History, Identity, Representation:

Public-Private-Community Partnerships

and the Batlokoa Community

By

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Declaration

I, Varona Sathiyah,   student number 206508940, the undersigned, hereby declare the originality of the work contained in this dissertation, that where it draws upon prior research, this has been duly acknowledged and referenced. It has not been presented to any other university or for any other degree. The dissertation is submitted in totality of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Social Sciences, in the Centre for Communication, Media and Society, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal,

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how a public-private-community partnership impacts on the operation of a community-owned Lodge. The case study focuses on the Batlokoa community at the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge establishment, who collaborate with the tourism operating company, Transfrontier Parks Destinations (TFPD), and the National Department of Tourism (NDT). Collaborative partnerships are necessary in developing countries as the community sector often lacks the economic resources necessary for the operation of a successful tourism operation (DEAT 2011).

This study is pertinent to the post-apartheid South African context which fosters community initiatives in tourism contexts (DEAT 1996) as it illustrates the possible challenges that are encountered when tourism operating companies, communities and government departments collaborate. The research is informed by Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research (Denzin, Lincoln and Tuhiwai-Smith 2008: 2), an interpretative approach that places emphasis on the indigenous community's perceptions and interpretations. It aimed to ascertain how the Mountain Lodge establishment featured in the Batlokoa community's sense of history, group identity and representation. It is necessary to focus on the 'grassroots' community perceptions as this study is situated within the field of cultural studies which places precedence of the marginalized aspects of society, in this case, the indigenous Batlokoa community. Moreover, there is a scarcity of texts that focus on the plight of indigenous communities (Hall 1997, Denzin *et al.* 2008).

The findings of this study suggest that the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise is viewed by the Batlokoa community as being primarily a place of employment and secondarily a place of heritage.

Key words: Batlokoa, public-private-community partnerships, Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge, Indigenous community representation.

Acronyms

CCMS - The Centre for Communication, Media and Society

DEAT - Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

DLA - Department of Land Affairs

NDT - National Department of Tourism

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

PPCP - Public-Private-Community Partnership

SADC - Southern African Development Community

TFPD - Transfrontier Parks Destinations

Contents

Map

Map indicating Witsieshoek, the site of the study

Map of South Africa adapted from the Lonely Planet
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/africa/south-africa/

Chapter One : Introduction

Navigating the complexities of a New South Africa

Mainstream tourism brochures represent 'indigeneity' as something exotic and attainable through travel. It conjures up images of unspoilt rural lands and rustic communities steeped in mythology, folklore and spiritual awareness (see Tomaselli 2012). The tourist arrives at a destination with preconceived expectations. However, the reality that they encounter is often far from the envisioned harmonious setting. Indigenous communities in remote areas squabble and have disagreements just as an urban community would. In fact, the friction in remote communities is exacerbated due to poverty and the lack of access to basic health and educational services (Tomaselli 2007, Grant 2011). Engagement with tourism ventures is often the only avenue or means for income generation available to indigenous communities in remote areas who have scarce resources in terms of financial and human capital, educational qualifications or infrastructure (Ivanovic 2008, Mbaiwa 2003, Ashley and Roe 2002).

Communities sometimes adopt 'survival skills' such as begging and by commoditising their interactions with tourists as a way to garner resources. This is illustrated by the ≠Khomani Bushmen of the Northern Cape as such: "Organised begging replaces formal job descriptions. To be a 'Bushman' in the tourism sector holds currency, particularly if you are a ≠Khomani and even more so if you are a Kruiper" (Dyll-Myklebust 2011: 4). This quotation alludes to the sense of entitlement that some indigenous communities may have as a result of being researched by academics and visited by tourists over decades. However, contrary to dominant perceptions of indigenous communities being passive recipients of financial aid, they are capable of utilising available resources for their own benefit. Familiarity with tourists' stereotypes of indigenous communities sometimes allows community members to exploit these perceptions for financial gain. This was illustrated when a ≠Khomani Bushman, Silikat van Wyk, attempted to leverage his understanding of land dispossession to convince a student researcher into paying him money during a 'game' etched in the sand recounting a trope related to land dispossession during colonial times (Dyll 2003). There is an aspect of insecurity and vulnerability that tourists face when engaging in casual interactions with indigenous communities (Urry 2002, Bunten 2010,

Tomaselli 2012). The distinctions between those with influence and those without are blurred. The status quo is not static as there are constant re-negotiations of meaning (Hall 1997). Indigenous communities play a pivotal role in the tourism enterprises that they are involved in irrespective of whether cultural tourism is the dominant aspect of the enterprise. This dissertation is concerned with how one indigenous community in particular, the Batlokoa of Witsieshoek, re-negotiate and represent their collective history and identity in a public-private-community partnership. As will be elaborated on in chapter two, the Batlokoa community only banded together to gain access to land, they never had a 'group' identity. Therefore, they have to re-negotiate their respective ethnic identities in order to form a collective history (Quinlan 1988).

A *public-private-community partnership* is a joint collaboration between different stakeholders from the governmental, commercial and community sectors in order to achieve a common goal (Dyll-Myklebust 2011). The Batlokoa community of Witsieshoek entered into a collaboration with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) and in 2010 appointed the tourism operating company Transfrontier Parks Destinations (TFPD) to manage and market the community-owned Lodge (O' Leary, Personal Communication, 21 October 2010). This study is located within the field of cultural studies which focuses on issues of power, identity construction and group representation. A cultural studies approach focuses on the perceptions and experiences of marginalised sectors of society (Hall 1997). As the Batlokoa community was previously marginalised under the apartheid regime, the cultural studies approach was the most suitable. As such, the emphasis is placed on ascertaining the negotiation of power between the different stakeholders and on issues surrounding the historical representation of the Batlokoa community as opposed to highlighting the financial details of the community. Public-private-community partnerships are quite complex to navigate through as "they often comprise multiple stakeholders who may hold diverse views on development and varying degrees of influence over decision-making. No individual stakeholder can fully control planning. Conflicting public/private sector interests and activities can impact on economic, ecological and socio-cultural wellbeing" (Jamal and Stronza 2009: 3).

What is a community?

For the purposes of this study, a community is defined as a group of people living within a particular geographical boundary (Hillery 1955). Although there are Batlokoa communities residing in other parts of South Africa (Quinlan 1988), the scope of this study is limited to the Batlokoa community who reside in the Witsieshoek region.

This attempt to ascertain the perceptions and beliefs of an indigenous community stems from a need to establish whether or not the communal ownership of a tourism enterprise influences how an indigenous community views themselves as a cultural entity. This study is informed by the methodological stance of Critical Indigenous Inquiry. This inquiry focuses on the voices of oppressed and marginalised communities that do not usually have the means to articulate their plight. In creating a platform for divergent views to be expressed, it allows for greater understanding between different cultural and socio-economic groups (Denzin and Lincoln 2008). This stance places emphasis on the perceptions and experiences of the indigenous communities. The impetus for this study stems from the scarcity of scholarship from an indigenous perspective in the tourism industry (Hill 2011).

This research aims to establish what impact the community-owned Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise had on the Batlokoa community. The research questions guiding the study are:

- What was the Batlokoa community's relation to and perception of the Lodge when it was initially established?

- What was the historical significance of the Lodge as attributed by the Batlokoa community?

- What is the community's current relation to and perception of the Lodge after they entered into the partnership with TFPD?

Background of the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge establishment

As recounted by members of the chief's tribal council, the Lodge was built in the mid-1950s by members of the Batlokoa community under the auspices of the Batlokoa paramount chief Wessels Mota. It was initially used as a resting point for mountaineers or to house the chief's guests (Monei and Ramaili, Interview 8 December 2011). It was only turned into a tourism venture in the early 1970s, when the then homeland QwaQwa government turned the infrastructure into a resort and leased it to an individual of Greek descent, in his private capacity to operate the lodge as a tourism venture. In the late 1980s the QwaQwa government reclaimed the Lodge and it was managed by their department of tourism where managers were appointed to operate the Lodge on its behalf (Moloi, personal communication 18 February 2013). As far as can be ascertained from the interviews conducted with the Batlokoa staff, it seems as though a series of white managers ran the Lodge until custodianship of the Lodge was given to the current Batlokoa paramount chief in 2001 (Interviews, 6-8 December 2011). This study attempts to ascertain how the Batlokoa community incorporated the Lodge into their beliefs and practices once they gained communal ownership of the Lodge in 2001 and to simultaneously explore how public-private and community partnerships pan out in a the post-apartheid South African context. The Witsieshoek tourism enterprise differs from cultural tourism enterprises in that, while there is prominence placed on the Batlokoa heritage in the design, marketing and furnishing at the Lodge, this emphasis alludes to the fact that the local indigenous community is the owner and custodian of the Lodge as opposed to merely being exotic cultural 'attractions'.

Getting lost

My first visit to Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge was an eventful affair as the Garmin, the Global Positioning System I used, led my supervisor and I astray which resulted in us driving up to the gates of the Royal Natal National Park (twice), with a bemused guard sending us on our way (twice). I compounded our navigational problems by spotting a sandy road and foolishly assuming that it would get us to the Lodge. However, after a few minutes of driving deeper into a rural Africa we conceded that we had taken a wrong turn yet again. We stopped and asked two lumberjacks how to get back onto the main road. There were a few minutes of anxiety as I tried to phone the lodge manager. The Garmin once again attempted to re-calculate the best possible route as we drove on. This temporary state of limbo was disconcerting; for the reality was that

we were just driving deeper and deeper into the unknown, at least for us. When we eventually found the correct road and snaked our way up and up until we reached the Lodge, we discovered that Garmin had not updated its co-ordinates to reflect the National Park and was trying to direct us through the reserve to the Lodge.

It was all something of a metaphor, for truth to tell Witsieshoek Lodge is a long way from anywhere. Would it also be lost in the past?

But my metaphor goes further. Getting lost and having to navigate one's way back to a desired route can be a frightening experience. It can be likened to the many bumps and snags that are encountered on our quest to create a 'new' South Africa. There is no route map to direct our nascent democracy; there is only a constant re-calculation and re-negotiation occurring in all spheres of South African society to find a new way forward that is acceptable to all South African citizens.

Periods of transition are disconcerting, simply because of the uncertainty about events and what lies ahead. It forces one to confront the status quo and to re-establish one's own position in society. Post-apartheid South Africa is still in that state of limbo. We are similar to lost travellers in trying to forge a new national identity that is inclusive of all the diverse ethnic groups. Even though the laws and acts of parliament have changed and we are officially on our nineteenth year of democracy, mindsets and public consciousness has not always converted to the 'co-ordinates' of our new democratic national identity. Post-Apartheid South Africa may have been christened as 'the Rainbow nation' by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but this phrase with both religious and symbolic overtones of forgiveness, ethnic diversity and reconciliation does not always reflect the fear, suspicion, resentment, discomfort and uncertainty that frequently still exists amongst different race groups in South Africa. This is not surprising considering the decades of segregationist propaganda that we as a society have been exposed to (Baines 1998, Moodley and Adam 2000, Jansen 2007). Apartheid was a system of discriminatory laws that promoted the doctrine of racial segregation in the political, social, cultural, economic and personal spheres of life. Its aim was to privilege a minority group at the expense of the majority and this aim was furthered by the implementation of a battery of laws that controlled the movement, residential areas and educational development

among other things, of the non-white population (Krog, Mpolweni-Zantsi and Ratele 2008). This created vast inequities between the racial groups that are only beginning to be addressed now.

And what has all this to do with quiet, remote and beautiful Witsiehoek? The answer, sadly, is quite a lot. The Batlokoa community in the Witsieshoek region obtained custodianship of the Lodge in 2001 due to the Lodge being situated on land that once belonged to them. The land was handed over to the community, not to specific individuals. However, communal ownership of the land does not mean that a community necessarily has the skills or knowledge to utilize the resources on the land (Ashley and Roe 2002, Jamal and Stronza 2009). Indeed, given South Africa's past the inequities frequently mean that this is not the case. And this is where the Witsieshoek Lodge comes into the saga. As will be seen, the Lodge, or precursors of the Lodge as it appears today, had stood on this site for over fifty years. It is now part of the Batlokoa community's cultural inheritance.

The Lodge was now run by managers appointed by TFPD in collaboration with the local community. A brave attempt was made by TFPD in 2010 to manage the operations of the Lodge on behalf of the local custodians to turn the lodge into a commercially viable operation. Prior to the intervention by TFPD, members of the local leadership and community tried their best. But the reality was that they had very little going for them. They did not have sufficient capital; they did not have the necessary multi-skills necessary to run a tourist resort, from manager to chef and from receptionist to gardener; they did not have the wider linkages or the public relations skills to promote the enterprise; and they did not have any training programme to bring up local labour to tackle such a project. Not to put too fine a point on matters, it was a project doomed to failure.

So in the ten years since the community had acquired the land, the Lodge had steadily declined into a state of disrepair until it was almost uninhabitable. The staff working there had not been paid for months because business at the Lodge could not meet its overhead costs. There was nothing left even for salaries. And not surprisingly, the number of tourists visiting the Lodge had declined dramatically due to the derelict infrastructure existing as well as the poor service offered to anyone unfortunate enough to stay at the place (O' Leary, interview, 21 October 2010). This lack of skills, managerial knowledge and financial support eventually drove the

community to appoint a tourism operating company to run the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge. This was the-Transfrontier Parks Destinations, or TFPD.

Unfortunately, it is an international trend that community-owned lodges operated by individual communities often close once donor funding finishes or alternatively, due to the lack of knowledge of the tourism industry, the product and services offered are rarely on par with international offerings (Goodwin and Santilli 2009). Also, it has to be said, collaborations between tourism operators and communities are not always smooth sailing, as the different stakeholders often have divergent worldviews and agendas (Ashley and Haysom 2006, Jamal and Stronza 2009). And because of our history of a racially segregated society, not unnaturally, there are suspicions, mistrust and a lack of understanding occurring between the stakeholders, even more so that one would expect in a normal situation.

In the case of Witsieshoek, TFPD is not a single-site operator so they have a wide expertise to draw upon. TFPD also oversees the management of !Xaus Lodge which is located in the remote Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in the Northern Cape Province. This Lodge, owned by the ≠Khomani San and Mier communities, presented many infrastructural, logistical and operational challenges. Initially, accessing the Lodge is problematic as one needs a hardy off-road vehicle to withstand driving through kilometres of sand dunes to reach the Lodge. Then, one has to negotiate how to interact with the indigenous owners of the Lodge so that their aspirations are assimilated within the operating standards of the enterprise. Moreover, standard operational procedures such as stocking the Lodge with fresh food and ensuring that the sheets were laundered regularly proved to be both expensive and time consuming as the Lodge is situated in such a geographically isolated region. Trips to replenish supplies and do the laundry were inordinately long (Dyll-Myklebust 2011). However, despite encountering numerous other challenges TFPD was able to find means to overcome these hurdles (Tomaselli 2012).

Managing the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise seems easy in comparison to the difficulties encountered at some other sites. The Lodge is nestled in the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation area, near the little town of Phuthaditjaba. The proximity to the town enables access to basic shopping facilities, and essential services. Despite being more convenient in some respects, this enterprise also has its share of setbacks ranging from power outages due to

thunder storms and being snowed in sometimes, to hikers getting stranded in the mountains and having to be rescued (Field notes, October 2012).

Background of the Batlokoa community
The Batlokoa community which settled at Witsieshoek originated from the south of Basotholand, or what today is called Lesotho. In 1873, after gaining permission to do so from the (then) Orange Free State Republic, they settled in the Witsieshoek area under the leadership of Koos Mota. It must be noted that Witsiehoek lies is a region where borders or frontiers meet. To the south-east was the old Colony of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal); a few kilometres to the west and north-west was Basotholand (Lesotho); to the north and north-east was the Orange Free State (Free State) and over to the north-east was the old Transvaal Republic, now southern Mpumalanga. Not surprisingly, given the fact that four political entities converged near here, this was disputed territory. It also contained large tracts of exploitable woodland and mountain forests.

The Batlokoa were not all from one common lineage, however, they had banded together under the leadership of Koos Mota for reasons of safety as well as for the purpose of gaining land tenure. At that time the Orange Free State government would only allocate land to groups if they could be identified as being a distinct group under a particular leader. So the banding of disparate individuals under the banner of the 'Batlokoa' was necessary to leverage resources. The Batlokoa at Witsieshoek are a splinter group from the Harrismith Tlokoa, to the north-east. It was common for groups to split or merge depending on the requirements of current legislation. This is exemplified by Koos Mota's nephew, Chief Wessels Mota, deciding to accept the terms of 'separate development' legislation, the policy which led to the creation of African reserves known as 'homelands' by the apartheid government. According to this legislation he would be given funding in order to provide the necessary amenities for his followers. This was done under the guise of 'preserving ethnic unity', when it was in reality a mechanism of control to keep the black labour force contained in one geographical area (Hawkins 1982, Quinlan 1988, Pickles and Wood 1992). The practice of disparate indigenous communities banding together to leverage resources is quite common. Another example of this is among the ≠Khomani San of the Northern Cape in South Africa who are comprised of different bushmen groups uniting in order to launch a land claim in the late 1990s (see Dyll-Myklebust 2011 and Tomaselli 2012; Finlay 2009).

Situating this study

This research is embedded within the 'Re-thinking Indigeneity' track, established in 1994, which is headed by Professor Keyan Tomaselli of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This pioneering project is concerned with issues of indigenous identity, representation and history. It also touches on topics relating to cultural tourism and heritage (Finlay 2009). This research on Witsieshoek in particular stems from previous studies conducted on public-private and community partnerships which deal with the power dynamics and operational complexities that arise in the collaboration between indigenous communities and tourism operating companies. A study of particular relevance relates to how the ≠Khomani and Mier communities who own !Xaus Lodge in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park negotiated their collaboration with the tourism operating company TFPD (Dyll-Myklebust 2011).

This research aims to ascertain the underlying power relations existing between the Public-private and community sectors. The public component DEAT which contributed funding for the renovation and refurbishment of Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge, the private component is the tourism operating company, Transfrontier Parks Destinations, which is responsible for the operational aspects of the Lodge. The third side of the triangle is the vital community component, the Batlokoa community, which now has permanent land tenure at Witsieshoek. Although the research conducted at Witsieshoek is specific to this particular case study, the relations between the different stakeholders can be found in most collaborations of this nature. In that sense this study falls into a wider phenomenon which brings together local communities, government agencies and private commercial enterprises. Success or failure is dependent on all three maintaining faith in the project and contributing agreed resources when and where necessary. In a country like South Africa, where extremes of wealth and poverty stand side by side, this is a credible and exciting opportunity to move forward. It is especially important to understand the complex factors at play in light of South Africa's vast tourism potential as is outlined in the 1996 Tourism White Paper: "The country's tourism attractiveness lies in its diversity. Some of the features which make South Africa an incredibly attractive tourism proposition include: accessible wildlife, varied and impressive scenery, unspoiled wilderness areas, diverse cultures (in particular traditional and township African cultures) ... make South Africa an almost complete tourist destination" (DEAT 1996:7). The income that can be

generated through promoting tourism in South Africa may help to bridge the gap between the wealthy and the disadvantaged.

While urbanization advances at a frightening pace, this sort of venture is the only hope that impoverished rural communities like the Batlokoa have to make a decent livelihood and be given encouragement to stay on the land, and by so doing preserve their culture, language and heritage in a fairly traditional form. In this sense such partnership schemes as that at Witsieshoek mean more than just providing a few dozen families with a weekly wage, it a key to a door which opens the prospect of survival of a community.

Background to study

This study centres around the public-private-community partnership involving three very different entities in post-apartheid South Africa:

- ➢ The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT),

- ➢ Transfrontier Parks Destinations

- ➢ The Batlokoa community of Witsiehoek in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

It is necessary to outline what led to this partnership. The battery of racially discriminatory laws implemented during the apartheid resulted in a great imbalance between the amount of material resources that the white minority population had access to and that available to the black majority population. The black population in South Africa was confined to specific geographical areas known as independent 'homelands' or reserves. These reserves were densely populated and frequently had very little fertile agricultural land. Consequently, the black population was forced off the land in order to comply with the restrictive apartheid era legislature and to provide cheap labour in the industrial and mining cities and regions.

Impetus for the creation of independent 'homelands' or reserves

When faced with the difficulty of 'containing' the black population in one geographical area, the apartheid government created the constructs of 'homelands' or reserves. Under the benign guise of 'promoting ethnic unity' the rationale behind creating 'homelands' was to concentrate the black population in one area while generally evading the responsibility of providing basic sanitary, educational and housing services amongst others, to the black population (Pickles and

Wood 1992). In delineating the 'homelands' as an independent entity, the apartheid government could justify not allocating sufficient funds or services to the reserves as they were considered to be separate from South Africa. This construct of 'ethnic unity' also encouraged black communities living elsewhere in the country to live amongst their own 'people' who shared the cultural and linguistic norms (Quinlan 1988). A consequence of this is that some communities were forced off their ancestral land in order to comply with the related laws.

Because of this, the post-apartheid government acknowledged the injustices committed during the apartheid era and aimed to redress previous inequities by promoting business enterprises amongst the black population. However, despite the South African government acknowledging that due to the generally low agricultural, tourism and management skills capacity of beneficiary communities there needs to be additional support mechanisms put in place, not enough has been done to provide assistance to beneficiary communities (Ashley and Roe 2002, Grant 2011). Many restituted areas still require additional infrastructural, sanitation and operational management improvements. This juncture between what the communities are able to do, what the government is able to provide and what is needed provides the entry point for private, commercial enterprises such as the tourism operating company TFPD. The private sector is being integrated as one of the key stakeholders in providing the necessary operational, management and business skills that government departments are unable to provide to communities (Hottola 2009). The private, commercial sector then forms strategic linkages with both the beneficiary communities and the national departments in order to create a feasible working partnership (Dyll-Myklebust 2011).

Outline of study
Chapter two peruses pertinent case studies from the fields of management, tourism and cultural studies respectively. These case studies will have a particular focus on the issues of indigenous identities, heritage and representation, and make an interesting vehicle to compare, contrast and synthesis other attempts at public-private-community partnership, highlighting the enterprise intersections which the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge has with other ventures of a similar nature.

Chapter three seeks to outline the conceptual framework used to define the parameters of this study. As the inter-related concepts of Language, Representation and Identity forms a pivotal

aspect of the research, theories related to these concepts were integrated to provide the framework for this study.

Chapter four identifies the research design and methods employed in the acquisition of qualitative data and its subsequent analysis. This study was informed by the over-arching qualitative methodology of Critical Indigenous Inquiry. This mode of inquiry places emphasis on the indigenous community's perception of events (Denzin and Lincoln 2008).

Chapter five identifies and explains the trends and patterns in the data that were ascertained by employing a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). The Lodge was viewed essentially as either a place of employment or as a testament to the Batlokoa community's cultural heritage.

Chapter six re-iterates the salient findings of the study, emphasising the significance of the undertaking and its primary findings, as well as suggesting possible avenues for further research in the field.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Striking a balance within public-private-community partnerships

This chapter aims to identify and relate the key issues of importance surrounding Public-private partnerships in the tourism sector in South Africa. These key issues are extracted from literature in the tourism and management fields. Although the collaboration of public resources and private enterprise is not confined to the tourism industry, the scope of this study limits the investigation to this sector. It is especially pertinent in the South African tourism landscape as one of consequences of the post-apartheid land restitution process is that land in National Parks and other protected areas have on occasions been returned to previously dispossessed groups. But very often these groups lack the skills or experience to manage the existing tourism enterprises situated on this acquired land (Brockington, Duffy and Igoe 2008, Department of Land Affairs 1997). The Public-private relationship with the Batlokoa community is pertinent to this study, as the aim of this study is to ascertain the most practical and mutually beneficial practice of managing Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge in collaboration with its various stakeholders. As this study focuses on South African tourism, this review begins with an overview of the origins of tourism.

Tourism in everyday life

> For many people in 'developed' societies, taking a holiday (or, increasingly, several holidays) every year is the norm. It is part of the life cycle, and holidays join birthdays, religious festivals and the annual round of births, deaths and weddings as notable and noteworthy episodes that punctuate the passing of time (Harrison 2001: 1).

Tourism as we know it today originated from the sixteenth century practice of the European elite embarking on a "Grand Tour", an educational trip undertaken to nurture their understanding of foreign cultures, languages and customs (Alder 1989). By the mid nineteenth century, improved roads and transport systems increased domestic tourism in Europe while advances in sea transport allowed for access to overseas resorts. However, the greatest impact on the tourism industry in the nineteenth century was brought about by the railways that enabled mass tourism to develop (Urry 1995). The surplus of aircraft after World War II enabled British holiday-makers to travel to Spain and other parts of the Mediterranean. Air travel increased the tourism periphery (Heppenheimer 1995). Tourism brings about the seasonal creation of employment, and on occasion, improvements in the communication, building and transport infrastructure in host

communities (Harrison 2001). Developing countries, which are often the destination for holidays, depend on tourists to bolster their economies. Tourism has been linked to the development of a 'service class' whose employment depends on catering to the needs of an affluent, discerning consumer (Urry 1995).

Tourism in the South African context

The tourism sector is an especially valuable economic driver in the South African context as it has many opportunities and avenues for employment that do not require formal education or training (Manyara and Jones 2007).That is to say that the tourism sector can provide employment opportunities even for people who were previously disadvantaged. It is South Africa's fastest growing industry and, arguably, the world's largest industry. It can be a catalyst for both regional and national development creating employment opportunities and infrastructural improvements that benefit the host communities (Ivanovic 2008, Glasson, Godfrey and Goodey 1995, Mbaiwa 2003). This industry provides potential employment opportunities for communities in which other sectors of employment have declined. Tourism enterprises can also be implemented in rural areas as it can incorporate the remoteness of the area as a beneficial factor as well as to provide employment opportunities where subsistence and small-scale agricultural activities are no longer feasible due to competition from larger commercial ventures. The sector also often promotes gender equality, or at least an advance in gender equity, by employing women. It can also improve the standard of living for host communities in terms of increased access to education and health facilities as well as sanitation, transport and communication infrastructural development (Ashley and Roe 2002; Manyara and Jones 2007; Wang and Pfister 2008). It is a home-truth that tourism enterprises tend to be more successful if they have the support of the community in which it is based (Goodwin and Santilli 2009; Manyara and Jones 2007). "Local communities who have a vested interest in a tourism venture will actively seek to sustain it and contribute to a positive tourism experience. Supporting local economic growth is therefore key to long-term success" (DEAT 2003:9). This often leads to community-based tourism, an initiative that is being implemented to increase local people's participation in tourism (Ashley and Roe 2002).

Tourism as an enactment of affluence

Tourism relies on the consumer's buy-in of a fantasy. Tour operators carefully craft images and icons of mysticism, romance, excitement, sensuality and adventure. Often, it is not the actual geographical place that holds the allure of the tourist, it is the associated mental frameworks and promise of the realisation of these ideals that drives the sector (Mason 1996).

Tourism promotional materials often rely on strong under currents of desire. Visits to certain countries become coveted as the mark of a cultured and privileged individual. Travel itself becomes synonymous with leisure, luxury and affluence (Weightman 1987). Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge is located in the Drakensberg. The Drakensberg Mountains are renowned amongst adventure tourists looking for hiking, climbing and outdoor activities, however, the Drakensberg Mountains also connote romance, natural scenic beauty and seclusion. It is a popular destination for weddings (Drakensberg Wedding Venues 2013). The Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise is in a prime location for tourism.

Prior to 1994 when the first democratic elections were held and the apartheid laws were abolished, only the white population could afford to engage in tourism. However, in post-apartheid South Africa, there has been an increase in tourism activities undertaken by the non-white population as there is now a greater amount of financial resources available for travel (DEAT 2011). Additionally, tourism to cultural heritage sites of the non-white population is increasing as the black population endeavours to understand a history that was largely eliminated from the educational system and public discourse. This symbolic merger of the history of the black population with the history taught in the formal educational system has led to a more holistic interpretation of past events (Oberholzer 2012). Engagement with community-based tourism ventures is one way to gain an understanding of the realities at the grassroots levels of society.

Community-based tourism in developing countries

Community-based tourism is defined as "tourism owned and/or managed by communities and intended to deliver wider community benefit, benefiting a wider group than those employed by the initiative" (Goodwin and Santilli 2009:4). The central component of the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) model is the inclusion and participation of the various stakeholders in a

community such as the local citizens, local government officials, developers and business people in the tourism enterprise. This participation is not reserved to merely working at the venture, but also extends to the operational and decision-making processes at the venture (Okazaki 2008). The case study conducted on Coron Island in the Philippines (Okazaki 2008) illustrates the success of an indigenous people, the Tagbanua, in implementing a community-based tourism (CBT) initiative. Coron Island is a prime coastal tourist destination due to scenic beauty and abundance of interesting flora and fauna. Most of the islanders earned their livelihoods through fishing until the community-based organization Tagbanua Foundation of Coron Island (TFCI) re-claimed ownership rights over the tourism areas on the island. It implemented income-generating processes, such as charging admission fees to the entrance of visitation zones such as lakes and beaches, and also provided the option of having a boat tour around the island. When asked about their engagement in the tourism industry, most local respondents on the island felt that it was a positive addition to the community. This study provides evidence that community-based tourism projects can be successful if managed properly. Proper management is the key to success. It entails amongst other things, the use of non-exploitative labour practices, as outlined by the South African national tourism policy.

The guidelines suggested by the South African national tourism policy encourage the practice of "Responsible Tourism" in the operation of the tourism enterprise. The guidelines state that "Responsible tourism is a tourism management strategy embracing planning, management, product development and marketing to bring about positive economic, social and environmental impacts" (DEAT 2003). The guidelines also emphasize the need to respect local cultures and be aware of local customs and areas of religious significance. Tourism operators should ensure that tourists are mindful and respectful of local custom and heritage. Local citizens provide the 'history of the land' and the local indigenous knowledge. However, even though the CBT model appears to be the solution to the issue of community participation in tourism, it is difficult to implement on a practical level due to community members lacking the skills and literacy required to make informed and beneficial decisions for any specific tourism venture. There is too often a lack of business management skills. Then there is either a lack or a haziness relating to a basic understanding of the tourism industry. Finally, there is the thorny issue of how to equitably distribute common resources and benefits. A case study that seems to indicate an example of the

unequal distribution of benefits was conducted by Wang and Pfister (2008) in Washington, in an eastern coastal area of North Carolina. Washington used to serve as a manufacturing and agricultural hub, however, due to the decline of these industries in the past decades, the region experienced an economic decline. In order to boost employment opportunities in the region, community leaders and the local municipality implemented strategies to attract tourists. Many Victorian era homes and historical buildings were refurbished, the waterfront and shopping facilities were renovated and local artists were encouraged to host music festivals in the area. Despite the high level of tourism initiatives in the area, local residents stated that they did not feel that they or their families were involved in the tourism industry. A possible reason for this perspective may be that the opportunities and income accruing from the local tourism industry in Washington was concentrated among a small group of entrepreneurs, community leaders or local governance. The possibility of the unequal distribution of opportunities could account for the lack of enthusiasm or feeling of involvement reflected by the local community in Washington. This study highlights the dangers of not ensuring an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Community members who are not involved in the tourism endeavour may question its relevance to their communities and livelihoods and may consequently view the endeavour as a waste of time and resources. These serious weaknesses in distribution of wealth and resources have the tendency to create conflict within the community, as well as difficulties and misunderstandings in the management of the tourism enterprise (Ashley and Roe 2002, Manyara and Jones 2007). The result is dramatic for, due to these weaknesses in capacity, many CBT enterprises close as soon as or soon after donor funding runs out (Goodwin and Santilli 2009). This highlights the possible pitfalls of community tourism in that the Batlokoa community may not be inclined to participate in creating a hospitable environment for tourists if there is the perception that the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge is not contributing value to the community as a whole.

A frequent point of contention is that although community-based tourism ventures provide links to the local economy, it often enjoys very little success due to its inability to compete with commercial enterprises (Manyara and Jones 2007, Goodwin and Santilli 2009). A lesson, not always learnt to-date, is that community-based tourism must be commercially viable in order for it to be sustainable. The commercial operational aspects of the tourism venture must be

incorporated in a partnership between the public community-owned venture and private commercial tourism interests if growth and survival are to be guaranteed. (Roberts and Tribe 2008, Wilson, Nielsen and Buultjens 2009). The success of tourism at a lodge can often have a multiplier effect on the local economy as illustrated in the case study by Jamal and Stronza (2009) conducted at the Chalalán ecolodge in Bolivia. The indigenous Tacana community's primary means for earning a livelihood by was logging in the Madidi National Park; however this was not sustainable as the logging depleted the forest which was the resource that needed to be conserved. As a solution to the problem, Chalalán ecolodge was designed with the explicit goal of generating material benefits for the local community. Although it was initially established by the Bolivian government, the lodge is now owned and managed entirely by the Tacana community with local leaders collaborating with the Bolivian government. When tourism at the lodge began to prosper, it had a multiplier effect in the local economy. Several families began to farm native fruits to supply to the lodge. Local artisans also made handicrafts such as baskets, carved wooden masks as well as handmade cards. There does seem to be some evidence that this multiplier effect also applies at Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge, as the rugs and many wall decorations are hand-woven by Batlokoa women. Their crafts are for sale, displayed at the entrance of the Lodge (field notes 2011). However, it is doubtful if this makes a significant contribution to the local economy.

The South African government asserted in its Rural Development Strategy (RDS) in 1995 that new policies needed to be drawn up to promote tourism among non-whites in South Africa as tourism had previously been developed on a racial basis catering to a white elite (Brennan and Allen 2001). This created the impetus to foster community involvement and new partnerships in rural areas. The scenery and wildlife in South Africa makes ecotourism an ideal enterprise in rural communities. Due to its proliferation in the press and on television, most South Africans are have a high level of awareness of ecotourism. Community engagement in ecotourism has the potential to advance conservation goals as well as to promote political transformation in South Africa (Brennan and Allen 2001). As South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world where housing, educational and employment opportunities amongst others is still divided along racial divisions, this political transformation is essential for the redistribution of wealth and employment opportunities (Meer, Miller and Rosen 2003). This transformation is

easier said than done however. There are many challenges faced when incorporating the historically disadvantaged communities into the operation of tourism industries in rural communities. Rural communities are often divided when it comes to maintaining who owns a portion of land. Frequently the official record of land ownership is contested by other members of a community who claim ownership as well. This contested issue of private land ownership creates obstacles when land needs to be used as a commercial asset. Moreover, there is mistrust amongst local residents of signing any documents related to the land as in the past, local communities often saw themselves excluded from hunting, residential, and farming opportunities to make way for conservation interests (Wells and Brandon 1992). Any attempt to foster a community, public and private collaboration would have to navigate through all the aforementioned challenges.

Small-to-medium sized tourism enterprises would seem to have a greater economic impact on rural communities than larger mass-packaged tourism resorts. Small, locally-run tourism enterprises often source their goods and services from local suppliers thus increasing the multiplier effect in a particular locale. The 'multiplier effect' refers to the money accrued from commercial transactions as a result of tourism in an area. An example would be of how tourists staying at a lodge or resort in an area would use the transport services, buy local arts and crafts, buy refreshments from the local stores and participate in recreational activities. The addition of foreign currencies into developing economies strengthens local socio-economic linkages between tour operators and communities (Brohman 1996). It is imperative that local communities and businesses are included in the economic benefits of tourism or else there is the danger of alienating local communities by creating enclaves of wealth and a culture of dependency in economically poor areas (Britton 1982).

Sustainable tourism
In 1987, the United Nations commissioned a report that investigated the effects of development on the environment. The report, subsequently known as the Brundtland Commission Report, *Our Common Future*, drew attention to the link between tourism and the environment. The concept of 'sustainable development' became common in tourism discourse. Some of the key findings of the report were the need to conserve environmental resources in order to ensure the sustainability of human progress. There was the realisation that environmental issues were inextricable from

economic development issues. It became increasingly clear that economic, environment and development issues could not be compartmentalised as they were all interlinked.

The term sustainable development refers to the goal of meeting the needs of the current generation without depleting the environmental resources required to meet the needs of future generations (Brundtland 1987). This aim requires that individuals in affluent societies curb their use of environmental resources so that energy, food, water and other necessities can be distributed amongst a greater portion of the population (Hughes 1995).

It is worth noting that sustainable development is not an end-goal, but a process. It requires that global consumption of resources does minimal damage to the environment and is mindful of the needs of future generations.

A salient point made in relation to the tourism sector was that economic development should not be pursued at the expense of natural resources, and by threatening the traditional lifestyles and ecosystems of indigenous peoples. Tourism does have the potential to disrupt traditional lifestyles and to set-off environmental degradation, however, if communities and tour operators are well-informed about the environmental impacts and if they take precautionary steps to prevent environmental damage then tourism can be a much-needed economic boost in economically-stagnant communities (Bramwell and Lane 2000).

Tourism partnerships

It has become clear to tour operators, government officials and indigenous communities that is it not possible for a single organisation to control or shape the tourism sector in an area. It takes the collaboration of many different sectors to promote and sustain a positive tourism atmosphere in a specific area (Selin 2000). However there is no escaping the fact that partnerships are not necessarily equal in nature. There is the inherent danger of economically powerful sectors of the partnership, over-riding the wants and needs of the economically weak. (Selin 2000). The process of collaboration is best enacted if all the key stakeholders have an equal say in the decision-making process. It is important that tourism practioners bear in mind that partnerships and collaborative linkages are dynamic and not static (Gray 1989). This means that one has to constantly assess the progress in the collaboration and be informed of any developments that may affect the stability of the agreement.

Women and tourism

Employment in the tourism sector is a means for illiterate rural women to achieve a degree of economic empowerment. Rural women are face discrimination in South Africa due to traditional patriarchal beliefs (Riep 2005). They are often excluded from decision-making processes and are often victims of exploitation and domestic violence due to their economic dependence on men. In order to combat these inequalities in society, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), has developed structures outlined in its Protocol on Tourism Development which was drawn up in 1998, but which came into effect in 2002. Some of these protocols are to promote small and medium business enterprises, and to increase the number of women and youth in the tourism industry. Tourism therefore offers women an opportunity to gain employment (Manwa 2001). However, gender-ascribed roles are transferred to the employment sector. Women are viewed as the custodians of traditional and culture as they had the responsibility to convey the cultural norms and values to the children as the men were engaged in migratory labour that resulted in them being away from home for long periods (Owusu and Lund 2004). Women also play a symbolic role in the informal employment sector by dressing in traditional clothing and performing traditional songs as well as dance. Tourists looking for an 'authentic cultural experience' often appreciate the perceived pride in local cultures (Manwa 2001). Due to women and girls often relying more on natural resources in order to weave baskets, create pottery or crafts, they have a wealth of indigenous knowledge of natural resources that is valuable in the tourism sector (Van der Cammen 1997). The employment of women helps to stimulate local economies in developing countries that have high unemployment rates and low-levels of literacy and education (Cattarinich 2001). Women generally spend their money on maintaining the household by buying food, clothing and other necessities for the family. This leads to an overall improvement of the standard of living in rural communities. Furthermore, economic independence is vital for Zulu rural women in particular as polygamy is still practiced and sometimes women are abandoned by their partners (Scheyvens 1999).

Village-based tourism

Village-based tourism is an offshoot of cultural tourism. International tourists seem to prefer this type of tourism due to the combination of cultural and natural resources to be experienced. This generally has positive economic effects for the residents of the area as many of the tourist

activities on offer involve low monetary investments, but a deliver a high monetary yield. An example of this is that tourists can be charged a fee to receive a guided nature walk that entails pointing out the local flora and fauna, sometimes accompanied with local folklore or fables. Additionally, if there is a demand for local cuisine, then that can be prepared and provided in the village itself while engaging the tourist in the preparation of the meal if need be (Burns and Barrie 2005, Moswete , Thapa and Lacey 2009, Frost 2003).

Village-based tourism is often held as a 'cure-all' in terms of economic regeneration in impoverished rural areas. It often promotes the exhibition of local heritage sites, the maintenance of local accommodation facilities and the provision of local food (Ying and Zhou 2007). However, the village residents do not necessarily receive all the economic benefits from hosting tourists. Tourists may seek out an 'authentic' cultural experience when they want to feel like intrepid travellers, however, when it comes to accommodation, most prefer the luxuries that they are used to at home. Hot showers, air-conditioning, comfortable beds, and so forth, are necessary even for tourists who want to experience the 'authentic lifestyles of indigenous cultures'. They want to have a safe, mediated and controlled tourist experience while enjoying the standard of life that they are accustomed to (Tomaselli 2012). This leads to the importance of human resources development and public-private-community partnerships. Even though a rural community may be able to offer the standard tourist fare of local sights, cuisine and culture, they may require capital investment from national or provincial tourism departments in order to finance high-standard accommodation facilities that tourists are accustomed to, as well as to use the services of tour operators who have the cultural know-how necessary to re-assure the tourist and make them feel comfortable in their surroundings (Dyll-Myklebust 2011, Finlay 2009).

Human resources in tourism development
A major constraint in tourism development in African countries is the lack of trained tourism employees. International funding agencies have invested in the education and training of potential tourism employees however, this has not been enough to address the acute shortage of competent and efficient individuals working in the tourism sector (Jenkins1997). Human resources can be defined as the human capital that a company employs. Factors such as education, training, health status and levels of competence affect the quality of human capital that a company possesses. If the tourism industry is able to attract competent employees, it has

the capacity to create vast employment opportunities (Dieke 2001). The tourism sector is a 'labour-intensive', i.e. it is cheaper to create a job for a person with minimal formal education in the tourism sector than it is in other economic sectors. The negative implication of this is that the nature of tourism employment is often, casual, seasonal, unskilled and requires little training. As a result it is viewed as an industry that employs temporary staff, does not have opportunity for much upward mobility and is a temporary but necessary step in pursuit of a 'real' job. (Mbaiwa 2003). As the entry thresholds are quite low, many potential employees are discouraged by the perceived lack of upward career mobility, this leads to candidates seeking employment in other economic sectors where there are greater training and educational opportunities (Doswell 1997). This lack of a competent labour force has far-reaching consequences for the sector as a whole. Tourists choose their holiday destination based on the perceived 'value-for-money' of the tourism product. Highly educated and professional tourism employees are needed to ensure that the 'tourism product' as a bundle of services, is the best in comparison to similar packages offered elsewhere. Human, economic, cultural and natural resources have to be skillfully collaborated to ensure that the amenities, attractions, and services available at a destination is used to the best advantage (Dieke 2001).

Resort-based tourism
Resorts can range from multi-national, five-star enterprises to quaint rural, and community-based tourism facilities. They can be found in highly-industrialized societies and in under-developed areas. However, resorts attract affluent foreign tourists with high disposable incomes who are vital to the survival of impoverished communities (King 2001). Resorts often come under fire for its accommodation of Western elites who consume vast amounts of local resources while the local workforce has to behave in a subservient manner to the guests. Resorts have attracted criticism because they seem to embody the ideals of conspicuous consumption and foster an elitist exclusivity. Very often, locals in a community are deprived of access to beaches, nature reserves and other tourist 'hotspots' as the locals are deemed to lower the exclusivity of the facility unless they are dressed overtly in cultural garb. It is jarring to view the juxtaposition of extreme wealth, luxury vehicles and leisure in contrast to the impoverished local communities that are often denied access to their own resources as a result of it being reserved for elite tourists. It is sometimes viewed as an oppressive enterprise that only offers the local employment

that comprises of menial tasks (MacCannell 1992). Tourism should be planned such that it offers greater means of economic development and social benefits for the majority of the local community in which it is situated in order to be ethically sound and have long-term success. If the local community feels hostile toward the tourism enterprise and subsequently behave in an inhospitable manner toward the guests then this will have a negative effect on tourism in the area over time. Therefore, the practice of responsible tourism is both ethically correct and it sound business practice (DEAT 2006).

Tourism challenges in developing nations

Against a backdrop of poverty, pollution and social upheaval, most tourism appears to be the indulgence of the worldly traveler in the conspicuous consumption of the third world. Tourists' are largely concerned about their own economic self-interest and are unlikely to spare a thought for the basic human rights or working conditions of the employees at their travel destinations (Dann 1996). However, tourism policies have the potential to foster more equitable relations between host communities and tourists. Initiatives that incorporate local communities in conservation and employment opportunities generated by the tourism sector stand a better chance of fostering wealth redistribution (Okazaki 2008). Tourism can therefore be implemented as a driver for social change. Realistically though, the tourism sector often consists of low-skilled workers divided along racial or gender lines, doing menial jobs. Much needs to be done to overturn this state of conditions (Roberts and Tribe 2008). Another issue of contention is that when wealthy tourists are catered to by poor communities, the stark difference in wealth is brought to the fore. This can lead to the building up of resentment toward tourists by impoverished community members. How does one reconcile poverty juxtaposed with opulence? The emphasis needs to shift from catering to tourists' consumption to promoting a mutually beneficial arrangement whereby tourists enjoy the attractions that a community has to offer while encouraging sustainable practices in host communities (Goodwin and Santilli 2009).The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage List is critical for helping developing nations conserve ecological and heritage sites (Reid 2006). The extremes of wealth and poverty within a single society can be negated by the redistribution of wealth via well-managed tourism enterprises (Richter 2001).

Sustainability: a 'buzzword' in tourism?

Tourism has a great impact on regional and local development in southern Africa. Many rural areas are now tied to global networks in the tourism circuit. The related cross-industrial and cross-societal value chains that are created on an economic, cultural and inter-personal level often add to the human resources, communications and transport infrastructure in a community. As stated previously, tourism is a relatively labour-intensive, but cost efficient way of generating employment in an otherwise impoverished area (Binns and Nel, 2002). It must be noted that despite its vast potential for economic gain in rural areas, tourism, if not managed properly, also has the potential to destroy natural resources and cause irreparable environmental damage. It is in light of this understanding that tourism policies place emphasis on the criteria that tourism in an area must benefit the local people who live in the area and secondly, more environmentally and host-friendly practices must be incorporated into the planning, policies and operations of the tourism venture (Mbaiwa 2003).

Accessibility to a tourism destination is of paramount importance. Public investment in roads, airports, railway systems etc. is a necessary start-up cost to ensure the success of a region. In addition to ease of access, the attractiveness of a destination depends on whether tourists feel safe enough to travel to a region while being drawn by the natural attractions, hospitality services or activities on offer. However, the best natural resources, climate, cultures and infrastructure in the world is not worth much to tourists if the enterprise is not marketed by individuals with specialised knowledge in business skills and tourism (Binns and Nel 2002).

The publication of the Brundtland Commission's report, *Our Common Future,* in 1987 (Brundtland1987) generated international awareness and debate around sustainable development. The report advocates that the ecological, socio-cultural and economic resources be used in a way that enables their use for future generations, it is based on the ideal of preserving resources to be used by as many people as possible in an equitable manner (Ashley and Roe 2002). The focus on equity means that different generations should have equal opportunities to gain access to environmental resources (Duffy 2000).

The United Nations Development Programme identified three major principles to adhere to when practicing sustainable tourism:

They are:

> Keep ecological processes as undisturbed as possible in order to preserve nature and biodiversity.

> Respect and encourage the continuation of local communities' socio-cultural values. Teach tourists to be aware of, and to be mindful of local customs and norms.

> Create strong economic links and viable business strategies that provide income-generating opportunities along equitable lines. Increase access and availability of social services in rural communities in order to combat poverty (UNDP 2001).

Due to the broad, and often all-encompassing nature of the term 'sustainability', tourism operators generally ensure that sufficient management, monitoring and preventative measures are taken so that environmental degradation, or societal alienation does not occur (Zerner 2000).

Overview of South African national sector strategy
South Africa has experienced a drastic increase in both domestic and international tourism after the 1994 democratic elections. This is as a result of international sanctions against South Africa being lifted. Tourism has subsequently been noted as a priority development sector in the national government's Medium–Term strategic framework (DEAT 2011) due to its potential to generate employment. The hosting of the 2010 International Football Federation (FIFA) World Cup showcased all that South Africa has to offer. International Football fans had the opportunity to experience the country at one of its most vibrant and unified events. The infrastructure and tourism strategies that were utilized during the World Cup are currently being used to maintain levels of tourism in South Africa. However, despite tourism being one of the world's fastest growing industries, it was also negatively affected by the global economic crisis in 2009. There are numerous factors that affect the tourism rates in a country. Among these are the price of air travel, the strength of a country's currency and the perceived safety in a country (DEAT 2011).

The National Department of Tourism aims to upgrade and then maintain consistently high levels of tourism service delivery that is on par with or that surpasses visitor experiences in first world countries. Domestic travel by South Africans is also a lucrative avenue of tourism generation. There is a concerted effort to position South Africa as a prime globally recognised destination.

Tour operators are creating niche-product development such adventure tourism, rural tourism or cultural tourism. At times, these categories overlap in terms of the activities and resources on offer at a single destination. The Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise is an example of a rural, community-based tourism facility that has the potential for both cultural as well as adventure tourism activities.

Many training and educational programmes have been implemented by the tourism departments at provincial level to ensure that there is capacity building in the form of human capital to stimulate service excellence, decent employment opportunities and political transformation in the tourism sector (DEAT 2011).

Public-private collaboration in the tourism sector
In order to be competitive with the global markets, the facilities offered at South African tourism ventures need to be on par with or surpass the quality of tourism enterprises offered internationally. But this is easier said than done. Often, there are 'too many cooks' spoiling the 'tourism broth'. Rural tourism ventures, as other rural products, often depend on intermediaries for marketing know-how, business acumen or just as a link to international tourism markets. Collaboration between stakeholders from the community sector, government departments and tourism operating company as intermediaries may provide the means to interlink resources to create a quality tourism product, but equally they can make the whole enterprise just too bureaucratic and complex for what is in effect a fairly simple reality on the ground (Forster 2004; Dyll-Myklebust 2011).

Ironically, collaboration is usually the only hope of success for rural communities involved in tourism with different stakeholders enabling the efficient use of resources. As one company or organization may not specialize in or have access to the various components in the tourism supply chain, it can be more beneficial for stakeholders to combine their respective resources. Palmer (1996) has stated that a Public-private partnership is the exchange of core competencies for mutual gain. The collaboration in this study is formed between the Batlokoa community who have communal land tenure of Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge and Transfrontier Parks Destinations (TFPD), a South African based tourism operating company. The Batlokoa community appointed TFPD to develop, market and manage the Lodge since members of the

community lacked the skills and capacity required to utilize the potential of the Lodge. TFPD entered into a 25 year lease agreement with the Batlokoa community in May 2010 (O' Leary, personal communication October 2010). Members of the tribal council of the Batlokoa community initiated the collaboration when they met the C.E.O of the tourism operating company (TFPD) at a tourism conference in 2007 (Monei, personal communication 2011). Thus TFPD provided the external intervention needed to develop the Lodge. As Ashley and Roe point out, there must be effective and on-going communication and dialogue between stakeholders if they are to accrue economic gains and linkages between the formal and informal aspects of a commercial tourism enterprise (Ashley and Roe 2002). There is an exchange of resources and core competencies between them. In the instance of this study under investigation, the Batlokoa community provides the access to the land and provides local indigenous knowledge, while the tourism operating company provides the following:

Skills required for writing proposals to acquire funding from government.

➢ Investment capital for developing the infrastructure of the Lodge.

➢ Formal management skills required for managing the Lodge.

➢ Extensive knowledge of the tourism industry to the partnership (Forstner 2004).

There is the possibility of disagreements and misunderstandings occurring due to the different levels of expertise and power imbalances between stakeholders. However, these obstacles can be minimized if all stakeholders treat each other with respect and acknowledge the different but necessary roles that each plays in the operation of the venture (Forstner 2004). It is also noted that unless each stakeholder approaches the partnership with a sense of ethics and honesty there is always the danger of private companies using the power imbalance to use communal resources without adequately compensating the rural community (Forstner 2004; Wilson *et al*. 2009). If the host community is alienated from the major decision-making processes and are made to feel like intruders on their own land, this will result in violence, crime, resentment and a resistance to promoting tourism activities. It is more productive for everyone concerned that the host community be recognised as a valuable source of local knowledge as well as the custodians of the land. This promotes a sense of responsibility and ownership towards a communal asset

(Brennan and Allen 2001). As stated throughout this dissertation, there is no clear-cut way forward. The tumultuous racial re-negotiations occurring in the tourism sector is reverberating through all segments of society in South Africa. There is no easy solution such as just ensuring that the black community stakeholders have the central decision-making powers just for the sake of adhering to politically correct expectations. There are other factors that need to be taken into consideration. There is no getting around the fact that there is often conflict of interests within communities and sometimes decisions are made not on what is best for the community as a whole but on the basis of what suits the political elite in the community. A lack of educational and professional experience often limits the amount of success grassroots civil organisations and NGOs in efficiently facilitating the redistribution of resources in communities (Boshoff 1996). These are gaps in which tour operators contribute to the educational and professional skill-set of the enterprise.

There are instances of beneficial co-management in southern Africa. The first instance is of the Makuleke community at the northern end of the Kruger National Park in South Africa. The Makuleke community had reclaimed their land as a consequence of the post-apartheid land restitution policy. Instead of re-inhabiting the land they opted to lease it back to the government not for rental income but for partial control over the income accrued from tourism in the park. They receive a portion of the profit accrued from tourism as well as participate in the decision-making processes related to their land, via representatives from the community who serve on the park's management board (Reid 2006). The second instance is that of CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Plan for Indigenous Resources), a model that was initiated and implemented in post-independence Zimbabwe in the late 1980s. This plan relied on engaging the local communities in wildlife conservation and tourism strategies implemented by the government's Parks Department. A portion of the profits accrued from tourism was invested in the local communities (Duffy 2000).

Even though the previous case studies suggest that effective collaboration can be fostered with careful management and planning, it is not an easy task. A study conducted by Wilson *et al.* (2009) focusing on the relationship between a national conservation park in Australia and the various tourism operators it entered into partnership with reveals many points of tension that

need to be resolved among the stakeholders. The tourism operators in the national park included an accommodation facility, a kiosk/café, a restaurant and a museum. The duration of their leases in the park ranged from one to 13 years. The disagreements resulted in the tourism operators feeling as though the park's management board viewed them merely as renters on their land, not as business partners. This stance was taken in light of the stringent lease agreements that the tourism operators had to adhere to, as well as their lack of autonomy when it came to making decisions related to their specific enterprise; every major decision had to be jointly made with the park management. Some would argue that since there is now a joint responsibility for risks that are incurred, there is the need for joint decision-making. The tourism entrepreneurs, however, argued that business sense did not necessarily mesh well with conservation sense and in certain instances the individual business should be able to act independently. This study does not intend to ascertain which is the right decision, however it does intend to bring to the fore the possible clashes between commercial tourism and public resource management. It serves to highlight the possible areas of difficulty between the goals of TFPD, a commercial tourism operator, and the Batlokoa community.

Tourism collaboration across political and geographical borders

> International boundaries have traditionally been viewed as barriers to human interaction. Indeed many borders have been defined and demarcated precisely for the purpose of limiting contact between neighboring societies or filtering the flow of people, goods, services and ideas between countries. As a result, tourist destinations, especially those on national peripheries, have tended to develop in a manner clearly constrained by limits of national sovereignty. The world is full of examples where adjacent regions in different countries share excellent natural and cultural resources, and therefore potential for joint tourism development and conservation. Unfortunately, political boundaries have a history of hindering collaborative planning, which has resulted in imbalances in the use, physical development, promotion, and sustainable management of shared resources (Timothy 2007:20).

Collaboration between different government organisations, stakeholders and tour operators lead to greater productive use of tourism destinations. The inclusion of all stakeholders is imperative if the long-term health and sustainability of the tourism enterprise is to be considered (Palmer 1996). Coordinated efforts between stakeholders minimize misunderstandings and help to reduce the waste of time and resources by duplicating services that could easily be done by one or other

organisation. By clearly outlining each organisation's roles and responsibilities, one is able to efficiently utilize the time, skills, and financial resources of each organisation (Timothy 2007).

A case study of a wildlife and nature conservation park that borders the United States of America and Canada highlights many of the difficulties encountered in stakeholder collaboration (Timothy 2007). Cross-border partnerships require careful planning and understanding between members in order to foster a productive working relationship. It is easy for misunderstandings to occur when stakeholders come from different ethnic, cultural or religious groups as they cannot find a middle ground. It is imperative that a concerted effort is made to understand other perspectives in these scenarios (Grant 2011). It must be acknowledged that cross-border partnerships are difficult to sustain because they are costly and time-consuming and often requires much more effort to avoid misunderstandings than if a management team constituted a relatively homogeneous group (Simoes 2001).

In certain instances collaboration, although initially difficult, is necessary for the successful operation of the conservation area. In the case of the US-Canadian park mentioned previously, administrators work together to ensure that electricity supplies, transport infrastructure, sewage systems and immigration and access controls are operational throughout the park (Timothy 1998).

Cultural consent in sustainable tourism
There is the prevailing expectation that the tourism industry should follow an operational framework that is compatible with the tenets of sustainable development. Sustainable tourism management techniques attempt to conserve the environment and consequently the major draw-factor on which tourism is based. However, it is felt that not enough is being done to cultivate and sustain the cultural aspects of tourism (Sharma 2005).

It is thought that if tour operators endeavour to understand the cultural interactions between the tourist and host then they would be able to use local knowledge in order to conserve the environment, make the most of natural resources and gain mutual benefits for the local host and visiting tourist (Scheyvens 2000). Sustainability in the tourism sector relates to the proper management of the cultural and natural resources in order to preserve them for future generations (Mbaiwa 2003). This 'proper management' entails using natural resources sparingly, investing in

the education and training of local host communities so that they are aware of how to protect their cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure and upholding their moral rights and responsibilities as a business by not engaging in exploitative labour practices (Reid 2006).

It is equally importantly for tourism operators to minimise the damage caused to the environment by monitoring the amount of pollution generated and environmental disturbances that occur as a result of the day-to-day tourism activities and to take steps to repair the damage (Manyara and Jones 2007). Nature and the natural environment is romanticised by cultural perceptions and shaped, if not literally, but figuratively to appeal to the fantasies of tourists looking for the spectacular in distant lands (Coria and Calfucura 2012). The ideological aspect of tourism links nature, the environment and host communities. The tourist arrives with preconceived expectations waiting to see the natural spectacle and cultural relationships that they have built in their minds (Tomaselli 2012). More often than not, the tourist gaze and expectations are shaped by Westernised expectations of a rural retreat in a remote area away from the corruption, pollution and stresses of daily life. These romanticised expectations extend to the expectations of indigenous people at tourism site. The cultural Other is searched for, not for how it actually is, but for how it fits within an idealised representation of welcoming indigenous communities at an idyllic site (Ivanovic 2008). In effect, the spectacular natural beauty of a tourism site serves as a backdrop for the enactment of the tourist's idealised self (Roberts and Tribe 2008).

Changes in power relations during a tourism partnership life cycle

The process of partnership and collaboration is key to the development of sustainable tourism in rural areas. While the community leaders in rural areas have the local knowledge of the land and environment, tourism operators have the business acumen needed to manage and market rural destinations to international tourists. However, it must be noted that these partnerships are not necessarily smooth-sailing and many frustrations, misunderstandings, resentments and disagreements inevitably occur before some semblance of harmony is reached (Brockington *et al.* 2008).

As all organisations within a partnership are constantly undergoing change within their own capacities, the collaborative partnership as a whole will constantly be undergoing changes as it adjusts to the changes in its composite organisations. Political transformations, economic recessions, natural disasters, and racial tensions all impact on the nature of the collaborative partnership (Moodley and Adams 2000). It is important that TFPD and the Batlokoa community are able to sustain their partnership as they have entered into a 25-year lease and should consequently be prepared to navigate around the pitfalls of a relatively long collaborative partnership.

Representation

This research focuses on what the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge represents and signifies for the Batlokoa community. It is limited to the perspective of the indigenous community as the focus of the study seeks to ascertain the indigenous perspective of the Batlokoa community that may have been overlooked in favour of a colonial historical account. This impetus stems from the perspective of critical and indigenous qualitative research (Denzin *et al.* 2008). The focus of this methodology lies in documenting non-western knowledge forms that have been disregarded by normative research paradigms. This results in attributing voice and agency to previously marginalized groups who lacked control of how they are represented (Swadener and Mutua 2008). Although a related path of inquiry, this study does not delve into the implications of representation in cultural tourism as it is not one of the attractions of the lodge. The field of cultural studies focuses on understanding and documenting the perspectives and realities of

marginalized sectors of society (Hall 1986). As this research endeavour focuses on the marginalized Batlokoa community, it is located within the cultural studies paradigm.

The Other is never just found or encountered, but made (Fabian 1990: 754).

This quote emphasizes the fact that the process of representation is not an ideologically neutral undertaking and that the individual's subjectivities influence how things are perceived (Hall 1986). Representation is thus a process of creating and attributing meaning to images, objects, symbols or concepts in order to impose a structure on the multitude of interpretations (Fabian 1990). This study is engaged in discovering how the Batlokoa community construct their own representations of the lodge. It also attempts to trace an evolutionary pattern in what the lodge initially signified to the community when it was established, whether and how those perspectives changed during the lodge's different phases of ownership and what the lodge currently represents to the community now that they have tenure of the land.

Dyll-Myklebust (2011) and Finlay (2009) produced case studies which investigated the issues of representation of indigenous communities in relation to a tourism lodge. Both studies investigate the nature of the interaction between the ≠Khomani and Mier indigenous communities respectively, who reside in the Northern Cape and work at the community-owned and privately-operated !Xaus Lodge which is part of Transfrontier Parks Destinations (TFPD) and located in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. These studies are pertinent to this research as it provides insight into the negotiations inherent in the representation of a lodge which is owned by an indigenous community. Dyll-Myklebust (2011) and Finlay (2009) intersects with the objectives of this study as the aim of the investigations was to ascertain how the relationship between the local indigenous communities and the tourism operating company could be developmentally and economically beneficial for both parties. Both studies attempted to facilitate an amicable working relationship between the community and lodge operator by initiating and engaging in dialogue between the stakeholders and by acknowledging that both parties added worthwhile skill, values and knowledge to the partnership. This two-way engagement appears to have been more successful in fostering a harmonious working relationship instead of an authoritarian managerial style. These tensions and discrepancies in communication and in power-relations

largely correlate along racial and to ethnic extractions due to South Africa's specific socio-economic history.

Race and representation

It is important to acknowledge that any investigation that involves delving into racial relations or representations in South Africa will be fraught with difficulties due to the contentious issues of racism and prejudice institutionalized during the apartheid era. Apartheid was a legal system institutionalized by the ruling political party, the National Party, from 1948. The cornerstone of this system was racial segregation which influenced every facet of people's lives, politically socially, culturally and economically. (Krog *et al.* 2008). Decades of racial division and unequal distribution of resources has created a rift and tension between the racial groups that is only beginning to be addressed in post-apartheid South Africa. This feeling of unease is eloquently captured in this appeal:

> How do we read one another? How do we "hear" one another in a country where the past still bleeds among us? How much of what we hear translates into finding ways of living together? How do we overcome a divided past in such a way that the "Other" becomes "us". (Krog *et al.* 2008: 531)

This poignant questioning has resonance especially in post-apartheid South Africa in remote rural areas where geographically isolated communities have not yet experienced the changes that they believed the demolition of apartheid would achieve. The combined disadvantages of illiteracy, inadequate education systems, poor nutrition and poverty often result in very few avenues where indigenous rural communities can voice their experiences, values and expectations in a way that fosters collective agency. (Krog *et al.* 2008). This sensitivity to racial inequalities is pertinent to this study as Witsieshoek was originally within an African reserve under apartheid legislation and became a 'homeland' in 1975 under the name "Qwa Qwa", an area with its own governance and civil service. Witsieshoek currently falls under the jurisdiction of the Maluti-A-Phofung local municipality (Aliber *et al.* 2006). Even though this study is temporally situated in post-apartheid South Africa, many of the current inequalities and historical representations originated during the apartheid era. It is consequently imperative that one casts an investigatory eye into the past in order to understand present circumstances.

Historical perspectives

The name 'Witsieshoek' originated much earlier from a myth that a Sotho 'Witch-doctor' (traditional healer) and rain-maker 'Ouetsi' sought refuge with his followers in that area during clashes in 1856 between the Sotho community and European settlers due to Ouetsi's cattle theft from both the Batlokoa and settler communities. This gradually transformed into an Afrikaans appellation meaning 'Ouetsi's corner'. Thus the name Witsieshoek connotes a long-standing historical relationship with the Batlokoa community. (Quinlan 1988, Inskeep 1978, Legassick 1969, Hawkins 1982). Additional evidence attesting to the deep-rooted presence of the Batlokoa community in the Harrismith vicinity is the grave-site of 6 to 7 successive Batlokoa chiefs located in Verkykerskop, which could possibly date back to the late seventeenth century (Hawkins 1982). Folklore in the Verkykerskop region in Harrismith recount the narrative of the fierce, bloodthirsty and dauntless Queen Regent Mantatisi who, together with her band of tall, robust warriors known as the *Wildcats* protected their territory against invading warriors (Sharratt 1968). These historical representations of the Batlokoa community both at Harrismith and at Witsieshoek support both their long-standing presence in the area and possibly legitimates their current ownership of the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge.

Representations can sometimes be a means to gaining agency and empowerment; it provides a mental space, a framework within which an indigenous group can utilize their agency in creating and disseminating their own perception of history and their experiences as opposed to having their meanings and significance imposed from an external source (Swadener and Mutua 2008).

In this process of "self-representation" of the Lodge it is hoped that the Batlokoa community form a collective agency in co-operating to create a communal history of their own Lodge. Current recorded history of the Batlokoa community has been documented by individuals outside the community who have imposed their external perception of the community in their accounts (Quinlan 1988, Inskeep 1978). Although these accounts provide a useful starting point, they do not capture the subjective 'lived experience' of the community. Woodson (1933/2000) posits that the intangible nuances of a particular community can only be captured by those who have shared experiences. These commonalities provide the springboard to base an empathetic, collaborative communal relationship. It is possible that the public acknowledgement of a shared history and experience will pave the way for mutual trust, understanding and insight. It is hoped that the

negotiation of the representation and significance of the Lodge, will foster a sense of agency and commitment that will carry over to the tourism endeavours of the lodge. This will aid in understanding how meaning is made by the community as a collective unit around the Lodge.

Although the focus of this study has, up to this point, largely concentrated on the indigenous recounting of historical events it would be an incomplete recount unless it delves into some of the European accounts of this geographical area. In the interests of historical accuracy, this study briefly investigates the European presence Witsieshoek. Whites originally came to this region for three reasons: to farm, to hunt, and to log timber. Much of the indigenous forest has now disappeared (Marwick, n.d.). Some of this thick bush, such as that at Oliviershoek, was full forest land. But there was extensive exploitative , and despite various attempts at conservation, including parliamentary legislation and the establishment of a Forestry Department in 1891, a great deal of indigenous timber in this region was cut and smuggled across the then Natal border into the Orange Free State (McCracken 1986). Vanished also is the old lodge which used to stand at Witsieshoek. This was at Mount Rydal. In 1908 an Irishman called Tom Casement took a lease of £100 a year on the local hostel and set about trying to make it a tourist attraction. He was funded by his eminent brother, the diplomat Roger Casement, who also came to Witsieshoek for a time while he was British Consul at Lorenco Marques, which was Portuguese East Africa near what is now South Africa. Indeed, Roger Casement considered at one time joining his brother full-time in making the Witsieshoek venture a commercial success. Had he done so, Irish history would have been different, for Sir Roger Casement, as he became, was to join the Irish revolution in 1916, and was to be executed as a traitor by the British (Laffan 2009). Tom Casement, with his Basotho guide Melatu, did much to popularise the northern Drakensberg for mountaineers over a 100 years ago. He used to collect visitors in a horse and carriage at the railway station at Harrismith. The 40 kilometre journey to Witsieshoek took nearly four hours. After seven years with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Tom Casement had to pay off his staff at Witsieshoek and joined the Union Defense Force, fighting with General Smuts in East Africa. He eventually returned home to Ireland, where in 1924 he was the inspector of the Irish Coast Life-Saving service in the newly independent state (Shaw 2012). This trajectory into the origins of the lodge as a mountaineer's hostel established by an Irishman in 1910 alludes to the fact that although the current existing structure of Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge can be traced

back to chief Wessel Mota in the late 1950s, the original mountaineer's hostel can be traced back to the early 1900s. This insight attests to the more than a century-long practice of tourism and hospitality at Witsieshoek.

Identity and the search for the 'self'

In modern societies, an individual's identity and social standing is not ascribed and constant from birth. One has to create an identity dependent on one's social role and aspirations. As social roles are often in a state of flux, an attachment to a geographical area or ethnic identity is often a mechanism used to create a semi-stable identity (Hughes 1995). Indigenous communities often derive their identity from their connection to the land. The ≠Khomani San of the Northern Cape often frame their identity in terms of their ethnicity and their closeness to nature and the environment in the Kalahari (see Tomaselli 2007). Some of the Batlokoa community members who work at the lodge take great pride in the fact that the enterprise is community-owned.

Semiotics and historical representation

> Semiotics is the study of how meaning occurs in language, pictures, performance, and other forms of expression. The method incorporates not only how thing come to mean, but how prevailing meanings are the outcomes of encounters between individuals, groups and classes and their respective cosmologies and conditions of existence (Tomaselli 1996: 29).

In light of the above definition, it can be inferred that the process of meaning-making encompasses a vast array of cultural, mythological and class-dependent factors. It is not contained within a static environment. The Batlokoa community has the shared history of settling in a specific location, Witsieshoek, after their chief Wessels Mota led them to a place of safety as refugees from the clan fighting in Lesotho (Quinlan 1988). This common history can attribute to many of the historical myths and legends that form the cohesive bond between the community. Myths, in a semiotic sense, are defined as "culturally conceptualized dominant connotations of an ahistorical nature" (Heck 1980: 113-114). "They are common recurring themes, stereotypes and icons from within a cultural group" (Tomaselli 1995: ii). The narrative relating the founding of the lodge under the auspices of Chief Wessels Mota serves as a testament to the unity and perseverance of the Batlokoa community in their common goal of providing refuge to stranded mountaineers (Monei and Ramaili, personal communication 2011). This narrative seems to be one of the core elements infusing the establishment of the present Lodge in the late 1950s as the

evidence of the preferred attributes of the Batlokoa community. Tourism in Witsieshoek may subsequently influence the values and attributes of the Batlokoa community's collective identity.

Tourism and place identity

Tourism does not occur in a location without having any effect on the location. Often the negative aspects of tourism can be environmental degradation due to the increased flow of people to an area, which adds a strain to the natural resources and ecological systems in the vicinity. Although it is assumed that indigenous natural practices of conservation are more environmentally friendly, this is not always the case. On occasion indigenous practices of hunting, harvesting or extracting resources from the environment deplete environmental resources rather than conserve them (Coria and Calfucura 2012). The point of this is that although tourism can and sometimes does cause damage to the environment of a particular locale, sometimes the benefits accrued are enough to offset the negative repercussions that may arise from tourism. The other factor to take into consideration is that the natural resources and environment may be depleted by the indigenous practices themselves even without tourist activities. There is a two-way dynamic in the relationship between tourism and the location in which it is conducted. A case study conducted in rural Ireland will be discussed in order to illustrate the various ways in which the local population affects tourism as well as how tourism affects the local population.

This study in Foxford in County Mayo (Kneafsey 1998) was undertaken in order to gauge how the social relations of tourism affected or influenced the attitudes of the local Irish population. It was ascertained that the impetus for tourism in Ireland was fuelled by the myths and stereotypes of Ireland constructed around romanticized ideas of 'unspoilt landscapes', and around nostalgic notions of it being the last place to escape from modern industrialized society and return to 'old world values'. The confining aspect of these representations is that a location is subsequently held hostage by tourist's romanticized notions of what it is supposed to be like rather than what it actually is like. This may hinder technological or infrastructural development in certain areas due to a reluctance to lose income accrued from tourism. Contemporary lifestyles in Ireland may diverge from the dominant touristic representations of Ireland and this may affect the local identity. Residents in Foxford differed in their estimation of the value of tourism in the area and this affected whether they acknowledged a change in the town or not. It was found that residents

who settled relatively recently in the area welcomed tourists, viewing them as an economic asset to the community; however, the older residents felt that tourism commoditized and destroyed the unique identity of their town. From an economic perspective the booming tourism industry in Mayo turned Foxford from an almost invisible town into a thriving locale, a vast improvement from its generally high levels of unemployment and de-population. The four main types of tourists to the area were the anglers who spend money on meals and accommodation in the area; the 'exiles', who were generally emigrants from the Irish villages who returned periodically and stayed with relatives; the coach tours which consisted of large numbers of people who just travelled through the area for a day; and finally, the independent travellers, who travel to Mayo in search of nostalgic representations of 'Irishness'. These four types of tourists do not contribute equally from an economic perspective; however, they all do contribute to establishing the Foxford area as a prime tourism destination. They have changed the way that the Foxford community view themselves in terms of their identity. The residents became more proactive in the tourism process. It became a collective effort. Derelict woollen mills, a vestige of the past industrial era, were re-developed as a tourist attraction, which stimulated the need for peripheral tourism facilities such as accommodation, restaurants and local shops as well as a visitor's centre. These old manufacturing infrastructure has now been converted into places of historical interest, thus attracting new visitors to the area. The social dynamics in the area have, on occasion, revolved around the tourism at the old mills. The negative aspect is that due to Foxford being a relatively small town, the resident's actual living space has been commoditized as well as having rivalries arise as a result of competing business industries in the community. In summary, although tourism cannot be viewed as either unequivocally positive or negative, what can be noted it that it definitely has an impact on the identity and social relations of the local community in which it is situated.

As illustrated by the aforementioned case-studies, the inter-related concepts of history, identity and representation all influence the economic and socio-cultural landscape on which the tourism enterprise is based. Therefore a critical engagement with these concepts in relation to the South African context is essential for the success of any public-private tourism enterprise.

Negative aspects of tourism

In the interests of providing a holistic overview of the impact of tourism in a host community, potentially negative aspects of tourism will be discussed. It is important to acknowledge that tourism cannot be considered as an unequivocally positive phenomenon. As much as it is labour-intensive and provides employed to many unskilled and semi-skilled community members, it can also have negative social and environmental repercussions. Environmental degradation as well as the emergence of a thriving prostitution industry can be some of the unintended consequences of mass tourism due to the influx of people to an area. Sex tourism has become synonymous with tourism to Thailand. This circumstance arose following events that occurred in the late 1960s as a result of American soldiers seeking respite from the Vietnam War came to Thailand for "Rest and Recreation", which informally translated to alcohol and sexual pursuits (Montgomery 2001).

Tourism creates a sort of 'liminal space' for travellers where the change of climate, surroundings, people and their relative anonymity in an area would cause them to pursue experiences that they would not necessarily try at home. In the Northern Cape in South Africa, previous owners of the Molopo Safari/ Wilderness Lodge often ignored sex tourism, when tourists enquired at reception "about where they could acquire a Bushman girl for the night" (McLennan-Dodd and Barnabas 2012:144). The potential for prostitution is rife in the tourism sector because of the often great discrepancies of wealth between tourists and host communities.

There is always the danger of poor communities being exploited by tourists, however, if religious leaders, tour operators and government officials are aware of this possibility, then the youth and the community at large can be educated to prevent this.

Chapter Three: Theoretical framework

An aim of this study is to ascertain how the Batlokoa community establishes the significance of the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise in relation to their own systems of representation. A 'system of representation' is a categorisation system that allows the individual to correlate concepts and mental representations of objects, people and events in order to perceive the world in a meaningful way (Hall 1997). The Batlokoa community has customs, myths and practices that define them as a social group (Hawkins 1982). This excavation into the underlying processes of signification aims to uncover whether or how these customs influence their perception of the lodge.

This research focuses on the perspectives of the Batlokoa community, as opposed to tourists' perspectives, as it attempts to garner responses that originate from the community's experiences and interaction with the lodge. This is in adherence to 'Critical, Indigenous Inquiry', a methodological stance that gives precedence to voices of the indigenous communities (Denzin *et al.* 2008).

The study is located within the field of cultural studies. Cultural studies include a broad spectrum of topics from punk culture to audience reception studies. However, the common thread running through all the components is the interest and concern for groups marginalised within mainstream society (Hall 1997). The Batlokoa community of Witsieshoek is a marginalised community as they were victims of the 'separate development' policy implemented by the apartheid regime which stipulated that 'tribal' communities perceived to be of common ethnic origin had to be classified as a single 'national' unit and this led to the existence of 'homelands'. The land allocated as 'homelands' were overcrowded and lack sufficient housing, educational or sanitation facilities. The South African government relinquished the responsibility of the 'homelands' to the tribal 'chiefs' so that it was not accountable for providing amenities (Quinlan 1988). This was an attempt by the apartheid regime to control the movement of African communities and to curb migration to urban areas.

The conceptual framework that defines and focuses this study does not utilize a single over-arching theory. Rather, the related concepts of language, representation, culture and identity have been dove-tailed into a framework which guides the foray.

Theories of representation

There are three approaches that could be used to explain how representation and signifying practices occur. These are the reflective approach, the intentional approach or the constructionist approach (Hall 1997). The reflective approach purports that meanings and significations are intrinsic to objects themselves and are a reflection of what the object actually is. This implies that the meaning of objects is fixed as it is inherent to the object. This approach does not lend itself to the needs of this study as the signification of the Lodge is being investigated as a collective process imposed by the community.

The intentional approach operates on the premise that each individual creates and asserts their idiosyncratic meaning of the world through language (Hall 1997). This approach is unsuited to this study which aims to ascertain the shared interpretation and signification of the Lodge, not an individualistic interpretation.

The constructivist approach holds that objects, people or events do not have an intrinsic meaning and that the signification process is a collective process whereby users of a language construct and agree upon specific meanings for concepts and objects and events in the world (Hall 1997).This approach is utilised in this study as it is compatible with the aim of finding out how significance is collectively attributed to the lodge. Representation and language are key concepts that influence the process of signification.

Representation and language

Representation is the process that enables us to create mental representations of 'real' world objects, people or events into concepts that can be conveyed through language (Hall 1997). As both tangible and intangible concepts need to be conveyed to other people, a 'system of representation' is devised to organize, cluster or establish complex relations between ideas mental imagery (Hall 1997). This enables individuals to interpret the world in a way that is consistent with their societal and cultural milieu. It allows the individual to navigate through social interactions in their community with ease due to a shared interpretation of events. This encapsulates the definition of culture as is relevant to this study: "It is the shared conceptual maps, shared language systems and codes which govern relationships and translation between them" (Hall 1997: 21). This means that in order to be appropriately understood, speakers should both be aware of the context and expectations within the conversation. This requires that one has

knowledge of and can exhibit the expected behaviours and roles necessary to continue the conversation. Shared knowledge and understanding of social interactions cannot be exhibited if it is not expressed in a common language. Thus language is pivotal to the process of representation.

The Batlokoa community speak both IsiZulu and Sesotho. Southern Sotho (Sesotho) is one of the official languages of South Africa and is a member of the Bantu/Nguni family of languages" (Riep 2005:23). These languages are spoken by the indigenous people of southern Africa. Societal norms and cultural covenants are often embedded within a language itself which equips the speaker with the cultural 'know-how' to successfully interact with others in the community (Hall 1997). This creates the potential for misunderstandings between multi-lingual encounters, in this case between English speaking employees at the Lodge and those employees speaking either of the aforementioned indigenous languages.

Meanings and significance

Events and objects in our social reality can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. This is because concepts, objects or social interactions do not possess any inherent fixed meaning or signification. Most commonly accepted words and understood meanings in a given society are events or concepts that have reached a wide consensus on its naming process (du Gay *et al*. 1997). If one had to mention the word 'ocean' in an English-language context, it would conjure up a host of images and thoughts for an audience: Whether one thinks about swimming, sea-side family holidays, aquatic animals or the tranquillity of ocean waves lapping against a shore. This host of divergent images all signifies or leads to the mental imaging of the same concept. Therefore, the process of signification or 'meaning-making' is the act of enforcing categories and implementing similar mental-frameworks that are shared and agreed-upon by a particular social grouping so that communication can occur (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay and Negus 1997, Riley 2007). These 'shared codes' enable a similar conceptual understanding between people, thus structuring the possibility of meanings in a culture (Hall 1997). Language is the medium that enables information and meanings to be conveyed, while culture prescribes a most likely interpretation to be drawn (Riley 2007).

Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of language asserts that language is a mechanism and system of representation that enables the organisation and construction of one's reality. It is maintained that language is constituted socially and culturally and is not a natural construction. Therefore, there is no inherent connection between a word and its meaning. These connections are culturally and socially agreed-upon names for particular objects without any inherent relationship to it (de Saussure 1960).

The inter-connected relationship of language, representation and culture makes them pivotal aspects in ascertaining the signifying practices that that the Batlokoa community employs in order to make meaning of Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge in relation to their collective identity as a community.

Culture: ways of seeing the world

 If one lacks the necessary background information, even the negotiation of everyday social rituals such as buying groceries or greeting passersby on the street can be like encountering a potential minefield (Riley 2007). This can be likened to a foreign visitor in a country who does not understand the myriad of verbal and non-verbal cues that are occurring all around them with very little orientation as to whether they are encountering a threat or an opportunity. Culture is a set of meanings that are circulated and exchanged which provide a means to make sense of the world (Muller 1988, du Gay *et al.* 1997, Hall 1997). These meanings are not fixed, they are re-negotiated and re-circulated to suit new needs and circumstances. Culture is also closely related along ethnic or socio-geographical lines. This is due to people being faced with similar realities in a particular locale who incorporate practices and rituals into daily lives to account for certain occurrences. Examples of these can be linked to cultural practices created around seasonal changes such as rituals during the time of year that crops are harvested, or when heavy rains are expected (du Gay *et al.* 1997). Culture is also viewed as the pervasive routines of everyday life. It includes what we eat, what we wear, who we associate with, and how we see ourselves in relation to others. It is made up of the functions of everyday activities and how our everyday lives are constructed (Willis 1979). It is seen as a signifying practice that enables meanings to be generated and experienced (Hall 1980). It is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1871:1).

The following definition of culture highlights how meanings are constantly being negotiated and circulated within social groups:

> Culture is the ensemble of meaningful practices and 'uniformities of behaviour' through which self-defined groups within or across social classes express themselves in a unique way or locate themselves within an identifiable 'field of significations'. It is the process which informs the way meanings and definitions are socially constructed and historically transformed by social actors themselves. Cultures are distinguished in terms of differing responses to the same social, material and environmental conditions. Culture is not a static or even a necessarily completely coherent phenomenon: it is subject to change, fragmentation and reformulation (Tomaselli 1988: 39).

At times, the change and reformulation of meanings is instigated by an outside source. Many indigenous communities that engage in cultural tourism practices often adapt their culture over time to suit the demands of the tourism sector (Stronza 2008, Weaver 2010). It is also argued that "Indigenous peoples have been involved with tourism since they first hosted guests through exploratory and early colonial encounters" (Bunten 2010: 2). Representations of a culture are often modified to ascribe to a set of ideological expectations held by the tourist, in order to generate more tourism in an area. This study does not aim to change or reformulate the Batlokoa community's perception of the Lodge. However, it does seek to ascertain the significance of the Lodge to the community in order to understand the positioning of the Lodge in relation to community attributes and heritage.

Ideology and representation

An ideology is a set of mental frameworks that convey ideas and a representation of reality that creates a consciousness of the world that is constructed to benefit certain sectors of society while misleading others. This grid of significations organises myths in order to legitimate particular social, economic and political relations (Gramsci 1971, Tomaselli 1996). Myths are the anonymously composed narratives that offer explanations of why the world is as it appears to be, and why people act as they do (O' Sullivan, Hartley, Sanders and Fiske 1983: 47). It is a deliberately constructed dominant narrative that is created from the patchwork of themes, stereotypes and icons in a cultural group (Barthes 1969, Heck 1980, Tomaselli 1995). They attempt to legitimise current social relations as an obvious and natural occurrence. It works in order to naturalise the dominant ideas of the more powerful sectors of a society. However,

individual members of society do not just passively internalise the dominant messages and frameworks. They have the agency and ability to disagree with or to resist the dominant ideology if it clashes with their world-views or beliefs. Therefore one's social reality is always discursively constituted in relation to one's own class, gender, race and status (Hall 1984).

However, myths are not always used for negative influence. On occasion a myth can be utilised as a means to foster cohesion and pride within a community. A powerful narrative circulated by the Batlokoa community recounts how the paramount Chief, Wessels Mota, conceived the idea in the early 1950s of building a road up to the ridge of the uKhahlamba (Drakensberg) mountains because he noticed that many people visited to experience nature by hiking or mountain climbing but that there were no roads, only footpaths. He spoke to the community and they agreed that they needed to build a road. Each family was made responsible for making and maintaining a section of it. As far as infrastructure was concerned, there were then only two huts situated where the lodge is today. The bigger structure was for visitors and the second smaller structure was for the caretaker of the establishment. He did not receive any pay other than the mountaineers' surplus provisions when they were returning home and any gratuity they cared to leave.

This narrative serves as a testament to the unity and perseverance of the Batlokoa community in their common goal of providing refuge to stranded mountaineers (Monei and Ramaili, personal communication 2011, Hawkins 1982). It seems to be one of the core narratives infusing the establishment of the present-day lodge in the late 1950's as evidence of the preferred attributes of the Batlokoa community. As the process of representation draws from culturally agreed-upon signs and symbols it is always embedded within an ideology. Ideology is a mental conceptual framework which one uses to interpret, make sense of and 'live' the material conditions in which they find themselves (Hall 1980).

No space of representation can exist outside the mental frameworks of ideology. The process of signification is always is a state of flux as dominant meanings are often being contested while new meanings replace old. Additionally, multiple layers of meaning and circuits of communication can exist simultaneously, overlapping at some points while being in opposition at others (Hall 1984, 1993). This study aims to ascertain what the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge

represents within the circulations of meaning held by the Batlokoa community. The circulation of meanings exists within a semantic network.

Semantic networks
A semantic network is a set of culturally agreed-upon meanings that connote more about an object, image, symbol or event than is immediately implied. These underlying meanings are conveyed through the related language and discourse surrounding an object that is inferred and communicated by others who are familiar with the cultural significance of the object (du Gay *et al.* 1997).

In the case of Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge, it is not viewed purely as a tourism infrastructure; it is also viewed as a place of employment, a symbol of cultural heritage and a communal resource. These secondary meanings are attributed by people who view the lodge in a variety of capacities. Perspectives of the lodge differ according to the prism through which one views it. The manager of the Lodge may be concerned with the number of tourists staying there and the income generated by the Lodge, while a tourist may consider the quality of the lodge experience in comparison to others they may have stayed at. A member of the Batlokoa community may feel pride at their communal ownership and heritage. The semantic network that one has of an object or place is related to one's subjective relation to it. The significance of meanings within semantic networks is drawn from the cultural and language practices of a particular society.

As Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge, or rather its humble forbearer, was commissioned by the chief of the Batlokoa community, it can be assumed that the lodge holds intangible cultural value to the community as well as tangible economic value that can be accrued through tourism at the lodge. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how the lodge fits into the Batlokoa community's system of representation in order to fully ascertain its cultural value as well as to increase its economic value by fostering increased tourism at the Lodge.

Culture and language
Batlokoa community members who work at the lodge speak Sesotho and/or isiZulu and on occasion, English. Language is closely related to a community's the cultural values and norms as language often forms the medium through which meanings are exchanged and circulated. This can take the form of conversations, folklore, narratives or even gossip that aids the dissemination

of information (Riley 2007). It can be inferred from this definition that cultural values, norms and meanings are not fixed. It follows that cultural norms as well as the language can change and adapt as social and material circumstances fluctuate.

This study sets out to ascertain how the differing phases of ownership at the Lodge influence how the Batlokoa community perceives it in relation to their material and social realities. Culture provides the lens and frameworks of reference that enable the interpretation of objects, events and symbols in a way that reflects the meanings and values implicit in particular ways of life. Culture can be viewed as the production and circulation of meaning (du Gay *et al.* 1997, Williams 1976). It is also viewed as the level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life that reflect the form of their social and material life experience (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 11).

History and representation
It is well known that writers of history, be they professional antiquarian or amateur, compete with each other concerning versions of history each serving a different agenda (Wright and Mazel 1991, Krog *et al.* 2008). Knowledge and recorded history is sometimes shaped by the nature and social milieu within which it is developed. Social groups often attempt to gain legitimacy for their practices and beliefs by finding precedent for them in the past. History, therefore, becomes a reference point in the process of creating group cohesion as well as to provide justification of collective actions to other opposing groups. Producers of history sometimes have a personal stake in what is being represented and often hope to ensure the survival of their views of the past through print media, visual imagery, folktales, traditional practices and other means of dissemination (Wright and Mazel 1991). Representation is the process of creating and attributing meaning to images, objects, symbols or concepts in order to impose a structure on the multitude of possible interpretations (Fabian 1987, du Gay *et al.* 1997). The process of representation occurs within a socially constructed world. As it is a deliberately constructed process, it is not neutral in its agendas. The manner in which something is represented can lend insight into its importance and value. An object, person or event can be imbued with symbolic power simply by its depiction in society. Power is not fixed within institutional, societal or representational structures. It is always being circulated and re-negotiated amongst members of a society. The process of being 'shown' and 'being seen' is a

negotiation of power (Foucault 1980). There is a correlation between power and visibility. The concept of symbolic power is pertinent to the investigation at the lodge as the Batlokoa community seem to be in a process of re-claiming their symbolic power as the precursors of the lodge itself and are asserting their power at the lodge by incorporating Batlokoa iconography and themes in the visual aspects such as the large imposing copper etching of Paramount Chief Wessels Mota displayed at the reception area as well as the inclusion of Batlokoa artefacts such as the tapestry depicting communal life on the wall of the lounge and through the many carpets, woven baskets, clay figures and bead work present in the décor or the lodge. This deliberate and overt inclusion of Batlokoa artefacts could attest to the symbolic power that the community wields as the owners of the lodge. The assertion of symbolic power by a cultural group of African ethnicity is especially pertinent in the South African context as this potentially creates a discourse around issues of land ownership, cultural identity and transition of power in society. The Lodge as a communally-owned resource could provide an impetus to foster a cohesive Batlokoa identity. Both individual identities and collective identities are constructed to serve particular functions.

Identity and collective identities

Identity is a social construct. It is not something that can be decided on, or accepted by an individual alone. It is constructed partly by others and requires a group consensus in order to be accepted as 'true' (Riley 2007). People exhibit different facets of their identity as they deem it appropriate for certain social situations. Therefore, the concept of one's identity is always fractured, fluid and in a state of flux (Hall 1996). Every social group finds part of its identity in the shared experience, or more accurately, the perceived shared experience of its members (Wright and Mazel 1991).

At times a collective identity is adopted to suit an economic or political need. The premise of a group identity rests not on what a group has in common, but rather it is based on how a group excludes the Other. Collective identities are created through a series of oppositions to the 'Other' (Hall 1996). This research is situated in the ethnographic present (Fabian 1983). Conducting research in the ethnographic present entails gathering and relaying accounts of other cultures and societies as they are in the present. It engages members of other communities and cultures in a dialogue that acknowledges the changing nature of and divergent viewpoints inherent in a

society as opposed to representing the community as a static, objectified 'Other'. Symbolic boundaries are created and maintained in order to delineate one collective identity from another (Hall 1997). Practices of inclusion and exclusion are especially pertinent to groups that have privileges, rights or resources dependent on that identity. The Batlokoa community in this instance would be especially likely to impose parameters on who constitutes as a part of the community and these parameters could be based on linguistic, ethnic or geographical factors. Their interest in reaping the potential benefits accrued from the communal ownership of the land may foster greater cohesion in the collective identity.

Representatives from the Batlokoa tribal council, including the advisor to the chief, were interviewed in order to gauge their opinions and historical perspectives on the establishment of the lodge. This approach acknowledges the Batlokoa community of Witsieshoek as a contributing stakeholder in the Community-Public and Private partnership.

Historical analysis

As a subsection to identity and collective identities may be added pure historical narrative. There are some historians, and not just followers of a Marxist paradigm, who have observed in the past various patterns, either predetermined or apparently accidental. When it comes to theories of revolutions South Africa's land redistribution or land redress policies clearly fall under the term 'revolutionary'. Yet, one will look in vain for a revolutionary theory which excludes 'land grabbing' either by revolutionaries or counter revolutionaries. That said, historically this region may be adeptly applied to Turner's theory of historic frontier (Turner 1935). His concept of the combining forces of a laxity of rules, conflicting cultures and the neighbouring 'wilderness' are not without resonance in that triangle of land where Lesotho, Kwazulu-Natal and Free State meet, or to use historic names, Batsutholand, Natal and the Orange Free State.

In the Turnerian paradigm there juxtaposition of an 'open' frontier and a 'closed' frontier. In the open frontier there is great fluidity, often violence and inevitably contested claims for land. In the case of the Witsieshoek region, at least some of these identifiers hold sway. There were three very differing cultures in the region: the First-People San, the Batlokoa, the Afrikaner (Boer) trekkers and the British colonialists.

While this clash of cultures has all but played itself out in the rest of South Africa, there are still pockets of 'frontier' society, Witsieshoek being one. For here where the fall of Apartheid has turned vested interests on it head and where transfrontier fluidity flourishes, opportunities are as real as they were in the heyday of the 'wild west' of America (Billingham 1981).

This fluidity is classically illustrated by the very existence of the Batlokoa 'people', for, truth to tell, the community as a collective was fuelled and consolidated for political reasons in order to gain access and tenure to land. As the White government of the then Orange Free State only allocated land to groups with indigenous tribal authority, in 1874 a cohort of about 50 people splintered off from the 'Harrismith Tlokoa', then under the leadership of Koos Mota, and settled in the Witsieshoek region (Quinlan 1988). Therefore, there was no inherent group similarity other than the fact that this group chose to follow the leadership of Koos Mota. However, this allocation of land on a communal basis did not clash with traditional Sotho beliefs of land ownership. It was believed that the ancestors dwelled in the earth and, therefore, the splitting of the land, as is done with individual land ownership, was considered to be an insult to the ancestors. The prevailing norm was that the chief controlled the land on behalf of the community (Riep 2005). It is difficult to ascertain what the 'true' beliefs of the Batlokoa community were and are, as the constructs of 'chief' and 'tribe' are sometimes attributed as ideological tool employed by the apartheid regime in order to subjugate indigenous communities through indirect rule by installing a pawn-like chief who would then do the bidding of the apartheid state (Quinlan 1988). Does tradition dictate that land should be communally-owned or was the tradition created in response to existing conditions? Underlying currents of influence need to be examined when investigating the place of the lodge within the Batlokoa identity.

Membership to a group is also knowledge and language based (Riley 2007). This distinction is exemplified by one of the isiZulu-speaking employees at the lodge. His linguistic difference initially excluded him from group membership; however, his integration into group membership was fostered by his long-term employment at the lodge and his ability to assimilate the cultural norms and practices of the Batlokoa community. The creation of subjective, ideological, linguistic or symbolic boundaries within a group membership is essentially to keep insiders in, and outsiders out, as members of an ethnic group compete or mobilize to achieve some

advantage (Stronza 2008). The advantage perceived in this instance was the knowledge of the Batlokoa practices and routines that indicated one's familiarity with both the geographical area and its history.

An interesting footnote to an historical focus on the area is that long prior to the building of the existing Witsieshoek a mountain hut or lodge existed on this site (Shaw 2012). This was in the 1890s and early 1900s. It was run by an Irishman called Tom Casement, whose brother Roger was British consul at Lourenço Marques (Maputo) in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). Tom Casement would guide groups and individuals deep into the wild Drakensburg Mountains, and he was often visited by his more famous brother (Boylan 2009). Eventually both brothers found themselves back in Ireland, Sir Roger Casement turning rebel and being shot by firing squad by the British Army during the Irish insurrection of 1916 (Mitchell 2003). It is ironic but fitting that one of the great revolutionary figures of the twentieth century should be associated with this long contested corner of southern Africa. The old Witsieshoek cabin has now long since fallen into disrepair and collapsed.

Even though the research in this context has the potential for beneficial outcomes in its application, indigenous communities are often wary of people conducting 'research' as early anthropologists often served nefarious ends when collecting information as knowledge accrued about the social hierarchies, daily activities and belief systems were often used by colonial governments in order to subjugate ethnic communities (Smith 1999). However, research in conducted this community-public-private partnership attempts to benefit all stakeholders without exploiting or subjugating any entity.

The discussions in chapter two and three relating to public-private and community partnerships both on an international and local scale helps to identify commonalities and differences between other community-owned Lodges and the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise. South Africa has a different tourism trajectory to the rest of the world due to its apartheid era legislation. However, if one interrogates the basic 'rules' of successful tourism promotion in other countries, similar strategies can be implemented in South Africa. Larger conceptual frameworks such as culture and language provide a means of understanding how the Batlokoa community in Witsieshoek navigate their new circumstance of being the owners of the Lodge.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter seeks to outline and justify the research design as well as the data collection and analysis methods used in this study. As the objective of this study was to ascertain how the indigenous Batlokoa community of Witsieshoek perceived the now community-owned Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge during the different phases of its ownership, this study utilizes the overarching investigative framework of Critical Indigenous Inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 2008). This framework uses the *indigenous community's perspectives and worldview* as the starting point for the inquiry. This is pertinent in this investigation as it endeavours to uncover the 'grassroots' historical narrative as well as aspects of the value and belief system of the Batlokoa community. As the Batlokoa community now own the Lodge, it is imperative that their values, beliefs and folklore is reflected in both the material and symbolic representations of the lodge. As there is a dearth of studies recording social phenomena from an indigenous perspective (Denzin and Lincoln 2008) this study attempts to ascertain what is the historical significance of the Lodge to the Batlokoa community and what role it plays in their representation.

A case study of Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge

As alluded to in the research question, this study is concerned with the feelings, attitudes and perceptions of a community; therefore it requires a research design which is intensive in scope. This means that one specific community and case is investigated in great depth as opposed to studying several communities on a more superficial and surface level. A 'case study' research design was used as it enabled an in-depth focus on the Batlokoa community at Witsieshoek specifically in relation to Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge. This case study enables one to gauge the attitudes and perceptions of a social group regarding a particular social phenomenon. It provides qualitatively dense descriptions of a specific area, in this case, of Witsieshoek and the Batlokoa community (Swanborn 2010). Despite this study having the specific parameters in terms of boundaries and time, it is hoped this case study will indicate trends that are common to other public-private and community partnerships. This is a qualitative study that is located in an interpretive paradigm. As values and perceptions are created and expressed through one's own interaction with and interpretation of a phenomenon, a richly detailed and dense qualitative response was best suited for this undertaking (Lapan and Quartaroli 2009). In-depth interviews

were the most effective means of eliciting information. A quantitative study would have provided ratings or statistics in a survey in a positivist paradigm which would not garner the deeper underlying perceptions which are required for this study. Similarly, it would have been futile to attempt to ascertain how the Batlokoa community views the Lodge by interviewing the current management or indeed the tourists visiting the Lodge. This study endeavours to obtain highly subjective interpretations from the community itself, thus it is ensconced in the interpretive paradigm. As the interviews were conducted at the Lodge the respondents were in their natural environment and the researcher was able to gauge and experience the context of the investigation by conducting interviews at the site itself as opposed to conducting telephonic interviews or by leaving questionnaires to be completed.

Sample selection- introducing the participants

As this study focused on eliciting perceptions from a 'grassroots' level from community members themselves, only staff members that live in and around Witsieshoek were interviewed. The interviews were conducted, over a three-day period, from 6-8 December 2011 at the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge. Although the majority of the field work was conducted during the aforementioned period in 2011, additional time was spent at the Lodge in October 2012 with the objective of verifying the accuracy of the interviews conducted the previous December. This was done in order to affirm the accuracy and validity of the research findings.

The Lodge is not a particularly small enterprise, offering employment to a total of 46 staff. Nor is the employment on offer all manual labour. It ranges across the spectrum, offering a variety of tasks and responsibilities. These posts range from management; front-of-house reception and reservation; the kitchen section; security for the facility; cleaning and room maintenance; laundry facility; garden and general maintenance and last but not least specialist tour guiding, especially for hiking parties. There is also very close liaison work undertaken by employees with members of the Batlokoa tribal council, who contribute to the operation and smooth day-to-day running of the Lodge in a variety of capacities.

Eleven in-depth interviews were conducted amongst staff members, which ranged from an hour to an hour-and-a-half in duration. In terms of time-constraints as well as in terms of respondents' availability it would have been impractical to attempt to interview every member of staff at the

Lodge. Therefore, every attempt was made to engage in interview at least one Batlokoa member of staff from each division of the enterprise. That enabled the representation of a range of employees. This study utilised a purposive sampling technique (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, Murdoch 1999).

Purposive sampling
Purposive sampling occurs when researchers conduct interviews or collect data from sources that are most likely to have the information that is sought. (Lapan and Quartaroli 2009). Although this study focuses on how the Batlokoa community in its entirety perceives the Lodge, it was impractical in terms of time and financial constraints to conduct interviews from a representative sampling of the wider community population. Besides, that would change the whole direction and focus of the study. The researcher purposively selected respondents who worked at the Lodge, due to their accessibility and well as for their particularly close and daily interaction with the Lodge itself. Both males and females were interviewed in an attempt to foster equal gender representation. Also staff with varying levels of educational attainment and differing ages were interviewed in order to gauge whether socio-economic levels or age affected the perception of the Lodge.

All members of staff interviewed lived either at the Lodge or had their homes in the surrounding areas of Bergville or the little town of Phuthaditjaba which is near Harrismith. It has to be said, that not all the staff members from the Witsieshoek area were necessarily of Batlokoa origin. Some of the employees were also of Zulu ethnicity. However, as these two communities live in the same geographical area, interviews were also conducted with isiZulu speaking staff who had been assimilated into or were closely associated with the Batlokoa community. One of the principal benefits of interviewing inhabitants of this area was that they were knowledgeable about the history of both the Lodge and the surrounding Witsieshoek region. This provided the contextual background of the area and community in relation to the Lodge. It was fortuitous that two of the respondents were advisors to the chief of the Batlokoa community. They in particular contributed a wealth of historical background regarding the impetus for the Lodge's establishment. This will be elaborated on in the data analysis chapter.

Demographic Details of Respondents

Gender	Age	Occupation
Male	25-35	Initially gardener, then waiter, currently barman.
Male	25-35	Tour guide
Male	25-35	Waiter
Female	35-45	Receptionist
Male	45-55	Construction worker contracted to the Lodge.
Male	45-55	Waiter/Barman/Chef
Female	45-55	Initially worked in the kitchen, then waitress, currently at reception
Male	55-65	Security guard
Male	55-65	Barman
Male	55-65	Member of the Batlokoa tribal council.
Male	55-65	Lodge Manager
Male	65-75	Advisor to the Batlokoa chief

Despite attempts to attain a more balanced gender representative sample, this proved insuperable due to the reluctance that female staff had towards being interviewed. The reason for their reluctance is unknown to the researcher, though it can be surmised that it was a reflection of the nature of such a rural and traditional society. A rural and traditional community is often patriarchal in nature. In a patriarchal society women are not expected to voice their opinion of public matters as their locus of influence is confined to the domestic sphere, 'the home and hearth' as it were (Riep 2005). Thus, the women could have been reluctant to speak to researchers about matters that they felt they had no authority to discuss.

Concerning the breakdown of those who were interviewed:

  ➢ One respondent had an educational attainment post-grade 12.

  ➢ The rest had a minimum of a primary school level of educational attainment.

  ➢ None of the respondents had any formal qualifications in the tourism sector.

  ➢ There was a 50-year age rang, from 25 to 75 years old.

The participants for the in-depth interview were selected using *snowball sampling* (Deacon *et al.* 1999). The researcher and the interpreter came into contact with staff at the Lodge in the dining area during dinner on the first evening. After dinner we approached the waiter who served us, explained the purpose of our visit and inquired whether he was interested in participating in the study. He agreed to participate in the study and suggested more people to us who were approachable and likely to be interested in the study. We continued in this manner amongst the staff that we encountered.

The researcher is aware that although this study is informed by the tenets of Critical Indigenous Inquiry which endeavours to understand events from the perspective of the indigenous community (Denzin and Lincoln 2008), this endeavour cannot be considered as an ethnographic study because ethnography requires that the researcher immerse themselves in the culture and life of the host community over an extended timeframe (Malinowski 1922). Clearly, in this instance this did not happen. The researcher's brief foray into the Batlokoa community could be the application of 'reverse cultural studies' (Tomaselli 2005). This is an interpretive research

practice which employs empirical observations, episodic narratives and insights gleaned from members of the community from a 'grassroots' perspective, thus transferring power and agency to host communities to offer possible explanations and solutions for their problems, as opposed to researchers imposing externally-derived solutions (Dyll-Myklebust 2011). This study seeks to acknowledge the perspectives of the Batlokoa community in the decision-making processes at the Lodge.

Data collection methods

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews

As this undertaking involved eliciting views, attitudes and perceptions of a personal and often idiosyncratic nature, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted (Deacon *et al.* 1999). Face-to-face interviews had the advantage of allowing the researcher to observe the body-language of the respondents enabling the researcher to prompt greater elaboration on responses or to clarify issues of uncertainty during the interview. It also prompted the respondent to be more engaged in and passionate about relaying their knowledge when they had an interested audience, as opposed to conducting a telephonic interview. Several times during the interviewing process, the respondents made animated gestures or had intense expressions as they spoke about something that they were particularly proud or passionate about. These facial expressions or gestures prompted a sometimes divergent line of questioning which alerted the researcher to other unanticipated avenues of inquiry. The semi-structured interview was more effective than a completely structured closed-ended interview as the respondents did digress in their responses without being restrained by a fixed interview schedule. However, the semi-structured interview format still provided enough structure so that there was a common thread running through all the responses. This allowed for coherence and commonality during the analysis.

The researcher also employed *participant observation* (Kumar 1996). This approach allows for the inclusion of empirical evidence in the research undertaking. The opportunity to participate in an activity led to both the researcher and the interpreter embarking on a day-long, guided-hike to the summit of Sentinel Peak. This activity allowed for a semblance of a rapport being fostered with the tour guide as he had spent many hours in the company of the researcher and interpreter. He was subsequently able to provide more forthright responses during the hike, away from the

management of the Lodge than would have been possible had we conducted the interview in the guest lounge.

Instrumentation

A semi-structured interview schedule was used to elicit the values and perception of the respondents. The schedule was divided into three sections which roughly corresponded to the stages of ownership of the Lodge.

➢ The first section dealt with questions of a historical nature relating to the initial establishment of the Lodge.

➢ The second section dealt with the Lodge while it was run by commercial operators.

➢ The last section elicited responses relating to the Lodge after it was acquired by the Batlokoa community as a result of the post-apartheid land restitution process.

This schedule was planned to create an evolutionary narrative of the Lodge from its initial establishment until its current day public-private and community partnership. The interview schedule was pre-tested amongst the researcher's colleagues in order to check for clarity of the questions as well as ease of understanding.

Limitations of interviewing process

Language barrier

The Batlokoa staff at the Lodge communicates primarily in the Nguni languages of isiZulu or Sesotho. They only had a limited grasp of communication in English. As the researcher only had a rudimentary grasp of isiZulu, an isiZulu speaking interpreter was enlisted to aid the interviewing process. The interpreter was reading for her Master's degree in Zulu culture and heritage and subsequently understood the importance of capturing the nuance of feelings and opinions expressed during the interview process. It is pertinent to note at this point that the personal subjectivities and worldview of the interpreter could also influence their perceptions of the responses garnered during the interview process. This phenomenon is known as 'translator's bias' (Edwards 1998). In this instance, as the interpreter had conducted interviews during her own fieldwork, she was aware of this possibility and made a concerted effort to separate her thoughts, feelings and subjectivities from the interviewing process. The interpreter proved to be a

source of insight because she was aware of subtle nuances in description that in most instances would only be understood by a person who spoke the Nguni vernacular.

The researcher felt disadvantaged in that some of the nuance and vitality of the narrative was lost on her due to her inability to fully engage in the discussion with the respondents. It was disconcerting to nod in affirmation without knowing what the response was at the time. However, the interpreter was able to elaborate when the respondents needed further prompting or elaboration on a question. The researcher employed observation to interpret the expressions and gestures (Kumar 1996). Some of the interviews were conducted by switching between English and isiZulu or Sesotho when the respondent could do so. This enabled the researcher to gain some information first hand.

The Interview setting
Most of the interviews were conducted in the guests' lounge at the Lodge. The researcher recognises in retrospection that this may not have been the ideal setting to have conducted interviews with at least some of the staff. Some interviewees looked ill-at-ease while sitting in the lounge. At the time this was, perhaps wrongly, interpreted by the researcher to be anxiety due to the interviewing process rather than a consequence of the actual setting of the interview (field notes 2011). The researcher acknowledges in hindsight that the interviewees may have been more forthright in their answers had the interviews been conducted in a less public setting away from the Lodge.

The interviews conducted late in the evenings, when the lounge was empty, seemed to elicit more forthright answers than those that were conducted during the hustle and bustle of the day. This can possibly be accounted for using the concepts of the 'backstage' and 'front stage' (MacCannell 1973). The concept of the 'backstage' and 'front stage' serve as a symbolic shorthand to refer to the private, personal and domestic aspects of one's persona which is not intended for public consumption- the 'backstage'. This is opposed to the professional role employed for public consumption, the 'front stage'. In light of this differentiation between the different roles that individuals assume in different settings, it might have been better in some instances at least to have conducted the interviews in a more secluded area away from the Lodge when eliciting information of a personal nature. There was also the sense that the management of

the Lodge was hovering about within earshot that may have added to some respondents' reluctance to speak without fear of censure (field notes October 2012). Unfortunately, as both the researcher's and interpreter's presence was largely confined to the 'front stage' public areas of the Lodge such as at reception, the guest lounge and the restaurant, most of the small-talk that we engaged in with the staff was held in public space. Nonetheless, all this said, all the interviewees spoke with commitment and in many cases their nervousness abated as the interview proceeded.

Time constraints: lack of trust and rapport?
The three-day period over which the interviews were conducted was perhaps too little time to build trust or to foster a rapport with the respondents. One of the advantages of the face-to-face in-depth interview is that the researcher's physical presence with the interviewee could possibly contribute to a rapport between the researcher and the interviewee (Lapan and Quartaroli 2009). With the exception of the respondents who were of a similar age as the researcher and the interpreter, the respondents were invariably hesitant during at least the initial period of the interview process. It is possible that the 25-35 year old cohort of staff were not apprehensive about interacting with the researcher or interpreter due to a perceived affinity as a result of the similar ages.

Neither the researcher nor the interpreter had enough time to form a close interactions with members of staff, so as to be introduced to the 'back stage' of the private and domestic sphere (MacCannell 1973). Gaining access to the private, domestic sphere of live might have created opportunities for a deeper engagement with the community.

Being seen as 'one of them': the threat of interview bias
Interview bias can occur when respondents provide the answers that they think that the interviewer wants, as opposed to what they really feel (Thompson 1996). This was a real concern for the researcher as the staff members interviewed were aware that this research was being conducted with the knowledge and acceptance of the management of TFPD. This could have inadvertently positioned the researcher as being in collaboration with TFPD in conducting interviews for the tourism operating company as opposed to it being an academic undertaking for the purpose of research. Both the researcher and the interpreter attempted to dispel the notion of conducting research for TFPD by explaining the aims of the study using the informed consent

forms as well as by spending as much time as possible with the Batlokoa staff at the Lodge. It also needs to be noted that both the researcher and interpreter felt the respondents were more forthright in their answers by the third day when they had established for themselves that we were not some sort of informants working for TFPD as they were probably wary of saying anything that could jeopardise their employment (field notes December 2011). Before respondents were comfortable enough to speak, it had to emphasised several times that we were students from a university who were conducting research.

Ethical issues

An *informed consent* form was drawn up and the conditions of the interview written down and given to each interviewee. These underlined the fact that it was voluntary, anonymous and could be halted by the interviewee at anytime with no detriment to themselves. This was explained to each respondent in isiZulu or Sesotho. The respondents were assured that even if they expressed negative opinions about the Lodge they would remain anonymous. This was done in accordance to the stipulation that respondents exercise their choice about whether or not they wanted to speak, as well as to enable them to speak relatively freely without fear of negative repercussions (Lapan and Quartaroli 2009). However, it must be acknowledged that some of the staff did exhibit a slight reluctance to speak fully in answer to all questions, perhaps fearing negative consequences from management if they ventured to express negative sentiments regarding the Lodge. However every effort was made to convince them of the anonymity and voluntary nature of the interviews.

Involvement of the tourism operating company in the research process

Transfrontier Park Destinations facilitated this research undertaking at the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge establishment. The Chief Executive Officer of the company, Mr Glynn O' Leary, had ascertained the potential benefits to both the indigenous community and the tourism operating company if they contributed their respective knowledge and resources in a collaborative effort toward the success of the tourism enterprise. Academic research in public-private and community partnerships can have real-life application in the tourism sector (Tomaselli 2012). This is illustrated by the implementation of practices suggested to foster positive public-private and community partnerships at the !Xaus Lodge establishment in the Northern Cape with the

≠Khomani Bushmen community by previous academic researchers (Finlay 2009, Dyll-Myklebust 2011).

Despite TFPD facilitating this research undertaking by allowing the researcher accommodation at the Lodge at no charge for the duration of the fieldwork, the researcher maintained a large degree of autonomy during the research process by paying for her meals at the establishment as well as for the accommodation and meals of her interpreter. Also, no request was made relating to which staff should be interviewed, what questions should be asked or, indeed, what answers had been elicited from the interviews. Therefore we were not under any obligation to investigate avenues that were especially pertinent to TFPD. TFPD management had minimal involvement with the researcher when fieldwork was being conducted, and did not influence the process.

Triangulation of data collection methods
Triangulation occurs when two or more sources of data or data collection are used to validate one's findings (Lapan and Quartaroli 2009). This study employed both in-depth interviews and participant observation to ensure the consistency of collected data. Historical information about the Lodge was obtained primarily from the in-depth interviews; however this information was also checked against primary and secondary sources, such as archival documents and public records relating to the history and development of the Harrismith and Witsieshoek area. The information obtained from the interviews was also checked for accuracy in transcription and interpretation by some of the respondents almost a year after they were conducted.

Methods of data analysis
This study employs a process known as *coding* in order to categorize and analyse the material obtained from the interviews (Wisker 2001). All the interview transcripts were examined to find common themes. These common themes revolved around issues of historical significance, community pride, heritage and identity and the related concept of community representation at the Lodge. The responses that clustered around each theme were then sifted through to identify and establish trends and patterns running across gender, socio-economic, educational attainment, and age factors. These findings will be elaborated upon in a later chapter.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis

The relationship between the indigenous community and the tourism operating company, as well as with the provincial tourism department, sometimes has been rife with disagreements and misunderstandings. This can be attributed to the fact that three different constituencies, all with different aims, have to work together for mutual benefit.

This analysis stems specifically from the perspectives of the Batlokoa community members interviewed, as they are the focus of the study in adherence to the methodological stance of Critical, Indigenous Inquiry (Denzin *et al.* 2008). During the course of the interviews, respondents relayed how they felt about TFPD entering into a partnership with the community; how this affected the quality of service at the lodge; and how this may have enabled the Batlokoa to leave a legacy for their children. However, despite the majority of respondents agreeing that the collaboration with TFPD was a positive change, a few people did have reservations and in particular concerning the 25 year lease which had been granted to TFPD and which they felt was an excessive time frame. They were of the opinion that with such a long lease the Batlokoa might eventually lose ownership of the Lodge and they suggested that a member of the Batlokoa community should act as an independent auditor to ensure that funds were not being squandered. These issues onset the following discussion.

Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge: A place of employment
In contrast to the researcher's own romanticised notions of the Mountain Lodge establishment's value to the Batlokoa community as a symbol of cultural heritage, the reality of the situation was that most of the staff members were pragmatic in asserting that the lodge was merely a place of employment.

Some of the staff interviewed, especially those who had been employed there for many years, expressed gratitude for their employment. However, their loyalty to the establishment did not extend beyond appreciation for a pleasant and convenient place of employment. They did not have any emotional attachment or any deeper sense of connection to the Lodge.

This was succinctly expressed by this respondent:

> I am only here because of work...my homestead is not far from here. Staying here on the premises allows me to be away from the day-to-day domestic responsibilities of living at home but it is also close enough to my homestead that I can walk home on my days off[1] (Respondent A, Interview, 6 December 2011).

His decision to work at the lodge was not necessarily influenced by a need to express his cultural identity or to promote and highlight the Batlokoa belief system. More often than not, there were mundane incentives to work there. A few respondents stated quite frankly that they were interested in the development of the lodge because it was their place of employment. They did not have any particular emotional or cultural attachment to it other than it being their source of income; moreover, if they were offered better salaries elsewhere, they would have no hesitation in leaving the lodge. This attitude was succinctly phrased by this respondent:

> If there was another job for better pay I would leave (Respondent C, Interview, 6 December 2011).

The sentiment is echoed by a fellow employee as such:

> ... this place is good for the experience, but it pays peanuts. If I were offered a job for better money I would go (Respondent K, Interview, 22 October 2012).

They also went on to explain that the surrounding town of Phuthaditjaba used to be an industrial hub, however in recent years many of the factories have closed down so there are not so many jobs to choose from than in the past. Their employment at the lodge was based on practical factors such as it being close to their homestead, and the fact that they could walk home and see their family on their days off. In other words, there was not anything intrinsic to the lodge that kept them there. However, it is important to acknowledge that although the Lodge is seen primarily as a place of employment, this does not mean that members of the community are not proud of it as a representation of community values, they simply emphasise its economic significance due to their reliance on the Lodge for their income.

Another refrain that kept cropping up was that the staff enjoyed working with people of many different nationalities and cultures who were guests at the lodge. This intercultural learning

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[1] In order to preserve the respondents' anonymity, all quotations have been referenced with a pseudonym.

experience is echoed by many indigenous communities that marvel at the opportunity to interact with so many diverse cultures on their own doorstep. This sentiment articulated in a study of tour guides in rural Fiji who described their experience as such: "I really appreciate the tourists' visits. I often ask them where they come from and it fascinates me just to look at them...When I see the tourists from all over the world it's like I'm actually living in their country of origin" (Bricker 2001: 242). The Batlokoa respondents replied in a similar vein. Another respondent stated that his job allowed him to work in a clean environment that was peaceful and not noisy or overcrowded. He enjoyed the physical exertion and sense of freedom that working in the mountains afforded him. This non-emotional response was in stark contrast to those respondents who were invested emotionally and culturally in the lodge.

In instances where financial gain was the primary motive for seeking employment at the lodge, the factors cited for working there revolved around issues of convenience and practicality. Employment opportunities are welcomed in a region where jobs are scarce.

The prevailing notion of the lodge as merely a place of employment was further emphasised in light of responses garnered during the interviews. Upon inquiring about what changes the community would like to see implemented at the lodge to increase their representation as an ethnic group, the answers seemed to emphasise the notion that the respondents viewed themselves first and foremost as employees of the lodge and were consequently interested in attracting more guests to the lodge instead of increasing the community's symbolic presence at the lodge.

One response that reflected the general employee mindset ran as follows:

> I think that the lodge really represents the Batlokoa due to the cultural artefacts that are displayed in the lodge. The tourists appreciate that we are of Sotho origin. The pictures and the tapestry reflect the dignity of the Batlokoa. Since the Batlokoa took over [the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge] lots of Black people visit the lodge as tourists or as day visitors to hold functions here (Respondent D, Interview, 6 December 2011).

The reference to Batlokoa iconography reflected in the furnishing of the Lodge, specifically the photos, tapestries and frames alluded to in this quotation, all depict the traditional Batlokoa way of life as well as the images of the community and paramount Chief Wessels Mota. It is worth noting that even though these artefacts do provide material representations of the Batlokoa

community at the Lodge, the respondent explicitly views these means of cultural and symbolic representation in terms of its potential value to guests at the lodge. The commercial aspect of utilising Batlokoa narratives and iconography is brought to the fore as this implies that cultural representation in this instance is only deemed necessary in as far as it promotes tourism. This is in line with the current trend where "aspects of tangible and intangible culture are viewed by policy prescribers as both malleable and valuable- in need of protection from heritage and ethical perspectives, as well as marketable commodities that poor communities can sell to tourists" (Hill 2011:3).

The Lodge is viewed as a preferable place of employment in comparison to the sometimes unpleasant working conditions that the respondents had been subjected to. Some respondents' previous employment ranged from working in a noisy factory to working in a busy hotel/nightclub. They found the employment at the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge establishment to be a welcome respite from unsavoury conditions encountered in previous employment.

But for some the TFPD's revival of the Lodge has been viewed as nothing short of a miracle. The collaboration between TFPD and the Batlokoa community originated as a result of members of the Batlokoa tribal council meeting Mr Glynn O' Leary, Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O.) of TFPD at a tourism conference in 2007 (Respondent J, Interview, 8 December 2011). The tribal council began taking tentative steps to appoint TFPD to manage the lodge on behalf of the Batlokoa community. TFPD was officially appointed as the operating company at the Lodge in May 2010 (Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge Promotional Brochure, 2010). By that stage the Lodge had fallen into a state of disrepair and some of the staff had been working for months without payment. TFPD faced a substantial challenge in its endeavour to improve the operation standards of the Lodge.

The Relationship between the tourism operating company and the community
The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the tour operating company TFPD saw immense potential in the Lodge but he was dismayed at its state of dilapidation when he first encountered it.

> I almost cried when I saw the run-down state of the Lodge. It had the most magnificent panoramic views of the mountains but it was in disrepair (O'Leary, Personal Communication, 21 October 2010).

Most of the respondents interviewed relayed their relief at the tourism operating company's intervention at the Lodge. They stated that before TFPD had intervened they had not collected salaries for several months because the Lodge was in dire straits financially and that there was not enough operating income for all the staff to receive a salary. One of the salient points brought up was that once in control the tourism operating company TFPD had actually paid the staff wages owing to them.

One respondent emphatically noted that:

> Since the White people are here, people get paid and the people here are pleased that they are getting paid when previously they were not (Respondent C, Interview, 6 December 2011).

It was also noted with much relief that now the Lodge kitchen and bar was fully stocked with food and alcohol to serve the guests, as opposed to when the Lodge was communally owned and the infrastructure was run-down, with the kitchen and bar being practically empty. The lack of food and equipment to operate the lodge was voiced as follows:

> In the days before, the old fridges were not working nicely. Transfrontier Parks came here and bought new fridges and got enough stock. Now we never run out of cool drinks (Respondent K, Interview: 22 October 2012).

These constraints in terms of deficient stock and supplies to provide meals for the guests severely hindered their ability to attract and retain guests at the Lodge prior to TFPD's intervention. TFPD is now viewed reverently as a godsend by some of the respondents as they believe that TFPD rescued the lodge from closure and complete dereliction. The tourism operating company was also instrumental in implementing non-discriminatory employment practices that included a greater cross-section of the community.

Breaking the chains of nepotism

One respondent was especially grateful to TFPD for breaking what he claimed were the nepotistic process of hiring staff to work at the lodge which he claimed had existed in the past. He explains as follows:

> ... before TFPD took over, only the Chief or the Chief's family or friends were working at the lodge, whether they knew anything or not. Now TFPD hires on the basis of whether we are suitable for the job or not (Respondent D, Interview, 6 December 2011).

This quotation illustrates the point that even though a Lodge may be communally-owned, it does not necessarily mean that the entire community benefits from a tourism venture. Prior to the collaboration with TFPD, most of the economic benefits of owning the lodge only impacted on a small group with the local Chief as the central node. As jobs are now allocated on the basis of merit, as opposed to a nepotistic basis, members of the community are much happier to be involved in the operation of the Lodge. A few respondents were gratified to add that many of the workers who were chosen by the Chief left their jobs once TFPD came aboard, as they were unqualified for the positions that they held. A respondent noted that since TFPD started hiring, they soon implemented a meritocratic basis for appointments. They explained it as such:

> I only heard that they needed staff so I brought my C.V.[2] and came for the interview. I don't have much family in the area. They took me for my qualifications (Respondent C, Interview, 6 December 2011).

This approach ensured that the Lodge was subsequently staffed with competent employees, as opposed to employees chosen on the basis of political favour. It is also in line with the responsible tourism guidelines which seek to: "Recruit and employ staff transparently, aiming to create a diverse workforce in terms of gender, ethnicity, race and disability" (DEAT 2003: 10).

As TFPD is a Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) company, it is committed to implementing employment policies that aim to redress racial inequities wrought by the apartheid regime (Dyll-Myklebust 2011). This implementation entails contributing to much-needed skills development amongst Batlokoa community as well as to increase the number of Black people who manage projects. TFPD is also committed to implementing a pro-social business model called 'For-Profit-Philanthropy, designed by Nobel Peace prize winner Muhammed Yunus, that places emphasis on benefitting the local community that one works with while still engaging in a profitable business venture (Kelly 2009, Dyll-Myklebust 2011).

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[2] Curriculum Vitae.

Voices of dissent

Despite the many positive changes such as the refurbishment of the Lodge and the renovation of the infrastructure being cited as the main developments that TFPD brought to the establishment, a few respondents also voiced their discontent at the lease agreement between the Batlokoa community and TFPD ran for 25 years. One respondent distilled their discontent as such:

> ...they might as well take the lodge away from the Batlokoa. 25 years is such a long time. The Chief will be dead before there are lots of profits... there is no strong leadership to take over (Respondent B, Interview, 6 December 2011).

Perhaps this respondent does not understand the long-term nature of investment in tourism ventures. It is not something in which major profits can be accrued on a short-term. However, this statement does reflect a mindset that the stakeholders need to be aware of and seek to address these fears during community meetings. There was also the suspicion of 'being robbed' by TFPD and the underlying suspicion that perhaps TFPD was making more money than was reflected in their auditing sheets. The suggestion was put forward that there should be a member of the Batlokoa community who also kept track of the financial information at the Lodge to ensure that neither the Chief nor TFPD was 'robbing the community'.

Despite many positive interactions occurring between the Lodge operators and the staff, there is still a sense of suspicion and unease between them. This slight animosity could be a residual effect of South Africa's legacy of apartheid. Old, deep-seated prejudices have to be confronted and expressed if the partnership is to move forward. There seems to be something of a rift between the people who believe that the collaboration with TFPD is unequivocally a positive change and those who have a sense of distrust. One respondent was firm in their conviction that the Batlokoa community was fully involved in the operation of the Lodge. She stated:

> I have seen community members attending the meetings. If there are major changes, the community is consulted. With each and every decision that is taken, the community is included (Respondent C, Interview, 6 December 2011).

Stated contradictory views make it difficult to ascertain why some members of the community feel alienated from the decision-making process while others adamantly insist that they are actually represented in the decision-making process. TFPD seem to be implementing a process called "Community Visioning" (CV) when they invite members of the tribal council, Batlokoa

staff members and other stakeholders to the Lodge to participate in meetings. Community Visioning is a process used to foster community involvement in management procedures by encouraging community members to come together to discuss their ideals, values and plans for the community. This encourages a sense of ownership and collective competence (Chitakira, Torquebiau, and Ferguson 2012). One respondent felt that he deserved more recognition and monetary compensation for being, in his estimation:

... a real Batlokoa who is a leader of the community, but I am left out of the decision-making process. Even though I am a leader in the community, I don't get paid enough. (Respondent F, Interview: 7 December 2011).

It is possible that the respondent attempted to leverage some political or financial gain by attempting to establish himself as a prominent leader in the community. But it is more likely that he is trying to articulate his sense of alienation. His grievance could stem from the possibility that he does not feel that he benefits from the community's acquisition of the lodge. He echoes the sentiment that only a few people from the community benefit from the lodge. His criticism is as follows:

> ... the leaders should look after the community, not only after themselves. The Chiefs should stop spending only for their homes and they should spend for the Batlokoa community (Respondent F, Interview, 7 December 2012).

This respondent indicated that he felt that the benefits accrued due to the communal ownership of the lodge are only circulated amongst a select group of people and not amongst the entire Batlokoa community. It is unclear as to whether he finds TFPD to be at fault or whether he is just dissatisfied with their involvement with the lodge in general. This complaint is was often echoed by the late Dawid Kruiper, the traditional leader of the ≠Khomani in the Northern Cape, who lamented to tourists, academic researchers and NGOs alike that his importance as community leader was not recognised and that he did not receive adequate financial compensation for his role in the community (Dyll-Myklebust 2011).

The lodge as a symbol of cultural heritage
Some respondents were in opposition to those who maintained that the lodge was primarily a place of employment. They held that the lodge was testament to the unity and perseverance of the Batlokoa community. A respondent asserts this view when he states that:

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I would never want to work anywhere but here. This place is my home. It is the place of my ancestors. This is the legacy of the Batlokoa for my children. (Respondent G, Interview, 22 October 2012).

He exhibits an all-encompassing conviction that the Lodge is imbued with cultural significance. This quotation was part of a highly impassioned narrative relating to the Lodge being the concrete legacy of paramount Chief Wessels Mota's altruistic vision to be of aid to hikers and mountaineers who ascended the Sentinel Peak and its surrounding summits. The narrative maintains that the Lodge was created as a result of paramount Chief Wessels Mota's consultation with the Batlokoa community about his vision and wish to improve the plight of stranded mountaineers. This narrative suggests that he enlisted the help of the community in using rudimentary tools to physically carve a path from the Tesheng village, where the he lived, up to the foot of the Sentinel Mountains. It is maintained that the Chief allocated a part of the road to each family and they were responsible for creating and maintain their section. The community responded to his request as such:

The community said that they were behind his plans. All they needed to know is what they could do to help. They have their hands and their labour (Respondent I, Interview, 8 December 2011).

Thus it was literally a community effort. The path that was carved is known as 'the Chief's road' in present-day (Hawkins 1982).

The Lodge was initially comprised of a single long hut-like structure which provided just rudimentary and temporary shelter for travellers. This was done in the mid-1950s and the materials used to build the structure were pulled up from the valley on sleds harnessed to oxen. Some respondents were deeply attached to the Lodge as a result of viewing it as symbolic of Batlokoa unity. It re-enforced their collective identity. It is worth noting that the impetus for Chief Mota's magnanimous gesture could be viewed, by the cynically-minded, as having been fuelled by his desire to appease the South African apartheid government as he stood to benefit from the 'independent homeland' policy that was being encouraged at the time. This policy promoted 'separate development' for black people and this entailed confining black people of South Sotho ethnicity to what was then known as the African reserve or 'homeland' of Qwa Qwa. Under this policy the ideological concepts of 'Chief' and 'tribe' were utilized. This meant

that the paramount chief of an allocated area had jurisdiction over the finance and provision of amenities in an area.

While this seemed to empower black communities on a superficial level, it was a thinly veiled mechanism of control and division used by the apartheid regime. Chief Wessels Mota accepted this policy with enthusiasm because he stood to gain dominance over the Mopeli settlers who some claimed had more claim to the area due to their prior settlement (Quinlan 1988). Although the Lodge does seem to have a cultural resonance amongst the Batlokoa community, and this is acknowledged by the culturally themed interior and artefacts at the Lodge, it is worth noting that the enterprise is not marketed as a cultural Lodge. The Lodge is immensely popular with bird-watchers, hikers, mountaineers and nature enthusiasts. It is marketed primarily as and ecotourism venture. Ecotourism refers to "environmentally and socially responsible travel to natural or near natural areas that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people (DEAT 1996:5). The Lodge provides beneficial socio-economic involvement by employing 44 out of 46 staff from the local Batlokoa community.

Community owned land or the chief's land?
The concept of a community-owned lodge seems to be a murky issue amongst the Batlokoa (Field notes, December 2011). According to the traditional Sotho understanding, there is no recognition of private land ownership. It is believed that the land cannot be delineated into separate portions as would be the case for private ownership as the ancestors live in the land and would be angered if the land was portioned off (2005). Consequently, it was believed that all the land was communally-owned with the paramount Chief as its custodian. However, this belief has proved to be problematic in terms of the lodge as many members of the Batlokoa community are under the impression that the lodge belongs to the chief. Correspondence with the current manager about community entitlement of the lodge revealed the following:

> I haven't found any sense of entitlement. It may be so, as the lodge is perceived to be owned by the king and not entirely in the hands of the community (Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge manager, personal communication, 11 February 2013).

Evidence of this perception is also relayed by Victoria Moloi a Batlokoa community member and resident of Qwa Qwa:

Little is known to the Batlokoa communities about the resort. Only those who are in the royal family are aware of the history of the resort. Though this facility was never inscribed as a heritage site, in the history of Batlokoa it can be inscribed as one. (Victoria Moloi, personal communication, 18 February 2013).

One of the prominent objectives set out by the South African National Department of Tourism (NDT) is to increase the participation of rural communities in tourism enterprises (National Department Tourism 2012). However, garnering community support can be difficult in light of the community's understanding that the tourism asset belongs to the chief as is the case in this situation. It would seem that TFPD has to make a concerted effort in convincing the Batlokoa community that they also have a stake in the success of the Lodge.

TFPD has encountered similar difficulties at the !Xaus Lodge establishment in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. Here, those who portray the essentialist Bushmen persona in terms of dress and lifestyle, the Kruipers generally claim that they have more right to the land and any income accrued as they are the true custodians of the land due to their deep spiritual connection to the land (see Tomaselli 2012, Dyll-Myklebust 2011). !Xaus lodge is built on land that belong to both the local Mier community and the ≠Khomani san ,the Kruipers are members of the latter , both communities have equal right to profits accrued from the Lodge.

It is unknown as to whether the current Batlokoa paramount Chief, Lekonutu Mota, intentional cultivates the impression that the royal family owns the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge establishment in order to leverage his power or whether the community just assume that the establishment belongs to him because of traditional patterns of land ownership. Irrespective of the perceived ownership, there does seem to be some community pride in the lodge as gauged by the manager in response to how did she think that the community viewed the lodge?

> They seem to be proud of the lodge and its long-standing history and
> position in the community. It is like a gentrified old friend
> (Lodge Manager , personal communication, 11 February 2013).

It can be surmised that despite not being fully aware that they have a right to the Lodge, the Batlokoa community members would still like the Lodge to be successful, if not for their financial gain but as a testament to their heritage. The challenge for TFPD as a private enterprise

is to mobilise this community support into tangible benefits in terms of the operation and promotion of the lodge. The Lodge can then capitalise on its 'social licence' in the community.

Social licence and community involvement

The long-term sustainability of community-owned tourism assets depends on a large extent on community approval and support (Goodwin and Santilli 2006). It is consequently in the best interest of the tourism operating company to gain the support of the local community. This community support, known as 'social licence', can be gained in several ways (Ashley and Haysom 2006). Due to the primary motive of the tourism enterprise being profit-seeking and not a development organisation, tourism operating companies relegate community investment to the margins of their operational activities. Often, this is done via an annual monetary donation or a community tour or activity, however, these attempts at community altruism does not create a working relationship between the community and the private sector (Ashley and Haysom 2006).

The manager at the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise outlined TFPD's philanthropic activities as such:

> While Isabel & Deon conducted the "Christmas Joy" program, I will be leading the lodge in holding educational classes for area school children. We are in discussions with KZN Wildlife & students at UKZN to lead half-day classes here at the lodge about a range of topics, including: bearded vultures, other regional birds, wild flowers, conservation, etc. We are hoping to hold a couple of classes a month (Personal communication, 11 February 2013).

The 'Christmas joy' programme entailed the previous managers of the lodge handing out food hampers to an organisation that supports orphans in the community. Although this is a commendable endeavour, in terms of sustainability it seems that the current proposal to hold educational classes for school children would have long-term benefits in instilling a sense of pride within the community about the environmental and cultural heritage as well as have a wider reaching effect that only targeting a few members of the community as the lessons that the school-children receive are likely to be disseminated by them to their parents, friends, and to the wider community as a whole. The classes will also supplement the children's traditional school activities which is an investment in the educational future of a younger generation. Educating the community and transferring skills are vital to promoting equality in the tourism industry. Additionally, some schools in the area hosted their grade 12 farewell functions at the conference

venue at the Lodge. They are thus utilising their community-owned assets and gaining familiarity with the premises. The Lodge has become a source of employment for the community as well as a place of leisure and learning. The education initiative by TFPD bodes well for the tourism industry on the whole. The White Paper on Tourism states the following: "Perhaps the greatest deficiency in the tourism industry in South Africa is the absence of adequate education, training, and awareness opportunities. The previously neglected groups are highly disadvantaged and the job of levelling the playing field is a massive one. One of the key vehicles for doing so is education and training" (DEAT 1996:13). Apart from these initiatives the lodge also sources its floor rugs, decorative paintings and wall tapestries from the local Batlokoa crafters (Field notes 2011). These decorative touches enhance the aesthetic presence of Batlokoa ownership at the lodge as well as create a 'multiplier effect' (Jamal and Stronza 2006). This multiplier effect has practical and material implications in that the success of the lodge as a commercial enterprise enhances the cash-flow in the local community as the lodge operators source more of their products from the community thus injecting a considerable amount of money into an otherwise stagnant economic region. The Lodge manager assets that:

> The greatest impact is through employing local staff. Perhaps a few people generate enough monthly income by selling crafts. The local industry isn't developed enough to provide commodities that we need (such as fresh produce or furniture)... so, we buy food wholesale or through Spar and hard goods further afield (Personal communication, 11 February 2013).

TFPD has only been operating in Witsieshoek for the last three years, yet they were able to make a contribution to the local economy by the employment of local staff and the procurement of some goods from the local community. TFPD had an economic impact on the livelihoods of the Mier and ≠Khomani san host communities in the Northern Cape, due to their generation of R5.1 million income to the Gordonia area where !Xaus lodge is situated. This feat subsequently earned TFPD an Imvelo Award for best practice in the economic impact category in 2010 (Dyll-Myklebust 2011, Myklebust and Finlay 2012). This has economic implications for the community because:

> Whether tourists are domestic or international, their expenditure in local communities contributes to the economic development of the area. The greater the proportion of total tourism spending that stays in the local area, the stronger and more diverse the economic base. The multiplier effect is greatest where the local linkages are the strongest- the

imperative is clear, source the inputs for all tourism enterprises as locally as possible in order to maximise local economic benefit and to assist in diversifying the local economy" (DEAT 2002:2).

TFPD does occasionally come under fire for their lack of a Batlokoa representative in the management of the lodge. TFPD's C.E.O. Mr. Glynn O' Leary states that:

> He would love to employ a person of Batlokoa descent to manage the lodge but at the moment no-one has sufficient skills, training or business acumen to take on the position, however, he is not against employing someone if they were suitably qualified. He does add the caveat though, that TFPD was appointed on behalf of the Batlokoa community to manage the operations of the lodge. It does not necessarily mean that because the Batlokoa community own the lodge that they should necessarily manage the lodge. He uses an anecdote to illustrate his point. One may have shares in a telecommunications company for example. It does not necessarily mean that because one owns something that one is necessarily the best candidate to manage something. The person who owns shares in a business entrusts the management of that business to someone who is suitable qualified to manage the business. It is in a similar vein that the Batlokoa community may own the lodge but they entrust its upkeep to TFPD (Presentation, 11 May 2011).

It must be re-iterated at this point that the Lodge is primarily a commercial enterprise, however, due to endeavours to promote 'responsible tourism', tourism practices that uplifts the local communities (Ashley and Haysom 2006), TFPD incorporates the local Batlokoa community into the operations of the lodge so that it benefits a wider segment of the Batlokoa population both directly through employment at the lodge or indirectly via sourcing crafts or providing educational classes. 'Responsible tourism' as defined by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism is: "tourism that promotes responsibility to the environment through its sustainable use; responsibility to involve local communities in the tourism industry; responsibility for the safety and security of visitors and responsible government, employees, employers, unions, and local committees" (DEAT 1996:5) This working definition has several facets to it, and it seems like quite a large requirement for the tourism operating company to live up to.

Hurdles in public and private partnerships
Due to the different goals of the present-day national Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) and the tourism operating company TFPD disagreements inevitably arose. Part of the aim of DEAT in funding projects such as the renovation of Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge was its endeavour to promote community skills and development training, poverty alleviation as

well as to redress racial inequities created by the apartheid regime and promote cultural heritage and diversity (DEAT handbook 2003). While these agendas are worthy of attention, there is often blurring as to whose responsibility it is to implement them. A tourism operating company, although altruistic in its vision, is not necessarily responsible for implementing practices that bring about transformation. Granted, positive societal change may be one of the effects of proper management of the lodge, however the main role of the tourism operating company is to ensure that they operate a commercially viable tourism facility that is on par with international offerings and standards. When allocating public funds for community projects, of which Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge is such a beneficiary, DEAT appoints implementing agents to ensure that the funds are spent profitably and appropriately.

Implementing agents are individuals appointed by the Department of Environmental affairs and Tourism (DEAT) to ensure that public funds allocated for the project are spent according to tender. The implementing agent immediately gets a percentage off the top of the allocated funds and is responsible for hiring contractors to complete the project (O' Leary, Interview, 21 October 2010). Even though, in theory this acts as a security mechanism to safeguard against the squandering of public funds, anecdotal   evidence suggests that these individuals sometimes complicate the public-private and community partnerships. A common lament from the tourism operating company's management is that:

> ...due to miscommunication at times, the needs of the tourism operating company are not fulfilled in time as there is a delay when requests are channelled through the necessary bureaucratic structures. (Respondent L, Interview, 22 October 2012).

Due to the high level of accountability inherent in the nature of the requisition of public funds, there are often inevitable delays that hinder the provision of tourism services at the lodge. The tourism operators are at a loss as to what can be done to speed up the process. A survey of a building site of renovated rooms reveals incomplete structures although the jointly agreed-upon dates for completion have been revised and re-scheduled once it was clear that the original projected dates were unattainable. These obstacles in service delivery threaten the sustainability of the partnership as these delays result in the loss of income for the tourism operating company during peak business periods. A comment by a member of management of the tourism operating

company during a tour of a renovation site hints at the possibility that the inclusion of too many managers can lead to uncertainty over what each stakeholder's respective role is. This uncertainty can lead to problems sliding through unchecked as each manager is unsure of what they are responsible for. This incident at a renovation site is symptomatic of other mishaps that have occurred and is a case of 'too many cooks spoiling the broth'. It is possible that this predicament could have been avoided if there was clearer communication between all the stakeholders:

> The roof tiles aren't fitted securely; the strong winds are blowing the tiles off the roofs. I have suggested that more nails be used to secure the tiles but this hasn't been done. If this is happening during the construction, I hate to see what will happen after a few years. (Respondent L, Interview: 22 October 2012).

The suggestion made by the member of management staff was quoted to highlight the problems that can occur due to there being many stakeholders in a project. It is a difficult predicament to find oneself in when one can foresee the possible consequences of a course of action but one is unable to implement meaningful changes.

Although the scenario above reflects a situation on a particular site, the difficulties encountered could occur in any public-private and community partnership if the channels of communication are not available.

It is not uncommon to hear of disagreements and distrust between the management of the private enterprise and the representatives appointed by the public sector. There are instances when stakeholders do not have enough support to implement their tasks. In these situations it is vital that possible obstacles are discussed early enough so that they do not become insurmountable hurdles at a later stage.

Anger, disillusionment and helplessness
Public-private and community partnerships are often fraught with disagreements due to too many people insisting on their own methods of doing things without consideration for the other parties in the collaboration. Differences in opinion and a break-down of trust can sometimes sever working relationships to the detriment of the collaborative projects. The following incident reveals one example of difficult collaborative relations between the tour operator and the governmental sector.

> The implementing agent looked me in the eye and assured me that he had ordered more building materials and that they were on the way. However, that was more than two months ago, and the materials still haven't arrived (O'Leary, Personal Communication: 22 October 2012).

This was the disillusioned response of the chief executive officer of TFPD when he commented on how he had to deal with the situation on the ground where relationships were strained. The renovation of infrastructure was supposed to be completed by 1 December 2012, as drawn up by and agreed upon by the tourism department representatives, members of the Batlokoa community and management of the lodge.

The renovation was completed in October 2013. Reasons cited for the delay has included inclement weather conditions, difficulty in sourcing the specified materials, and a lack of a vehicle to transport the builders to the site of the lodge amongst other things. It is worth noting that the completion dates were jointly agreed upon by the aforementioned stakeholders and the schedules were also adjusted when it became clear that the original dates were not attainable. This causes a great deal of frustration to the lodge operators who lament the loss of revenue during the peak tourism period during December and January as the renovations are not complete. There appears to be a blurring of roles and responsibilities. And the reality is that all parties would enjoy a more conducive relationship if channels for communication were kept open and the matter was approached in a more collegial manner.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The overall aim of this research was to ascertain how the indigenous Batlokoa community of Witsieshoek re-negotiate and represent their collective history and identity in a public-private-community partnership. This research was undertaken due to its pertinence to the post-apartheid South African milieu in which partnerships between indigenous communities and other sectors of society are becoming increasingly commonplace (Ashley and Roe 2002). Indigenous voices will become more prominent as more policies are implemented to foster greater racial equity. The research objectives focused primarily on the feelings and perceptions of the indigenous Batlokoa community in keeping with the methodological tenets of Critical Indigenous Inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 2008). As stated in earlier chapters, this is a necessary avenue of inquiry in the post-apartheid South African context as more organisations embark on Public-Private-Community partnerships. The conclusions are discussed roughly along the lines of the main research questions.

Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge: a symbol of cultural unity

As stated in earlier chapters, the Batlokoa community welcomed the establishment of the Lodge in their community as it was built in the mid-1950s under the auspices of the Batlokoa paramount chief Wessels Mota. Chief Mota was concerned about the plight of stranded mountaineers in the vicinity of Witsieshoek. This prompted him to build a basic shelter for hikers to rest at before they embarked on their journey into the mountains. He also took the initiative to commission the creation of a road, known as the Chief's road, to be carved out from the valley up until the car park at the foot of Sentinel Peak (Hawkins 1982). Chief Mota enlisted the help of every Batlokoa family to aid him in accomplishing his goal of building a road and a shelter for hikers. This narrative holds a place of pride in the collective memory of Batlokoa community. Many respondents offered impassioned accounts of how they, or their parents, were called upon by the Chief to accomplish the seemingly impossible task of creating a path through the mountains itself. As each family had to build and maintain a section of the road the entire community was, in one way or another, responsible for the success of the Lodge as everyone had contributed to the building of either the road leading up to the Lodge or to the building of the Lodge itself. This in itself was an amazing feat as the community was only equipped with rudimentary tools and their physical labour. This joint endeavour of building a road and a shelter

for stranded hikers reflected the altruistic nature of the Batlokoa Chief, and by extension, the Batlokoa community. Therefore, the Lodge serves as a physical testament to altruism, ambition and achievement of the Batlokoa community. It serves as a reminder of the collective identity and history shared by the community.

As the Lodge was built as a result of the combined efforts of the community, many respondents viewed it as the symbol and representation of the perseverance and achievement of the community. As some members of the community hold the Lodge in great reverence, they are proud to relay this narrative of community pride to tourists visiting at the Lodge.

The impact of the historical significance of the Lodge on the community
As elaborated on in the previous section and in earlier chapters, the narrative surrounding the establishment of the Lodge has become a great legend amongst the Batlokoa community. The narrative serves as a reminder of the many obstacles that were encountered and overcome in the process of building the Lodge. This fosters a sense of pride in the community by re-enforcing a sense of a shared history and identity bound to this geographical region. The sense of historical resonance is supported by the strong presence of traditional Batlokoa iconography incorporated in the decor of the Lodge from the wall tapestry depicting traditional activities engaged in by the Batlokoa community, to the large copper etching of the paramount Chief Wessels Mota that is displayed prominently in the reception area. Many other smaller items such as cushion covers and floor rugs are also imbued with Batlokoa cultural significance and iconography. A few respondents viewed the Lodge as the cultural legacy of the Batlokoa that had to be preserved in order to be passed on to their children. They were adamant that would never want to work anywhere else as they were the custodians of the Batlokoa heritage at the establishment. They felt privileged to be employed at the Lodge as it was central to their history and identity as an indigenous community.

Based on the impassioned assertions of the Lodge being the symbol of Batlokoa unity and perseverance, it is evident that despite the majority of respondents viewing the Lodge primarily in economic terms as a place of employment, it also has a strong historical and cultural significance to the community. The success of the Lodge as a tourism enterprise is considered as a success for the community on a wider scale. The partnership between TFPD, the Department of

Environmental Affairs and Tourism and the Batlokoa community is pivotal to the preservation of the Batlokoa cultural legacy at the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise.

The impact of the presence of Transfrontier Parks Destinations on the Lodge
As established in an earlier chapter, the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge enterprise was seen primarily as a place of employment to most of the staff interviewed. This is not surprising as the economic implications of the community owning the lodge featured prominently during the interviews.

Most of the Batlokoa community members employed at the Lodge view the collaboration with TFPD as a positive change, however, it has to be mentioned that there are a few people who think that the 25 year timeframe for the lease may be excessive. Some respondents expressed the sentiment that the Batlokoa community might eventually lose ownership of the lodge as a consequence of the long lease. Some mistrust of TFPD was also evident as there was the suggestion of hiring an independent auditor to ensure that TFPD was not 'robbing' the Batlokoa community of profits accrued from tourism at the lodge. As discussed in previous chapters, this suspicion and slight hostility is residual from the apartheid era in South Africa. Members from different race groups are often reluctant to trust each other due to many years of segregation and racially discriminatory indoctrination. Unfortunately, it is difficult to abandon the ingrained mind sets and behaviour in favour of new behaviour and responses.

In terms of current perceptions, the Lodge is viewed as more than a historical reflection of Batlokoa history and representation. It is also viewed as a vital source of income to an otherwise impoverished community. The respondents expressed appreciation towards TFPD for enabling their salaries to be paid on time and on a regular basis. This was not the case before TFPD had entered the partnership. Due to the prior mismanagement of the lodge, the Batlokoa community members were unable to attract enough tourists to the lodge to cover their operating costs. A consequence of this was that there was insufficient income to pay salaries. Respondents also expressed gratitude toward TFPD for refurbishing the lodge, facilitating infrastructural renovations and re-stocking supplies for the restaurant.

Despite having a largely collegial working relationship, there are times when disagreements between community members, TFPD management and representatives from the Department of

Environmental Affairs and Tourism crop up. However, the issues of contention are discussed between all the stakeholders until a suitable agreement is reached (see chapter 5). Disagreements are bound to emerge due to the different goals that each entity attempts to achieve.

Implications of this research for other public-private-community partnerships in South Africa

Public-private-community partnerships (PPCP) between indigenous communities and other stakeholders are becoming common place due to the socio-economic integration being fostered in the 'new' South Africa amongst different race groups. These strategic linkages have the potential to ensure that resources are utilised to an optimal effect (Palmer 2006). The case study of the partnership between the Batlokoa community and the other stakeholders can shed light on other PPCPs irrespective of whether the collaboration occurs in the tourism sector. It is acknowledged that these are not always easy collaborations due to a myriad of differences between stakeholders that emerge due to differences in their backgrounds and experiences. It is hoped that this research sheds light on how to maintain more collegial channels of communication between partners in an enterprise. The different goal of each institution or organisation makes it exceedingly difficult to find a common starting point from which to work. The added layers of suspicion and miscommunication due to racial difference can sometimes compound the difficulties of the situation.

Limitations of the research

In accordance with the methodological stance of Critical Indigenous Inquiry, every attempt was made to ascertain the feelings and perceptions of the indigenous community at a 'grassroots' level (Denzin and Lincoln 2008). However giving precedence to the indigenous perspective, no matter how warranted, places the perspectives of the 'private'- the tourism operating company and the Departmental of Environmental Affairs and Tourism- the 'public' in a secondary emphasis. This was inevitable due to the limited scope of any Masters study as well as the financial and time constraints.

Recommendations for further research

This dissertation focused primarily on the indigenous community's perspectives in the public-private-community partnership. A research investigation that focuses primarily on the public or

private sectors of the partnership may lead to a more holistic understanding of the dynamics inherent in the partnership.

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Photo of Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge

Source: Varona Sathiyah, 21 October 2010.

 Photo of refurbished Chalets- October 2013. Source: Eleanor

Muller (TFPD).

Photo of Interior of refurbished Chalet- October 2013. Source: Eleanor Muller (TFPD).

Photo of Copper etching of Chief Mota that is at the reception area of the lodge.

Source: Varona Sathiyah, 6 December 2011.

Photo of the Batlokoa motif rugs and cushions in the lounge of the lodge. Source: Varona Sathiyah. 6 December 2011.

Photo of crafts sold to tourists at the lodge. Source: Varona Sathiyah. 6 December 2011.

Photo of the wall tapestry in the lounge of the lodge, depicting traditional Batlokoa lifestyle. Source: Varona Sathiyah. 6 December 2011.