING VAN NAVORSINGSDEELNEMER

Andre Gerard Breytenbach het die inligting hier bo in Engels//Afrikaans//isiXhosa aan my verduidelik. Ek het geleentheid ontvang om vrae te vra, en dit is bevredigend beantwoord. Ek stem hiermee vrywillig in om aan hierdie studie deel te neem. 'n Afskrif van hierdie vorm is aan my oorhandig/is aan my aangebied, maar ek het dit van die hand gewys.

Teken enige voorwaardes aan (bv. dat deelnemer instem om geïdentifiseer te word):

* _____
Naam van deelnemer

* _____
Handtekening van deelnemer

* _____
Datum

OF Mondelinge toestemming verleen en aangeteken deur die navorser [MERK]:

HANDTEKENING VAN NAVORSER

Ek verklaar dat ek die inligting in hierdie dokument sorgvuldig aan _____ verduidelik het. Hy/sy is aangemoedig om vrae te vra oor hoe die onderhoud gevoer sal word. Die gesprek is in Engels//Afrikaans//IsiXhosa gevoer. Hierdie respondente het gekies om toestemming te verleen deur middel van:

Handtekening OF Mondelinge toestemming [OMKRING DIE TOEPASLIKE EEN]

Handtekening van navorser

Datum

Appendix 4: Institutional Permission



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LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter will serve as authorization of Andre Gerard Breytenbach (ID: 9301225395089) to conduct the research project entitled “Dance to Advance: The *Rieldans*, Nama identity and community empowerment in Williston”. Upon a review of the research proposal, and interview schedules that were sent to us we are glad to offer you an opportunity to conduct the same study with the members of the ‘Die Stofskoptrappers’, a *Rieldans* group that consists of members within our academic facility, Hoorskool Williston. All interviews and observations are approved and will be duly supervised by Elmarie (the groups teacher).

Yours Faithfully,

Name of school head

Signature of school head

Date

Appendix 5: In-depth Semi-structured Interview Schedule



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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: TEACHERS/CHOREOGRAPHERS AND DANCERS

Research Title: *The Rieldans, Nama identity, and community Empowerment in Williston.*

Purpose of interview schedule: This interview schedule serves as a guide for the semi-structured Interviews that will be conducted with the teachers/choreographers and *Riel-dancers*.

There are 3 different topics in this interview, each topic focussing on a different aspect of the study:

1. General and background
2. Identity
3. Dance related

1. General and Background

The purpose of this topic is to gain background information on the interviewee's personal history, whilst establishing a relationship with the interviewee and placing them at ease.

Important to establish:

- *How, and why the interviewee became a Rieldans teacher/choreographer/dance (At what age? For dancers only)*
- *What their family setting is like*

Prompt Questions include

Tell me about yourself and how you became involved in Rieldans.

*Have you always lived in *?*

Who taught you how to do the Rieldans and when?

Are other members of your family involved in Rieldans?

Did your parents do Rieldans, and if so, who taught them?

Other than Rieldans, what do you do for a living? (teachers/choreographers only)

Why do you teach Rieldans? (teachers/choreographers only)

Was it your decision to start doing Rieldans? (dancers only)

2. Identity

The purpose of this set of questions is to understand what *Rieldans* means to the person in terms of ethnic identity.

Important to explore

- Whether *Rieldans* is linked to a specific ethnic group and culture, e.g. Nama and/or Khoisan and/or 'coloured'
- How central *Rieldans* is to the identity of the people who perform it
- Gender dynamics, if any

Prompt questions include:

What does Rieldans mean to you? How important is it to you?

Where does Rieldans come from – who first danced it?

Does it belong only to a certain group? Which group?

How central to the local community do you consider the dance to be, and why?

Does the dance tell a story? If yes, what?

Are men and women equally involved in Rieldans? Are there different roles?

Are you friends with the women (girls)/men (boys) in the group? (dancers only)

Do the women (girls)/men (boys) all come from the same area or school as you? (dancers only)

3. Dance Related

The purpose of this topic is to gain insight into the interviewee's dance environment, and general information on what teaching *Rieldans* means to the interviewee.

Important to explore:

- How the dance is described
- Which aspects of the dance-form are perceived as being important
- Competing

Prompt questions include:

What rules are there about what steps you must do and how? Can you change them?

How many hours do you teach/practice a week?

How important are the competitions? For the dancers? For the community?

Are you currently preparing for any competitions?

Who are your dancers? (teachers/choreographers only)

Is there a possibility for sponsorship? If so, how? (teachers/choreographers only)

What is involved in teaching Rieldans? Is it difficult to do? Are you paid to teach it? (teachers/choreographers only)

Why do you continue to teach/choreograph Rieldans? (teachers/choreographers only)

Do you enjoy teaching Rieldans? (teachers/choreographers only)

Why did you join this Rieldans group? (dancers only)

Do you get paid to do Rieldans? (dancers only)

Is Rieldans difficult to do? (dancers only)

Do you do any other extra-curricular activities other than Rieldans? (dancers only)

Why do you continue to Rieldans? (dancers only)

Appendix 6: Focus Group Discussion Guide



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FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: *RIEL-DANCERS*

Research Title: *The Rieldans, Nama identity, and community Empowerment in Williston.*

Purpose of interview schedule: This interview schedule serves as a guide for the semi-structured Interviews that will be conducted with a group of *Riel-dancers*.

The purpose of the Focus Group Discussion is to explore the meaning that *Rieldans* holds with participants

The following topics will be discussed:

- Participant's knowledge of the origins and history of the *Rieldans*.
- What they think is enjoyable and/or valuable about it.
- How popular it is among their peers and community.
- Their ambitions for their dance group.
- Their views on performing at festivals.