NAVIGATING BETWEEN THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE: MOHOKARE SACRED SITES, SPIRITUAL TOURISM AND THE CHALLENGES IN THE FORMAL HERITAGE SECTOR

by

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DECLARATION

I, MAKASHANE ARCHIBALD NTLHABO (student number 2015287762), declare that the thesis that I herewith submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with specialisation in Africa Studies at the University of the Free State is my independent work. I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

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ABSTRACT

After the democratic election of 1994 in South Africa, many Basotho who were dispossessed of their ancestral land west of the Mohokare River in the Free State Province of South Africa in the late 19th century returned to reclaim the land through spiritual journeys to sacred sites of Mantsopa, Mautse, Motouleng and Witsie's Cave. This was the beginning of the contestation between farm owners and pilgrims, even between pilgrims themselves, thus creating complexities that came to characterise Mohokare Valley sacred sites as sites of ownership contestation, criminality, and hybridity. This study attempted to find empirical solutions to the sacred and profane tensions created by the inheritance of a colonial approach to heritage and land administration in South Africa that displaced Afrocentric customs, values, and experiences. The study integrated Afrocentricity and Decoloniality with elements from Postcolonialism to develop the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework. The theoretical framework was further enhanced by Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR) as research methodology that encompassed Afrocentric Research Methods and Participatory Action Research chosen because of their liberating and emancipatory potential to bring about change in the lives of local communities. This approach borrows spirituality and communalism from Afrocentricity, places Africa as the locus of engagement, takes hybridity from Postcolonialism as the condition that characterises sacred sites and pilgrimage, and approaches the process of decolonisation of African gnoseology from a decolonial perspective. This is interpreted from a broader perspective, extending back to the Atlantic Slave Trade and making local communities partners in this project. Given the nature of APAR, the research culminated in an Integrated Management Plan (IMP) designed to institutionalise Mohokare Valley sacred sites as spiritual tourism sites with beneficiation intended for all participants. The IMP was first tested on the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site as the action case study. It was adapted for the rest of the Mohokare sacred sites as part of an ongoing process in line with APAR.

Keywords: Afrocentricity, communalism, Decoloniality, African gnoseology, hybridity, Postcolonialism, integrated management plan, Participatory Action Research, spirituality

KAKARETSO

Ka mora dikgetho tse lokolohileng tsa Afrika Borwa tsa 1994, Basotho ba bangata ba neng ba amohilwe lefatshe la bontata bona le ka bophirima ho noka ya Mohokare provenseng ya Freistata, Afrika Borwa, mafelong a ngwahakgolo wa leshome le metso e robong, ba ile ba kgutla ka ho nka maeto a semoya ho ya dibakeng tse halalelang tsa Mantsopa, Mautse, Motouleng le Lehaheng la Oetsi. Hona e bile qaleho ya ditwantshano pakeng tsa beng ba mapolasi a potileng dibaka tse boletsweng le batho ba neng ba di etela. Hape ya eba qhwebeshano mahareng a baeti ka bobona. Hona ho tlisitse mathata a tsekisano ya dibaka, botlokotsebe le bohabedi, e leng tseo dibaka tse halalelang tsa phula ya Mohokare di tsejwang ka tsona matsatsing a kajeno. Thuto ena e lekile ho fumana tharollo e sebetsang tsitsipanong e pakeng tsa bohalaledi le tlhokahalo ya bohalaledi e bakilweng ke tsela eo re sietsweng lefa ke borakoloni ya ho laola dibaka tsa botjhaba le tsamaiso ya naha mona Afrika Borwa moo ho nang le meetlo, boleng le mekgwa ya seafrika. Thuto ena e kopantse ditheori tsa Tjhadimo ya boafrika le Ho itlhohlolla bokolone le Ho feta bokolone, e le ho bopa *Moralo wa theori ya Afrikana-Decolonial*. Motheo ona o matlafaditswe ka *Phuputso e Ketsong ya ho ba le seabo ya Afrikana* e le mokgwa wa ho etsa diphuputso oo le ona o ikamahanyang le mekgwa ya diphuputso ya seafrika. Mekgwa ena e mmedi e kgethilwe ka lebaka la ho nnetefatsa hore ho be le tokoloho le phetoho maphelong a baahi ba sebaka seo diphuputso di etswang ho sona. Tselatshebetso ena e adima bohalaledi le letsema tjhadimong ya boafrika, e hloma Afrika e le tikoloho eo diphuputso di etswang ho yona, bohabedi ho feta bokolone jwalo ka boemo bo renang dibakeng tse halalelang le ho baeti ba tsona, ebe ho sebediswa ho itlhohlolla bokolone e le ho leka ho lokolla tsebo ya seafrika, kaha ho itlhohlolla bokolone hona ho lata tokoloho ya Afrika nakong ya bokgoba mme ho fana ka matla ho baahi ho etella pele merero ya bona ya tokoloho bokoloneng. Sena se etsetswa ho bopa moralo wa tsamaiso o kenyeletsang tsohle, o reretsweng ho sebediswa Dibakeng tse halalelang tsa noka ya Mohokare jwalo ka dibaka tsa bohahlaudi ba tsa sedumeli tseo ho tsona bohle ba bang le seabo ba tla una molemo. Moralo ona o beilwe tekong pele Setsheng sa Botjhaba sa Provense sa Lehaha la Oetsi e le karolwana ya ho ithuta, hape e le karolo e ntshetsang pele mosebetsi o mabapi le *Phuputso e Ketsong ya ho ba le seabo ya Afrikana* e sebedisitsweng thutong ena.

Mantswe a hlahelletseng: Tjhadimo ya boafrika, Ho itlhohlolla bokolone, Filosofi ya tsebo, Bohabedi, Ka mora bokolone, moralo wa tsamaiso e kopantsweng, Phuputso e Ketsong ya ho ba le seabo, semoya.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
Declaration	II
Abstract	III
Kakaretso	IV
Acknowledgements	VI
List of Images	XIV
List of Maps	XV
List of Tables	XV
List of Figures	XVI
CHAPTER 1 - ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	2
1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY	7
1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES	11
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS	12
1.6 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RESEARCH	13
1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	14
1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	15
1.9 THE KEY CONCEPTS EMPLOYED IN THIS STUDY	16
1.9.1 Afrocentricity	16
1.9.2 Colonialism	16
1.9.3 Decoloniality	17
1.9.4 Post-colonial vs. postcolonial	17
1.9.5 Postcolonialism	17
1.9.6 Heritage	18
1.9.7 Religion and spirituality	18
1.9.8 Micro sacred sites	19
1.9.9 Hybridity	19
1.9.10 Creolization	20
1.9.11 Syncretism	20
1.9.12 Space versus place	20
1.9.13 Ngaka	21
1.9.14 Morena	21
1.9.15 Indigenous leaders	21
1.8.16 African indigenous governance system	22
1.9.17 Sacred indigenous leadership	22
1.9.18 Knowledge versus gnosis	22
1.9.19 African gnoseology	22

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 23

1.11 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS 24

CHAPTER 2 - THE MOHOKARE VALLEY AND SACRED SITES 26

2.1 INTRODUCTION 26

2.2 HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND 26

2.3 MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES 29
2.3.1 Mantsopa 29
2.3.1.1 Mantsopa sacred site 29
2.3.1.2 History and heritage linked to Mantsopa sacred site 31
2.3.2 Mautse 33
2.3.2.1 Mautse sacred site 33
2.3.2.2 History and heritage linked to the Mautse sacred site 34
2.3.3 Motouleng 35
2.3.3.1 The Motouleng sacred site 35
2.3.3.2 History and heritage linked to Motouleng sacred site 38
2.3.4 Witsie's Cave 39
2.3.4.1 The Witsie's Cave provincial heritage site 39
2.3.4.2 History and heritage linked Witsie's Cave 40

2.4 AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY ASSOCIATED WITH MOHOKARE SACRED SITES 44
2.4.1 Pre-colonial nature of sacred sites and spirituality 44
2.4.2 Role-players in African Spirituality 46
2.4.2.1 Morena 47
2.4.2.2 Dingaka 47
2.4.2.3 Ancestral spirit mediums 47
2.4.2.4 Family head 48

2.5 RESERCH PROJECTS CONDUCTED ON MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES 50
2.5.1 Notable Institutional Projects 50
2.5.1.1 National Heritage Council Research Project 50
2.5.1.2 The SANPAD Project 51
2.5.1.3 Water quality at sacred sites 51
2.5.2 Notable PhD Degrees 52
2.5.2.1 PhD thesis by Du Plooy 52
2.5.2.2 PhD thesis by Moephuli 52
2.5.3.2 PhD thesis by Ngobese 53

2.5.3 Notable Master's Degrees 53

2.6 COMPLEXITIES FACING THE MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES 54
2.6.1 Contestation through religious or spiritual superiority 55
2.6.2 Contestations in terms of proximity 56

2.6.3 Ancestral attachment claims 56
2.6.4 Makholokoe infighting 56
2.6.5 Oral and mythmaking discourse 57
2.6.6 Criminal elements 58
2.6.7 Effects of colonialism on sacred sites 58

2.7 CURRENT HERITAGE ADMINISTRATION 59

2.8 CURRENT HERITAGE STATUS OF SITES 62

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY 63

CHAPTER 3 - THE HERITAGE LANDSCAPE 65

3.1 INTRODUCTION 65

3.2 THE STUDY OF HERITAGE AS ENCOMPASSING FIELD 66
3.2.1 Heritage Studies: An overview 66
3.2.2 Heritage and Africa 71

3.3 GLOBAL HERITAGE CONTEXT AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS 72

3.4 REGIONAL HERITAGE CONTEXT: AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES 76

3.5 LOCAL HERITAGE CONTEXT (SOUTH AFRICA) 81

3.6 LIMITATIONS OF HERITAGE LEGISLATION AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR THE MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES 84
3.6.1 Eurocentric interpretation of heritage 84
3.6.2 Heritage and language 86
3.6.3 Living heritage attachment 87
3.6.4 Sacred Sites 89
3.6.5 Nature/Culture dichotomy 91
3.6.6 Non-involvement of traditional custodians of heritage 92
3.6.7 Graves and burial grounds sixty years clause 94
3.6.8 Prioritisation of political heritage 95
3.6.9 Westernisation of cultural heritage 96
3.6.10 Approaches to heritage management 97

3.7 HERITAGE AND SPIRITUALITY 101
3.7.1 Religion and African spirituality 102
3.7.2 African spirituality and land 106
3.7.3 Sacred sites 108
3.7.4 Spiritual tourism 113

3.8 NOTABLE CASE STUDIES 117

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY 124

CHAPTER 4 - TOWARDS THE AFRIKANA-DECOLONIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 125

4.1 INTRODUCTION 125

4.2 HOW DID WE LAND HERE? AN OVERVIEW OF COLONIALISM 127
4.2.1 Historical overview of colonialism 127
4.2.2 Forms of colonialism 129
4.2.3 Southern African colonial history 130
4.2.4 The process and disruption of decolonisation 133

4.3 THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF DECOLONISATION 139
4.3.1 Postcolonialism and Africa(n) Studies 140
4.3.2 Border Studies and Decolonial Theory 142
4.3.3 Theoretical integration 146
4.3.4 Origins and development of Afrocentricity 148

4.4 AFRICAN GNOSEOLOGY: INDIGENEITY, AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY, INDIGENOUS LAND TENURE, LANGUAGE AND GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS 151
4.4.1 Indigeneity 152
4.4.2 African spirituality 152
4.4.3 African indigenous attachment to land 154
4.4.4 African indigenous language 154
4.4.5 African indigenous governance systems 155

4.5 LIMITATIONS OF POSTCOLONIAL THEORY TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN GNOSEOLOGY 155
4.5.1 Indigeneity 155
4.5.2 African spirituality 156
4.5.3 African indigenous land tenure 157
4.5.4 African indigenous language 159
4.5.5 African indigenous governance systems 160

4.6 AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO AFRICAN GNOSEOLOGY CHALLENGES 162
4.6.1 Convergences of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality 165
4.6.2 Divergences of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality 166

4.7 TOWARDS THE AFRIKANA-DECOLONIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 167
4.7.1 Ontological foundation 168
4.7.2 African gnoseology as epistemology 168
4.7.3 Axiology 169
4.7.4 Conceptualising the theoretical framework 169

4.8 APPLYING THE AFRIKANA-DELOCONIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (ADTF) 177
4.8.1 Decolonising epistemology: African gnoseology 182

4.8.2 Decolonising African land tenure 183
4.8.3 Decolonising language through languaging 187
4.8.4 Decolonising custodianship in terms of African gnoseology 195
4.8.5 Balancing the sacred and profane: Institutionalising Mohokare Valley Sacred Sites through spiritual tourism 197

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY 201

CHAPTER 5 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: AFRIKANA-PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (APAR) 203

5.1 INTRODUCTION 203

5.2 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY 203

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN 205
5.3.1 Participatory Action Research: An overview 205
5.3.2 Afrocentric approach to research 207
5.3.3 Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR) 208
5.3.4 Adding a case study for the integrated management plan 209

5.4 DIMENSIONS OF RESEARCH 210
5.4.1 The phenomenon under study 210
5.4.2 The nature of the research 210
5.4.3 Population 210
5.4.3.1 Mantsopa 211
5.4.3.2 Mautse 212
5.4.3.3 Motouleng 212
5.4.3.4 Witsie's Cave 212
5.4.4 Units(s) of analysis 213
5.4.5 Samples and sampling 213

5.5 THE APAR RESEARCH PROCESS ADAPTED FOR THE CASE STUDY 213
5.5.1 The Concerns Report Method 213

5.6 SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION 216
5.6.1 Existing literature on Mohokare Valley Sacred Sites 216
5.6.2 Observation 216
5.6.3 Researcher as participant (participant observation) 217
5.6.4 Individual and group interviews 217
5.6.5 Website searches 218

5.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION 218

5.8 RESEARCH QUALITY 219

5.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 219
5.9.1 Risk and mitigation 220
5.9.2 Informed consent 220

5.9.3 Confidently and anonymity 221
5.9.4 Vulnerable participants 221
5.9.5 Beneficiation, reciprocity and remuneration 221
5.9.6 Deception 221
5.9.7 Conflict of Interest 222

5.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY 222

CHAPTER 6 - DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION 223

6.1 INTRODUCTION 223

6.2 OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION PROCESS 224

6.3 MAPPING IT OUT: STATE OF MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES AND PILGRIMAGE MOVEMENT 226
6.3.1 Mautse 226
6.3.2 Motouleng 229
6.3.3 Mantsopa 235
6.3.4 Witsie's Cave 237
6.3.4.1 Challenges of Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site 238

6.4 DATA CONVERGANCE 240
6.4.1 Management of the sacred sites 240
6.4.2 Permanent residence at the sacred sites 242
6.4.3 On a proxy mission 246
6.4.4 Evolution and meaning making 248
6.4.5 The use participants' knowledge 254

6.5 CHALLENGES OF THE MOHOKARE SACRED SITES 256
6.5.1 Sacred contestations and profane materialities 256
6.5.2 'Ownership' contestations 258
6.5.3 Competing ancestral attachments claims 259
6.5.4 Stakeholder infighting 259
6.5.5 Competing oral mythmaking 260
6.5.6 Opportunism 261
6.5.7 Effects of colonialism on sacred sites 265
6.5.8 Lack of integrated management plans 266
6.5.9 The challenges of grassroots memorialisation 267
6.5.10 Spelling variation and inconsistency 271

6.6 DATA PRESENTATION FOLLOWING THE CONCERNS REPORT METHOD (CRM) 272

6.7 THE CALLING 285

6.8 MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES: HERITAGE, IKS AND TOURISM POTENTIAL 287

6.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY 289

CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSION 291

7.1 INTRODUCTION 291

7.2 SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES 291
7.2.1 Difference between heritage sites and Mohokare Valley sacred sites 292
7.2.2 Heritage sites (tangible) and sacred sites (intangible) 293
7.2.3 Management and ownership contestation over the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site 296
7.2.4 Hybridity 297
7.2.5 Shifting of leadership powers 299

7.3 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH 301
7.3.1 The National Lockdown 301
7.3.2 The POPI Act 301
7.3.3 Sensitivity around land 302
7.3.4 Limited access to literature 302
7.3.5 Non-documentation of pilgrims 302

7.4 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH 303

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS 304
7.5.1 Practical recommendations for the sacred sites 304
7.5.2 Policy recommendations 305
7.5.3 The Integrated Management Plan 308
7.5.4 Witsie's Cave Implementation plan 316

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 317

7.7 CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION 318

7.8 FUTURE ACTION PLANS IN LINE WITH APAR 321

7.9 FINAL CONCLUSION 323

LIST OF REFERENCES 324

Appendix 1: Letter written to the President of South Africa requesting ownership of Witsie's Cave.
Appendix 2: Letter written Free State Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation requesting control/ownership of Witsie's Cave.
Appendix 3: Ethical clearance.

List of Images

Image 1: The purported site of Mantsopa's initial settlement at Modderpoort 30
Image 2: A well and sorghum beer at Nkokomohi 33
Image 3: Clay site at Nkokomohi 33
Image 4: *Lekgotla* – Meeting place at Motouleng 37
Image 5: Huts demolished at Motouleng 37
Image 6: Pilgrims preparing to leave Motouleng 37
Image 7 and 8: National Monument Plaque of Surrender Hill 38
Image 9: Witsie's Cave reception area 40
Image 10: Witsie's Cave craft centre 40
Image 11: Sign board at Witsie's Cave 42
Image 12: Graffiti of members of Shembe Church at Witsie's Cave 42
Image 13: Burnt incense with coins at Witsie's Cave 43
Image 14: Pits made from collecting clay 43
Image 15: Stone pile at Robben Island 69
Image 16: Sol Plaatjie monument at Bethlehem 90
Image 17: Harmelen train disaster memorial 98
Image 18 and 19: Grassroots memorialisation on the N8 road to Ladybrand 99
Image 20: Grassroots memorialisation on the R57 road from Parys to Sasolburg 99
Image 21: Grassroots memorialisation on the N5 road from Bethlehem to Harrismith 100
Image 22 and 23: Monument of people who died on N8 road to Botshabelo 101
Image 24: Shrines inside Motouleng Cave 111
Image 25: A grave of the Bataung people next to Mantsopa's grave 211
Image 26: New entrance to Mautse valley 227
Image 27: New entrance to residential house at Sekonjellashoed 227
Image 28: Pilgrims arriving at Motouleng from the northern entrance 230
Image 29: An alternative entrance to Motouleng that is now also closed 231
Image 30: Vehicles waiting for pilgrims at the new entrance of Motouleng 231
Image 31: Pilgrims arriving at the new entrance of Motouleng 232
Image 32: Stop sign at the new gate leading to Lusthof 234
Image 33: Closer look at the new gate leading to Lusthof 234
Image 34: Information board at Mantsopa 236
Image 35: Fire pit and altar at Mantsopa 236
Image 36 to 39: Messages to God found at Mantsopa's Cave 245
Image 40: Nkgono Masechaba at Motouleng 247
Image 41: Snuff containers and burning candles at Witsie's Cave 249
Image 42: Areal view of new sacred sports at Witsie's Cave 250

Image 43: Newly found sacred site (water pool) near Witsie's Cave 250
Image 44: Mlungane Msibi inside the dart cave at Witsie's Cave 251
Image 45: Witsie's Cave and the Dark Cave 252
Image 46: Activities at different spots of Witsie's Cave 253
Image 47: Extract from the Clarens Xtreme Adventure Company website 262
Image 48 to 49: Graffiti at Motouleng Cave 267
Image 50 to 51: Members of the ANC "marking the register" at the Wesleyan Church 268
Image 52: Cross at Geneva Railway Station near Henneman 269
Image 53: Crosses at Marikana Hill 269
Image 54 and 55: Graves found next to the R532 road in Mpumalanga 270
Image 56: Sign board showing spelling variation at Witsie's Cave 271
Image 57: Poster advertising a hiking trail to Witsie's Cave 271

List of Maps

Map 1: Mohokare Valley reproduced from 'the river runs through it' (Coplan, 2001) 28
Map 2: Position of Witsie's Cave between Monontsha and Tseki Villages 39
Map 3: Mautse valley transcending Wonderklip and Sekonjellashoed 229
Map 4: Location of Motouleng Cave 232
Map 5: Paths of old and new entrance to Motouleng Cave 233
Map 6: Distance between the new gate of Motouleng and the old gate 235
Map 7: Position of Qwaqwa at the corner of Lesotho and Kwazuly Natal 237

List of Tables

Table 1: Heritage legislation of selected African countries 79
Table 2: Determination of religious/spiritual vs tourist significance 114
Table 3: Comparison between participatory and conventional research 206
Table 4: 2017 data collection 224
Table 5: 2018 data collection 225
Table 6: 2019 data collection 225
Table 7: 2020 data collection 225
Table 8: 2021 data collection 225
Table 9: 2022 data collection 225
Table 10: Websites visited 225
Table 11: Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site challenges and sources 239
Table 12: Explanation of activities illustrated in Image 46 254
Table 13: Tourist attractions of Thabo Mofutsanyana District 263

Table 14: Witsie's Cave Stakeholders 275
Table 15: Concerns raised in previous research projects and Witsie's Cave project 278
Table 16: Outcomes of stakeholder meetings 280
Table 17: Determination of spiritual vs tourist significance at Witsie's Cave 294
Table 18: Proposed category ratings for sacred sites 306
Table 19: Witsie's Cave challenges and strategies for overcoming the challenges 312
Table 20: Witsie's Cave five-year implementation plan 316

List of Figures

Figure 1: Diagram illustrating sacred stations inside Motouleng 36
Figure 2: Provincial Notice of Declaration of Heritage Sites in the Free State 61
Figure 3: Presentation showing heritage translated into South African languages 87
Figure 4: Illustration of the project of decolonisation through Decoloniality Theory 146
Figure 5: African Spiritual Worldview 153
Figure 6: The melting pot of the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework 172
Figure 7: Decolonisation of African gnoseology 175
Figure 8: Concerns Report Method of Participatory Action Research 214
Figure 9: Organisational structure of Bakoena Royal Council 297
Figure 10: Bottom-up approach of Witsie's Cave Management 310
Figure 11: Chan's eight-step model of participation turned upside down 314

CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Spirituality forms an integral part of many African cultures and livelihoods. Olupona (2010: xv) believes that this spirituality was lost or modified under colonial rule and during the slave trade due to the introduction of European cultures and traditions. However, Paris (1993: 118) opines that during these times of great upheaval and repression, Africans discovered that spirituality was one of the few domains European colonialism could not conquer. This spirituality was kept alive by Africans sharing their deepest values and spiritual longings, expressing themselves through work songs, bodily rhythms, functional crafts, anecdotal stories, and symbolic gestures. Spirituality manifesting in rituals performed at sacred places was the source of protection against enemies, ensuring good harvests and understanding and surviving within the immediate environment.

The study of sacred sites, pilgrimage, and religious tourism in reference to spirituality has grown into the expanding fields of Pilgrimage and Ritual Studies. Eade (2015: 127) highlights how globalisation in the travel and tourism sector has also led to growth in niche areas such as pilgrimage and cultural tourism. This study explored the complex secular-sacred dynamics of the informal pilgrimage movement to the Mohokare sacred sites in the Eastern Free State of South Africa along the Lesotho-South African border through the lens of Heritage Studies. These sacred sites have been the subject of numerous research projects (Cawood, 2010; Moephuli, 2016; Du Plooy, 2016; Coplan, 2001; Colman, 2009; Ngobese; 2018; Post, Van Beek and Post (eds.), 2014). Herein distinction was made between formalised and informal pilgrimage. The Mohokare Pilgrimage Movement is considered an informal spiritual journey because notable Mohokare sacred sites are informal heritage sites. Thus, they are not officially declared or managed under the South African National Heritage Resources Act of 1999, while some sites are officially declared[1]. This kind of informal

[1] The declaration status of the various Mohokare sacred sites will be discussed in Chapter 2.

pilgrimage contrasts the more organised and popular religious pilgrimage, such as those conducted annually under the Zion Christian Church, where pilgrims converge at Mount Moria and The Nazareth Baptist Church in South Africa.

This chapter provides an overview of the study parameters starting with the background of the Mohokare Valley and its sacred sites. The motivation for this research is also discussed, including the research problem and objectives, overarching aim, assumptions of the research and a brief exposition of the theoretical framework and methodology. This is followed by clarifying key concepts used in the study, the significance of the research and an outline of the thesis.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Mohokare is the Sesotho name for the Caledon River, which forms the border between the Free State Province of South Africa and the west of Lesotho. It is the largest tributary of the Orange River (also known as the *Xhariep* River taken from one of the Khoisan languages and *Senqu* in Sesotho). The Mohokare Valley is the region found in the Free State Province along the Caledon River and the Maloti-Drakensberg range that starts from its source at the *Mount-aux-Source* peak and stretches to the point where it joins the *Senqu* (Orange River) near Bethulie in the southern Free State.

Several sacred sites associated with the Mohokare Pilgrimage Movement lie along the valley, such as Mantsopa's Cave at Modderpoort, the Mautse valley and Nkokomohi near Rosendal, Motouleng Cave near Clarens and Witsie's[2] Cave in Qwaqwa. These sites are linked to ancestral veneration that is believed to be present because of water springs, pools and waterfalls forming part of natural caves and rock formations as well as the medicinal clay and plants found at or near these sites. The sites are also associated with prominent Basotho indigenous and revered leaders

[2] There are spelling variations, namely Witsie, Wetsi, Oetse and Oetsi. While 'Oetsi' would have been preferred instead of 'Witsie' as Oetsi is the more correct Sesotho spelling whereas Witsie was the Afrikaans rendering of the same name, the decision was taken to use the orthography, Witsie's Cave, as it is still the most widely known version and is the spelling used in the heritage declaration. However, when referring to the *Morena* after which the cave is named, the preferred orhography of Oetsi will be used.

(e.g., Moshoeshoe, Sekonyela, Mohlomi, Mantsopa and Oetsi). The combination of the above elements inspired spiritual individuals and groups to pilgrimage to the sites to reconnect with their ancestors, undergo spiritual cleansing, undergo training to become spiritual healers, and ask for guidance and forgiveness.

The Mohokare Valley was historically part of the fertile Caledon River frontier between the Free State Boer Republic and the Basotho people under Moshoeshoe I (Nel, 2014). It is also known as 'The Conquered Territory', referring to the armed expulsion of Basotho across the Caledon in the wars of 1865-8 (Coplan, 2001: 83). After the wars, the area became active in farming up until 1994 when pilgrimage to the sites resurfaced in what Coplan (2001: 87) called 'spiritual reclaiming of the territory'. The reoccupation of this territory demonstrates the diffusion of culture, language, socio-politics, and physical contact that are in itself an extension of border theory (in Border Studies) from geographical and cultural perspectives (Kurki, 2014: 1058-1059).

From that period (1994) onwards, the area became a locus of complex dynamics and many stories of contestation or ownership, crime, permanent occupation of the sites, and contestation caused by different beliefs sharing one space. These dynamics attracted many scholars interested in establishing the cultural significance of the area as well as the historical and heritage values attached to the sites. As mentioned before, several research projects have been undertaken on the dynamics of the sacred sites of the Mohokare Valley that recognised the vulnerability of these sites because they fall outside of the protections of the formal heritage sector. Amongst the notable studies are, inter alia, Coplan's (2003)[3] work on popular religious pilgrimage to the sites, Colman's[4] (2009) Master's mini-dissertation on the dynamics of religious traditional, heritage and land with Modderpoort (Mantsopa-aligned sacred sites) as the case study, the edited volume by Post, Nel and Van Beek (2014) entitled, *Sacred spaces and contested identities*, Cawood's (2010) *Oral Histories and the*

[3] Coplan, D.B. 2003. Land from the Ancestors: Popular religious pilgrimage along the South Africa-Lesotho border. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29(4): 977-993.

[4] Colman, M. 2009. *Religious traditions, heritage and land: Dynamics in making a heritage site with contested claims to land a tourist attraction. A case study of Modderpoort*. Master of Arts (Heritage Studies). University of the Witwatersrand. Johannesburg.

cultural uses of clay at sacred sites in the Free State (commissioned by National Heritage Council), Du Plooy's (2016) PhD thesis titled, *Pilgrimage to Sacred Sites in the Eastern Free State,* the PhD thesis titled, *A Survey of Sacred Sites and the Construction of sacredness of space in the Free State* by Moepholi (2016) and Ngobese's (2018) PhD thesis, *Protest and identity in the context of sacred spaces: An Historical appraisal of three selected sacred sites of the Eastern Free State*.

The studies above reveal this area's complex historical layers, characterised by violent conflicts that took place in the 1800s between the British and Basotho, the Basotho and the Boers, and the Boers and the British. The most notable of the battles was the 1852 battle of *Tihela,* where the Basotho defeated the British over land and livestock (Gill, 1997: 96). In 1856, conflict ensued over land and livestock between the Boers and the Makholokoe where the Boers attacked and killed the Makholokoe in the cave known as Witsie's Cave where they had sought refuge (Ntlhabo, 2011). At the turn of the century, the South African War (1899-1902) took place, which is commemorated by the Surrender Hill Monument around 11 kilometres outside Clarens, located near the intersection leading to Braamhof farm close to the Motouleng Cave. The 19th century was a period of political volatility in the Free State. Within this area and historical context, one finds accounts of the leadership of Queen Manthatisi, the regent of the Batlokoa on behalf of her young son, Sekonyela, the skilled diplomacy of Moshoeshoe I, who unified the Basotho nation, the prophet Mantsopa who settled at Modderpoort after expulsion by Moshoeshoe I and the political tactics of President Brand of the Orange Free State Boer Republic (Ellenberger, 1997; Eloff, 1979; Gill, 1997; Lelimo, 1998a; 1998b).

Within this complex and volatile context, the sacred sites of the Mohokare Valley are situated. The cultural significance of the sites, as reflected in the various studies, is intimately linked with the rich history and heritage of the area. However, some of these sites do not form part of the national or provincial heritage estates as they remain without formal declaration or management protocols. Of the Mohokare sacred sites, only Mantsopa at Modderpoort (first declared under the National Monuments Act of 1968) and Witsie's Cave have been successfully declared provincial heritage sites under the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA). Mautse (sacred valley) and Motouleng (sacred cave) are not formally declared. They were informally 'declared'

as heritage sites just prior to 2010 to coincide with the FIFA Soccer World Cup held in South Africa in an attempt to attract international visitors to the sites. This informal 'declaration' constituted the erection of faux sandstone gates at the entrance of Motouleng and Mautse at the behest of the then MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in the Free State Provincial Government.

The process of declaring Mautse and Motouleng as heritage sites were stalled in 2016 when consent could not be obtained from the owners of the properties surrounding the two sites for the declaration as required by Section 27 Subsection 8 of the Act (NHRA). Mautse and Motouleng reflect the complex dynamics of informal sacred sites and the complexities surrounding the issue of access of pilgrims vis-à-vis land and private property. As a result, the complexities surrounding the sites persisted, leading to the closure of Mautse in 2016, when the farm on which it is situated came under new ownership. This far-reaching event marked the beginning of the negotiations and interventions involving the site users, property owners, entities such as the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority, the Commission protecting the Rights of Cultural, Linguistic and Religious Communities as well as the Human Rights Commission. Working as the researcher in the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, I was roped in to facilitate the negotiations and interventions and report to the above entities. This is how this study came about, as I found it to be a research topic warranting academic research. In 2020, in a devastating turn of events during the commission of this research, Motouleng was also closed down. The Police forcefully ejected residents and pilgrims at the beginning of the hard lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the structures within Motouleng Cave were destroyed by fire rendering it uninhabitable.[5]

Certain factors have been identified as constraining the protection and management of the Mohokare sacred sites. Heritage management in South Africa largely conforms

[5] The exact origin of the fire was never investigated, and the origins thereof remains the subject of rumour, but arson is suspected. However, due to the sensitivity of the case and potential legal implications, I refrained from sharing the nature of the rumours and the sources thereof.

to Western management models and practices as they represent industry standards. However, the sacred sites in question represent local African belief systems. Therefore, there is tension between Western and African approaches to heritage. In addition, South African heritage legislation does not explicitly mention sacred sites as part of the national estate nor provides a role for Marena (indigenous leaders) to play in managing cultural heritage. Aspects of intangible heritage are limited to only those places with oral history or living heritage attachments. However, this does not make provision for sacred places or aspects with spiritual beliefs attached, which the current UNESCO definition of heritage provides for. Furthermore, there is no legislation designed specifically for the protection of a sacred site in South Africa.

Section 46 of the NHRA 1999 states that the minister of Arts and Culture (now Sport, Arts and Culture) "may, on the advice of SAHRA and after consultation with the Minister of Finance, purchase or, subject to compensation, expropriate any property for conservation or any other purpose under this Act if the purpose is a public purpose or is in the public interest". This is echoed in Section 25 (2) of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, which stipulates that "property may be expropriated only in terms of law of general application (a) for a public purpose or in the public interest; and (b) subject to compensation, the amount of which have either been agreed to by those affected or decided or approved by a court". Under Subsection (4), the public interest is further defined to include "the nation's commitment to land reform, and to reforms to bring about equitable access to all South Africa's natural resources". In the absence of explicit mention of sacred sites in both the Constitution and the NHRA, it is not yet clear whether informal use as a sacred site constitutes 'public purpose' or 'in the public interest', which in the Constitution are directly linked to land reform.

The legislative lines are further blurred given the privacy clause of the Implications of Owning a National Heritage Site (published by SAHRA). Herein it states that owners of the properties where declared heritage sites are located have no legal obligation to allow the public access to their properties. In the case of informal heritage sites, such as Mautse and Motouleng, the owners of the private properties on which these informal and undeclared sites are found have the legal right to prohibit entry to their properties and, by implication, also the sacred sites. The issue of access is illustrated

by the case of the Wesleyan Church school hall, where the ANC was founded in 1912. Just before the centenary celebration of the African National Congress (ANC) in 2012, the Free State Provincial Government had to pay R15 million for the founding venue that was used as a panel-beating enterprise at the time and was valued at about R3 million. The then-owner took advantage of the urgency of the matter and stuck to his demand (Letsoalo, 2011).

Another constraint is the contestation of ownership. Cawood and Moephuli (2014) documented the tendency amongst certain pilgrims to reside at the sites on a more permanent basis, which influenced site dynamics leading to contestation and claims of ownership as well as introducing criminal elements linked to economic activities commonly found in any settlement or more urban space. At the same time, many of these sites transect multiple privately owned properties, which led to competing interests. The property owners who owned the land, which served as the access points to the sites (e.g., Mautse and Motouleng), enforced an access fee and ticketing system. However, the property owners on whose property the actual sacred sites were located did not share in the proceeds. Other ways of enforcing ownership included the demarcation of routes as well as evicting site users.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The various research projects on the Mohokare Valley sacred sites have found that these sacred sites are spiritually mandated to specifically address the cultural and spiritual needs of South African communities, particularly communities adhering to African traditional beliefs and religions (Moephuli, 2016: 222). They are also living heritage sites closely intertwined with cultural and customary practices of the local indigenous people of the area, and even for groups exogenous to the region, who identify with the cultural and spiritual history and symbols of these sites (Du Plooy, 2016: 126). Cawood (2010) defined the sacred sites of Mohokare valley as rich repositories of tangible and intangible heritage, as well as rich repositories of indigenous knowledge and collective cultural memory.

While the Mohokare sacred sites are valuable heritage repositories, they are also subject to complex socio-spatial dynamics. Firstly, the complexities are derived from

their informal heritage status (they were unofficially ‘declared’ heritage sites in 2009). These became what Smith and Waterton (2009: 27) labelled “inherited non-heritage” in the formal heritage sector, where the focus is on Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD). This is part of the top-down approach this study addresses in Chapter 4.

It has been challenging to manage and protect such sacred sites as heritage sites within the formal heritage sector, as the NHRA 25 of 1999 does not refer to the notion of sacredness at all. From an Afrocentric perspective, informing the theoretical framework for this study, the idea of ‘heritage’ has always been associated with “places that were held sacred by local communities” (Mahachi and Kamuhangire, 2008: 43). The sacredness of the sites is derived from spirituality that is part of ancestral veneration. Spirituality falls within the realms of the sky, the earth, and the water below, meaning the sites are integrally tied to the natural environment (Kalu, 2000: 56). However, as noted by Leitao (2017: 195-198), Eurocentric management models for heritage have drawn an artificial line between cultural heritage and natural heritage where two separate international professional bodies are managing cultural and natural heritage in the form of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for cultural heritage and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for natural heritage.

A further complication is that these sites are located on private properties, sometimes spanning multiple private properties simultaneously, creating issues around accessibility for site users, preservation, protection, and management. Chapter 2 discusses the complex nature of the contestations between the notion of private ownership of land vis-à-vis the desire of site users to access these sacred spaces, the competition among the different religious groups that use the sites as well as the conflict over resources that led to the transformation of the sites into economic hubs with the appearance of permanent settlements, which, in turn, created further complications in terms of private property ownership (Nel, 2014: 135-146).

The current owner of *Sekonjela* farm (within which part of Mautse is situated) also mentioned a criminal element at the site during my visit on 24 February 2017. The owner revealed that the site had become a hiding place for criminals fleeing law enforcement. There was alleged illegal dagga and liquor trafficking (evident from beer

bottles that were confiscated from the site) and looting of livestock from neighbouring farms. This situation was also confirmed in a meeting attended by representatives of site users held with the Commissioner from the Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission) and the Free State Provincial Heritage Authority in Ficksburg on 24 November 2016. The representatives (site users) agreed that people indeed went to the site with ulterior motives. These activities led to contestations regarding the true sacredness of the site. This situation eventually culminated in the sudden closure of Mautse, eviction of pilgrims and the demolition of permanent structures, including the church/temple built by Mr Moeketsi Molaodi, who claimed to have been instructed to build it by the *Badimo* (ancestors). The closure of Mautse in 2016 foreshadowed the closure, eviction of pilgrims and destruction of Motouleng in 2020.

Based on the above challenges and motivated by personal, academic, and professional reasons, and also being a heritage practitioner working in the provincial government department mandated to address the issues of heritage in the Free State Province, I felt the need to explore solutions to revive and safeguard these sacred sites before crucial intangible heritage is lost to posterity. The quest for finding a practical solution to enhance the sustainability of these sites involved developing a suitable alternative theoretical framework and research methodology for studying informal heritage sites of this nature.

Apart from the reasoning above, further justification for this research relates to my own positionality and socio-cultural location in relation to the Mohokare sacred sites. I see myself as an insider in this study, sharing in the ideologies, beliefs, and experiences of the participants (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009: 56). This is what, in terms of the theory of Decoloniality, would be called ‘dwelling in the borders’ (Mignolo, 2000: xv). I also see myself as navigating between the sacred and the profane in the sense that as a descendant of the *Bakoena ba Monaheng ba Mankopane a Mathunya*, I have ancestral links to the sites. One of the sacred places at Mautse (sacred valley) is Ha Mankopane’s Cave. Mankopane is the mother of *Ngaka* (Doctor), Mohlomi the Seer. The cave is associated with the Bakoena clan as a place where they connect with *Badimo*. The same applies to Mantsopa’s Cave found at Modderpoort. Mantsopa is also from the Bakoena clan and is the niece of Mohlomi. As will be explained in

Chapter 5, as head of the Ntlhabo family, I am expected to guide the family in spiritual rituals. In conducting this research, I was aware that I, as an insider, had to be reflexive in dealing with data collection and analysis to avoid any preconceived notions or emotions emanating from my prior knowledge and experience that could potentially compromise the trustworthiness of the research (Smith, 1999). In contrast, by virtue of my profession as a heritage professional and scholar, I have a vested interest in documenting and preserving the tangible and intangible heritage associated with these sites. From an academic point of view, I used Witsie's Cave as a case study for my master's degree.

Through its focus on Participatory Action Research (PAR), this study wanted to contribute to the assimilation of issues of African Spirituality into the South African heritage sector by preserving the intangible heritage associated with the African spirituality tied to these sacred sites. I am employed at the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation as a Heritage Researcher to facilitate the transformation of the heritage landscape in the Free State by documenting previously neglected elements of heritage. I am working closely with *Dingaka* (healers) and individuals interested in changing the course of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. The Free State heritage landscape is characterised in part by colonial and apartheid legacies offset by a growing focus on sites and memorials that embrace the ruling African National Congress and its liberation heritage. The Free State heritage landscape and administration, including the current status of the sacred sites alluded to in this study, is discussed in greater detail in Sections 2.7 and 2.8 of Chapter 2.

The study, therefore, navigated between Eurocentric heritage and heritage management models in the form of static buildings and structures that must be preserved for future generations, while the sacred sites represent living heritage sites that continue to evolve and exist as part of living culture (Butterly and Pepper, 2017: 1315). Thus, this research navigated between the preservation of sacred knowledge or gnosis inherent to pilgrims and spiritual leaders called to these sites that cannot be tested through scientific processes and the profane elements of formal heritage. At the same time, it attempted to formalise the Mohokare Valley sacred sites as important aspects of heritage promoted through spiritual tourism.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

This study explored the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites in terms of the formal heritage sector in South Africa as guided by the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) 25 of 1999. This Act does not explicitly mention sacred sites as part of the national estate. Aspects of intangible heritage are limited to only those places with oral history or living heritage attachments. However, this does not make provision for sacred places or aspects of spirituality and pilgrimage, such as found at the sacred sites associated with the Mohokare Valley, although the Mantsopa-linked heritage sites at Modderpoort and Witsie's Cave are declared provincial heritage sites. However, the sacred valley of Mautse and the sacred cave of Motouleng are informal heritage sites without protection or management protocols. Where such sites are located within and transecting the boundaries of private properties, the accessibility of the sites becomes challenging. The tendency of certain pilgrims to settle at the sites on a more permanent basis, as documented by Cawood and Moephuli (2014: 27-39), led to contestations and claims of ownership, further complicating the tension between sacred and profane dynamics at these sites. Such competing claims of 'ownership' by more permanent settlers were a key factor that led to the eviction of pilgrims, the demolition of permanent structures and the closure of the Mautse sacred site.

The primary objective of this study was two-pronged. On the one hand, the study aimed to explore the challenges facing Mohokare sacred sites in the formal heritage sector by applying Postcolonial Theory and Decoloniality from an Afrocentric perspective, carrying the critical emancipatory potential to understand the complex and competing dynamics at play. On the other hand, and in line with Participatory Action Research, this research also aimed to propose a feasible, negotiated integrated management plan, which could be applied to sites that may allow dormant sites such as Mautse and Motouleng to reopen.

In order to meet the above primary objective, the following secondary objectives were set:

- To provide a detailed site description and understanding of the complex

dynamics of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites (Chapter 2);

- To provide an overview of the heritage landscape within which this research is situated, detailing the complex interplay between the sacred and profane tensions found at these sites (Chapter 3);
- To conceptually link Postcolonial Theory, Decoloniality and Afrocentricity to offer an original theoretical framework for this research (Chapter 4);
- To apply Participatory Action Research (PAR) as research design so that research may lead to practical solutions and a proposed integrated management plan for the sacred sites in question (Chapter 5);
- To unpack the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites in terms of the heritage landscape and theoretical framework (Chapter 6);
- To indicate the most significant aspects of the sacred and profane dynamics at the sacred sites in question and to proffer an integrated management plan for these sacred sites in line with the principles of Participatory Action Research where research is intended to lead to practical solutions (Chapter 7).

This study explored the challenges faced by these sites in relation to the formal heritage sector. This was done by applying Participatory Action Research. However, this study also aimed to make practical changes by facilitating negotiations between the property owners who have closed the sacred sites of Mautse and Motouleng located within their properties and the site users to avoid acrimonious and lengthy legal processes, as was the case between the Anglican Church and the Bataung Community over Modderpoort farm, where the Mantsopa sacres sites are located, which lasted for more than 20 years (see Chapter 2).

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

The main research question is: What are the challenges derived from the tension between the sacred and profane dynamics facing the Mohokare sacred sites in the formal heritage sector as explored through the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework (ADTF) and what are the potential solutions offered by an integrated management plan developed through the application of Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR)?

The main research question is supported by the following sub-questions:

- What are the complex dynamics of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites derived from the tension between the sacred and profane?
- What are the characteristics of the heritage landscape within which this research is situated detailing the complex interplay between the sacred and profane tensions found at these sites?
- How can Postcolonial Theory, Decoloniality and Afrocentricity be conceptually linked to offer an original theoretical framework for this research?
- Can Participatory Action Research (PAR) as research design and the proposed integrated management plan be applied to lead to practical solutions for the sacred sites in question?
- What are the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites in terms of the heritage landscape and unpacked through the theoretical framework?
- What are the most significant aspects of the sacred and profane dynamics at the sacred sites in question?
- How can the principles of Participatory Action Research be incorporated into an integrated management plan for these sacred sites where research is intended to lead to practical solutions?

1.6 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Several assumptions underpin this research. Firstly, it is assumed that colonial legacies had a detrimental effect on the development of Africans due to the neglect of indigeneity and the environment, the abandonment of the sacredness of human life that is inherent to African indigenous leadership systems, the prioritisation of European languages over African indigenous languages as well as the disavowal of African spirituality which entrenched Eurocentric notions of private land ownership for commercial gain at the cost of African spiritual connectivity to land (Loomba, 2015; Sibani, 2018, Appiah, 1992; Boisselle, 2016). The above has led to tensions between Western heritage management models and sacred sites linked to African spiritual belief systems. As a result, many postcolonial societies are still influenced by imported systems and values. At the same time, postcolonial societies still practice their

traditional belief systems, which created hybrid and syncretised societies that cannot be ignored when embarking on a decolonisation project.

Secondly, it is further assumed that sacred sites are considered a special kind of heritage site and should be clearly described in legislation for protection. This argument is informed by the complexities surrounding the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, which the study assumes are not addressed by current heritage legislation, policies, or praxis. Among the four sacred sites that form part of this study, two (Mantsopa and Witsies Cave) are declared provincial heritage sites and protected in terms of the NHRA of 1999. Sacred sites have been characterised as evolving and part of living heritage in cases where they are actively used for pilgrimage and ritual, while the heritage sites described in South African heritage legislation seem to be static (Cawood, 2014; Butterly and Pepper, 2017: 1315).

Thirdly, applying Participatory Action Research (PAR) as research methodology is considered a suitable approach to study the research problem empirically and bring about practical change concerning the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. Smith (1999) has noticed how urgent the need is to decolonise research methodologies and researchers by capacitating them to work with and for indigenous people using indigenous methodologies. In PAR, when participants become partners with a researcher in a research project in their immediate community, research may bring about practical change to real-world problems experienced by the communities involved (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995: 1669).

Fourthly, the challenges faced by the Mohokare Valley sacred sites can also be resolved by reinventing the custodianship of sacred sites through the system of indigenous governance as well as institutionalising African spirituality through a community-based spiritual tourism project that can serve as an educational platform to facilitate future discussions.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study aimed to epistemically decolonise African spirituality and its associated body of knowledge at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites by devising an original

theoretical framework that was conceptually and contextually relevant. The study's theoretical framework was informed by the theories of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality but viewed through the lens of Afrocentricity. Both theoretical bodies seek to redress colonial legacies and imbalances in postcolonial societies imposed through the unilateral imposition of colonial languages and cultures, while meting out punishment to colonial inhabitants for continuing indigenous practices (Amadiume, 2015). Postcolonialism and Decoloniality emerged from the works of Diasporic and Subaltern scholars, with Postcolonial scholars hailing from the Middle East, Caribbean and South Asia such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon and Gayatri Spivak while Walter Mignolo, Enrique Dussel and Catherine Walsh are Decolonial scholars who are associated with Latin America. Both Postcolonial and Decolonial works refer to their location from where either of the fields is based and to which the study's focus is directed. Mignolo's (2011a: 46) argument is that Decoloniality (decolonial thinking) is different from Postcolonial theory or Postcolonial Studies as both are based on French poststructuralism, whereas Decoloniality has a more global approach.

Due to the limitations of Postcolonialism and the broad nature of Decoloniality, the study strategically borrowed concepts from Postcolonialism to broaden the scope of Decoloniality. This study was conducted under the umbrella of Africa Studies with a particular focus on spirituality and culture within a particular African context. However, the study also applied an Afrocentric perspective or Afrocentricity to the theoretical lens. Afrocentricity was introduced as a theory to liberate Africans from the shackles of dominant European social or thought systems by encouraging African people to apply African ideologies, values, spirituality, and rituals when conducting research in Africa, on and for Africans or the African diaspora (Asante, 2000: 50; Asante, 2005: 1-13). In this study, Afrocentricity was applied to Postcolonialism/Decoloniality to respond to the nuances of the unique African context of this research to conceptualise the original conceptual framework called the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Lens.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology was based on Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a research design. PAR in this study was applied from an Afrocentric perspective using African Centred Research (ACR). It was therefore reconceptualised as Afrikana-

Participatory Action Research (APAR). Both PAR and ACR aim to subvert the intellectual, social, and material legacies of colonialism and to position community members or indigenous African people as partners in research, not mere informants. PAR was chosen for its empirical approach and potential to lead to real-world change.

1.9 THE KEY CONCEPTS EMPLOYED IN THIS STUDY

1.9.1 Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity is an ideology that studies ideas, concepts, events, personalities, and political and economic processes from the standpoint of Africans as subjects and not as objects, basing all knowledge on the authentic interrogation of location (Asante, 2009: 1-2). The historian and supporter of “the turn to African roots”, Dr John Henrik Clarke, introduced Afrocentricity, deeming it more appropriate for Black consciousness than the “Afro”-centricity of Asante (Khokholkova, 2016: 123). Afrocentrism radically “advocates for a reconstruction and rewriting of the whole panorama of human history in its account of the origin of mankind” (Onyewuenyi, 1993: 39). However, this study is based on Afrocentricity as it stands for harmonious coexistence of a variety of cultures without the European view being imposed as universal (Chawane, 2016: 83). Afrocentricity was further developed by African feminists such as Chilisa and Ntseane (2009).

1.9.2 Colonialism

Colonialism is described as the process of establishing a new community in a new world where language, cultural values, and trade activities from the colonising country are imposed on the colony. Although Colonialism was formalised during the European conquest of Asian, African or American countries through the imposition of their language and control of land and goods from the 15th to the 18th century, it started as far back as the second century CE when the Roman Empire expanded its span of control from Armenia to the Atlantic. Other notable colonial conquests include the following: when Mongols conquered the Middle East and the East (including China) in the thirteenth century, when the stronger tribes in Mexico subjugated smaller ones to

form the Aztec Empire in the fourteenth century, and when the Vijayanagar and the Ottoman Empire took control of Southern India in the 15th century (Loomba, 2015: 20).

1.9.3 Decoloniality

Decoloniality is a theory that scholars from South or Latin America introduced. It employs border epistemology to liberate Third World countries from the bounds of colonialism, considering diversity and different periods of interference by European countries (Mignolo, 2001: 131). It focuses more on the decolonisation of knowledge while citing communalism as an alternative to capitalism and communism and also urges for returning to the ways of life that Christianity disqualified (Mignolo, 2001: 130 - 133). It aims to re-join the world, intending to be an equal contributor of knowledge that can be exposed to scrutiny and re-evaluation compared to other knowledges of the world. This study presented African spirituality as one such decolonial knowledge.

1.9.4 Post-colonial versus postcolonial

Post-colonial is used in this study as a temporal marker describing a period after independence (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007). However, this period is not generalised in Postcolonial Studies as the term is generally considered to cover the period after the Second World War. However, it may also be extended back to the time of the abolition of slavery as the study's notion of colonisation goes back to the time of the Atlantic Slave Trade, when Africans were captured and taken from Africa to become slaves in America and other parts of the world. 'Postcolonial' is a descriptive term referring to the process of disengagement from the colonial condition by groups or individuals affected by colonialism to become hybridised and diverse communities (Loomba, 2015: 38).

1.9.5 Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is a theory that deals with the after-effects of colonisation on cultures and societies (Ashcroft et al., 2013: 204). In the words of Quayson (2000: 2), Postcolonialism involves the "studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies, as well

as at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after-effects of the colonial Empire". Postcolonialism does not simply seek to tell the story of what happened after decolonisation but seeks a critical perspective on its ongoing, problematic legacy (Butt, 2013). This legacy includes, among other things, occupation and administration of land and heritage interpretation and management, which are the main factors central to the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites of South Africa.

1.9.6 Heritage

Heritage is described as the legacy from the past that includes physical remains (in the form of buildings and structures) but also the intangible aspects of culture such as language, spiritual beliefs, and intangible heritage such as the belief in sacred rivers, groves, forests, or mountains (Ndoro, 2008: 25). From the South African context, heritage covers a wide range of aspects such as sites of cultural practices, buildings housing museums, archives, libraries, language, literature, poetry, storytelling, art, music, drama, festivals, performances and living monuments. Living monuments are realised in the form of the naming of buildings, streets, towns, and places. This has been dominating the heritage landscape in South Africa, with the focus mainly on names linked with the liberation struggle (Marschall, 2010: 22).

1.9.7 Religion and spirituality

Religion and spirituality have been used interchangeably in the social context where, for example, Christians would refer to having a spiritual walk with Jesus where they are fully committed to their Christian religion (Bender, 2007). The two terms are, however, distinct in nature. The word religion is derived from the Latin root, *religio*, which signifies a bond between humanity and some greater-than-human power, while spirituality means 'breath of life' (Hill et al., 2001: 56-57). Spirituality is a consideration of meaning or ultimate purpose, and religion refers to the organised, institutionalised set of beliefs, teachings and practices established to connect groups or individuals to a particular expression of spirituality (Hutt and Robbins, 2003). In addition, African spirituality is based on the belief that there is a supreme being, known amongst the Basotho as *Modimo* (God), who can only be reached through the ancestors (*Badimo*),

believed to walk “beside the living” to guide and protect them. It is based on this belief system on which African Independent Churches that practice African spirituality and Christianity were founded (Lugira, 2009: 17).

1.9.8 Micro sacred sites

Micro sacred sites are places erected for the purpose of memorialising the accidental death of a person or people (Weissera, 2004). Family members of the deceased tend to visit the place to commemorate the day the person or people lost their lives at that place just like they would take a journey to pilgrimage sites. These can be seen as crosses or other signs that are placed on the side of the roads in South Africa. These sites are also known as grassroots memorialisation which is another form of heritage. The study uses ‘micro sacred sites’ and ‘grassroots memorialisation’ interchangeably.

1.9.9 Hybridity

Hybridity is a condition where people’s lives are affected by their ways of life, their beliefs, and how they interpret their culture and art using foreign languages and cultures. It also refers to a condition guided by modern technology and informed by cultural differences that coexist within certain boundaries and beyond borderlines. For Africans, this state came about when they were taken from Africa to work as slaves, interacted with the colonisers, and migrated to other parts of the world due to economic and political diaspora (Bhabha, 1994: 5-9).

Based on a postcolonial description:

> *Hybridity is a notion that indigenous people are, through various means, civilised, educated and assimilated into the colonizer’s culture while at the same time relegated to a state of perpetual otherness that allows their continued subjugation (Gibb, 2019: 236).*

Creolisation and syncretism have previously been used as synonyms of hybridity, meaning mixture, even though the analytical meaning of the terms may vary at times.

1.9.10 Creolisation

Creolisation describes the linguistic blending of dominant and subdominant cultures. It is a state where a person or people of foreign origins have assumed African citizenship and adapted to their new surroundings. Challis (2012) expands the notion of creolisation by stating that it can be realised when new identities are formed leading to a common language and based on objects and symbols that are exchanged among groups of people. An appropriate example would be miscegenation of the different clans that formed the people of the Maloti-Drakensburg frontier such as the Khoisan and Bantu speaking people that inter-married during the 19th Century.

1.9.11 Syncretism

According to Mokotso (2015: 158), syncretism comes from the Greek etymology *snkratein,* which means pouring together. This can symbolically be pouring two liquids into one container to form a mixture. Syncretism can be interpreted as a second level of creolisation. At this level, a person adapts to new surroundings and starts to be fully immersed in new belief systems and ritual practices especially when people identify elements in the new belief system that are similar to their own, meaning they come into contact and may adopt new beliefs while integrating other elements from their own culture (Steward, 2014: 1-15; Leopold and Jensen, 2005).

1.8.12 Space versus place

Tuan (1979: 409) associates space with the unthinkable vastness of the physical world. A place needs to be understood as more than a piece of land that carries a greater emotional charge than just a location or functional node. In simple terms, a place is a space that has meaning attached to it. Once the space has been occupied or worked on, it becomes a place. Places are spaces within which meaning can be nurtured. According to Asante (1990: 5), Afrocentrists should maintain inquiry rooted in a strict interpretation of place, as all knowledge results from an occasional encounter with a place.

1.9.13 Ngaka

While the Zulu term “Sangoma” has been widely used to refer to healers and diviners, amongst the Basotho, a healer and diviner is known as *Ngaka*. *Ngaka (*plural: *Dingaka)* is a Sesotho word for traditional medical practitioner. *Dingaka* are trained to heal people’s physical or spiritual illnesses (or, in some instances, dealing with both). In some cases, a person may be a *Ngaka* through inheritance, but in other cases, one can receive a calling through dreams or visions (Mbiti, 1991: 155). The term ‘traditional healers’ has been widely used for the people employing indigenous African ways of healing. Even though no derogatory connotations are attached to the term traditional doctor, and many people in the healing practice are still comfortable with it, this study preferred *Ngaka*, a general term either in Western or African practice.

1.9.14 Morena

Morena (*Marena* - plural) is the term preferred in this study over terms such as headman, chief or traditional leader/s because of the contested Nhlapho Commission Report that is believed to have failed in restoring the institution of the Indigenous Governance System through its work (Peires, 2014: 17). *Morena* refers to the customary leader whose position is passed down from one generation to the other. This is the institutionalised system that is governed through three levels: *Letona* (clan head), *Morena wa sebaka* (village chief), *Morena e Moholo* (King).

1.9.15 Indigenous leaders

The term ‘indigenous leaders’ is also used interchangeably with *Marena* in the place of traditional leaders because of their historical responsibility as the custodians of the land and the mediators between the living and the *Badimo* (ancestors). Indigenous leaders were also effective in dealing with public administration but were affected by colonial conquest, “neo-colonialism, global capitalism and having Western organisational management/leadership practices” that were imposed on them (Basheka, 2015: 457).

1.9.16 African indigenous governance system

The term 'African indigenous governance system' is also preferred instead of traditional leadership system. This refers to the systems of governance that had been practised in Africa before colonialism and not the customary variant adopted during colonial rule that was transformed and weakened to suit the needs of colonial rulers when the customary leaders became the agents of and dependent on colonial administration for resources (Beall and Ngonyama, 2009: 8). This system has been present in most notable West and sub-Saharan African nations long before colonial disruptions (Peires, 2014: 8-11).

1.9.17 Sacred indigenous leadership

This study recognised sacred indigenous leaders who did not inherit their positions through a blood line but ended up as sacred indigenous leaders because of their spiritual powers in guiding their communities through rainmaking and fertility rituals. Queen Modjadji of the Balobedu nation, *Morena* Oetsi of the Makholokoe and *Morena* Mohlomi of the Bakoena clan, are among the sacred indigenous leaders.

1.9.18 Knowledge versus gnosis

Knowledge is derived from the process of knowing something. It is based on three conditions: the truth, belief, and justification conditions, which can be subjected to scientific testing (Bolisani and Bratianu, 2018). Gnosis is linked to the ancient Greek word "*Gnosk*o", meaning to know. The word gnosis was used by Mudimbe (1988) in his work on African philosophy and in this sense describes alternate ways of knowing the world beyond scientific testing. Gnosis also refers to esoteric knowledge that is understood and procedurally transmitted by a few chosen people.

1.9.19 African gnoseology

Mignolo (2000) developed gnoseology as a discourse about gnosis. African gnoseology then refers to African knowledge acquired and interpreted through mystic contemplation. Unlike epistemology, it is not subjected to scientific analysis and

verification. African gnoseology is preferred in this study for dealing with the displaced knowledge inherent in African spirituality that is venerated at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites.

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was **empirical** in that it sought to document the heritage and how it has evolved over the last decade associated with the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. It was also intent on finding practical solutions to the problems surrounding Mohokare Valley sacred sites within the formal heritage sector. **Philosophically**, the study made conceptual links between Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Afrocentricity. Guided by the theories above, the study contributed to the existing body of knowledge in the fields of Africa(n) and Heritage Studies by shedding light on how sacred sites that are not officially recognised as heritage sites or as repositories of living heritage can be formally protected and promoted as spiritual tourist attractions that could also generate economic spinoffs for its local communities in South Africa. It could also provide a means to manage informal sites where declaration could be impossible or difficult.

This research was also designed to **contribute to policies**. This can be done through the amendment of current policies, the introduction of new ones or the reinterpretation of existing legislation and policy frameworks. Through the investigation and application of best practices from other countries that faced similar challenges related to disputes of indigenous land rights, the study suggests ways to address disputes to land rights and access to sacred sites.

The documentation of sacred sites in the body of literature will also aid in proposing the formal platform through which government policies governing cultural heritage, land reforms and environmental management can start influencing one another. This study was conducted under the umbrella of Africa Studies, which advocates for the scholarly centring of African culture. However, at the centre of this study's focus was the attempt to redress past imbalances and appreciate anew the values of African indigenous religions, symbols, motifs, rituals, signs, and language as a commitment to a new Africana narrative (Pellerin, 2012: 151).

Through the application of PAR, this study also developed an integrated management plan for these sites so that the research may lead to practical solutions. The integrated management plan can be used as a catalyst for facilitating the reopening of the closed sites as well as recommending it for all sacred sites in the Free State.

1.11 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This chapter provided an overview of the study and the study parameters. **Chapter 2** provides a background to the geographical setting, history and nature of the Mohokare Valley, and the four sacred sites located in the area. **Chapter 3** provides the literature review related to the heritage landscape, covering the global, regional, and local heritage contexts and policy frameworks, the interplay of heritage and spiritual tourism and notable case studies informing this research.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the theoretical framework for this research set against a brief critical overview of colonialism and the conceptual roots of Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Afrocentricity. The limitations of Postcolonialism as a dominant theory in Africa(n) Studies are also unpacked. This research attempted to overcome these limitations by merging concepts borrowed from Postcolonialism, Decoloniality (both focusing on decolonisation) and Afrocentricity to create a unique theoretical lens and novel empirical method of decolonisation based on African values and principles presented as the theoretical lens of Afrikana-Decoloniality.

Chapter 5 deals with Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the research methodology applied in this study. Similar to the theoretical framework, the research methodology was also applied based on an Afrocentric paradigm. Therefore, Participatory Action Research evolved into Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR). In **Chapter 6**, the research data collected through focus groups, interviews, photographs, observation, and other appropriate methods are presented and interpreted through the theoretical lens, while **Chapter 7** concludes the thesis by summarising the research findings, describing the limitations that were encountered, explains the practical, policy and scholarly recommendations, provides a critical self-reflection as well as future action plans of this study. This chapter concludes by offering

an integrated management plan for the sites in question as tested on Witsie's Cave as a case study.

CHAPTER 2
THE MOHOKARE VALLEY AND SACRED SITES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The area west of the Mohokare (Caledon) River that separates Lesotho and the Free State Province of South Africa has also been called 'the Heartland', 'Caledon Valley', and 'The Conquered Territory'. It was known as 'the Heartland' because it is situated in the heart of the interior, far from the coastal areas of the Cape and Natal, and for its offering of water that nourished the fertile soil and security for its settlers. It is one area that has multiple layers of history and heritage imprinted by the Ama-Zulu, the Boers, Basotho, and Batswana groups from the times of the Difaqane wars of the 1820s, the Great Trek of the Voortrekkers (Boers) of the 1830s, and the Basotho-Boer Wars of the late 1800s. These historical events shaped and reshaped 'The Conquered Territory' until the borders between Lesotho and South Africa were fixed to what they are today (Ndlovu, 2013: 160).

The Mohokare Valley sacred sites form part of this area's rich history that has been contested from many different vantage points. This chapter provides the historical background, the geographical setting of the Mohokare Valley as well as brief descriptions of the sacred sites located in the area. It also summarises some of the studies conducted on the sites, either as institutional projects or academic studies. It revisits the legislation governing the sites in South Africa, revealing site status in terms of grading and declaration as per the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999. It also provides an insight into pre-colonial natural sacred sites in the area.

2.2 HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Mohokare Valley is the region located west of the Mohokare (Caledon) River in the Free State Province of South Africa. 'Mohokare' and 'Caledon' are the names commonly used for the river forming a border between the Free State Province of South Africa and Lesotho. *Morena* Mathealira Seeiso (Maseru, 27/08/2014) revealed that the original name of Mohokare was Phuthi (meaning Duiker), with its tributary in

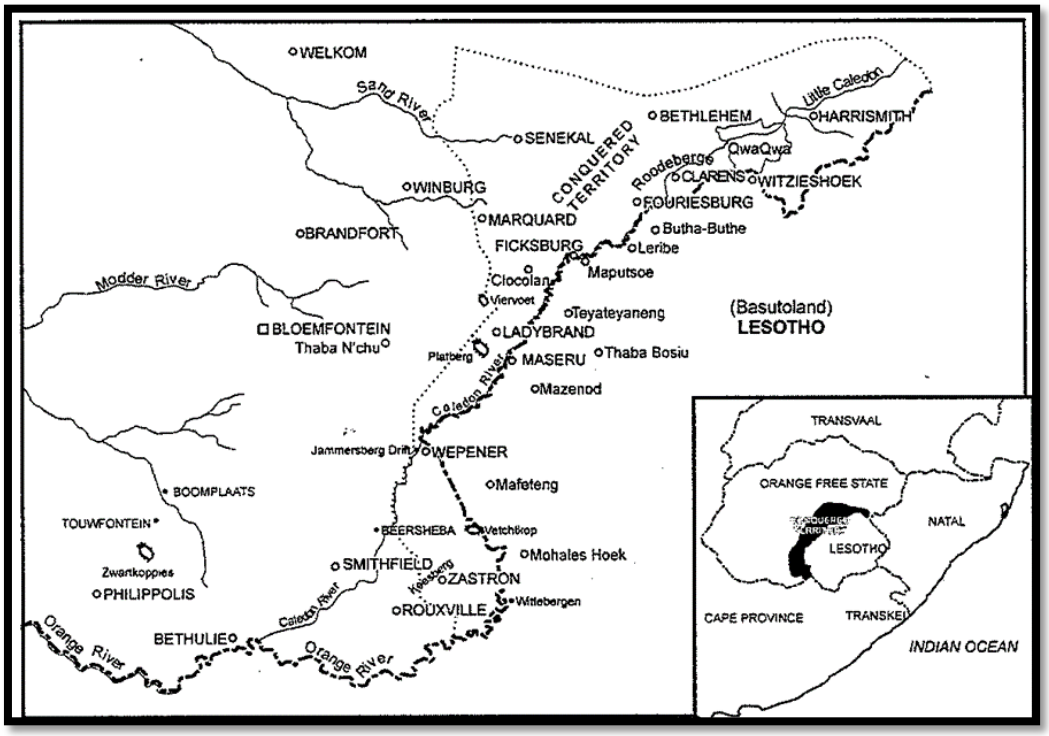
Lesotho, known as Phuthiatsana (female/small Duiker). This name stopped being used when the name Caledon was introduced. The name Caledon is derived from Alexander Caledon, a British commander stationed near Smithfield. This is because the grave of Alexander Caledon is located near a point where the Caledon River joins the Senqu-Orange River near Bethulie (in the south of the Free State Province of South Africa) (Venter, 2014: 9). The other name associated with Mohokare was Lisonein which came from the French Missionaries who worked in Lesotho (Dreyer, 2001: 71). The river came to be known as Mohokare in 1849 when the Warden Line marking the boundary between the Free State and Lesotho was drawn at the time when Moshoeshoe I questioned how a border could be drawn on his land (*Moo Ka Hare ho naha yaka ke moedi?)* (Coplan, 2001: 83). The river is about 200 kilometres long and has its origin flowing from Mont-Aux-Source (French for Mountain of Sources) in the Maluti-Drakensburg-Ukwahlamba Mountain range that forms the borders between Lesotho, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal.

The region transected by the Mohokare (Caledon) River is historically part of the fertile Caledon River frontier between the Free State Boer Republic and the Basotho people under Moshoeshoe I (Nel, 2014). It is also known as 'The Conquered Territory', referring to the armed expulsion of the Basotho across the Caledon River into what is today Lesotho because of three Basotho-Boer wars of 1865-8 (Coplan, 2001: 83). There are numerous sacred sites found in this region: Mantsopa, Mautse, Motouleng and Monontsha sacred sites.

The area was characterised by battles over its fertile land, cattle raids, and the expansion of sovereignties of both the Basotho and the Boer Republic of the Orange Free State. The battles involved the Boers and Basotho. The latter felt that the increasing number of Boers in the area would prevent the Basotho King's desire to reclaim this territory west of the Caledon for his growing nation. This led to several treaties signed between Boer and Basotho through British mediation. The Napier Treaty (1843) was the result of mediation between the Boers and Basotho by Cape Governor Sir George Napier, who attempted to resolve the conflicts by drawing a borderline, the Napier Line, demarcating the territory between the two nations. Through this treaty, the Basotho gained property rights over the towns of Smithfield, Rouxville, Zastron, Dewetsdorp, Wepener, Hobhouse, Ladybrand, Clocolan and

Ficksburg. This arrangement was, however, short-lived (Eloff, 1979, Lelimo, 1998a; 1998b).

In 1848, Moshoeshoe I complained about Boers infringing on his territory between the Caledon and Orange Rivers. Richard Southey, secretary and confidant of Harry Smith, attended to the matter and amended the borderline (also known as the Southey Line), this time leaving Smithfield, Rouxville, Zastron and Wepener outside Basotho territory. Moshoeshoe did not agree to the new borderline. To satisfy all parties, Sir Harry Smith instructed Major Warden to negotiate with Moshoeshoe. In 1849, under immense pressure from Warden, Moshoeshoe agreed to the new border arrangements as demarcated by the Warden Line. Under this agreement, Basotho territory included Zastron, Wepener, Ladybrand, Thaba Nchu, Clocolan, Excelsior, Winburg, Marquard, Ficksburg and Fouriesburg. The Warden Line did not resolve the conflicts over territory as Moshoeshoe's subjects continued to occupy areas demarcated for Boers, with continued livestock encroachment, violence, and border creep (Eloff, 1979: 6-10). From the beginning of the 20th century, the area was characterised by numerous conflicts between the farm owners and Basotho, who were said to be trespassing on the farms (Coplan, 2003: 981). The map below shows the Mohokare Valley with towns east and west of the Mohokare River.



Map 1: Mohokare Valley map reproduced from 'the river runs through it' (Coplan, 2001)

Coplan (2003: 981) believed that towards the end of the 20th century, the Basotho came to symbolically reoccupy “the so-called Conquered Territory” in the form of pilgrimage and temporary sojourns at the sacred sites spread along the Mohokare River. He interpreted the pilgrimage as a way of reclaiming the land that *Morena* Moshoeshoe I (founder of the Basotho nation) lost during the colonial era when it was distributed to white farmers without the consent of the Basotho or even their trusted French missionary advisors.

2.3 MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES

2.3.1 Mantsopa

2.3.1.1 Mantsopa sacred site

The Mantsopa sacred sites are located at St. Augustine’s Priory, the Anglican Church Mission Station at Modderpoort near Ladybrand (Cawood, 2014). The broader site is associated with Anna Mantsopa Makhetha, a prophet, rainmaker, healer, and advisor of Moshoeshoe I. The area of Modderpoort is significant for numerous stakeholders with different links to the site (Cawood, 2010: 122). This site is a popular place of pilgrimage for churches such as the Zionist Christian Church and Apostolic Faith Churches, as well as individual people. For Mantsopa’s followers, the site is important due to the presence of the spirit of Mantsopa (Cawood, 2010: 121).

The sacred sites associated with Mantsopa at St Augustine’s Priory at Modderpoort consist of the following: the Rose Chapel (also known as Mantsopa’s Cave), Mantsopa’s grave, located amongst the graves of the Anglican Brothers who founded St Augustine’s Mission Station in the area of the cemetery historically reserved for white people, and Mantsopa’s Spring. St Augustine’s Priory is currently operated as the St Augustine’s Resort and Conference Centre with self-catering facilities for people who visit the area, whether for pilgrimage, research, or tourism purposes. Mantsopa’s Spring lies to the north of St Augustine’s main complex. It is closer to the area that is arguably the former settlement of Mantsopa, located at the south-eastern side of Spitskop, standing approximately 500 metres west of the priory. This place is not visited as much as the Cave Church (Mantsopa’s Church/Rose Chapel) and grave,

which are revered by the followers of Mantsopa, other African traditional church members such as the Zion Christian Church and the Anglican Church (Cawood, 2010: 127-132).

Image 1: The purported site of Mantsopa's initial settlement at the south-eastern side of Spitskop mountain (by S. Cawood, 2010).

The cave was first used as a temporary dwelling by the five brethren who established the priory after their arrival in April 1869 at Modderpoort farm. Thereafter, it was converted and consecrated as a chapel. Over time, the Cave Church also served as a school for black people, a dairy and pumpkin store, and a horse stable for the British soldiers during the South African War (1899-1902). Currently, the cave is visited by individuals and church groups for prayers and offerings. Every August, the Anglican Church hosts a well-attended annual prayer session (Cawood, 2010: 127; Hodgson, 2003a: 221-229).

2.3.1.2 History and heritage linked to Mantsopa sacred site

The sacred sites associated with Mantsopa (i.e., the Cave Church, Mantsopa's grave and Spring) are situated between the ancient villages of Mabolela on the southeast (between contemporary Ladybrand and Clocolan) and Mekwatleng in the northwest (between contemporary Clocolan and Excelsior). This area has multiple layers of history, starting with the occupation of the Khoisan[6] as evidenced by the presence of rock art in the area as discussed in Section 3.3, and the numerous battles that took place during the 19th century.

The range of mountains running through this area was aptly named *Mekoatleng* (its meaning is yet to be established) by the Basotho. The Boers renamed this mountain range Korannaberg. One of the mountains forming part of this range is called Kolonyama or Viervoet Mountain. Around and on top of this mountain in 1851, the first ever British Military engagement happened in the interior of South Africa. The British, together with Barolong forces led by Warden, acting on behalf of Harry Smith, were defeated by the combined forces of the Bataung, under Chief Moletsane, and the Basotho, under King Moshoeshoe I, at Viervoet Mountain or Mekoatleng in Sesotho. Mantsopa is said to have foretold the events of this war, where the Basotho were victorious, leading most of the Barolong to throw themselves over the cliffs of Viervoet Mountain. This act inspired the name of the battle, Tihela, meaning 'to throw one down'. The Tihela battle was followed by another successful Basotho victory over the British, this time led by Sir George Cathcart, at the battle of Berea in 1852 (Gill, 1997: 96-97).

Mekwatleng is directly positioned west of Modderpoort (where the Mantsopa sacred sites are located) and east of Modderpoort, with the Berea plateau situated across the Mohokare River. The two defeats suffered by the British at the hands of the Basotho at the Tihela and Berea battles caused them to withdraw their initial plan of governing over the region between the Orange River and the Vaal. Subsequently, they handed over this disputed territory to the Boers at the Sand River Convention in 1852. The area formed part of the Republic of the Orange Free State. However, the

[6] I understand that Khoisan is a contested term. However, I am using it for historical context.

Boers were desirous of the land along the Mohokare River and, without the British as bulwark, launched attacks on the Basotho to acquire this land. The Basotho people were almost defeated in the War of Senekal, led by Commandant Frederick Petrus Senekal in 1858 (Shale, 2019: 201). This was followed by the second Basotho war of 1865, and, finally, in 1868 came the *Ntwa ya Seqiti* (Seqiti war). The latter war was known as such because of the canon used by the Boers that produced a deafening sound interpreted by the Basotho as *Qiti,* also called Wars of the Canon (Coplan, 2000: 192). The Basotho forces were defeated. They agreed to sign the Peace Treaty of Thaba Bosiu in 1866 by President Brand of the Boer Republic when Moshoeshoe was forced to accept that the Free State was no longer part of Lesotho. This was because of continuous attacks on the farms by Moshoeshoe's subjects (Gill, 2016: 20-21; Coplan, 2000: 192, Lelimo, 1998a: 152). From as early as 1861, Moshoeshoe had requested protection from the British. It was only in 1868 that Lesotho (then Basutoland) was declared a British protectorate. The Boers ceased their attacks, and in 1869 all land west of the Mohokare River was annexed to the Boer Republic of the Orange Free State. Sir Phillip Wodehouse, the British Governor of the Cape, and President Brand of the then Orange Free State agreed to fix the boundary between Lesotho and the Free State to what it is today (Gill, 2016: 21).

Mantsopa's Cave is known for the annual Anglican Church service that takes place in August. It is mostly visited on the weekends following the fifteenth and the end of the month, where people would pray inside the cave and bring sacrifices, while some would leave letters addressed to *Modimu* (God) where they would state their needs. The prayers would then be extended to the grave of Mantsopa, which is in the cemetery near the Anglican Church, ending at Mantsopa Spring on the north of Modderpoort. The area is also known for more profane activities; in the past, people (especially youth) visited the site on the 26th of December every year from the surrounding towns of Ladybrand, Clocolan and Ficksburg to braai (barbecue) and drink alcohol.

2.3.2 Mautse

2.3.2.1 Mautse sacred site

The Mautse sacred site is situated on the R70 road between Ficksburg and Rosendal. Mautse is a vast sacred area consisting of *Badimong* (the Valley of the Sangoma) and *Nkokomohi*, associated with harvesting clay for medicinal or spiritual purposes. The *Badimong* valley is on *Sekonjellashoed* farm, while *Nkokomohi* is on Moolmanshoek farm. *Badimong* is popularly but incorrectly known as Nkokomohi amongst many Basotho and some pilgrims who frequently visit this sacred site. Cawood (2010: 85) revealed that *Nkokomohi* is the primordial sacred site according to informants that grew up around the site. Many activities moved into the *Badimong* Valley away from *Nkokomohi*. However, during a July 2019 research trip, I discovered fresh sorghum beer offerings, coins and freshly dug clay pits that provided evidence of pilgrims still visiting the site to collect water and clay for medicinal and spiritual purposes, as shown in the pictures below.

Image 2: A well and sorghum beer at Nkokomohi (by M. Ntlhabo 2018)

Image 3: Clay site at Nkokomohi (by M. Ntlhabo 2018)

As part of Mautse, the *Badimong* Valley is a gorge with multiple sacred caves, waterfalls, springs, pools, and, before its closure in 2016, manmade structures. Sacred locations within Mautse include the following: *Maseeng* (place of children), a fertility site; *Yunivesithi* (the university), a school for traditional healers; *Madiboko* (place of clan identification), where people would go when they were unsure to which clan they belonged; *Ha MaNkopane* (the place of the Bakoena clan); *Bataung* (place of the

Bataung clan); *Naledi* cave (meaning star) associated with St Mary's Church; *Lehaha la Sebolai* (the cave of Sebolai), known as the meeting place of the *Badimo* (ancestors); *Tempeleng* (the high temple), where people would go when they needed help from *Modimo* and *Badimo*; and High Court. Literally, the High Court is where people who transgressed in the 'eyes' of *Badimo* would be convicted and, at the same time, where people received instructions from *Badimo* (Cawood, 2010: 63-80).

Waterfalls flowing from the north-eastern aspect of the valley flow into different pools found within the gorge, such as at *Letsha la Tsonolo*, *Khanyapa*, *Diepsloot*, *Yunivesithi*, High Court, *Tempeleng*, as well as *Nkokomohi*. The water pools mentioned above were used for baptism. It is also where healers were initiated into various aspects of their calling by the *Badimo* (ancestors) and received instructions on what attire to wear. Several springs are revered for their healing powers. *Sediba sa Moshoeshoe* (the Spring of Moshoeshoe) is a miraculous place with water that has the power to cure the sick. *Sefuthong*, a rock crevice in the mountainside, is a place of 'steaming' well known for healing people with headaches and swollen feet. Manmade structures within Mautse consisted of altars used for prayers and oblation, sleeping huts and temples used by different church denominations, individuals and healers for overnight lodging and prayers (Cawood, 2010: 58-90).

2.3.2.2 History and heritage linked to the Mautse sacred site

Initially, the popular site in the Mautse valley was *Nkokomohi*, meaning 'to rise like a dough of bread'. This name is derived from the rising smoke from the ground due to the combustion of decaying reed beds (similar to peat bogs in Europe). It created air pockets lifting the topsoil (similar to air bubbles in dough rising). Pilgrims believed that the rising smoke and bubbling effect signified the presence of *Badimo*, who was 'cooking' the clay. Numerous wells and clay harvesting sites believed to be the most sacred attracted people to the site (Cawood, 2014: 209-210).

A place known as *Tsullung* (meaning 'the highest place') is found within the broader Mautse. This mountain peak is also known as *Sekonjelasehoed* (the hat of Sekonyela) (Cawood, 2014: 208). Sekonyela is the son of Manthatisi, leader of Batlokoa, who once resided at *Jwala Boholo*, located east of Mautse. The Batlokoa were a formidable

army during the Difaqane wars of the early 19th century. Sekonyela killed *Morena* of the Hlubis, Motsholi, in 1821 (Gill, 1997: 66). The Hlubis later avenged the death of Motsholi under *Morena* Mpangazitha. Sekonyela waged several attacks on Moshoeshoe, who in 1853 asserted his authority by crushing the Batlokoa near present-day Ficksburg and became the reigning ruler in the Mohokare River Valley (Gill, 1997: 97).

In 2009, Mautse was unofficially demarcated (but not officially declared) a heritage site by building a wall bearing the inscription "*Nkokomohi* Heritage Site" at the entrance to the *Badimong* valley. This was in preparation for the much-anticipated FIFA 2010 World Cup, which was expected to boost tourism in South Africa. From this period, economic activities proliferated at Mautse with fee collection for services rendered, guides for rent, hawkers selling sheep, goats, and chicken for offerings, and medicinal plant hawkers who ran small businesses in the cities. The above economic activities led to permanent settlement at the site (Nel, 2014: 170-171). The more permanent settlement of people also brought a criminal element and social and environmental problems (e.g., drunkenness, stock theft, veld fires, environmental degradation, erosion, and polluted water bodies). This subsequently led to the closure of the site, eviction of settlers, and demolition of structures in 2016 after the farm came under new ownership.

2.3.3 Motouleng

2.3.3.1 The Motouleng sacred site

Between the towns of Clarens and Fouriesburg nestles Motouleng Cave. At Motouleng, ancestral instruction is received, and people go for healing (Cawood, 2010: 100). While Mautse has several sacred places within an extended valley, Motouleng is a cave with several sacred stations within one cave.

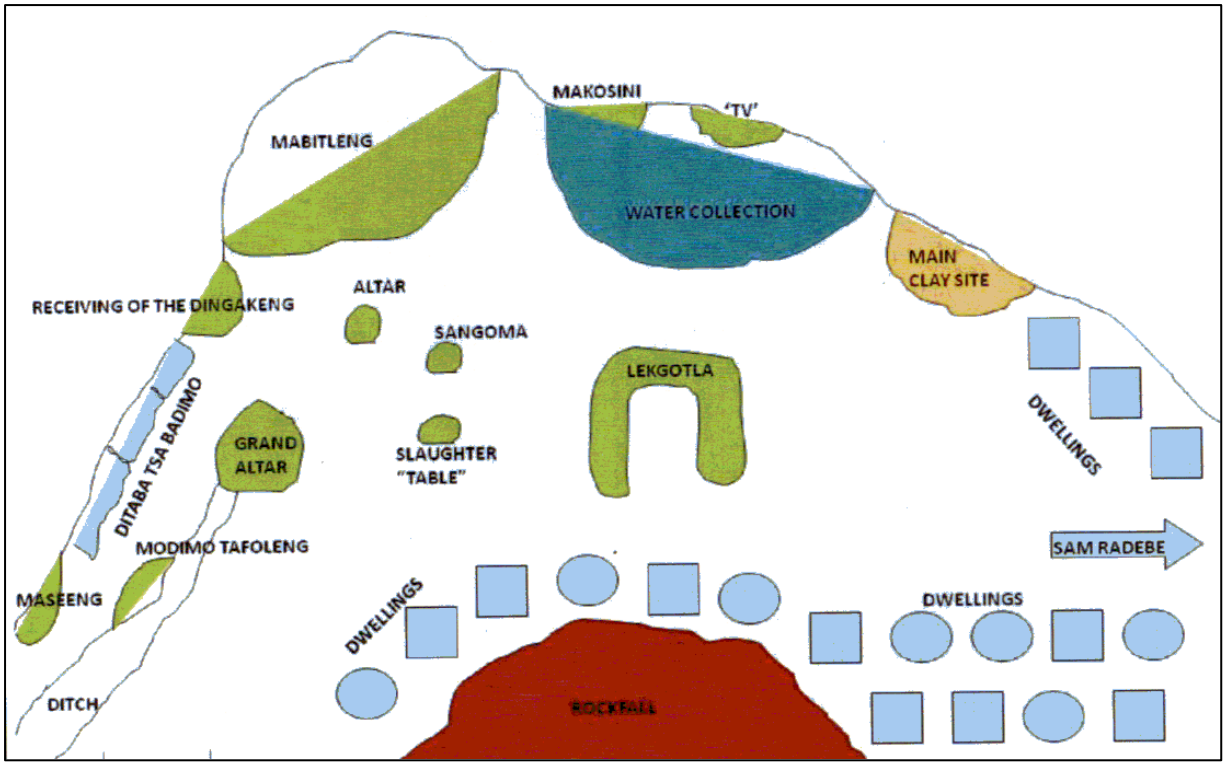


Figure 1: Diagram illustrating sacred stations inside Motouleng (by S. Cawood 2010).

Motouleng is considered the epicentre for ancestral veneration and acknowledgement due to the popular belief that all *Badimo* (ancestors) reside in this cave (Cawood and Moephuli, 2014). Entering the cave, one first passes *Maseeng* (Place of the Children) on the left-hand side. Similar to Mautse, women come to *Maseeng*, when they cannot have children. Adjacent to *Maseeng* is *Tafoleng* (God's table), then the place of the eldest and the longest-staying pilgrim, Ntate Tabatsabadimo. On the right hand, there are numerous stone and mud dwellings, some stand-alone with about one-metre-high walls, while others are attached to the rock fall on the western side of the cave. There are also several sacred spots: the Grand Altar, where pilgrims start as a sign of announcing their presence in the cave and request blessings from *Modimo* (God), *Dingakeng* a place where healers come to receive their calling, *Mabitleng* (graveyard), where it is believed that all *Badimo* (ancestors) are symbolically buried no matter what nationality, *Makhosing,* the spiritual convening place of *Marena*, different rock formations (rock altar, sangoma rock, slaughter table) used for slaughtering and other forms of oblation. Hidden in the rocks at the back of the cave is *Thelefishining* (ancestors' television), where one receives visions for past and future life events. Finally, there is *Lekgotla* (the Court). In Basotho culture, the *Lekgotla* would be a place for community deliberations where women were previously excluded from

participation. The *Lekgotla* at Motouleng was a casual meeting place that also seemed to be a “shop” where people could buy candles and snuff tobacco needed for rituals in the cave. Pilgrims visiting the cave also collected water from seepage and clay at identified spots in the cave.

Image 4: Lekgotla – Meeting place at Motouleng

Image 5: Hut demolished at Motouleng (taken from change.org).

Image 6: Pilgrims preparing to leave Motouleng (taken from Yvonne – Nomadlozi, facebook).

2.3.3.2 History and heritage linked to Motouleng sacred site

The Motouleng sacred cave lies within Brandwater Basin, a valley locked between the Brandwater, Little Caledon and the Caledon rivers found between the towns of Fouriesburg and Clarens in the Eastern Free State of South Africa. During the South African War (1899-1902), the Boer troops took refuge under the huge sandstone overhang. The flat hill where the Boers were forced to surrender to the British forces in 1900, Surrender Hill, is located near the intersection leading to Braamhof farm (where the access route to Motouleng cave is located). Cattle, horses, and sheep were captured, and ammunition was destroyed, while Boer soldiers were held as prisoners (Kinsey, 1999). Surrender Hill was declared a national monument in 1986 under the National Monument Act of 1969, and the plaque below was placed. (The plaque and the National Monument badge have since been removed.)

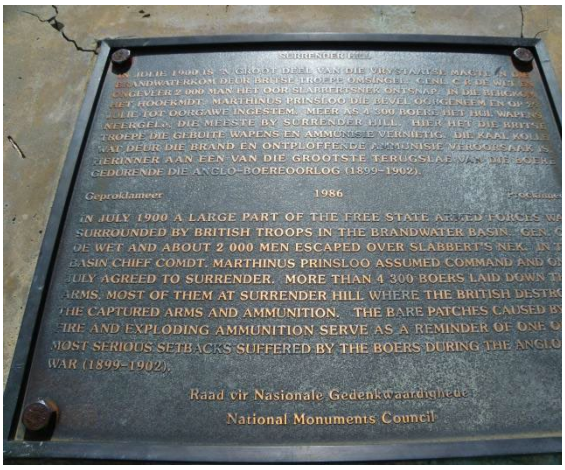


Image 7 and 8: National Monument Plaque of Surrender Hill (by S Cawood, 2010)

Pilgrims receive visions when they are instructed by the *Badimo* (ancestors) to go to Motouleng for training as *Dingaka* or healers. It is then that they would stay for different periods while getting trained. Some people would occasionally come (mostly) on weekends and engage in prayers and cleansing rituals accompanied by lighting the candle and presenting sacrifices. The period of stay may range from a day to a few weeks or months and sometimes years. There are altars used for prayers and sacrifices, as well as waterfalls and springs close by that are used for cleansing.

2.3.4 Witsie's Cave

2.3.4.1 The Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site

Witsie's Cave is situated south of Tseki Village and east of Monontsha Village in Qwaqwa. Near the Maluti Mountains, it forms the border between Lesotho, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. The cave is a horseshoe-shaped overhang with boulders at the entrance on the southwestern side that leaves a space of about 107m long and 35m wide with a height of 121m. It was first used as a cattle post during dry seasons and later served as a hiding place during the cattle raiding conflict between the Makholokoe and the Boers in the mid-19th century (Ntlhabo, 2011: 3).

Map 2: Google map showing the position of Witsies Cave between Monontsha (on the left-hand side) and Tseki (on the right) Villages in Qwaqwa, South Africa (sourced from Google on 20 November 2020).

From 1994, Witsie's Cave was included as a tourist attraction in Qwaqwa under the then-local Tourism Board called Qwaqwa Tourism and later Agriculture and Eco-Tourism. This parastatal administered agriculture and tourism products such as the Basotho Cultural Village, the Qwaqwa National Park (now part of the Golden Gate Highlands National Part), and farming projects. The Monontsha Traditional Council first directed tourism activities at the cave through community members. In 2008, the Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality sponsored a development project where a reception area, ablution facilities and a craft centre were built. This development was undertaken without the involvement of the Makholokoe (descendants of *Morena* Oetsi

who used the cave in the 1800s) under the aegis of the *Morena* of Monontsha together with a community group that conducted tours to the cave between 2008 and 2018 (Ntlhabo, 2011).

Image 9 and 10: Witsie's Cave reception area and the craft centre (by M. Ntlhabo).

In 2018, the operation of the cave was taken over by a cooperative of nine residents of Monontsha and surrounding villages known as the Witsies Cave Tourism Project. The project conducts educational and spiritual tours to the cave for school groups, researchers, traditional healers, members of African Indigenous Churches and ordinary tourists. The cave is reached through a one-and-a-half-hour hike on a steep and strenuous climb of Monontsha mountain, standing at 1704 metres above sea level.

2.3.4.2 History and heritage linked to Witsie's Cave

Witsie's Cave is linked to the cattle raiding conflict that took place between the Makholokoe[7] and the Boers[8] in 1856. There are different narratives surrounding the cause of the conflicts. The Boers accused the Makholokoe of stealing their cattle (Moephuli, 2016: 115). The Makholokoe claim that there was a misunderstanding between them and the Boers, who apparently arrived in the area without cattle looking for areas suitable for crop farming (Moloi, J. personal interview 28/12/2008).

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[7] *Makholokoe are descendants of Bakhatla. They are from Magaliesburg and arrived in Qwaqwa in the 1800.*

[8] *The term Boers was used before 1870s to refer to the white people of Dutch descents in South Africa.*

The Makholokoe, seeing how they were struggling, offered them some cattle through the *Mafisa* cattle loaning system. Through this system, the chief or the wealthy would loan cattle to the poor so that they could use those cattle for ploughing and getting milk. The calves born while the cattle are on loan remain the lender's property.

At this time, the Makholokoe realised there was no longer peace between them and the Boers. This was at the time when the Makholokoe were accused of trespassing on the farms of the Boers. They repossessed their loaned cattle and went to hide at Witsie's Cave. In 1854, Joseph Orpen (a member of the Volksraad under Major Warden), who went to Thaba Bosiu to meet with Moshoeshoe I, attempted to resolve the matter. The meeting was not productive as it was made clear that the Makholokoe were not Moshoeshoe's subjects and were independent. In the winter of 1856, the Boers attacked the Makholokoe at the cave (later known as Witsie's Cave) that Morena Oetsi used as a cattle post and later as a fortress. During the assault, numerous Makholokoe were killed, some escaping to nearby Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal (Ntlhabo, 2011: 4).

For the Makholokoe, this conflict and consequent deaths resulted in the cave symbolising the grave of their ancestors. They regularly visited the cave as people would do to any other grave (Moloi L.S. personal interview 28/12/2008). Prior to 2016 (and the closure of Mautse in 2016 and Motouleng in 2020), only the Makholokoe, school groups, tourists and researchers visited the cave. Only recently, traces were found of other religious and spiritual groups that visited the cave, as shown in the photos below. With the closure of Mautse in 2016 and Motouleng in 2020, pilgrims visiting the cave for spiritual purposes and spending a night or two in the cave proliferated.

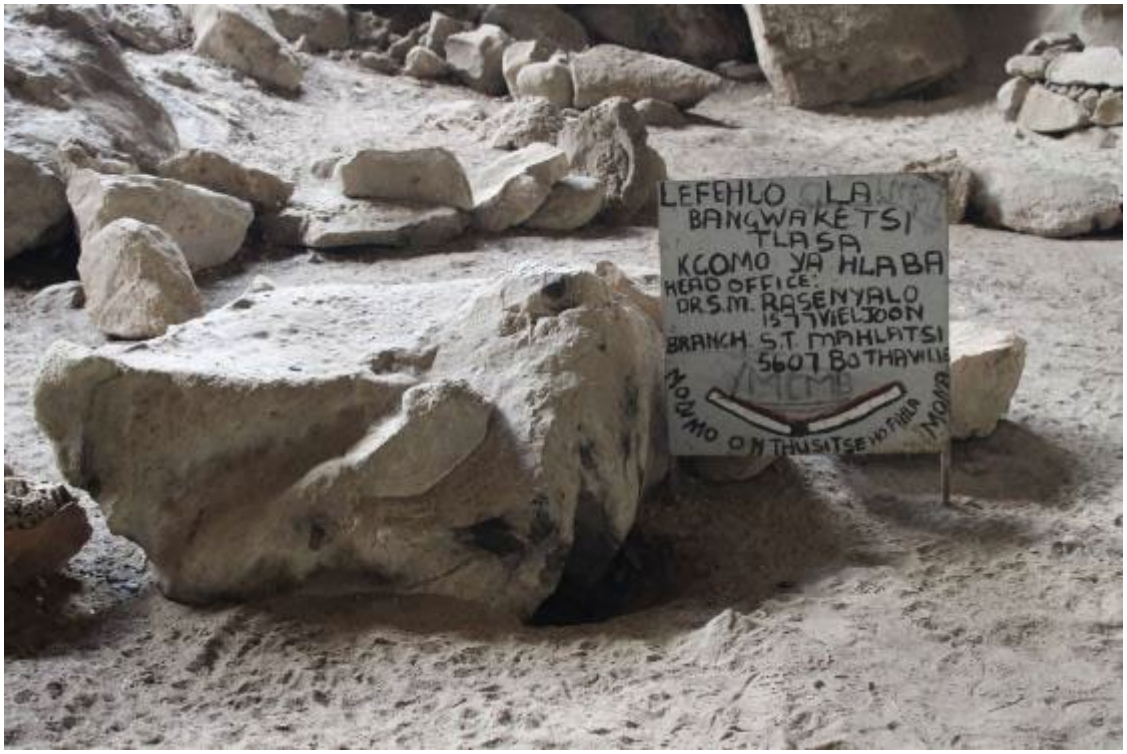


Image 11: A sign of a spiritual group that visited the cave (photo by M.Ntlhbo).

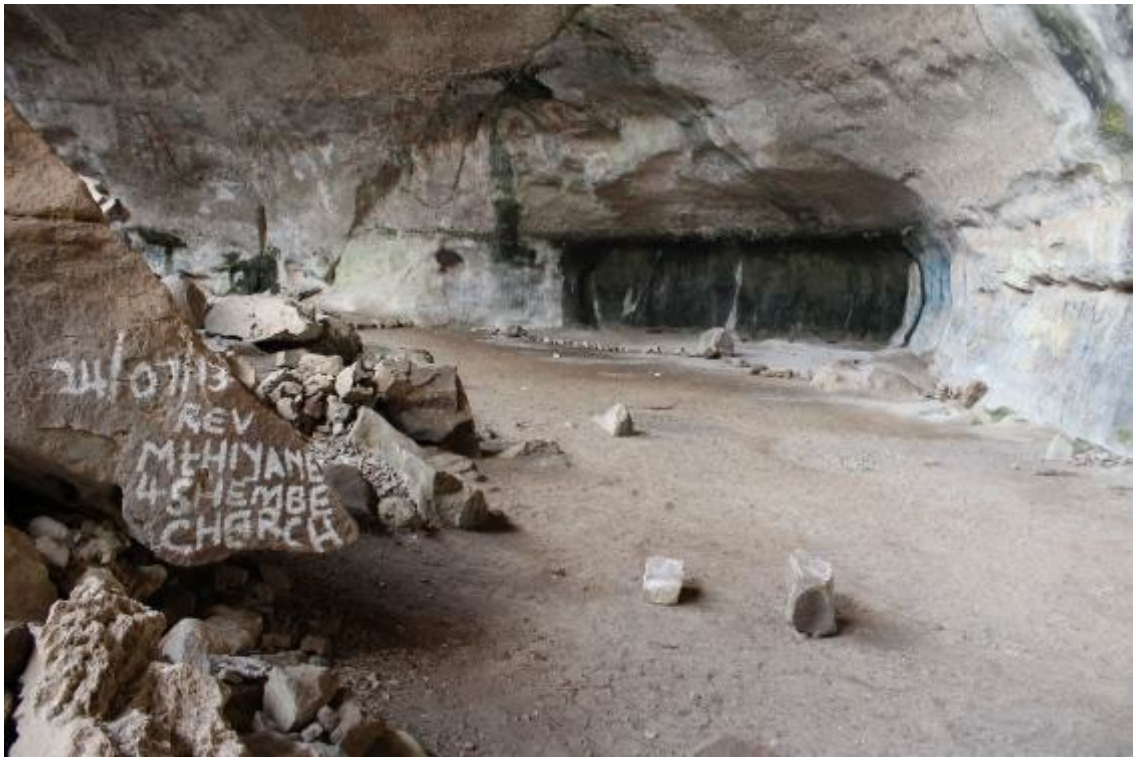


Image 12: Graffiti of members of Shembe Church who visited the cave in 2013 (photo by M. Ntlhabo).

Image 13: Burning of incense with coins as offerings (photo by M. Ntlhabo).

Image 14: Pits made from collecting medicinal clay (photo by M. Ntlhabo).

2.4 AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY ASSOCIATED WITH MOHOKARE SACRED SITES

2.4.1 Pre-colonial nature of sacred sites and spirituality

The idea surrounding African spirituality is that *Modimo*, the supreme power, represents himself through the natural environment, especially places with naturally flowing waters (e.g., rivers and springs). Water is the binding material between the divine, the human and the natural worlds (Wicker, 2000: 198). Forests, mountains, rivers, and springs (within which water divinities are embedded) are the main features that characterise the Mohokare Valley sacred sites with numerous springs, waterfalls, and pools.

In general, sacred sites are places connected with communities or individual experiences of a religion or spirituality and associative practices, including rituals and the act of pilgrimage (Cawood, 2010: 30). According to Post et al. (2014), the adjective "sacred" can be divided into 'personal sacred', 'civil sacred', 'religious sacred' and 'spiritual sacred'. Even though the study focused more on African spirituality than religion, 'religious sacred' (as one type of sacred alongside personal, civic, and spiritual sacred) is accommodated because of the hybridity of African spirituality that emerged within the African Religious Tradition Churches.

The shrines within the Mohokare sacred sites reside within the realms of sacrality. The rock art that is present at Modderpoort and other sandstone caverns in the Mohokare Valley has been interpreted as embodiment of spiritual powers which is an illustration of the omnipresence of the sacrality that the Basotho inherited (Ndlovu, 2016). Communication between the living and *Badimo* in Africa is made possible through sacred shrines. A shrine can either be natural or manmade. African people have localities that have always been identified as shrines because of their natural settings and may be in the form of mountains, caves, rocks, or trees, while manmade shrines can be a revered place at the homestead and graves where the living can communicate with *Badimo* (Zahan, 2000: 17).

Sacrality can arise from human acts of the consecration of buildings, shrines, and burial sites, from miraculous events or the presence of revered persons and of late places of great tragedy or disaster (Collins, 2003: 241). These may be manmade or natural disasters, for example, the Marikana massacre of 2013, the train tragedy near Kroonstad in 2018, the 1962 Harmelen train disaster in the Netherlands, as well as the Robben Island leper graveyard and leprosy pools, called the Baths of Bethesda. The latter's creation as a sacred site is attributed to a natural disaster, namely the breakout of leprosy in the 1800s. These sites form part of the broader Robben Island World Heritage site. The baths are actually tidal pools where people with leprosy went to bathe, as it was believed that seawater had curative properties (Fleminger, 2022).

When a sacred site exists as a result of tragedy or disaster, the focus may diverge from heritage sites where monuments are erected. Commemoration includes “people such as medical personnel and all others who were active in the rescue and salvation procedures” (e.g., the Netherlands when a monument was erected to mark the 50th anniversary of the Harmelen train disaster) (Faro, 2014: 110). Thus, sacred sites are specifically for the spirit of the dead and not to commemorate heroic deeds, as in the case of heritage sites.

Durkheim (2008: 37) also emphasises that by calling something sacred, one must not simply understand those entities called gods or spirits. Anything can be sacred, be it a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, or a house. However, similar to sacred sites, not every space is sacred. According to Masoga and Nel (2014: 71-87), spaces become sacred places because of human interaction; similarly, not every object is sacred until it is transformed through ritual performance, of which the sacrality can last as long as the ritual performance lasts.

Sacred sites are associated with divinities found in ‘living waters’. According to Bernard (2013: 144), living waters are fast-moving water from springs, waterfalls, and rivers. Water sites where divinities are thought to reside are characterised by their general inaccessibility, remoteness from human habitation and minimal human impact. In areas where topographical features do not permit waterfalls or fast-flowing water, quiet deep pools surrounded by dense forest and certain species of trees (e.g., the river willow and reeds) are used as indicators for the potential presence of water

divinities (Bernard, 2013: 144). In the view of Wicker (2000: 198), it is through water divinities that intimate connections interwoven in the divine, the human, and the natural worlds are demonstrated. It is also believed in African spirituality that specially selected people can be taken 'under' the water where they can be taught philosophical wisdom and healing skills (Wicker, 2000: 207).

According to Van Beek (2014), the sacredness of a site could be constructed according to its own rules and dynamics. The first rule is opposition, where the sacred is demarcated in opposition to the profane. Secondly, the construction of sacredness results from the active involvement of people in the sacred place. Thirdly, even though construction can be planned at times, it is usually unplanned. Fourthly, demarcation must be accompanied by rituals, and lastly, specialness may be constructed without very specific content.

The Mohokare Valley sacred sites represent that African spirituality, as a by-product of African culture, is open and tolerant to the assimilation of new traditions and systems (Wicker, 2000: 199). A visit to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites revealed that not only individual people and spiritual healers but also members of Christian churches undertake pilgrimage to these sites. The sign of the cross (which is commonly known as a symbol of Christianity) at the Mantsopa Spring, Mautse, and Motouleng sacred sites, as well as the inscriptions of massages from different church formations such as the church of Nazareth Baptist Church (Shembe) and the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), typically belonging to an African Indigenous Church (AIC), whose Christian faith embraces ancestral spirituality, are evident at these sites (Edwards and Thwala, 2010: 224).

2.4.2 Role-players in African Spirituality

According to Igboin (2014: 438), the link between ancestral spirits and spirit mediums is the primary influence on human affairs. While *Badimo* forms the link between *Modimo* and human beings, spirit mediums also play a role in mediating between human beings and *Badimo*. The spirit mediums have several responsibilities and roles, as shown below. Kaoma (2016) refers to *Dingaka* as the main spirit medium, but amongst the Basotho, there are other role-players such as the *Morena*, *ngwana hloho*

ya Badimo (the ancestral chosen one) and *hloho ya lelapa* (the family head). I came to know about the above roles while growing up in Lesotho, working at the Basotho Cultural Village as a tourist guide and the heritage officer interacting with knowledgeable people in Qwaqwa, parts of the Free State Province and Lesotho. The information provided below is, therefore, part of the knowledge from my position as an insider.

2.4.2.1 Morena

The *Morena* (indigenous leader) or his representative plays the role of custodian of sacred sites, be it forests, graves, or sacred mountains. They are the gatekeepers coordinating sacred events (e.g., rainmaking ceremonies) and ensuring that taboos are adhered to. The role of a *Morena* is believed to be passed down from the ancestors (Khunou, 2006).

2.4.2.2 Dingaka

Dingaka (healers) can be classified into five categories: 1) *Ngaka Chitja:* a type of general practitioner that listens to the patient's description of the problem and prescribes medicine or sometimes uses diviner bones to find the problem and solution; 2) *Lethuela:* spiritual healer in training; 3) *Dingaka tsa moya:* African spiritual healers, commonly known as *Sangomas;* 4) *Senohe:* the Seer can predict the future (Mantsopa and *Ngaka* Mohlomi fall under this category); and 5) *Seepa mere:* herb collector or pharmacist. Seepa is derived from *ho epa*, meaning to dig, whereas *mere* refers to *meriana*, medicinal plants. For their spiritual healing knowledge, *Dingaka* can also play a role as custodians of sacred sites on behalf of *Morena*, especially those places where care has to be taken to prevent participants' deaths, such as initiation schools (Masupha, Thamae and Phaqane, 2013).

2.4.2.3 Ancestral spirit mediums

The Basotho has what is called "*ngwana hloho ya badimo*" (ancestral spirit medium), who is not necessarily a *ngaka* but a family representative through whom the *Badimo* communicate with the family. '*Ngwana hloho ya Badimo'* is bestowed with an ancestral

spirit to look after a certain clan. His/her role could be similar to *'Ngaka ya moya'* (spiritual healer) but with responsibilities limited to a particular clan. An example is '*Kwena di fule Makhetha*' (Mantsopa), who was of the Bakoena clan and assisted *Morena* Moshoeshoe I (also Mokoena) (Mensele, 2011).

2.4.2.4 Family head

'Hloho ya lelapa', or family head, acquires this role by either being the firstborn male child or being named after an elderly person of the family (interview with Mr Lenong 29/11/2020). It is upon this person that the responsibility of ensuring the well-being of family members rests by guiding the family into the future and protecting the assets of the family. Even though it is commonly believed that people become *Badimo* only when they die or move to the 'new world' in the case of the Basotho. However, Zahan (2000: 13) found that older clan members may take up their roles as *Badimo* while they are still alive. These may be due to one being named after an elderly person in the family and automatically inheriting the responsibility or someone chosen by ancestors.

In most cases, the responsibility becomes easy because he (in the past, the person would be a man) would inherit all the family wealth and be expected to pass it on to the next generation, thus ensuring the continuity of the family line. I have been identified as the head of the Ntlhabo family. My name is Makashane, although apparently, this was not the original name of the person I am named after. Though the origin of this name is not conclusive, it is believed to be derived from the Zulu name *Makatjane* which means 'old man'. When growing up and until today, family members would call me *Ntate Moholo* (grandfather), *Tata* (father) and *Timer* (father). The latter was used especially by my father, who worked in the mines of Johannesburg and had acquired familiarity with *Tsotsi-taal* (township lingo). The elders hinted that I was called 'the old man' because *Bo Makoti* daughters-in-law were not supposed to call me by my real name, which could be disrespecting the head of the family I am named after.

The role-players mentioned above frequently visited sacred forests, mountains, and caves to receive messages delivered from *Modimo* through *Badimo*. The sacred valley of Mautse (also known as *Badimong*, *Nkokomohi*) and the sacred sites associated

with the prophet, Mantsopa, are two of the four sacred sites that form part of this study. For Cawood (2014), sacred sites may typically be connected to names of either notable persons or those associated with historical events. Mautse has several such sites, such as *Sediba sa Moshoeshoe*. Mantsopa and Witsie's Cave are named after *Kuena li fule (*crocodiles are grazing*),* Anna Mantsopa and Lephatsoane Oetsi[6] because of their spiritual gifts (one was a rainmaker and the other a 'war doctor'). It is also within the Mohokare Valley that *Ngaka* Mohlomi, the philosopher and the Seer, once lived. He was born in Fothane near the present town of Fouriesburg but, as an adult, moved to Ngoliloe, near the present town of Clocolan (Gill, 1997: 59).

The research on the sacred sites of the Mohokare Valley that was conducted by the Centre for Africa Studies[7] and commissioned by the National Heritage Council (2010) revealed that *Lehaha la Mankopane* (Mankopane's cave) is in the Mautse Precinct. Mankopane was married to *Morena* Monyane (also known as Monaheng) of the Bakoena clan. Monyane had three sons, Nkopane, Mohlomi (the Seer) and Makhetha. Interestingly, Nkopane's daughter *'Kuena li Fule'*, affectionately known as Mantsopa, got married to Makhetha's son, Selatile. Mantsopa inherited Mohlomi's (her uncle's) powers. I fall under the five generations of Nkopane's lineage.

I recite my clan praises as follows:

Ke Mokoena wa Monaheng
– I am Mokoena of Monaheng
motho was Nkopane ya mathunya
– The son of Nkopane of thunder
Ke modidimanyane mora Ramakatsa morapela putswa
– I'm the son of Ramakatsa, who praises the blue skies
Petsana kea lehoa-hoa Makhetha
– The whining foal of Makhetha
E hoa e koma komisa ditjhaba tsa heso tsa Ramonaneng
– It whines while praising the people of Ramonaheng

[6] Oetsi is the correct Sesotho spelling for Witsie which is an Afrikaans rendering of the same word.
[7] The Centre for Africa Studies became the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies in 2018.

Makhetha ke tau mora Ramakatsa
– Makhetha is the greatest son of Ramakatsa

2.5 RESEARCH PROJECTS CONDUCTED ON MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES

Numerous research projects have been conducted on the Mohokare Valley sacred sites under the auspices of, inter alia, the University of the Free State, the University of Venda, and the University of the Witwatersrand as institutional projects or as research for masters and PhD programmes.

2.5.1 Notable Institutional Projects

2.5.1.1 National Heritage Council Research Project

In 2010, the then Centre for Africa Studies (now Centre for Gender and Africa Studies) at the University of the Free State completed a research project funded by the National Heritage Council. The research, led by Dr Stephanie Cawood, investigated the significance of the oral tradition, indigenous knowledge of the communities, stakeholder involvement, as well as the sacredness of clay and other material culture connected to the three sacred sites: Mautse, Motouleng and Mantsopa in the Mohokare Valley. The research concluded that Mautse, Motouleng and Mantsopa are indeed rich repositories of tangible and intangible heritage worthy of preservation for future generations (Cawood, 2010: 256).

The research further revealed the socio-political and historical contexts of the sites while at the same time documenting the histories of key figures at the sites. Most of the key figures were people who were residing at the sites on a more permanent basis. Sites like Mautse, which contained numerous pockets of sacred locations within one site, also had different people dedicated to the identified sacred spots. In most cases, the key figures reported that *Badimo* sent them to those places. Elements of intangible heritage observed through music and songs performed by *Dingaka* (healers) and *Mathuela* (trainee healers) were also recorded, revealing the significance of the above-mentioned sacred sites.

2.5.1.2 The SANPAD Project

This project (2008 to 2015) was funded by the South African Netherlands Research Programme on Alternative Development (SANPAD) and explored the sacred sites in the Eastern Free State from the vantage point of communitas and religious integration. The research team consisted of Prof Philip Nel and Dr Elias Malete from the University of the Free State and Prof Paul Post and Prof Walter van Beek from the University of Tilburg (Netherlands). Major research themes were as follows: religious and spiritual site dynamics and user contestations at local, regional and national levels; pilgrimage to the sites; the geography of the sites and constructions of sacredness; identity construction of pilgrims within the religious landscape; as well as rituals performed at these sites. This research also included a survey detailing the notable sacred sites in the Eastern Free State, while similar sites were also visited in Lesotho for comparative purposes. This project graduated one MA (Africa Studies) mini-dissertation, one MA dissertation by research, two doctoral theses (Du Plooy, Moephuli), numerous conference papers, and an edited book (*Sacred Spaces and Contested Identities: Space and Ritual Dynamics in Europe and Africa*, ISBN 978-1-59221-955-1 published by Africa World Press in 2014).

2.5.1.3 Water quality at sacred sites

Drs Vos and Cawood (2010) mainly focused on Mantsopa, Mautse and Motouleng in their research study. They conducted interdisciplinary research involving the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies and the Centre for Environmental Management at the University of the Free State. The research conducted between 2008 and 2010 and 2018 and 2019 employed mixed qualitative and quantitative methods to trace the usage and cultural significance of water at streams located within the Mohokare Valley sacred sites while, at the same time, conducting a “bio-cultural screening” to inspect the impact of water quality at the sites (Cawood & Vos, 2016). This was done as a means of monitoring unofficial sacred sites. This research indicated several risk factors associated with water bodies found at the sites, including bacteria derived mostly from human and animal faecal deposits. The risk arises when the water is used for drinking, bathing, and performing traditional rituals.

2.5.2 Notable PhD degrees

2.5.2.1 PhD thesis by Du Plooy

Du Plooy submitted a PhD thesis (with specialisation in Africa Studies) in 2016 at the University of the Free State with the then Centre for Africa Studies. She attempted to fill the void of non-systematic Anthropological Studies of pilgrimage to the three sacred sites in the Eastern Free State, namely Mantsopa, Mautse and Motouleng. Using the popular pilgrimage conducted by the Zion Christian Church to Moria and the Nazareth Baptist Church (NBC), she explored, described and sought to understand how pilgrims make meaning of journeys of reverence taken to sacred sites in the Eastern Free State, with the intent to uncover the motivations underlying these pilgrimage journeys. Through this study, Du Plooy (2016) uncovered the hybrid nature of pilgrimage that included individuals, members of the Traditional African Religion and the Modern Christian Churches. She identified two cohorts of pilgrims, namely those from formal religion and church groupings on the one side and traditional practitioners on the other. She found praying to request something specific and to provide feedback on the requests made to the ancestors as some of the reasons visitors embark on their journeys.

2.5.2.2 PhD thesis by Moephuli

Moephuli's (2016) thesis, also under the auspices of the Centre for Africa Studies at the University of the Free State, focused on locating the sacred natural sites to understand their contextual setting and reveal the extent to which belief systems were exercised at various sacred places. Most of the research conducted at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites employed participant observation associated with ethnographic research. Moephuli (2016) collected data at Mautse, Motouleng and Mantsopa between 2008 and 2013 through interviews, recording extensive field notes, photographs of events and changing landscapes while observing and participating in day-to-day activities.

2.5.2.3 PhD thesis by Ngobese

In his PhD thesis, Ngobese (2018) investigated ways in which challenges faced by site users, landowners and heritage practitioners can be addressed to offer amicable means to preserve the sites for future generations, to develop a management strategy for Mautse, Mantsopa and Motouleng sacred sites and to find a way of restoring or reopening Mautse sacred site. The reopening of Mautse falls within Sections 25 and 42 of the National Heritage Resources Act, calls for the intervention of the Provincial Heritage Authority where the site users and the landowner failed to reach an agreement (Section 25) and for the involvement of the National Minister of Arts and Culture (Section 42). Interestingly, this study used "religious heritage sites" to refer to sacred sites and interchange the two terms (religious heritage sites and sacred sites). Ngobese's PhD was a product of the University of Venda.

2.5.3 Notable Master's Degrees

Other research studies included several Master of Arts degrees. In 2008, Trabold completed her research for a Master of Arts (Africa Studies). She studied the cultural meaning of clay, its origin, preparation, colours, and uses as part of the Centre for Africa Studies at the University of the Free State. In 2009, Colman submitted her research report for a Master of Arts degree in Heritage Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand entitled 'Religious Traditions, Heritage and Land: Dynamics in Making a Heritage Site with Contested Claims to Land a Tourist Attraction. A case study of Modderpoort'. Ntlhabo (this author) investigated the cultural significance of Witsie's Cave as a heritage site through the University of the Witwatersrand in 2011. M.S. Mensele (2011) revealed and documented the significance of rituals performed at the Mautse and Motouleng sacred sites. Nyenye (2014) featured Witsies Cave among 27 formal and informal heritage sites that she documented for her Master of Arts degree (Africa Studies). She assessed site conditions and uncovered issues ranging from inaccessibility, lack of management and a lack of knowledge of the Act governing heritage sites as some of the challenges facing heritage sites. The two studies were conducted under the Centre of Africa Studies (now Centre for Gender and Africa Studies) at the University of the Free State.

2.6 COMPLEXITIES FACING THE MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES

Various research projects (see Section 2.5) have revealed the complexities surrounding the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. These came in the form of ownership contestation that arose through religious or spiritual superiority, historical events attached to the site, legal claims to ownership, locality of the site and political control, and ownership claims through “oral and myth-making discourse” (Nel, 2014a: 137).

As already stated, one of the main complexities revolves around the tensions between private property ownership and access to sacred sites by pilgrims. A related complexity is ownership contestation through a land claim adjudicated in court. The Mantsopa sacred site was subject to a court battle between the Anglican Church as the legal owners of the title deed of Modderpoort Farm, where the Mantsopa sites are located, and the Bataung Community, a group of residents around Modderpoort since around the 1800s (Colman, 2009: 3-11). Colman (2009: 10) remarked, “as this research comes to an end [2009], two of the protagonists - the Anglican Church and the Bataung community - are readying for a court battle”.

Section 1.15.1 of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights 2018/19 Annual Report recorded the claim that was first lodged on 29 December 1998 by the Bataung community (registered as Lekgalong Communal Property Association) for Modderpoort farm and other surrounding farms represented by Mr TI Motsetse. The report mentioned above states that the claim was settled in the 2018/19 financial year, making the time span 20 years. This was after the parties concerned (Lekgalong Communal Property Association and the Anglican Church) opted to settle the matter out of court. In the process, two options were agreed upon: 1) The restoration of the land extending to 781 564 1 hectares for the members of the Lekgalong Communal Property Association who chose the land, and 2) the financial settlement of R73 769 031.25 for those who wanted financial compensation (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2018/19 Annual Report).

2.6.1 Contestation through religious or spiritual superiority

Legal claims to ownership were enforced at different sites of the Mohokare Valley through what Nel (2014a: 142) termed “spatial tactics”. This was a strategy applied by the owners of properties within which sacred sites are located by enforcing access controls to the sites through the charging of entrance fees and the purchasing of tickets to gain access, as well as demarcating access routes. This strategy was also used to prevent counterclaims to ownership. An example given by Nel (2014a: 142) is that of Modderpoort, where the route to the Mantsopa Cave and Grave is clearly marked, with strict times during which the public can access the sites.

An attempt was made just before the FIFA Soccer World Cup of 2010 (hosted in South Africa) to control access to the sacred sites and impose political control. The process saw Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality (through the then Mayor Msebenzi Zwane) leading a project funded by the National Department of Tourism where sandstone walls were built at the entrances of Mautse, Motouleng and Witsies Cave sacred sites erroneously proclaiming the sites as ‘heritage sites’. According to the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority officials, this arrangement was not communicated to them. The formal procedures of nomination and declaration of heritage sites, as required by NHRA, were not followed.

Even though the proper procedures were not followed, this was an ill-conceived attempt to officiate the site. The action implied that the state officially sought to own the sacred as part and parcel of heritage (Nel, 2014a: 143-145). Heng (2016: 217) distinguished between official and unofficial sites where “official sacred spaces are [those] spaces that are sanctioned and approved by secular forces, particularly the state, whereas unofficial sites include indigenous sacred sites, religious schools, religious organisations and their premises, pilgrimage routes as well as religious objects”. In this study, the Mohakare Valley sacred sites (except for Mantsopa and Witsie’s Cave) remain unofficial as their status is only recognised by the people associated with it.

2.6.2 Contestations in terms of proximity

Witsie's Cave is one site that has been embroiled in ownership contestations, as discussed in this section and the two sections that follow. The Bakoena ba Mopeli claim Witsie's Cave through proximity entitlement (Moephuli, 2016: 115). The Bakoena is the largest clan in Qwaqwa after arriving in 1868 with Mopeli Mokhachane, younger brother of Morena Moshoeshoe I, after accepting a proposal from the then President of the Orange Free State, President Brand, to move from Mabolela near Modderpoort. Their (Bakoena ba Mopeli) claim was based on the cave's proximity to Monontsha village, which they claimed to be under their jurisdiction as Monontsha Village forms part of the Bakoena Traditional Council. Even though the cave can also be accessed from the site of Tseki using 4X4 vehicles, easy access has always been from the Monontsha Village, where the formal entrance is located.

2.6.3 Ancestral attachment claims

The Makholokoe believe that Witsie's Cave has both cultural and [spiritual] attachment because their [forefathers] were killed in the cave (Ntlhabo, 2011: 28). They [Makholokoe] visit the cave every year during February, making way for the annual *Mokete wa mokopu*, the harvest festival. During the visit, they collect *sehwasho*, clay from the cave to use for spiritual cleansing purposes. In a personal interview conducted in 2008, Mr Lesia Moloi revealed that the cave is a sacred place of the Makholokoe as it is the grave of their ancestors.

2.6.4 Makholokoe infighting

Different groups belonging to the Makholokoe have been fighting leadership and ownership battles over the cave since 2008. This is evident from letters in my possession which I obtained while conducting research for my Master's Degree. The letters are from the two different competing traditional councils representing the same community of the Makholokoe, namely the Mafikeng Traditional Council under Morena LS Moloi stationed at Tseseng Qwaqwa in the Eastern Free State and the Makholokoe Traditional Council of Morena Paulos Mopeli located in Makholokoeng near Harrismith, also in the Eastern Free State.

This shows that the Makholokoe had been divided into two factions. One faction falls under Morena Paulos Moloi, who is acknowledged as the rightful leader of the Makholokoe by the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders. The other faction comprises people who have changed their clan name to 'Bakholokoe Tribe Witsieshoek'. The latter faction disputed the claim that Morena Moloi was the legitimate leader based on lineage. The latter group nominated Witsie's Cave for declaration as a heritage site and recently wrote to the Provincial Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation to request the cave to be transferred to their control (see Appendix 2).

In the letter (see Appendix 2), they requested the Free State Provincial Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation to hand over custodianship of Witsie's Cave to the Bakholokoe Traditional Council (the group that nominated the cave for declaration). The Director of the Heritage Museum and Heritage Services responded that the matter should be referred to the National Department of Land Affairs as the land neither belonged to the provincial nor local government.

2.6.5 Oral and mythmaking discourse

Cawood and Moephuli (2014: 27) noted that people used the sites as permanent residence. I also discovered the presence of houses locked with padlocks inside Motouleng on numerous visits as signs of ownership and long residential periods. Throughout this study, I met the same people every time I visited the cave. People such as *Ntate* Tabatsabadimo (interviewed on 18/07/2018) revealed that he has been staying at Motouleng since 1986, making him the longest-staying pilgrim at Motouleng. He has now acquired custodianship status. During my first arrival at Motouleng, I was directed to first meet with *Ntate* Tabatsabadimo for permission to conduct interviews and observe the activities in the cave.

Cawood (2014: 210) revealed that oral narratives over ownership contestation could be based on dream claims where people can claim to have received instructions from Badimo. *Ntate* Tabatsabadimo (interviewed on 18/07/2018) indicated that the structures found at Motouleng were erected by people who received instruction to build them from the *Badimo*. They would use them whenever they came to spend time in

the cave. He also mentioned that part of his obligations is to perform a ceremony in the cave every October, as per instructions from the *Badimo*.

2.6.6 Criminal elements

I attended a meeting on 15 December 2017 at Mautse. Present at the meeting were members of the Traditional Faith Outreach Projects Agency as site users that frequented Mautse. The owner of Sekonjellashoed stated that criminal activities ranged from the looting of livestock from the nearby farms, infighting caused by different recruiting agents, selling and use of *matekwane* (dagga), unattended burning candles that caused wildfires and water pollution caused by people bathing in the pools. The site was also used as a hiding place for criminals who went to the 'cave' under the pretext of being 'called' by the *Badimo*. These factors contributed to the eviction of pilgrims, the demolition of permanent structures and the closure of the Mautse sacred site in 2016 as the criminal activities were taking place on the above-mentioned farm.

2.6.7 Effects of colonialism on sacred sites

Arguably the most popular sacred sites in the Mohokare Pilgrimage Movement between 2008 and 2016, Mautse and Motouleng, are not formally protected as heritage sites under the NHRA (25 of 1999). The situation is more complex because these sites are situated within private property, making it difficult to arrive at a practical management strategy. The background provided in Section 1.2 revealed how it is challenging to develop a management strategy for sacred sites. This is due to South African pieces of legislation speaking to each other in name but not necessarily in implementation.

The non-explicit inclusion of sacred sites by the National Heritage Resources Act 25 1999 from issues of heritage was also the result of colonialism that detached spirituality from the land or environment. From an Eurocentric perspective, spirituality is a separate entity from the land or environment. Chapter 3 illustrates how the concept of heritage did not include intangible aspects that came in the form of oral traditions and living heritage. It was only around 2003 that intangible or living heritage was

recognised through the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO) (Petti et al., 2019: 2532).

These sacred sites are primordially associated with the indigenous beliefs of the Basotho, centred on ancestor veneration. With the arrival of Europeans in Africa, many people were discouraged from the idea of ancestor veneration, as colonial missionaries misinterpreted the belief as ancestral worship, whereas in actual fact, ancestral spirits (*Badimo*) are not the objects of worship but are guardian spirits and intermediaries believed to be responsible to *Modimo* (Moyo, 2013).

2.7 CURRENT HERITAGE ADMINISTRATION

Sacred sites are managed under the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA, 25 of 1999). The Act facilitated the establishment of the South African Heritage Resources Agency and the National Heritage Council at national level, the Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities in the nine provinces, and the local authorities at municipal level. Issues of heritage studies, research, policies, and legislation relating to international, regional, and local contexts and notable case studies are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 3.

This section discusses the functions of the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority, as it is the immediate authority to the sacred sites in this research. The Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (FSPHRA) was established in 2006 in terms of Section 23 of the Act. It is a body corporate capable of suing and being sued in its corporate name. The FSPHRA, as a provincial heritage resources authority, is responsible for identifying and managing heritage resources in the Free State that have special qualities, making them significant within a provincial context.

The FSPHRA is responsible for the following:

- Advises the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation on the implementation of NHRA or relevant provincial or municipal legislation;

- Submits annual reports to the MEC;
- Establishes new policies, objectives and strategic plans for heritage resources management in the province;
- Promotes systematic identification, recording and assessment of heritage resources;
- Regularly inspects formally protected heritage resources;
- Protects/manages heritage resources it owns or controls;
- Maintains databases of provincial heritage resources;
- Notifies the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) of Grade I sites and nominate them for declaration as national heritage sites;
- Enhances public awareness of the need for management of the national estate;
- Maintains a list of conservation bodies which have registered their interest in geographical areas or categories of heritage resources;
- Determines the competence of local authorities to manage heritage resources;
- Assists, coordinates and monitors the performance of local authorities in terms of their heritage resources management functions;
- Provides for areas of responsibility when local authority does not have the competence/capacity to perform functions;
- Identifies and manages heritage resources declared as provincial heritage sites;
- Identifies and designates protected areas surrounding provincial heritage sites, archaeological and palaeontological sites, or meteorite sites;
- Compiles and maintains a heritage register of provincial heritage resources based on inventories submitted by planning authorities;
- Designates heritage areas (where the planning authority is unwilling/unable to perform such functions);
- Considers applications for alteration and demolition of structures older than 60 years;
- Protects archaeological and palaeontological sites and material;
- Preserves graves of victims of conflict and other graves of cultural significance;
- Considers environmental and heritage impact assessment of developments affecting heritage resources;
- Promotes research of heritage resources;

- Publishes information on heritage resources, and
- Inspects or documents heritage resources (NHRA 25.1999: Section 24-25).

The list of over 200 Provincial Heritage Sites in the Free State is dominated by colonial buildings, military cemeteries, graves of colonial leaders and streets named after colonial leaders and prominent people of the colonial and apartheid eras. The list was updated with the provisional declaration of post-colonial and post-apartheid era resources, such as the graves of prominent struggle activists and ANC members in the Free State, Sipho Mutsi, Zuka Baloyi, Itumeleng Billyboy Mokobo, Vuyo Edward Charles, Albert Ndoyisile Xhamfu, and Martha Motlhakwana. The houses of Martha Motlhakwana and Mr Maphikela in Batho, Dr Moroka's house in Thaba Nchu, and the Wesleyan Church School Hall at Waaihoek, the founding venue for the African National Congress, form part of the provisionally declared monuments (FSPHRA Annual Report, 2013-2014). The above monuments were gazetted just before the centenary celebration of the ANC in Mangaung in 2012. It was only in 2016 that four sites that were not politically linked, namely Namoha Battle Site, Witsie's Cave, Mantsopa's Cave and Nkoe/Sefate/Poqo Cave, were declared as Provincial Heritage Sites (see Figure 2 below).

2 No. 3 PROVINCIAL GAZETTE, 8 APRIL 2016

PROVINCIAL NOTICE

[No. 5 of 2016]

DECLARATION OF PROVINCIAL HERITAGE SITES: FREE STATE

The Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (the "FSPHRA"), in terms of section 27(6) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999), hereby declare the sites set out in the Schedule as Provincial Heritage Sites.

SCHEDULE

Site name		Extent/ Identification	Location	Town	Municipality	Province
1	Namoha Battle Site	Open land	Monontsa	Witsieshoek	Maluti-a-Phofung	Free State
2	Witsie's Cave	Cave	Monontsa	Witsieshoek	Maluti-a-Phofung	Free State
3	Mantsopa's Cave	Cave	Modderpoort	Ladybrand	Mantsopa	Free State
4	Nkoe/Sefate/Poqong	Cave	Verkykerskop	Harrismith	Maluti-a-Phofung	Free State

Figure 2: Provincial notice of declaration of heritage sites sourced from Free State provincial gazette No. 5 of 2016.

The Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities are meant to be established entities independent from the government with its own staff members as required by the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999. Despite the long list of responsibilities above, the FSPHRA is situated within the Secretariat Sub-Directorate of the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation. It provides secretarial support to Geographical Names and Heritage Councils. The Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority is mandated to host National Heritage Day Celebrations in the province, conduct five (5) community dialogues in a year, and host one (1) Provincial Social Cohesion Summit. This Sub-Directorate functions with four officials: the Deputy Director, who oversees both the Geographical Names and Heritage Units; the Geographical Names Coordinator; the Heritage Coordinator; and the Administrative Clerk.

2.8 CURRENT HERITAGE STATUS OF SITES

Among the four sacred sites under investigation in this study, only the Mantsopa sacred sites (grave, cave, and spring) located at Modderpoort and Witsie's Cave in Qwaqwa are declared as Provincial Heritage Sites.

The area of Modderpoort enjoyed the protection of the San rock art under the Bushman Relics Protection Act of 1911 and the National Monuments Act of 1936 because of the San rock art found in the cave overlooking the railway station and the mission (www.sahra.org. sourced on 19/01/2021). Mantsopa's cave, grave and spring are now listed as Provincial Heritage Sites (gazetted in 2016) under the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA) because of their cultural significance as a site attached to oral tradition and its association with living heritage as stipulated by Section 3: Sub-Section 2(2) of the Act (NHRA). Witsie's Cave was also formally declared a Provincial Heritage Site in 2016 in line with oral traditions of events that took place between the Boers and Makholokoe in the mid-1800s and the spiritual powers linked to Makholokoe ancestry that most people visiting the cave attest to.

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a general historical and geographical background of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites of Mantsopa, Mautse, Motouleng and Witsie's Cave, the broader pilgrimage movement to the Mohokare sacred sites and the associated African beliefs and role-players. While postcolonial challenges inform this study, it was important to revisit the pre-colonial nature of sacred sites to establish if there are factors that could be utilised to address the current challenges. In this process, the focus was on revisiting different role-players in site management, including *Marena*, *Dingaka tsa moya* (spirit mediums) and *Hlooho ya lelapa* (family heads). The area under study is also home to a rich history and heritage linked to specific Mohokare Valley sacred sites and therefore warranted inclusion. The history and heritage centred on the Difaqane, the Tihela or Viervoet battles, the Basotho Boer Wars of the 1800s, and the South African War.

Previous institutional research projects, as well as individual PhD and Master's research studies, mostly from the University of the Free State, were revisited to collate known scholarship and to use them as a foundation to build the argument of this study. This also allowed me to put together site descriptions of Mantsopa, Mautse, Motouleng and Witsie's Cave as part of the context. The descriptions covered locations of the sites with identified sacred places within the sites while also revealing the cultural significance of the sites. These extant studies also revealed the numerous challenges surrounding the sacred sites of the Mohokare Valley, ranging from ownership contestation, clash of religion and spirituality, criminal elements, and socio-political policies inherited from the colonial and apartheid eras.

Furthermore, this chapter considered appropriate legislation and determined that the sacred sites are administered under the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999. In this regard, the requirements of the Act pertaining to the management of heritage sites were aligned with the emphasis on the grading of heritage resources, the three-tier system as well as the detailed responsibility of the Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities. By revisiting the role of the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (FSPHRA) and its list of heritage resources, the legacy of colonial and apartheid heritage sites became evident, including the work done by the FSPHRA

since its inception in 2006. Finally, the current heritage declaration status of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites was considered.

CHAPTER 3

THE HERITAGE LANDSCAPE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided a historical background of the Mohokare Valley and the historical events attached to the sacred sites of the Mohokare Valley. This study is not a historiography of the Mohokare Valley and its sacred sites, but rather considers the meaning of these sacred sites within the formal heritage landscape, which is the topic of this chapter. It explores the development of the study of heritage from global, African and South African perspectives. In the South African context, the study revisits the development of heritage legislation from the time of the Union of South Africa (1910-1948), the apartheid period (1948-1990) and democratic South Africa (1994-present). Particular attention is paid to the role of the South African Heritage Resources Agency, the National Heritage Council, and the provincial and local heritage authorities.

The chapter also explores the limitations of heritage legislation and policy frameworks for the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. The main limitation is the Eurocentric interpretation of heritage that informs the link between the concepts of heritage and how it is translated into the Sesotho language. A challenge arose regarding the notion of living heritage attachment that seems to 'protect' the heritage sites with oral traditions but not aiming to preserve those oral traditions and their attached spirituality. The separation of nature from culture within heritage protection and management has Eurocentric roots. It distances the traditional custodians of heritage, such as *Marena* and *Dingaka tsa moya* (spirit mediums), from formal management structures and protocols. The limitations highlighted in the heritage landscape discussion include the following: graves and burial grounds that are only protected after 60 years; the prioritisation of political heritage; and the westernisation of cultural heritage. The chapter also considers alternative heritage management approaches and establishes the links between heritage and spiritual tourism. This is dealt with first by understanding the difference between religion and spirituality (African), the link between African spirituality and land, understanding the sacred sites as sites of African spiritual veneration, and how these can be responsibly packaged for the purpose of

spiritual tourism. The chapter concludes by presenting case studies around the world that can be used as benchmarks when attempting to address the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites.

3.2 THE STUDY OF HERITAGE AS ENCOMPASSING FIELD

3.2.1 Heritage Studies: An overview

Heritage is arguably the phenomenon that many nations have practised as part of life where the past has been preserved for future generations. However, it received more focus in Europe after World War II as a means to protect national assets after noticing the destruction of the war in terms of buildings and monuments (then referred to as cultural property). From the time of the adoption of the convention for the protection of Cultural Property in 1954, the terms 'cultural property' and 'cultural heritage' were used synonymously to refer to artifacts, buildings, sites and later, cultural practices (Bendix and Hafstein, 2009: 6). Heritage preservation was formalised in 1964 through the Venice Charter, which compelled the current generation to ensure that monuments and sites are passed on to future generations in their authentic state (Logan and Wijesuriya, 2015: 557). Heritage was formally observed in most European countries and the United States of America (Logan, Craith & Kockel, 2015: 2).

Heritage as a field of study came about during the 1980s. The three British historians, David Lowenthal, Patrick Wright and Robert Hewison, contributed to the first body of literature between 1985 and 1987 compiling commentary work promoting heritage as separate from history. It was then in the 1990s that the first PhDs in the field of heritage were completed. Heritage was further developed through international conferences such as the World Archaeological Congress, the European Association of Archaeologists and the American Anthropological Association. Journals dedicated to Heritage Studies also emerged during this period with the introduction of research as another category of heritage in addition to commentary and guidance (Sorensen and Carman, 2009: 17-20).

Heritage is described by scholars such as Sonkoly and Vahtikari (2018: 15) as an academic interdisciplinary and heterogeneous field employing disciplines such as art,

history, archaeology, architecture, history, conservation studies, museology, anthropology, ethnology, memory studies, cultural and political geography, tourism studies, sociology, or economics. As a field of study, heritage was popularised during the last two decades of the 20th century in Europe. However, Winter (2014: 557) provided a general understanding of modern conservation theory and its institutions with roots dating as far back as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, citing examples such as Rome, Venice, or Paris as places where a heritage conservation ethos took hold.

Lowenthal (1998: 1-5), in the *Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, considered "heritage to be as old as humanity", dating back to the prehistoric period when people "bequeathed goods and goals; legacies benign and malign suffuse Homeric tales, Old Testament, and Confusion precepts". While acknowledging that heritage differs in interpretation from place to place, he also acknowledged that "the language of heritage that suffuses the world is mainly Western". This is based on the fact that the first meeting to discuss issues of heritage in 1931 was attended by only Europeans, with other continents only joining in 1972 at the World Heritage Convention. Lowenthal is instrumental in understanding the differences between history and heritage in terms of purpose and practice and what constitutes personal and collective legacies. He positions heritage as what individuals inherit (personal legacies) before it can be shared collectively as national legacy:

> *The nature of collective heritage and the feelings it arouses reflect its personal origins. Group ownership and fealty are rooted in family legacies. Heritage's stress on unique and exclusive possession harks back to family heirlooms; terms like patrimony, [birth right], and roots evoke its inherently personal character. Building on parental bequests, group heritage bonds us with forebears' communal passions and patriotisms* (Lowenthal, 1998: 57).

History is viewed as part of heritage as it forms part of those elements that link an individual with their forefathers, such as traditions, memories, myths, and memoirs. However, there is a distinction between history and heritage as the former is based on revealed 'truth' through recorded accounts with testimonies of witnesses, while the latter "relies on revealed faith rather than rational proof" (Lowenthal, 1998: 2). Even though history can be biased, historical records are openly available to all people,

whereas heritage may pass messages that can be exclusive to a selected group or by means of elitism (Lowenthal, 1998: 128). Under colonial South Africa, privilege was given to heritage that commemorates the colonial empire. During the apartheid period, only the legacy of white South Africans was deemed as important. Today the focus is on what Gungwu (2000) and Twala (2020) referred to as “political heritage”. Political heritage in post-apartheid South Africa is heritage associated with the history of the ruling political party, the African National Congress, and its allied formation that is preserved and promoted, excluding parts of the population of South Africa.

Initially, heritage focused on tangible aspects such as monuments, sites and buildings associated with elite society and distinctive architectural designs that were preserved for their historic, aesthetic, and scientific interests. The above was interpreted based on the principles of archaeology and architectural fields of study (Abungu, 2016: 377). Part of the tangible heritage is called “inconvenient heritage”. These are objects collected from developing countries (especially Africa) and are stored or displayed in some European museums where they are foreign (Beurden, 2021). In 1992, the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO expanded the scope of heritage to include the cultural landscape that then recognised the cultural elements of heritage (Logan et al., 2015: 2).

One element of cultural heritage that has been side-lined and needs urgent consideration is the issue of grassroots memorialisation. Amongst the Basotho, memorialisation goes back to pre-colonial times. The Basotho had a way of marking places where special events took place by placing a pile of stones called *Mokolokotwane*. For example, after a meeting between two *Marena* to decide on important issues, stones would be collected and placed in a mound to mark the place (Dr Mahanke, interviewed on 8 July 2022). In a more contemporary example, in 1994, former President Nelson Mandela, fellow Rivonia treason trialists and ex-Robben Island prisoners returned to the Island and met at the lime quarry where they used to spend most of their time when incarcerated. As a sign of memorialisation, they collected stones and put them in the same spot as shown in the image below.

Image 15: Stone pile at Robben Island. (Sourced from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rock_pile,_Robben_Island_Prison.jpg)

The story of Robben Island also fits into what has been introduced as “dark heritage” which is associated with places of death, suffering and disaster. Dark heritage is linked to terms such as “difficult heritage,” “contested heritage,” “dissonant heritage,” and “negative heritage.” (Thomas et al., 2019: 1). It can also be experienced through micro sacred sites or grass roots memorialisation that are built to mark a place where a person died (see Section 3.7.1 for a detailed discussion).

Even though intangible heritage was formalised in 2003 at the convention for the safeguarding of intangible heritage was adopted by UNESCO, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) is one of the scholars to write about aspects of intangible cultural heritage. In her book *Destination Culture,* she started raising important questions of “how does a way of life become heritage?” Digitisation has proven to be the most effective way of documenting, preserving, and promoting intangible heritage. As a result, many heritage institutions have turned to digital technology to create audio-visual and

interactive presentations of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in museums and at heritage sites. The experience is also extended to mobile apps and social media platforms for the dissemination of heritage resources in the form of photographs, reprinting of heritage objects, provision of interactive experiences through the 3D presentation of objects and animation where people can even visit sites while seated in their homes (Economou, 2016: 219-223). Liliesleaf Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa, where activists from the ANC and its armed wing, uMKhonto we Sizwe (MK), were captured in 1963 as they coordinated activities of the armed struggle from the underground, was one of the most sought-after heritage sites in terms of digital technology[10].

The above-mentioned method of preserving intangible heritage was based on the support of scholars and institutions that were tasked with documentation and preserving a record of disappearing traditions, whereas "the most recent model seeks to sustain a living, if endangered, tradition by supporting the conditions necessary for cultural reproduction". This also led to the support of the practitioners of intangible heritage, which was adopted from the Japanese concept of *Living national treasures* which takes "masterpieces" and the "masters" into consideration *(*Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006: 310)*.*

Heritage studies, being interdisciplinary, also means that different fields of study can be brought together in the study and management of heritage sites and resources. Tourism is interpreted as a modern-day platform for heritage in educational and community development (Timothy 2011: 3). In this study, I discuss elements of heritage tourism such as cultural tourism (Eboreime, 2008), indigenous tourism (McIntosh et al. 2002; Bunten, 2010), spiritual tourism (Geory, 2008; Medheker and Hag, 2012; Olsen and Timothy, 2022), and dark tourism (Timothy, 2011; Thomas et al, 2019). In research on the Mohokare Valley sacred sites (as previously mentioned in Chapter 2), Drs Cawood and Vos (2021: 30) from the University of the Free State integrated African Studies with Environmental Management. They devised a method of monitoring the human impact on informal and formal heritage sites through the assessment of water quality using a system called Rapid Integrity Appraisal (RIA).

This model is envisioned to assist in effectively managing undeclared and informal heritage sites that fall outside formal heritage management structures and protocols.

3.2.2 Heritage and Africa

Heritage studies in America have evidently been influenced or guided by the field of archaeology, with the World Archaeological Congress and the European Association of Archaeologists taking the lead in its development. This emphasises that the study of heritage in the Global North was based more on the tangible than the intangible. However, African approaches to heritage are more people-based. They do not separate people from the environment, meaning that it is broader and interdisciplinary, including fields such as anthropology, environmental science, and archaeology (Keitumetse, 2016: 3-11). The 2003 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention influenced change in the global approach to heritage. This coincided with the time when more African states joined the rest of the world in pursuing heritage conservation, and more anthropologists and sociologists were drawn into the field of heritage (Keitumetse, 2016: 24).

Even though African countries are increasingly engaged in heritage conservation and management, challenges remain linked to colonial legacies where aspects of heritage are still viewed in isolation from one another, thus creating ‘borders’ and ‘silos’. ‘Borders’ and ‘silos’ symbolise separation and demarcation and start with the conventions that entrenched the separation of nature and culture and tangible and intangible heritage, which are also ratified in African countries and their approaches to heritage management. In addition, there are the ‘borders’ created by political affiliation. Section 3.5.7 in this Chapter illustrates how political heritage in South Africa has taken centre stage with the focus solely on the struggle of the African National Congress that is foregrounded in the name of “heritage landscape transformation”. This has been implemented by creating monuments that still follow a westernised way of commemorating the past. There have been varying views over commemoration with monuments where some think they are “inciting hatred”, while those who are pro-monuments believe they “facilitate reconciliation”. This is based on the notion that in cases where people could not get closure due to a traumatic past, such as living through apartheid, monuments may be used as a means of healing, reconciliation,

and restorative justice (Marschall, 2005: 79-83). For effective cultural heritage management in Africa, Keitumetse (2016: 25) suggests following a holistic approach where the people-based conventions, cultural-based conventions and natural-based conventions are brought together to inform cultural heritage debates.

3.3 GLOBAL HERITAGE CONTEXT AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The most significant entity in matters of heritage globally is the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). After 20 years of suspension from participating in the United Nations because of the apartheid policy, South Africa was re-instated in 1994 after forming a new democratic government. South Africa as a member of the United Nations, is also party to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which falls under the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), as adopted by the General Conference at its 17th session in Paris in 1972. The main function of the Convention is to ensure that states part of the convention identify, protect, conserve, present and rehabilitate cultural and natural heritage that has outstanding universal values found within the boundaries of that state (UNESCO, 1972: 2-3). Ten of the South African heritage sites enjoy the status of World Heritage sites as declared below: Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains (2018), Khomani Cultural Landscape (2017), Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape (2007), Vredefort Dome (2005), Cape Floral Region Protected Area (2004), Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape (2003), Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park (2000), Fossil Hominid Sites (1999), Robben Island (1999) and Isimangaliso Wetland Park (1999). Isimangaliso is endangered and may possibly be excluded from the list due to the recent illegal occupation of land and the felling of trees in the Futululu Forest near St Lucia Lake.

The World Heritage Convention aims to identify valuable (outstanding value to humanity) world heritage assets for better preservation and protection within states forming part of the convention. For a cultural or natural heritage site to be considered for world heritage listing, it should at least display the following characteristics (UNESCO, 2019: 25-26):

1. Cultural significance as part of ingenious human creativity;
2. Exhibits human values on the architectural and technological development of monumental arts, town planning or landscape designs spanning over a certain period;
3. Provides proof of unique cultural tradition or civilisation that still exists or has diminished, standing as an example of building, architecture or technology that is attached to human history;
4. Offering an insight into a traditional human settlement, land or sea use representing cultural or human interaction with the environment that is threatened by socio-economic change;
5. Reveals association with living or intangible heritage of outstanding universal value;
6. Be an area of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance or linked to natural phenomena;
7. Contain evidence of major stages of earth's history, a record of life, geological processes in the development of landforms, as well as significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
8. Provide signs of significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
9. Be bio-diversity conservation areas containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from scientific and conservation perspectives.

'Authenticity' has for a long time been used as the main criteria for world heritage nomination. 'Authenticity' was interpreted as meaning the sites have remained in their original form. It was only after the Nara Conference of 1994 (where the Nara Document on 'Authenticity' was discussed) that the meaning of 'authenticity' was revised and interpreted as "a dynamic process, reflecting the different changes that has affected the sites over their history." The interpretation of 'authenticity' also differs from one site to another as "specific socio-cultural contexts corresponds to specific values and can only be understood and judged within those specific contexts and according to those values" (Labadi, 2010: 74-75).

‘Authenticity’ has been adopted by China as one of the international conservation concepts and approaches it by affording local communities the right to identify heritage sites that are worthy of inscribing. The local community then works with the local office that is set up and capacitated with the support of scholars and experts in heritage. An example is the Lijiang City located southeast of China. The city was inscribed as a world heritage site in 1997 and has since turned into a booming tourist attraction (Zhu, 2016: 80). ‘Authenticity’ is also achieved through a process of heritagisation where an object or site is re-contextualised and given a value that distinguishes them from other similar objects or sites. Through this process, the object or site can acquire sacral value that is derived from an engagement that reveals shared meaning based on the presentation of the information (Di Giovine and Garcia-Fuentes, 2016: 8-9)

Section 46 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention also accommodates heritage sites deemed to have mixed values (cultural and natural) if they satisfy a part or whole of the definitions of both cultural and natural heritage (UNESCO, 2019: 20). One example of such a site in Southern Africa is the Maloti-Drakensburg Park forming part of South Africa and Lesotho. The park is home to a diversity of birds, plants, and animal species, as well as the more than 4 000 years of history and heritage of the Khoisan people that is documented through the largest conglomeration of rock art in Southern Africa and preserved in the sandstone caves and rock shelters that form part of the majestic Maloti-Drakensberg Mountain range. Even if the site is listed as a World Heritage site, it remains the property of the state within which it is located. World listing becomes what Githitho (2016) calls an additional layer of protection that the site may enjoy.

The two elements of heritage (cultural and natural) are administered through relevant advisory bodies, namely the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Founded in 1965, ICOMOS evaluates the cultural values of properties submitted to the World Heritage Committee for consideration for World Heritage listing. It also conducts comparative studies, provides technical assistance, and reports on the conservation status of world heritage properties. The IUCN was formed in 1948 and is responsible for natural heritage, where professional advice on properties with natural values is provided through the use of natural conservationists spread worldwide. In addition to the above

advisory bodies, there is the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) responsible for providing expert advice on the conservation of cultural sites and training when and where needed (World Heritage Information Kit, 2008: 3-13).

In 2003, UNESCO created the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This Convention was developed after determining that the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) failed to accommodate “intangible qualities of human culture” (Alzahrani, 2013: 9). It was after the 2003 convention that the use of the term ‘cultural property’ was discontinued, and the term ‘cultural heritage’ took centre stage and paved the way for ‘intangible heritage’ (Bendix and Hafstein, 2009: 6). The introduction of intangible heritage also incorporated indigeneity and the environment. Human (2019: 93) explained it as “the relationship between indigenous peoples and their natural environment”, describing the interlink between people and their environment that is expounded through the spiritual veneration of the natural surroundings. This addresses the interconnectedness of African spirituality, indigenous land tenure, knowledge custodianship and language.

As early as 1998, the IUCN and UNESCO recognised that some communities could not separate nature from their spiritual beliefs. Some natural sites were then known as sacred natural sites as they had special spiritual significance for their communities. Special status may be given to natural sites such as mountains, caves, forests, rivers, lakes, springs, and entire islands, depending on different spiritual beliefs worldwide. Aspects of sacred natural sites were communicated in several meetings (India 1998, China and South Africa 2003, Mexico and Japan 2005, Spain 2006, Mongolia, Greece, and the UK 2007). These led to the publication of the “Sacred Natural Sites Guidelines for Protected Areas Managers”. This publication provides six principles for the management of such sites:

1. To recognise sacred natural sites that are already located in protected areas;
2. To integrate sacred natural sites located in protected areas into planning processes and management programmes;
3. To promote stakeholder consent, participation, inclusion and collaboration;

4. To encourage improved knowledge and understanding of sacred natural sites;
5. To protect sacred natural sites while providing appropriate management access and use; and
6. To respect the rights of sacred sites custodians within an appropriate national policy framework (IUCN and UNESCO, 2008: 4-21).

Respect for the rights of sacred site custodians can be drawn from the 107th plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly held in 2007, which adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Articles 12, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 36 reserve the right for indigenous people to gain access to land where religious and cultural sites are located to practice their spiritual and religious traditions and maintain relationships with the land as part of their spiritual beliefs. At the same time, they are afforded the right to the conservation and protection of the environment while keeping the socio-political, cultural, and spiritual relationship with their own members from whom they may be separated by international borders. The state is also empowered to recognise and protect the land and resources of indigenous people and establish customs and land tenure systems with the participation of indigenous people in these processes (United Nations, 2007).

Despite the above developments in the world arena, Di Giovine (2022: 213-214) has noted many challenges that still prevail when it comes to the nomination of religious and spiritual sites as World Heritage Sites as some sites lose their spiritual significance over time, some may be subject to multiple contesting interpretations and many cultures may not distinguish between the sacred and the secular, which makes it difficult to link spiritual value that is expressed through sacred travel to the natural environment.

3.4 REGIONAL HERITAGE CONTEXT: AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

The African Union (a body founded in 2002 to succeed the Organisation of African Unity) has a charter for African Cultural Renaissance adopted in 2006 to replace the 1976 Cultural Charter for Africa. Amongst many things, the charter commits African states to the African Union to adopt the African Position Paper on the State of the World Heritage in Africa and establish the African World Heritage Fund as a means to

protect African cultural heritage. It encourages the development of African languages by formulating and implementing language policies that can contribute to the advancement of the cultures and heritages of African member states and facilitate social and economic development. The charter recognises elders and traditional leaders as cultural stakeholders who should be integrated into modern conflict resolution mechanisms and an intercultural dialogue system.

The overarching objectives and principles of the charter are as follows (African Union, 2006):

(a) To assert the dignity of African men and women as well as the popular foundation of their culture;

(b) To promote freedom of expression and cultural democracy, which is inseparable from social and political democracy;

(c) To promote an enabling environment for African people to maintain and reinforce the sense and will for progress and development;

(d) To preserve and promote the African cultural heritage through preservation, restoration and rehabilitation;

(e) To combat and eliminate all forms of alienation, exclusion and cultural oppression everywhere in Africa;

(f) To encourage cultural cooperation among member states with a view to the strengthening of African unity through the use of African languages and the promotion of intercultural dialogue;

(g) To integrate cultural objectives in development strategies;

(h) To encourage international cultural cooperation for a better understanding among people within and outside Africa;

(i) To promote in each country the popularisation of science and technology, including traditional knowledge systems (also called indigenous knowledge systems in many contexts) as a condition for better understanding and preservation of cultural and natural heritage;

(j) To strengthen the role of culture in promoting peace and good governance;

(k) To develop all the dynamic values of the African cultural heritage that promote human rights, social cohesion and human development;

(l) To provide African people with the resources to enable them to cope with globalisation.

Negri (2005: 6) observed that most heritage policies and pieces of legislation in African countries came into being after independence. While it could have been the desire to implement new heritage legislation based on an African perspective as part of the decolonisation project, this could not be realised because of the "public and administrative bodies" entrenched in Africa and its hybrid postcolonial societies. Therefore, legislation was shaped by existing structures and followed European models that were characterised by the concept of "protection of cultural property", omitting any mention of relevant precolonial customary laws (Negri, 2005: 7). This arrangement is a testament to the fraught and complex unfolding of the process of decolonisation in African countries after independence where political power may have been vested in a new African ruling class. However, in these new hybrid societies, economic, educational, religious, and legal institutions remained subject to European colonial influence. These dynamics are discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.5 of this thesis.

According to Ndoro and Pwiti (2005), Madiba (2005), Eboreime (2009), and Ndlovu (2011), heritage policies and legislation in sub-Saharan Africa lack community involvement and are silent on intangible heritage. For Ndoro (2008: 25), many pieces of heritage legislation in African countries were not amended since the declaration in the 1960s and 1970s. However, a few, such as that of South Africa and Botswana, were amended from the 1990s onwards to incorporate the "perceptions, lifestyle and culture" of indigenous people.

When the concept of heritage expanded, it was also exported to European colonised countries in Africa, where it imitated the management and protection systems of the colonising country (Sorensen and Carman, 2009: 16). The adoption of European heritage legislation also influenced how its meaning was derived and the language it used. What is protected through heritage legislation, especially in English-speaking countries, is defined in the title of the legislation. African heritage legislation is dominated by tangible heritage in the form of built heritage, monuments, artefacts and or objects from the past, except for Nigerian legislation, for example, which explicitly identifies ancestral figures, religious masks and works of art of indigenous origin as part of the objects protected under the legislation. Lesotho's legislation has incorporated natural heritage, which is quite rare in the African context. Land "which

has distinctive or beautiful vegetation" also falls under monuments protected by legislation in countries such as Malawi and Lesotho. Zambia's legislation is presented as one of the few in Africa that accommodated ancient cultural and natural heritage from the time of its inception (Hall, 2008).

While some countries may seem to base the criteria of heritage protection on the period before colonisation, in some African countries, heritage protection somehow coincides with the European colonisation of Africa. For example, Zambia recognises relics that were produced before 1 January 1924, when it became a British protectorate, while Ghana uses 1900 for the recognition of heritage assets to be worthy of protection, four years after it became a British Protectorate in 1896 and the Golden Stool which symbolises the Asantehene's power[8] was hidden by the King's loyal servants. In 1900, Britain announced the discovery of the gold stool, which provoked a rebellion (Ndoro, 2008: 25-27).

Table 1 demonstrates the influence of European heritage legislation on African countries. The table presents the current heritage legislation. The general view is that most of the African heritage legislation is more focused on tangible heritage, whereas the legislations from Liberia and Ethiopia (two countries that were not colonised) are more focused on intangible, which can attest to the fact that the African approach to heritage differs from that of Europe.

Table 1: Heritage legislation of selected African countries

Colonial Empire	Country	Title of Act	Protected Items
Britain	Lesotho	The Historical Monuments, Relics Fauna and Flora Act No. 41 of 1967	Monuments, relics, fauna and flora
	Malawi	Monuments and Relics Act 1965	Monuments, antiquity, group of buildings, works of humanity
	Zambia	National Heritage Conservation Commission Act No 23 of 1989	Cultural and natural heritage relics (pre-1924) and historical, pre-historic, archaeological or scientific objects

[8] The Asantehene is the ruler of the Ashanti people in Ghana.

	South Africa	National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999	Heritage resources of South Africa, which are of cultural significance and other special value for the present community and future generations
France	Mali	Law No. 85-40/AN-RM of 26 July 1985 relates to protecting the national cultural heritage	Movable and immovable cultural properties which, for religious or secular reasons, are important for history, art, thought, science and technology
	Burkina Faso	Law No. 024-2007 Relating to Cultural Heritage protection in Burkina Faso	Cultural, natural, movable, immovable, immaterial, public or private, religious or profane properties whose preservation or conservation presents a historical, artistic, scientific, legendary or picturesque interest
Not colonised	Ethiopia	Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage Proclamation No. 209 / 2000	Cultural heritage (age-old ways of life, labour, creativity)
	Liberia	Act to create the national council of chiefs and elders of the Republic of Liberia 2012	Liberian traditions, cultural heritage and traditional Institutions

Act to create the national council of chiefs and elders of the republic of Liberia, 2012; Research and conservation fo cultural heritage proclamation No. 209 / 2000; Law No. 024-2007 Relating to Cultural Heritage protection in Burkina Faso; Law No. 85-40/AN-RM of 26 July 1985 relating to the protection of the national cultural heritage; National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999; National Heritage Conservation Commission Act No 23 of 1989; Monuments and Relics Act 1965; The Historical Monuments, Relics Fauna and Flora Act No. 41 of 1967.

Silverman (2015: 128) described how in Ghana, the *Marena* were empowered during the founding of the nation in 1957, which brought about the recognition of 80-90% of Ghana's land as stool property. Stool property refers to ancestral property that the chiefs may administer on behalf of the community or where the head of the family may be responsible for looking after the property for the benefit of all family members and not for personal gain. Any profits generated from this property can be shared amongst all community members or family members in the case of the family. Because of the ancestral attachment to the property, most of them are regarded as sacred. A forest can be one example of a stool property where the *Marena* may permit the community

to cultivate and harvest trees for building, crafts, and healing (as some have medicinal value). This authority to utilise sacred resources is offset by the responsibility and care that must also be taken to preserve the trees of the sacred forest for future generations. With this arrangement, *Marena* in Ghana can contribute to heritage development projects by providing and managing land (Kingsley, 2013: 366).

3.5 LOCAL HERITAGE CONTEXT (SOUTH AFRICA)

Ndlovu (2011: 33-36) provided a historical background of South African Heritage legislation by structuring it into three parts, namely the period of the Union of South Africa (1910-1948), the apartheid period (1948-1990) and democratic South Africa (1994-present). South African heritage legislation started as the Bushmen Relics Protection Act No. 22 of 1911. This legislation was meant to protect rock art panels extracted from South Africa's caves and taken to museums around the world. The second notable legislation framework became known as the Natural, Historical and Monuments Act No. 6 of 1923. While the above legislation operated simultaneously at the beginning, they were later merged to form the Natural and Historical Monument, Relics and Antiques Act No. 4 of 1934 (amended in 1937 and 1967). During the apartheid era, the National Monuments Act No. 28 of 1967 was declared (amended in 1970, 1971, 1975, 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1986) to replace the National and Historical Monuments, Relics and Antiques as amended in 1967. This Act became the longest-surviving legislation, only to be replaced by the National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999 (NHRA).

Since 1994, heritage has become a trendy phenomenon in South Africa that is interpreted differently by the diverse groups of the country including government. The previously marginalised black community use heritage as a form of empowerment through which they valorise and preserve their cultural beliefs, honour the contribution made by liberation heroes and authenticate their neglected stories suffering and sacrifices. The white community demonstrate patriotism and strong emotional attachment to their embattled heritage “even if they no longer identify with the specific symbolic values” inherent in their heritage. The state has employed heritage as a platform for “fostering the political goals of nation building, reconciliation and unity”

while also positioning heritage as a vehicle for employment and income generation through tourism (Marschall, 2010).

In South Africa, heritage is categorised through a grading system: Grade I heritage resources are resources with national significance, Grade II signifies heritage resources valued at provincial level and Grade III are resources relevant to communities at local level. In line with the grading system, the NHRA employs a three-tier system of heritage resources management. The grading system is administered through three tiers of governance: national, provincial, and local levels. There are independent bodies of authority designated to the above grades and levels of management according to Section 23 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999), namely the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) at the national level, Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities (PHRAs) as well as Local Heritage Authorities. Grade 1 resources are the responsibility of the national body, SAHRA; Grade II heritage resources are found and managed at the provincial level and Grade III heritage resources at the local level and fall under the authority of districts or local municipalities (Kotze and Van Rensburg, 2003: 16).

Since the declaration of the National Heritage Resources Act in 1999, it is only the KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape provinces that have fully functional Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities as mandated by Section 23 of the NHRA (No. 25 of 1999), namely Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali and Heritage Western Cape. Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali was formed under the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Heritage Act (No. 10 of 1997) following the amalgamation of the KwaZulu-Natal Office of the National Monuments Council and KwaZulu Monuments Council in 1997, two years before the NHRA was promulgated (Ndlovu, 2011: 36).

In the Free State, the arrangement was to incorporate the services of the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority within the Provincial Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation. This arrangement functioned with the Geographical Names Committee and the Heritage Permit Committee. Members of the two committees are elected every five years, while the staff members supporting the committee are permanent employees of the department. Under this arrangement, the

two sacred sites (Mantsopa and Witsie's Cave) forming part of this study were nominated and declared.

South Africa also has the National Heritage Council established in terms of the National Heritage Council Act 11 of 1999. The council is mandated to advise the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture on matters pertaining to heritage preservation and promotion by providing funding for heritage projects initiated by individuals and non-profit organisations or companies, working with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the heritage sector is transformed and to facilitate effective management of heritage resources. The council consists of five members nominated by the citizens of South Africa and appointed by the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture. Additional members of the council are representatives from the nine provincial authorities nominated by the members of executive councils responsible for Arts and Culture, together with chairpersons of the Council of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), the National Archives Commission, the Heraldry Council, Board of the National Library, the Councils of the North and South Flagship Institutions (NHCA 11 of 1999).

One of the main challenges for the Mohokare Valley sacred sites in terms of heritage legislation is that in the Free State, local heritage authorities are non-existent. Where local heritage resource authorities do not exist, the option may be to delegate the management of Grade III heritage resources to local *Marena* (indigenous leaders). However, the NRHA is silent on the role of *Marena,* whom they trusted in the past with the custodianship of the sites of cultural significance (Ndoro and Kiriama, 2008: 53).

Chiefs in South Africa by Oomen (2005) illustrates the dilemma faced by the institution of traditional leadership in South Africa. According to Oomen (2005), even though *Marena* is given power on paper, in practice, these powers are circumscribed by the confines drawn by the bureaucracy. The challenges of indigenous authorities range from landlessness to power contestation within local councils. This situation affects their roles and responsibilities, which are elaborated on in this study when discussing the challenges of heritage management.

South African Natural Protected Areas are managed under the National Environmental Management: Projected Areas Act, 57 of 2003 (NEMPAA). NEMPAA (2003) provides for the protection and management of special nature reserves (Section 18), national parks (Section 20), natural reserves (Section 23) and protected environment (Section 28). A declaration for a protected environment may be issued to protect the area if the area is sensitive to development due to its scientific, cultural, historical, archaeological, or geological value (NEMPAA, 57, 2003, 28, (2), (iii): 24).

The Act further sets the norms and standards for protected areas as stipulated in the NEMPAA. Amongst others, the Act provides guidelines, ensuring that a cultural heritage resources inventory for the protected area is maintained and that management of cultural heritage resources meets the objective of the protected area as per management plans and in terms of the South African Heritage Resources Agency requirements, as well as that commercial tourism, where applicable contributes to the protected area objective and that a protected area provides substantive socio-economic benefits to the local area, where appropriate (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014: 7, 16-17).

Chapter 3 of NEMPAA Norms and Standards for the Management of Protected Areas in South Africa (2014) sets a precedent for reporting to national management authorities, provincial management authorities and management authorities which are not organs of state. Management authorities responsible for protected areas on private land are to report annually to the MEC by the end of April on their progress towards meeting and maintaining the norms and standards (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014: 28).

3.6 LIMITATIONS OF HERITAGE LEGISLATION AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR THE MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES

3.6.1 Eurocentric interpretation of heritage

Chapter 2 illustrated that Mohokare Valley sacred sites are viewed as heritage sites even though some are not formally declared. Since the declaration of the National Heritage Resources Act 25, 1999, Mohokare Valley sacred sites have been

experiencing numerous challenges that were not resolved under the Act. Despite being commended as a fine piece of legislation, the NHRA represents a Eurocentric interpretation of heritage that does not seem to accommodate African ideas of heritage.

The observation in Section 3.2.1 about the evolution of Heritage Studies as a field in the Global North and Western academies, subsequently strongly influenced by Eurocentric interpretations of heritage, confused many people (scholars and ordinary people) when interpreting heritage from an African perspective. Whereas Eurocentric approaches to heritage are exclusive, Afrocentric perspectives of heritage are inclusive. In Sesotho, terms such as *lefa* exist, meaning inheritance or *Mojalefa* (a name mostly given to firstborn baby boys, meaning the inheritor). *Lefa,* in this context, refers to the inheritance of family properties that do not become individual property but remains in the family for generations. *Mojalefa* means the one entrusted with this property is only a caretaker, not a sole proprietor. The same goes for customs and beliefs practised by each family. Those customs and beliefs practised at the family level are also assimilated into a clan and a nation. This means that the notion of heritage amongst the Basotho is more constructed around identity, which may be a way of life, whereas, with a Eurocentric interpretation, a choice is made at a specific time by a specific group with a national identity based on heroes and monuments. It is only today that many nations are working on recreating heritage based on a "new identity" that includes aboriginal people and pre-colonial history (Dormaels, 2002: 108 - 113).

Heritage is a term associated with different meanings of multiple origins. According to Josefsson and Aronsson (2016: 2092), English uses heritage based on the Latin words "*heres"*, which later became "*hereditas*", which is also associated with "arv", referring to legacy. Heritage was first applied as "cultural property" after the Second World War when nations had to cooperate in respecting "cultural property" through UNESCO as an international body that drafted recommendations that were adopted into general laws of cultural properties. Conventionally, material aspects were paramount in defining heritage, and what was known as heritage was only limited to monuments, buildings, sites, artefacts, and objects from the past (Petti et al., 2019:

2532; Ndoro, 2008: 25). The use of the term “property” demonstrates that the focus was on tangible heritage.

3.6.2 Heritage and language

For Rouhi (2017: 7110), ‘heritage’ is one of the most complicated words in the English language. The complexity of heritage is particularly evident when translated into other languages. For example, the figure below shows a list of words taken from the official languages of South Africa, including Sesotho. Heritage in Sesotho is referred to as *letlotlo*. However, the meaning of the word *letlotlo* in Sesotho is “treasure”. A word meaning inheritance in Sesotho is *lefa,* as seen in Section 3.5.1. My engagement with the participants of this study has illustrated how complex heritage can be when translated into other languages, as none of the participants actually used the Sesotho word for heritage, *letlotlo* as illustrated below. The Sesotho quotes are directly followed by the English translation.

> *Ha profensing re kaba le sebaka seka kgethwang ele heritage, etla tsamaiswa ke mmuso (Morena Moloi, 5/11/2021).* (If we can have a place identified as heritage, it is best if it is managed by government (Morena Moloi, 5/11/2021).
>
> *Dibaka tse ngata tsa heritage rea bona di porofenseng tse ding di boemong bo hodimo (Maphale Moloi, 5/11/2021). (*We can see that many heritage sites are well taken care of in other provinces (Maphale Moloi, 5/11/2021).
>
> *…Ya bobedi ebe seriti sa di heritage site tsa rona mme hobe le tsamaiso e ntle (Maphale Moloi, 5/11/2021). (*The second one should be the figure of four heritage sites that must be effectively managed (Maphale Moloi, 5/11/2021).
>
> *Taba ya heritage ha re e nka re e beha mona rere mmuso o tlotla [e sireletsa]…Ngaka Ncala. (*If we take our heritage and place it under government [for preservation]…Ngaka Ncala, 5/11/2021)

The confusion can be derived from the concept of heritage being something valuable which, in most cases from the English language, can be tangible. In Sesotho, there are many intangible things that one may inherit. The slide below shows heritage to mean *letlotlo* in Sesotho.

Figure 3: Slide presentation showing heritage translated into South African official languages

Dormaels (2002) has also noted how complex the notion of heritage has been, even amongst European nations and unpacked the choice of the English to use 'heritage' over 'patrimony'.

> *This means that researchers must understand the context and the way heritage is expressed, a complicated task if they do not master the language and all the more necessary given that articulation of the heritage objects is not fixed and frozen in its original utterance…Understanding heritage phenomena thus depends not merely on their utterance and master of their language of production but also on knowledge of the social, cultural and historical context of this (language-based) production (Dormaels, 2013: 108-109).*

3.6.3 Living heritage attachment

Literature on heritage shows that, for the most part, in South Africa, heritage was seen as sites of natural significance and monuments that commemorated colonial and

apartheid legacies. It was only after 1999 when the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) was promulgated that in South Africa, aspects of intangible heritage (referred to as living heritage in the Act) were considered worthy of preserving for future generations. European countries only acknowledged the interdependence between tangible and intangible heritage in 2003 through the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Petti et al., 2019: 2532).

However, critics of heritage legislation in Africa, such as Ndlovu (2011), do not see this recognition of living heritage as sufficient to set the NHRA apart from other pieces of legislation:

> *The Act is not necessarily about the conservation of living heritage. Instead, as a heritage resources legislation, it is about protecting and conserving sites that have a connection to living heritage in order to provide access to those who may wish to perform various ritual activities* (Ndlovu, 2011: 32).

Ndlovu argues that Africans approach life holistically, emphasising the interrelatedness and interdependence of all things (e.g., interdependence between humans, spirituality, and the environment). In terms of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, the ritual practices performed at the sites make them more significant. Van Beek (2014: 41-52) revealed that some sites or objects only become sacred during the ritual performance and can acquire normal status (profane) when not in use. Masoga and Nel (2014: 71-87) provided the following practical example: an anthill that, even though it has medicinal powers, those powers can be evoked when a ritual is performed on it and when used with other medicines. In all the rituals, the use of candles is important. Candles provide light for the *Badimo* to see those who seek to communicate with them. When not used for this purpose, candles have no spiritual significance. The same goes for water, mostly found at sacred sites. Water may not differ in form, but people tend to attribute meaning to water flowing from a spring that comes from the sacred sites as having spiritual significance.

3.6.4 Sacred Sites

The research report on Oral Histories and the Cultural Uses of Clay at the Sacred Sites in the Eastern Free State (Cawood, 2010: 145) also recommended the development of a database of Eastern Free State sacred sites that should be used to inform the policy framework for sacred site protection. The focus of the above project was on the already known sacred sites such as the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. However, there may be many more sacred sites, given the definition offered by the above research project:

> *Places connected with communities/individuals' experience of a religion or spirituality and associative practices, including rituals and the act of pilgrimage (Cawood 2010: 30).*

This study has expanded the definition to accommodate places where the tragedy occurred, such as the Saulspoort Dam bus accident of 1 May 2003. On 25 September 2014, the Saulspoort Dam outside Bethlehem was renamed the Sol Plaatjie Dam by the then Premier of the Free State, Ms Beatrice Marshoff. Marshoff also unveiled a memorial (pictured below) to honour the 51 people who died as their bus plunged into the dam on 1 May 2003 while on their way to Qwaqwa to attend the Worker's Day Rally.

Image 16: Sol Plaatjie Monument erected in honour of the 51 people who died on 1 May 2003 (by M Ntlhabo)

According to Ntate Lenong (interviewed on 27 March 2022), the bus was travelling from Kimberly (the Sol Plaatjie Municipality) during the night to Qwaqwa. It is possible that the driver could have been tired or there was an issue with visibility because of the darkness. However, after the driver missed a turn that led to Qwaqwa, those who knew the area became concerned and alerted him that he had taken a wrong turn. The bus then increased speed, and passengers started screaming. Suddenly the bus came to an abrupt stop. At this time, the passengers realised water was coming into the bus. According to Ntate Lenong, an accident of this nature can happen when a person 'owes' their ancestors. 'Owing' the *Badimo* is a case where signs have been revealed to a person to conduct a certain ritual or to follow a calling, and the person has been dismissing the signs.

This memorial site is not declared a heritage site. However, the road sign giving directions to the memorial site depicts the name of the memorial and three crosses. The sign of three crosses is interpreted as a 'historical cemetery' in the South African

Road Traffic Sign Manual, Volume 2 (SA Department of Transport, 2012: 20). The memorial was officiated as a sacred site or a grave.

In the middle of the memorial, there is *mohlware*, an olive tree (*Olea Europea*). *Mohlware* is one of the plants protected by the Historical Monuments, Relics, Fauna and Flora Act 41, 1967 of Lesotho, where it is commonly used for spiritual purposes (Parliament of Lesotho, 1967). Besides being used as a walking stick that will be medicinally reinforced for physical and spiritual protection, it is also used as a form of protection against lightning and bad spirits (Moffat, 2010: 246). Traditionally, the sticks from *Mohlware* would be smeared with medicine and placed on a thatch roof just above the hut's entrance. It is also used when collecting the spirit of a person who has passed on elsewhere to take him or her to the final resting place (Mme Mamothibeli Sehlabo, interviewed on 02 March 2022).

3.6.5 Nature/Culture dichotomy

Heritage from the Eurocentric point of view has inherited the ‘capitalist modernity’ and ‘Christian theological philosophy’, where in the former, humans are superior to and can control and subjugate nature, and on the other side, the latter separates human beings from natural beings placing human beings above and in control of nature in the Great Chain of Being (Inglis and Bone, 2006: 274-275).

Articles 1 and 2 of the World Heritage Convention define cultural and natural heritage as two distinct ideologies. Article 1 links culture and nature, whereas Article 2 is silent on the interaction between humans and nature. This explains why the two fields are implemented separately under different professional bodies, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for Cultural Heritage and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for Natural Heritage (Leitao, 2017: 195-198).

Keitumetse (2011) critiqued this natural/cultural heritage dichotomy from the Afrocentric perspective in a paper titled *Sustainable Development and Cultural Heritage Management in Botswana: Towards Sustainable Communities,* arguing that:

> *Cultural resources are material (tangible) and non-material (intangible) remains of societies' past activities on the environment, which comprise archaeological remains, monuments and sites, cultural landscapes superimposed on the natural environment, local indigenous knowledge systems, folk-life and folklore, and traditional practices and rituals attached to the biophysical environment* (Keitumetse, 2011: 50).

The above divide is also evident in South Africa, where separate bodies of legislation deal with heritage and environment, such as the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA) and National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 (NEMPAA). Even though the NHRA accommodates environmental aspects under natural heritage and the NEMPAA recognises heritage enclosed within protected environmental areas, the former does not mention interactions with environmental management bodies, while the latter refers to agencies such as SAHRA for guidelines on the protection and maintenance of cultural heritage resources inventory within protected areas and requirements of management plans for cultural heritage resources (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014: 7-16).

3.6.6 Non-involvement of traditional custodians of heritage

The above-mentioned Western concept of heritage based on the disassociation between culture and nature has also alienated the traditional modes of heritage management where the community played a role as custodians of cultural heritage. Eboreime (2002: 2) noted that the top-down approach of heritage management and legislative frameworks do not allow for community participation. The National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, as a piece of legislation that gives precedence to the administration of heritage resources in South Africa, is clearly predicated on colonial principles that do not include traditional custodianship in the formal management of heritage resources (Jopela, Nhamo and Katsamudanga, 2012: 178). Traditional custodianship is described as follows:

> *All mechanisms and actions guided by customs and belief systems, carried out by local communities, which are aimed at the continuous use and preservation of the place, its values, and its surrounding environment, including the preservation of its symbolic and cosmological significance* (Jopela, 2011: 107).

Prior to colonialism, some African nations had a system of managing their sacred sites with elders, spiritual healers, or spirit mediums and *Marena* being vested with custodianship of the sites. Abungu and Ndoro (2008: viii) share examples of the role of elders in the Kaya sacred forests in Kenya, the Kasibu tomb of Buganda Kings in Uganda that was looked after by the King's sister in Uganda as well as the spiritual leaders/mediums as in Zimbabwe. In May 2021, President Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe unveiled a statue of Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana. This spirit medium oversaw the land of central and northern Mashonaland. It led the Shona and the Ndebele during their fight against the British over the British's Shonaland land invasion in 1890. Nehanda allowed herself to be captured to avoid the killing of more Zimbabweans and was hanged together with other people who resisted British rule (Gershon, 2021). The custodianship arrangement was disrupted during the colonial period, and traditional management systems were replaced with formal management, where professionals in heritage became the authority in their respective fields (Ndoro and Kiriama, 2002: 7; Jopela, 2011: 107).

Jopela (2011: 105) also acknowledges that most governments in Southern Africa have been unsuccessful in incorporating modern and traditional methods in heritage management, a state of affairs exacerbated by limited resources (financial and human). In terms of government administration priority scales, heritage is ranked the lowest. Chirkure (2013: 1-2) asserts that more attention should be paid to problems such as unemployment, disease, and hunger. A typical example may be the Free State (South Africa), where the unit dealing with issues of heritage operates with only two officials. These people have to deal with the coordination of the permit committee that grants permission for the demolition or renovation of buildings and structures older than 60 years in terms of Section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999). The same people also have to monitor over 200 provincial heritage sites that are spread throughout the province, consisting of colonial buildings, military cemeteries, graves of colonial leaders and streets named after colonial leaders and prominent people of the colonial and apartheid eras.

The Native Land Act of 1913 deprived black people of access to land. Phuhlisani (2017) presented a paper, "The role of land tenure and governance in reproducing and transforming spatial inequality", to the South African Parliament's high-level panel. It

highlighted the assessment of key legislation and the acceleration of fundamental change, extending the scope of land dispossession to the arrival of the Dutch in 1652 and categorising the process of dispossession into military, political, legislative, and economic factors. The above-mentioned process and factors also detached traditional communities from their traditional heritage sites, making it difficult for them to contribute to the management and maintenance of the sites.

Section 2.3 has demonstrated how the Basotho-Boer Wars of the mid-1800s contributed to the current borderline between Lesotho and the Free State. During approximately the same period in the 1800s, Mopeli Mokhachane (Moshoeshoe's younger brother), who was residing between the current towns of Ladybrand and Clocolan, relocated to Qwaqwa to make way for the farmers who had identified the fertile Mohokare Valley for farming purposes. This research contends that some challenges surrounding the Mohokare Valley sacred sites are caused by misunderstandings between the site users and the owners of properties within which the sacred sites are located. Dispossession of land negatively impacted the socio-economic livelihoods of (South) Africans and destroyed culture and spiritual well-being (Hall, 2015: 132). The removal of the Basotho from their homes in the 1800s meant that their graves and sacred sites fell within the properties of white settler farmers, thus making access difficult and leading to a disconnection between the Basotho people and their ancestors.

3.6.7 Graves and burial grounds sixty years clause

It has been difficult for many heritage practitioners to understand the logic behind protecting human remains only when they reach the age of 60 (Section 36, NHRA, 25 of 1999). The question posed by Ndoro (2011: 39) is, "what happens to human remains when they reach sixty?" According to Skosana (2017: 329), the cut-off date of 60 years was a continuation of the National Monuments Act of 1967 as an attempt to separate archaeological from historical artefacts. The assumption was that at 60 years, it could be difficult to trace the owners of the grave as people might have forgotten where the grave is or have relocated to other places.

This is in contradiction to the African spiritual belief where even just after death, the body of a person and the grave thereof remains spiritually significant as it is believed that the person has moved to the world of the ancestors. From an African spiritual perspective, there is little chance of people forgetting the location of the graves of their ancestors. People visit the graves regularly, even if they no longer stay in the area where the *Badimo* may have been buried.

3.6.8 Prioritisation of political heritage

The Constitution of South Africa positioned cultural heritage as a platform for social cohesion and nation-building. However, the nature of cultural heritage seems to be divisive rather than unifying. It focuses on individuals rather than the collective. Section 2.7 discussed how the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority sought to transform the heritage landscape of the province by mainly focusing on heritage linked to the liberation stewards of the African National Congress, ranging from their houses and graves as well as renaming streets in their honour. The recognition of Liberation Heritage products is based on Resolution 33C/29 of the Commission for Culture of UNESCO's 33rd General Conference in 2005 that recognise liberation struggle heritage as having universal values for the purpose of (NHC, 2013: 3):

- Recognising African liberation heritage as a common heritage of shared global values (human rights, freedom, democracy);
- Promoting dialogue amongst nations and cultures;
- Developing and promoting a culture of peace;
- Contributing to the memory of the world; and
- Generating data and databases that raise awareness of the African liberation heritage.

Recognising Liberation Struggle Heritage products puts them in a favourable position for World Heritage Status. As a contribution to the Liberation Heritage Route, the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, and Recreation has introduced the Liberation Heritage Museums unit managed by this researcher. This unit currently manages the Wesleyan Church School Hall Museum, which is the place of the formation of the

African National Congress in 1912, as well as the Winnie Madikizela-Mandela house museum in Brandfort, where Winnie Mandela was banished to from 1977 to 1985. The two museums are declared National Heritage Sites under the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999.

The developments mentioned above and the heritage landscape transformation that is taking place in the country are part of the legacy of the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme, which pledged that "there will be more libraries, museums, galleries, monuments and historical sites which will reflect our differing cultures and be accessible to communities" (ANC, 1994).

3.6.9 Westernisation of cultural heritage

Josefsson and Aronsson (2016: 2094) agree with Smith and Waterton (2009), who suggested that the notion of universal values that a heritage site must possess in order to make it onto the list of World Heritage sites is coined from a Western perspective and explains why most World Heritage sites are found in Europe. Statistics published in July 2021 show Europe leading all the continents of the world with 503 World Heritage sites, followed by Asian Pacific Countries and Latin American and Caribbean countries with 277 and 146 sites, respectively. Africa is fourth on the list with 98 sites but is ahead of Arab states with 88 sites and North America with only 42 World Heritage sites (UNESCO, 2021).

The World Heritage sites in South Africa were declared as such based on universal values of either cultural or natural significance linked to tangible heritage, while none were declared based on intangible heritage value even after the promulgation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003). The universal approach has taken the form of what Smith and Waterton (2009: 27) called Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD). This describes a situation where certain aspects of heritage are imposed on people even if they do not understand and appreciate it. This situation also leads to "uninherited heritage", something that they cannot associate with but have to embrace because their heritage has taken the position of "inherited non-heritage". The inherited non-heritage is the kind of heritage that, even if people want to celebrate it, is not regarded as heritage from the Western

or the authority's point of view. Ancestral spirituality venerated at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites was not regarded as part of heritage during the colonial and apartheid eras. It only became tenable as living heritage through the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999.

3.6.10 Approaches to heritage management

The three tiers of heritage management in South Africa position the first level of heritage resources at the national level, which is the top level, and the lowest at the local level. Following this approach, the South African Heritage Resources Agency was founded in 2000 as the highest body of heritage administration. Focusing on the Free State Province, the Free State Heritage Resource Authority was established in 2006, seven years after the declaration of the Act (NHRA, 1999). At the time of this research, which makes the Act 21 years old, there was not one local authority in the province. Thus, while SAHRA managed the Level I heritage resources, the provincial authority had to take responsibility for provincial and local resources. The whole process shows that Heritage Resources Management is approached from the top, trickling down to the bottom.

Sites representing colonial and apartheid eras are concentrated in towns or urban areas where the administration offices are located as opposed to sites representing local inhabitants, such as the sacred sites of this research, which are mostly found in rural areas. The lack of local heritage authorities makes it difficult for communities at local level to preserve and promote their heritage. In most cases, issues of sacred sites, especially those of tragedies or disasters, are normally proposed by the victims' families. This marks a clear differentiation between official and vernacular memorialisation. Official memorialisation is conventionally a state-initiated project that is aimed at maintaining the loyalty of its citizens, whereas vernacular memorialisation is a form of remembrance driven by ordinary people in creating shrines and narratives (Kovtiak, 2020: 52).

In general, there are two scenarios where the commemoration of sites can come about due to events of tragedy or disaster initiated by the community at local level, called vernacular memorialisation and formal memorialising led by some form of authority

such as the state, province, or local municipality (top-to-bottom). The memorialisation of the Harmelen train tragedy in the Netherlands is an example of community-led memorialisation. According to Faro (2014: 119-121), it took the Netherlands government over 50 years to finally accept the request to build a memorial for the 1962 Harmelen train tragedy. The process was stalled because most of the people associated with the tragedy did not reside near where the accident occurred. The people staying near the place did not see the monument's significance, and the officials of the municipality to which Harmelen belonged did not feel any relation or connection to the disaster. Only when one of the descendants of the victims of Harmelen published his family history on the website featuring the Harmelen disaster in 2009 did many people show interest.

> *The site turned into a nationwide 'forum' for all people who had, in one way or the other, been related to the Harmelen disaster. When the mayor of Woerden (in the meantime, Harmelen had become part of the city of Woerden), following the emerging attention on the disaster, was asked in 2010 to organise the 50th commemoration, he had concerns whether this would open up 'old wounds'. But he received an overwhelming amount with positive emails, and plans were developed to organise a day of commemoration and a memorial site which would be unveiled on January 8, 2012, exactly fifty years after the disaster* (Faro, 2014: 221).

The monument commemorating the 1962 Harmelen train tragedy is shown below.

Image 17: Harmelen train disaster memorial (sourced from Wikipedia on 20 November 2020).

The Harmelen train disaster memorial was a collective project of several families of victims of the train disaster. It was also supported by government. However, there are forms of numerous vernacular memorialisation mostly seen on the side of the roads in South Africa, such as those shown below:

Image 18 and 19 were taken between Tweespruit and Thaba Nchu on the N8 road leading to Ladybrand from Bloemfontein in the Free State, South Africa (by M. Ntlhabo)

Image 20: Taken on the R57 road 29 kilometres from Parys and 9 kilometres to Sasolburg in the Free State, South Africa (by M. Ntlhabo).

Image 21: Taken on the N5 road 25 kilometres from Bethlehem leading to Harrismith in the Free State, South Africa (by M. Ntlhabo)

The N8 (national road) between Bloemfontein and Botshabelo in central South Africa is a high accident zone where accidents occur every week. This road was upgraded and re-opened in 2014, but it did not curb the number of accidents on this road. The popular belief is that the accidents are caused by the spirits of the people who died on the road and whose spirits were not collected for a second re-burial. It Is believed that the spirits are haunting this place causing even more accidents. Ghost tours were registered as part activities of interest in the Mangaung Metro Municipality (Bloemfontein) from 2008 and gained popularity in 2010. According to one of the Ghost tour guides and spiritual healer, *Ngaka* Peter Maloro, there are many haunted places in Bloemfontein:

> *We take people to places like Presidency Museum, Military Museum, Old Raamkraal prison, Psychatric Hospital, Naval Hill and N8 road. N8 is the most haunted place, starting from Mahungra Car Wash to Botshabelo (Peter Maloro interviewed on 13 September 2022).*

Ghosts and haunted places have been recorded as new developments of dark heritage that are contributing to dark tourism (Thomas et al, 2019). On 7 August 2018, the then Executive Mayor of Mangaung Metro Municipality in the Free State Province of South Africa organised a prayer and erected a monument to honour those who died.

The pictures below show the state of the N8 monument from the day of the unveiling to its current state, with visible signs of neglect and vandalism. However, I would argue that this is evidence of uninherited heritage discussed in section 3.6.9 above.

Image 22 and 23 show the monument erected in honour of the people who died on the N8 Road to Botshabelo from Bloemfontein in the Free State, South Africa, already showing signs of neglect (by M. Nlthabo).

This section revealed the inherent link between heritage and spirituality and that spirituality informs heritage, as presented through the above examples of vernacular shrines memorialising the family members who died in road accidents.

3.7 HERITAGE AND SPIRITUALITY

As shown above, spirituality is an important factor in especially vernacular memorialisation and forms part of heritage. This link is also important in this research as the heritage of the sites under study is linked to the notions of sacredness in African spirituality. This section will unpack the meanings of religion and spirituality before narrowing the focus to African spirituality. Spirituality is general and African spirituality, in particular, is interpreted through micro, meso and macro views. The section also presents sacred sites as viewed in the international, regional, and local domains through notable cases that are viewed as sacred places for spiritual veneration.

3.7.1 Religion and African spirituality

Before spirituality can be explored as central to African gnoseology, as referred to in Section 1.9.18, it is important to distinguish between religion and spirituality in general and to narrow the focus to African spirituality. The concepts of spirituality and religion are sometimes used interchangeably in layperson's terms. However, as this discussion will show, they are distinct in nature. The word religion comes from the Latin root, *religio*, which signifies a bond between humanity and some greater-than-human power, while spirituality means 'breath of life' (Hill et al., 2001: 56-57). Spirituality is a consideration of meaning or ultimate purpose, and religion refers to the organised, institutionalised set of beliefs, teachings and practices established to connect groups or individuals to a particular expression of spirituality (Hutt and Robbins, 2003).

Heelas and Woodhead (2005: 12) differentiate between religion and spirituality as follows: "Religion asks you to learn from the experience of others. Spirituality urges you to seek your own". This means that religion has a predefined set of rules that one should abide by, whereas, with spirituality, one is free to set his or her own destination based on intuition. While Mbiti (1990: 16-17) partly supports the idea that Africans are religious, he also distinguishes between religion and spirituality by stating that religions have founders and are based on sacred scriptures, Jesus and the Bible for Christianity, Mohamed and the Qur'an for Islam, for example. His (Mbiti) explanation of spirituality is that major natural objects "like the sun, mountains, seas, lakes, rivers and boulders" are symbols of African spirituality (Mbiti, 1990: 76). This also means that:

> *Cultures can "hollow out" the spiritual content of religion and fill it, instead, with other things, including materialism, nationalism and fanaticism. Another metaphor is of religion as a vessel or jug, the spiritual contents of which can become spoiled or adulterated by other belief systems. Religion can still function as a source of social support and meaning under these circumstances and provide incentives to lead a healthy lifestyle. However, my contention here is that when spirituality withers, religion's social values is diminished because its transcendental dimension is lost or distorted (Eckersley, 2007: 55).*

The interchangeable usage of the concepts of religion and spirituality led Zahan (1970: 14-15) to argue that all African people are profoundly religious even though the number and nature of their beliefs are extremely varied. In line with this, he cited the example of hunting expeditions and the nomadic nature (of African people) as religious exercises.

The interpretation of spirituality through micro, meso and macro level analyses reveals areas of overlap with religion. For example, despite journeys undertaken by individuals for spiritual purposes, it has been discovered that religious groups (e.g., ZCC) would also embark on spiritual journeys at the same time. However, items such as olive trees, candles, and sometimes, the Bible can also be used when spiritually connecting to *Modimo* (God) or *Badimo* (ancestors). These items are thus used for religious purposes. However, while those overlaps exist, religion and spirituality are not synonymous. When people are engaged at the micro level, they are, in most cases, not led by anyone but use their instincts based on their spiritual belief, while at the meso and macro levels, people will have leaders of rituals to be performed with set rules and instructions which will then be taking a religious form (Herzog et al., 2020). Based on the literature consulted and the understanding of the influence of colonialism, modernisation and globalisation, this study considered the syncretic and hybrid elements when interpreting spirituality and religion.

As discussed in Section 3.5.2 below, the interpretation of spirituality may differ from region to region. The Western approach to spirituality is based on Christianised theology. At the micro level, spirituality is associated with one's relationship with the Holy Spirit or participation in the divine life, whereas the meso level revolves around one's affiliation with denominations such as Presbyterians, Evangelicals and Catholics, for example. These denominations may also have schools of spirituality within them, which Waaijman (2007: 5) described as follows:

> *A spiritual way that derives from a source-experience around which an inner circle of pupils takes shape which is situated within the socio-cultural context in a specific way and opens a specific perspective on the future (Waaijman, 2007: 5).*

While the teachings may differ based on the specific denominations or schools of belief, people may be brought together because of their common values as Christians. This is interpreted as the macro level. From an African perspective, spirituality is interpreted at the micro level as a connection of oneself to one's higher self. This is based on the idea that Africans are spiritual beings by nature, and the spirit within them keeps them alive. The notions of Ubuntu and communalism denote the belief that all humans are interrelated and depend on each other for survival, thus representing the meso level. The macro level of spirituality is illustrated by the belief that all things are somehow interconnected. The interconnectedness is based on the belief that *Modimo* (God) may take many forms to show His presence to human beings, and therefore Africans see themselves as embedded in the environment and part of it (Olifile & Chakala, 2019: 11697-11699).

African spirituality manifests in complex and symbolic ways as illustrated in the volume edited by Okulopa (2000), titled *African Spirituality: Forms, Meanings and Expressions,* which offers interpretations of forms of African spirituality, African spirituality through ancestral veneration, African shrines, water deities, the transmission of African spirituality through art and music as well as how African spirituality influenced religion in Africa and America. Herein Zahan (2000: 3) reflects on the distinctive characteristics of African spirituality and the "so-called revealed religions" where the former is not based on original sin and redemption with the implication that there is no final judgement. Zahan's (2000: 10) reference to 'ancestral worship' and 'ancestral cult' is viewed as problematic in this research. There are important points about the transition from a human being to an ancestor where a person does not cease to exist but takes another form through death or may even become an ancestor before death.

In explaining the metamorphoses from human to ancestor, Kalu (2000: 57) emphasises that not all people become *Badimo*, but only those who lived a "morally worthy life and must have died a good death…and must have received a second or third burial". A good death would mean that one had died peacefully in his or her sleep, perhaps due to old age. A bad death may be due to disease, suicide or accidental death by lightning strike or drowning. This volume assisted in comparing and

contrasting African spiritual beliefs from different parts of Africa and America and informed the theoretical framework of this study and its recommendations.

The idea of a second or third burial links to *ho lata mofu*, a Basotho ritual of collecting the spirit from where the person died before the actual burial can take place. Faro (2014) called it 'grassroots memorial' or vernacular memorialisation. While the Basotho do not leave any sign that marks a place where a person died after collecting the spirit, the sight of crosses and wreaths alongside the roads in South Africa is common and mostly attributed to the white communities in South Africa. This demonstrates the importance of spirituality in heritage, as these physical signs mark a sacred place that came into being because of death and loss due to car accidents. As such, these sacred sites do not carry universal meaning but is of great significance for the specific families of a loved one who died there.

For Faro (2014: 113), grassroots memorials share certain characteristics. They are performative, subjective and instant. Performativity means grassroots memorialisation is aimed at transformative change, such as being consoled or coming to terms with the loss. Subjectivity points towards grassroots memorials as being created on the individual or personal level with profound private meaning. Grassroots memorialisation is also instant because they are erected shortly after the tragedy to mark personal loss. The notion of grassroots memorials or vernacular memorialisation is important in this research as it is generally linked to commemorating the spirit of the dead and its connection to a specific place. This points to an interconnection between African spirituality and land as illustrated by Kalu (2000: 58) to be the semi-savanna and areas located along waterways in the case of northern Igbo, Nigeria, and Wicker (2000: 204), who discussed rivers and lakes as places that were deemed to be sacred according to African spirituality.

The micro sacred sites or grass roots memorialisation pose similar complexities as those of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. They are commonly found in contested spaces and remain unregulated and un-institutionalised in South Africa. This situation forms part of what Meskell (2010: 198) terms "conflict heritage" of which "the legal, political and ethical strata that underlie implicit tension over access, preservation and control of the material past in a volatile present" are taken into consideration. These

sites are also visited in the same way and for similar purposes that the sacred sites are visited for. As I intend to find solutions for the complexities surrounding sacred sites, it is my view that grassroots memorialisation should also be taken into consideration when policies relating to sacred sites are drafted. Even though they may be seen as temporary memorialisation, Thomas (2016: 27) has observed instances in Ireland where shrines are made permanent through the placing of a head stone. This trend is also now seen in South Africa (see Image 20 above).

3.7.2 African spirituality and land

African spirituality is indelibly linked to land; a spiritual connection disrupted during the colonial era. Nel (2014a: 130-143) attributes the inherent hybridity and ownership contestation of the sacred sites in the Mohokare Valley to the missionary activities that were well established in Lesotho, as well as the historical border conflicts of the 1800s. These events resulted in the alienation of the Basotho from their ancestral land and from the spiritual sites strongly associated with ancient religious kinship when these sites fell under the private ownership of farmers after Lesotho's borders were redefined. The argument is extended by Akuffo (2009: 65), who argues that ownership of land under customary law is community or group-based:

> *Ownership of land in the accepted English sense is unknown. Land is held under community ownership and not, as a rule, by the individual as such. The notion of individual ownership (of land) is quite foreign to [African] ideas. The land belongs to the community, the village or the family, never to the individual (Akuffo, 2009: 65).*

Indigenous people construct their teachings around the belief that at certain places, there is a sacred ambience that can and does empower human consciousness and spirituality (Battiste & Henderson, 2000: 66). However, because places continually reflect the dynamic processes of shifting meanings, they are vulnerable to contestation by various interested parties, a point aptly demonstrated regarding sacred sites in particular (Chidester & Linenthal, 1995: 1-42). Various groups have strongly vested interests in particular places. These interests may be economic, political, religious, moral, aesthetic, nostalgic, or a combination of these. When the interests of different

groups are at odds, places can become the focus of intense conflicts (Bremer, 2006: 27).

To address the matter of sacred sites situated within private property, Swepston et al. (1985: 93-94) emphasised the United Nations Special Rapporteur of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations and its consideration of the whole range of emotional, cultural, spiritual, and religious considerations present where the relationship with land is concerned. They (Swepston et al., 1985: 98) suggested that international standards should include a provision that the government of a country with indigenous and tribal persons within its borders should take immediate steps to delimit the land, allocating it, by whatever legal arrangements, to these people.

To put the above into perspective, it is necessary to revisit literature providing a historical background of Africa's current condition. In pre-colonial times, the indigenous people of South Africa had access to abundant land, with farming and herding being the predominant economic activities (Du Plessis, 2011: 48). The concept of 'ownership' was therefore limited in pre-colonial South Africa and more often embedded in status relationships (Du Plessis, 2011: 49). The African indigenous law on property was more concerned with people's obligations towards one another in respect of property than with the rights of people regarding property. The relationships between people were more important than an individual's ability to assert his or her interest in property against the world. Entitlements to property were in the form of obligations resulting from family relationships rather than a means to exclude people from using certain property.

Property in pre-colonial Africa can thus be said to have been embedded in social relationships rather than giving rise to an individual's exclusive claim over it as private property. This also links directly to the study of African indigenous religious traditions by Dodson et al. (2010: 283) that described Africans as "the people of the land". Thus, there continue to be communities worldwide that are descendants of original human occupants of land space. The ways of living practised by such descendants exist in intimate association with a land space, one another, and the universe while sustaining aspects of their sacred practices through time. The interconnectedness of African

spirituality and land and how spaces can be transformed into sacred places manifest in the notion of sacred sites, as discussed in the following section.

3.7.3 Sacred sites

Sacred sites are places connected with communities or individuals' experience of a religion or spirituality and associative practices, including rituals and the act of pilgrimage (Cawood, 2010: 30). Their sacred character can arise from human acts of the consecration of buildings, shrines, and burial sites, from miraculous events, or the presence of revered persons and late places of great tragedy (Collins, 2003: 241).

Sacred sites differ in terms of either being places recognised by indigenous people or places respected by different religious or faith institutions as places for worship and remembrance. Many indigenous and traditional communities, as well as religious and faith institutions, give special sacrality to sites such as mountains, rivers, lakes, caves, forest groves, coastal waters, entire islands, temples, burial sites of ancestors, places of pilgrimage as well as sites associated with special events. Sacred sites can be small areas, sometimes found on private land or the entire landscape (Oviedo, Jeanrenaud and Gland, 2005: 3-4). Eliade (1963: 153) builds a notion of a 'perfect sacred place' around a complex of water, trees, caves, and mountains.

Notably, sacred sites are structured around different belief systems of the world. Without following any order, the examples are drawn from Christianity, Islam, Jewish, Hinduism, Buddhism, Indigenous American beliefs, and African spirituality. Christian sacredness is conceptualised around the idea of "specific locations that were associated with important individuals and their places of teaching, healings, and/or martyrdom" (Simmins, 2008: 30). The entire city of Jerusalem is believed to be the most sacred place according to Christianity. It is here that Jesus first visited the Temple during his childhood and where He was determined to deliver His message. It is also the place where He first appeared after His resurrection. Early Christians believed the second coming of Jesus was based on the understanding that the current Jerusalem was earthly. There was going to be the heavenly Jerusalem that was going to be "the final destiny of the world". However, this changed when the coming of the New

Jerusalem was “delayed”, and Rome became the new epicentre and the most revered sacred place (Simmins, 2008: 30-31).

According to Christian dogma, Peter, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, became the foundation (or rock) of Christianity after the Ascension of Jesus Christ. The transfer of sacredness from Jerusalem follows the journey taken by St Peter to Rome, where he spent several years spreading Christianity and was buried at Vatican Hill. His remains are now said to be kept beneath the Basilica, which is a sacred site, a place consecrated in his name by Emperor Constantine (Trono and Oliva, 2017: 18). St Peter’s Basilica is one of the world’s biggest churches and the most visited Christian sacred site, followed by the Basilica of St Mary, Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, and the Basilica of St John the Baptist.

Even though in the Islamic faith that Allah (God) is everywhere, the adoption of sacred places also occurred. For example, Mecca was the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammed and Medina was where the Prophet died. As in Christianity, Jerusalem is another important Islamic sacred place:

> *[This is] because of the Dome of Rock, the oldest existing mosque, dating from 690-2, and [being] the place where prophet Mohammed (P) ascended to heaven on a night journey from which he returned with the instructions about how Muslims were to pray (Simmins, 2008: 41).*

Unlike in Islam, where everything is believed to be sacred because Allah is believed to be everywhere, Native Americans believe that only certain parts of the land are sacred, which are the “embodiment of spiritual beings”. The sacredness is constructed around areas surrounding burial sites, in areas where specific natural products are found or in areas where their religious events take place (Zarsky, 2006: 8). Native American places of spiritual significance have been described by Simmins (2008: 16) as mountains, caves, springs, rocks, and canyons where events such as sun dances, rain dances and rites of passage (transition from puberty to adulthood) take place.
The Jewish and Hindu people base their sacredness on the “vertical hierarchy of holiness” (seeing the world as increasingly holier the closer one is to the mountains). This is attested to by Biblical accounts from the Old Testament or *Torah* in relation to

Canaan, Mount Zion, and Sinai, which are associated with the Israelites and predates the building of temples as loci of sacredness. This later manifested in the building of temples and explained why temples resembled the shape of mountains and were often built on a hill (Simmins, 2008: 27-31).

African beliefs in sacredness are interpreted as tolerant and pluralistic (Olupona, 2000: xviii). African beliefs were not written in sacred scriptures like the Bible and Qur'an and identifiable founders, so they are adaptable and syncretic acquiring elements from other religions. However, even though there were similarities in African spirituality that allowed for the Africanisation of spirituality, spirit possession and veneration still remains a tension from the side of Christianity (Kleinhempel, 2017: 655). The notion of pluriversality is the product of decoloniality. The idea is to do away with a universal approach mainly based on the Eurocentric perspective. Pluriversality does not reject Eurocentric ideas but ensures that those ideas do not take centre stage but are made to coexist with "local histories, subjectivities, knowledge, narratives, and struggles against the modern/colonial order" that were relegated to the margins (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018: 3).

Tolerance creates pluralism because some African shrines may seem similar to Eurocentric religious expressions. On the other side, people do not need to create altars and temples because of the omnipresence of God (Abah, 2013: 117-120). The notion of *Badimo* as the mediator between *Modimo* and people is an important aspect of many African beliefs. Ancestral spirits are believed to be present in and on mountains, caves, rocks, stones, trees and groves. Notably, the Mbuti in eastern Zaire (now the DRC), Nuak and Dinka of southern Sudan, and the Kung San of Botswana and Namibia use open spaces as shrines (Ray, 2000: 30-31). While some places would remain permanent sacred places, such as burial grounds, some may acquire their sacredness only when in use or when events are practised (Masoga and Nel, 2014).

Zahan (2000: 17) explained that, especially in West Africa, trees, because of their areal nature, are believed to act as an "intermediary between human and spiritual powers" and that in most cases in Africa, there may not be a need to construct any building as natural places and objects can serve as altars, churches, and temples. The

idea of trees as spiritually significant is similar to the vertical hierarchies in the Jewish and Hindu faiths, while open-air temples are likened to what the Native Americans would call their sacred sites “natural churches” (Simmins, 2008; 27; Zarsky, 2006: 8). Religious vocabulary is seen here to dominate the discourse on indigenous sacred places, as is also the case with the Mohokare Valley sacred sites where altars, temples and churches are found and where some of the shrines at the sacred sites show influence from Eurocentric religious expressions as opposed to spirituality.

There are also manmade shrines in Africa that, according to Ray (2000: 26-27), can be as small as tree branches stuck to the ground, a normal size house or as big as two stories high and 80 feet in diameter, such as thatched roof shrines in Ganda that were made by the Buganda community of central Uganda. The Mohokare Valley sacred sites’ characteristics are similar to the sacred sites described in Section 2.4.1. The sites are located in secluded areas with trees, rocks, caves and running water from springs and fountains. However, there are also manmade altars, temples and shrines built by healers or pilgrims who claim to have been instructed by the *Badimo* (ancestors) to build the shrines as offerings and for veneration. These are similar to those described by Ray (2000), as seen in the picture below.

Image 24: Showing shrines inside Motouleng Caves (by M. Ntlhabo)

In Chapter 11 *(The Rhetoric or Ritual: Sacred Sites and the Oral Tradition in the Mohokare Valley)* of *Sacred Spaces and Contested Identities: Space and Ritual Dynamics in Europe and Africa*, Cawood (2014: 203-223) reveals the nature of oral narratives that were uncovered at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. The oral narratives are indicative of the liminality of either a certain space or a person occupying that space. They have been found to be based on certain myths derived from Biblical narratives, traditional legends or historical events that reveal the presence of *Modimo* (God) and *Badimo* (ancestors) at the sacred sites. The oral narratives also serve as a form of empowerment for individuals or groups narrating historical events that they either witnessed or were transmitted through the oral tradition. Narratives are, furthermore, embedded in certain localities within the broader sacred site while at the same time being influenced by narratives connected to the political economy of space and resources. These narratives are not homogenous but heterogeneous as divergent oral narratives come about because of diverse cultural representations claiming the same space and resources, a situation contributing to the complexities documented in Chapter 2 of this study.

The stories that make these sites meaningful relate first of all to a heuristic distinction between space and place. Space refers to an undifferentiated expanse lacking meaningful content. On the other hand, place distinguishes particular locales by punctuating the meaningless expanse of space with meaningfulness. The cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan stated, "'Space' is more abstract than 'place.' What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (Tuan 1977: 6). The value that distinctive communities or particular individuals attribute to a site differentiates it from other places and the monotonous expanse of space in general (Bremer, 2006: 25).

Sacred sites share certain features. They represent localities where places serve as an integral element in all social relations, both as a determinant of those relations and as a product of them. They also carry a temporal dimension where the meaningfulness of a particular place relies on cultural assumptions about time. Spatial location has little significance without temporal location, and places include pasts, presents, and futures (Bremer, 2006: 26-27). Religion, African spirituality, and sacred sites are what constitutes the sacred. There are also those profane issues intimately tied to these

sites' sacredness that needs to be understood within this research. Such issues may involve complexities of land tenure, Heritage Studies, heritage policy and the legislative landscape, as discussed previously. Also, the consideration of spiritual tourism, in particular, presents a tension between the sacred and the profane, which is explored in the next section.

3.7.4 Spiritual tourism

Spiritual tourism lies at the intersection of the sacred and the profane. Spiritual tourism is separated from other forms of tourism because of the rituals that take place at the sacred sites being visited (Collins-Kreiner, 2019). Unlike religious tourism where people travel to religious or cultural places without motivation, spiritual tourism is commonly motivated by a “quest” or a search for meaning or fulfilment. Spiritual tourism is therefore based on demand rather than supply (Olsen and Timothy, 2022: 4). Sacred sites as centres for spiritual tourism are shaped by both *sacrum* and *profonum,* which may differ in terms of the interests of pilgrims and tourists. While to pilgrims, a visit to a sacred site may be a strenuous journey filled with emotions, what is also defined as the “journey to the centre” with the aim of constructing meaning, to a tourist, it can be a joyful journey of exploration or just a superficial activity in the “opposite direction” with no meaning derived from it. The balance between the sacred and the profane is important for the spiritual sustainability of sacred sites, as both tangible and intangible aspects of a sacred site must be considered for effective visitor management (Aulet & Duda, 2020: 1-5). Yadav (2019) has noted that most of the sacred sites lose their “holy grail” of sacredness when transformed to adapt to modern needs of travel such as transport and accommodation that are normally in line with heritage management processes but threatening the authenticity of a sacred site. As described in Chapter 2, this balancing act between the sacred and the profane was less successful at Mautse and Motouleng (two of the sacred sites under study). Here the proliferation of recorded profane activities abrogated the sacrality of specific locations within the broader sites. At Mautse, especially, this led to the closure of the site and access prohibited to all site users. According to Aulet and Duda (2020), there are ways of managing visitors to prevent desecration and dispossession to ensure the spiritual sustainability of a site:

> The concept of spiritual sustainability refers to the preservation of spiritual values of sacred places by offering services to pilgrims and devotees, avoiding excessive transformation of the site to adapt to tourism needs, and making visitors aware of the spiritual values of the places (Aulet & Duda, 2020: 6).

In order to enhance spiritual sustainability, Aulet and Duda (2020: 8-10) devised valuation scoring criteria to determine the relative sacred (religious/spiritual) and tourism significance of sites (see Table 2 below). The first step is to divide factors into two groups. One group lists the factors determining whether the site carries more religious/spiritual significance or tourist significance.

Table 2: Based on valuation scoring criteria adopted by (Aulet & Duda, 2020) from the optimal and comparative content analysis method frequently used in geographical studies.

DETERMINATION OF RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL VS TOURIST SIGNIFICANCE			
Religious/spiritual significance	**Points**	**Tourist significance**	**Points**
Pilgrim accessibility 0-no accessibility 1-opened only during services 2-opened regularly a few times monthly 3-opened on specific dates and on request 4-opened weekdays, on-demand on weekends for limited hours 5-opened without limits	0-5	Tourist accessibility 0-no accessibility permanently closed 1-opened occasionally a few times a month 2-regularly few times a month, not during services 3-regularly on specified days and on request 4-open during weekdays and on-demand on weekends with limited hours 5-accessible without limits	0-5
Sacral service availability 0-Once per month or per year 1-Only on Sundays 2-Weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) 3-Regularly and on request 4-Regular and special services 5-Daily liturgical acts, blessings	0-5	Transport accessibility 0-no public or private car access 1-very random only with private car 2-public transport available several days a week 3-various public transport available during the week	0-3
Sanctuary official (Yes or No)	0-1	Tourist services 0-no tourist services 1-basic services (information or sings) 2-2-3 services available (parking, toilets, info) 3-well developed basic services (park, info, guides) 4-services available seasonally 5-All services all year round	0-5
Significant blessing or reliquary 0-No special blessings or reliquary 1-random special blessings 2-available during celebrations 3-always available with saints	0-3	Part of the regional/national/world heritage (yes/no)	0-1
Religious motivation 0-non-religious motivation 1-religious equal to non-religious 2-religious motivation dominant	0-2	Non-religious motivation 0-religious motivation 1-religious equal to non-religious 2-non-religious dominant	0-2

The above table shows the method used to guard against overdeveloping a sacred site to suit tourism needs that could desacralize it. One of the goals of this study was to consider how to develop spiritual tourism sites and to ensure a balance between the sacred and the profane elements of each site. The method was applied in Chapter 7 of this study to determine the sacrality and profane activities taking place at the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, which was identified as the specific case study for the Integrated Management Plan. While Aulet and Duda (2020) use religion and spirituality interchangeably, this study has established the difference between the two phenomena and focuses more on spirituality than religion. The study also draws from the ethical and professional standards for heritage sites, as articulated by Advocate Mancotywa (2012), the longest-standing Chief Executive Officer of the National Heritage Council in South Africa. Much of the standards for heritage sites in reference to heritage tourism still apply to sacred sites when implementing spiritual tourism because spirituality forms part of the intangible heritage managed through the National Heritage Resources Act no. 25 of 1999 in South Africa.

While accepting the right of tourists to expect high-quality information interpreted through accepted research that reflects integrity, diversity, and intellectual and emotional accessibility, Mancotywa (2012: 128-129) warns that heritage resources should not be subservient to the needs of tourism. Mutual respect must be afforded to the host communities, either property owners or indigenous people exercising rights over custodianship over land and sites identified for tourism development by involving them in development and management plans. The process should be structured in such a way that the development and management of tourism products are localised to environmental, social, and cultural contexts and that the tourism industry and tourists respect the sanctity of spiritual places, practices and traditions forming part of intangible heritage. It is also important to ensure that tourism benefits host communities either financially, where income is ploughed back into the community for the purposes of maintenance of the site and skills development within the host community, as explained by Advocate Mancotywa below:

> *The heritage management plan must establish appropriate limits for acceptable change, particularly in relation to the impact of visitor numbers on the physical characteristics of the*

> *site, its ecology and biodiversity, local access and transportation systems and the social, economic and cultural well-being of the host community (Mancotywa, 2012: 129).*

Medhekar and Haq (2012: 212) argue that spiritual tourism is not a new concept but has existed under the guise of religious tourism or pilgrimage tourism, although, as stated above, the differences between religion and spirituality are categorical. They (Medhekar and Haq) define a spiritual tourist as:

> *…someone who visits a place out of his/her usual environment, with the intention of spiritual growth (in relation to God and the Divine), regardless of the main reason for travelling…spiritual tourism could be viewed as a broad concept that involves tangible and intangible products and services. The tangible items will include churches, mosques, temples, shrines and other centres with a spiritual focus. The intangible products and services will include organised spiritual events, seminars, festivals and gatherings with spiritual motives (Medhekar and Haq, 2012: 214).*

Norman's (2011: 7-8) research on spiritual tourism in India, dating from the early 1960s, covered Western and Eastern contexts of spirituality, with the latter being the most preferred because of its wide range of spiritual activities inscribed in Hinduism, Buddhism, Ayurveda, New Age, Kabbalism, healing and wellness, with the former mainly displaying Western religious traditions such as the pilgrimage to Mount Athos and Meteora in Greece, the Vatican and Assisi in Italy, Lourdes in France and Glastonbury in the United Kingdom. From Africa, African spirituality as knowledge can be studied and disseminated through spiritual tourism. Spiritual tourism is an individual and collective project, "even if it takes place within the larger framework of a religious tradition." In this form of tourism, participants travel to unfamiliar destinations that do not form part of their everyday life or that they are not affiliated with (Norman, 2011: 1-20). Most journeys taken to sacred sites would be motivated by spiritual traditions such as praying, venerating, meditating or getting closer to God, being in the presence of a sacred shrine and strengthening one's belief. However, some tourism activities with challenges such as mountain climbing, sailing, and dark tourism can yield spiritual outcomes even though they may not be embarked on with the intent towards deep spiritual growth but would have been based on casual motivation (Heintzman, 2022: 61-62).

Based on the above, McIntosh et al. (2002: 39) argue that for indigenous communities, tourism is seen as a step towards building new meaning for traditional practices and reaffirming values, and ultimately as a means of economic empowerment and cultural independence. However, they warn that if the relationship between tourism and culture is to be sustainable, tourism will have to be developed in harmony with community interests. This also touches on the standpoint of this study, where the balance between the sacred and profane when positioning the Mohokare Valley sacred sites as tourist attractions or tourism products should be considered in depth.

Githitho (2016) noted how the sacred Kaya Forests, located in the coastal area of Kenya, received protection before the 20th century through traditional methods of conservation where cultural values and taboos were put in place and respected by the community. However, this changed from the 20th century onwards when there were growing demands for social and economic change because of the population increase. At this point, land was needed for agriculture, mining, and tourism. The Kaya Forests were exploited to produce commodities such as charcoal. The predicament of the Kaya Forests shows how sacred sites can be lost or degraded due to everyday material pressures.

3.8 NOTABLE CASE STUDIES

Worldwide, including in Africa and South Africa, challenges are experienced surrounding access, management, protection, and promotion of sacred sites. These challenges are due to the tension of profane matters such as material considerations regarding planned economic development and the spiritual attachments of (mostly) indigenous people in terms of the land on which those developments were expected to take place. In some cases, communities found ways of working together to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders, while in some instances, the interests of indigenous people were side-lined due to one-sided legislation, which forced them to abandon their sacred sites. These tensions are highlighted in a few notable cases from different regions of the world, as described below.

The United States of America (USA) passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) in 1978 in response to the confusion and conflict instigated by the

introduction of the Indian Religious Crime Code that removed the rights of Native Americans to practice traditional tribal spiritual ways in 1883. The AIRFA recognises that tribal religious practices are tied to the land, which is thought to be a sacred, living entity. The sacred sites are often the focal point of a tribe's creation stories and oral history, which are passed down through generations and tie new generations to their culture and identity (FireCloud, 2016: 59). The Devils Tower National monument in America is one sacred site that was rescued by the enactment of AIRFA. According to Collins (2003: 258), as part of a management plan for the monument, the Park Service (Grand Canyon National Park) gathered comprehensive and powerful evidence of Lakota religious interests in the sites at the same time. The monument has become a world-class destination for rock climbers. However, the park services adopted a compromise by banning commercial climbing during June, when most religious ceremonies are held (FireCloud, 2016: 60).

Australia has experienced much contestation over land surrounding sacred sites. One notable example is the case of Hindmarch Island. What started in 1993 intending to build a marina at Hindmarsh Island near Goolwa, South Australia, later turned into a proposal to build a bridge known as Hindmarsh Island Bridge (Howard-Howard-Wagner, 2008: 47). A group of Aboriginal women from the local Ngarrindjerri Tribe protested on religious grounds, basing their argument on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act of 1984 (Collins, 2003: 253). In the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Weiner (1999: 3) explains that Kumarangk is the Aboriginal word for fertile (pregnancy) which is also the name of Hindmarsh Island. It is all Aboriginal 'women's business'. When the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal Affairs attempted to commission a report, the Aboriginal women said that the details of the island's sacred character could not be revealed to men (Collins, 2003: 254).

The report came from the commissioned female Professor of Law, Cheryl Saunders, who met with the applicants. She maintained that this 'women's business' concerned the articulation and maintenance of fundamental reproductive principles in the Ngarrindjeri cosmos and that these principles had been a component of Ngarrindjeri tradition for 40 000 years (Weiner,1999: 3). Furthermore, it was believed that the construction of the bridge would form a permanent link between two parts of the landscape, which according to cosmology, are purposefully supposed to remain

separate. Linking the two parts was believed would undermine cosmological and human reproduction and ultimately cause the Ngarrindjeri society to disappear (Weiner, 1999: 3).

Based on the report, the Minister issued an order under the Heritage Protection Act of 1984 to forbid the bridge's construction for 25 years (Collins, 2003: 254). However, within months of coming to power, the new Howard government (Prime Minister John Howard) introduced the Hindmarsh Island Bridge Bill of 1996 into the House of Representatives (Wagner, 2008: 47). According to Wagner (2008: 48), the legislation enabled the unimpeded construction and operation of the bridge. The Act (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act, 1984), as it then stood, covered all Australian territories except the area surrounding Hindmarsh Island Bridge, meaning that the federal ministers would also no longer maintain their former power to protect significant indigenous sacred sites (Wagner, 2008:49). In due course, despite the protestations of the Aboriginal women involved, the bridge was built and opened in March 2002 (Collins, 2003: 255).

In India, the Mahabodhi Temple (the place of Buddha's enlightenment) underwent numerous repairs and renovations by different Buddhist groups before eventually falling into ruin around the 12th century; it was substantially restored in the late 19th century (Geary, 2008: 11). According to Geary (2008: 11), the temple was a site of contest and intense negotiations during the period of the British Raj and the nationalist movement. Matters were temporarily resolved through the establishment of the Bodhgaya Temple Management Act in 1949, which remains the constitutional form governing the temple today; it is the homeland of Eastern religion and stimulates pilgrimage from neighbouring Buddhist countries. Mahabodhi Temple is a UNESCO World Heritage site and is recognised as the 'first living Buddhist monument' to be declared a World Heritage site, thus distinguishing it from other heritage sites that are often regarded as 'dead monuments' or archaeological zones (Geary, 2008: 13). Geary (2008: 14) also revealed that despite the fear of spiritual degradation generated by the tourism development project, the place of Buddha's enlightenment is an exhilarating site for many visitors. Today, Mahabodhi Temple is a fusion of spiritual cosmopolitanism, heritage tourism and a place where local people make a living through sales of refreshments and souvenirs made to pilgrims and tourists.

In July 2005, members of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) decided to approve the Nigerian nomination and consequently declared the Osun Osogbo Grove a UNESCO World Heritage site (Probst, 2009: 25). The research conducted by Ogundiran (2014) revealed that nomination of the site was based on claims that remains of the two palaces are still visible where one of these is identified as the Temple of Osun in the southern wing of the grove. The other is the structure currently housing the Ogboni cult in the grove's northern wing. The above claims require tangible archaeological evidence that the government did not provide. It is, therefore, surprising that the WHC eliminated this criterion in its decision and focused instead on the site's natural, religious, cosmological, and modern artistic features (Ogundiran, 2014: 178). According to Ogundiran (2014: 179), the oral tradition indicated that the Osun Grove was, from its inception, perhaps as early as the 17th century, a site of kratophany and for staging political as well as religious rituals. It is an important site for spiritual and religious practices for thousands of individuals beyond Nigeria who visit the site every year.

In Zimbabwe, previously Rhodesia named after British Colonialist Cecil John Rhodes, the Matopo or Matobo Hills is a World Heritage site located near Bulawayo (Jopela, 2016: 16). Matopo (also Matobo) Hills earned its World Heritage Status based on the highest concentration of rock art in Southern Africa, the interaction of communities with the landscape and the long-standing religious traditions that are depicted in the rock art. Similar to many sacred sites, controversial and complex issues also surround the Matopo Hills sacred site. It is revered as the place of the ancestral spirit in Zimbabwe. It is where King Mzilikazi of the Matebele used to honour Badimo and is also his resting place. At the same time, it is also the burial place of Cecil John Rhodes.

Local communities have been visiting the area for religious and spiritual purposes, while international tourists have been attracted to the Rhodes grave. This has been a bone of contention where local communities contested tourism activities while at the same time government promoted tourism as part of revenue collection of the country (Bhebhe, 2019: 2-10). Due to the diverse nature of the Matopo Hills World Heritage site, which encapsulates both cultural and natural heritage, the site is managed through the combination of the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe and

the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) (Makuvaza, 2014: 7973). According to the Matopo Hills World Heritage Site Management Plan 2015-2019, relevant stakeholders in the site's management include rural district councils, local communities, traditional leaders, environmental management agencies, forestry commissions, commercial farmers, and the Rhodes Matopos Estate.

In Botswana, the interpretation of the rock art and rock formations at the Tsodilo Hills World Heritage site located close to the Okavango Panhandle has led local communities to believe that life originated at Tsodilo Hills. This spiritual belief, the highly concentrated rock art left by the San people and the rock formations were the primary motivation for the site to be awarded World Heritage status. While the main focus has been placed on the archaeological significance of Tsodilo Hills, the site has been interpreted as having more value. This is due to traditional, cultural and spiritual practices linked to local communities, which would justify a bottom-up approach to site management by the body managing the site, the Botswana National Museum (Basinyi, 2019: 79). However, Human (2019: 207) argue that the San have been marginalised and are not benefiting from the tourism proceeds of the Tsodilo Hills even though the World Heritage site is their primordial site.

Unlike the Matopo Hills of Zimbabwe, the Tsodilo Hills management is approached through a strategy that gives the local communities (with less involvement of the San) the responsibility of managing the site, thus presenting a bottom-up management system. Tsodilo Community Trust (TCT) is responsible for supervising daily activities at the site together with Tsodilo Management Authority (TMA). TMA is similar to a board of directors that is also mandated to raise funds for projects initiated by the trust. These two agencies manage the site in consultation and agreement with the Botswana National Museum (BNM). Forming part of the advisory council of Tsodilo Hills are “a selection of [relevant] government departments, district administration, nongovernmental organisations, research institutions and community-based organisations with a stake in the Tsodilo development process” (Tsodilo, Core Area Management Plan 2010-2015).

Even with the management approach heritage scholars like Jopela (2016) and Basinyi (2019) have recommended being the best for managing intangible cultural heritage,

Tsodilo Hills still has its fair share of complexities. Tourism activities that have dominated the site since its inscription as a World Heritage site have compromised some of the values held dear by local communities. These communities feel that the spiritual value has been reduced due to the interpretation of the site through the use of English. In this way, language can be used as a means of excluding other members of the community. Some smaller locations within the broader site have lost their meaning due to tourism packaging and interpretation. For example, tourists are mostly told about the four hills making up the Tsodilo Hills, whereas local people acknowledge that there are seven hills they know by name, which hold historical and spiritual value (Basinyi, 2019: 82-83). The tour presentation of the Tsodilo Hills sideline belittles the San through racist terminology such as "*Basarwa".* They do not participate in the site's management, showing that they are regarded as lower-class citizens (Human, 2019: 207).

Cape Town is known for its numerous Muslim sacred sites called kramats. One particular kramat at Oudekraal is situated on the hills facing the Atlantic Seaboard (Green and Murray, 2012: 204). This is where Sheikh Noorul Mubeen was buried. The 'Guide to the Kramats of the Western Cape' (Jaffer, 2010: 29) states that Sheikh Noorul Mubeen was banished to the Cape in 1716 and incarcerated on Robben Island, where he miraculously escaped by unknown means. Numerous legends about his escape suggested that he was a holy man. After his escape, he soon made contact with slaves and is said to have taught them, mainly at night, the religion of Islam. The kramat entered public debate in 1996 when the owner of the land (where the kramat is situated) submitted plans to the local authorities for its development. In the intense public dispute that followed, the Muslim community mobilised to assert its right to determine how the land surrounding the kramat might be used (Green and Murray, 2012: 204). The ruling issued a statement calling on the owner, the South African National Parks Board, and the South African Heritage Resources Agency to negotiate the transfer of this land to what was then known as the Cape Peninsula National Park (Green and Murray, 2012: 215). Heritage Western Cape, a public entity that seeks to identify, protect, and conserve the rich and diverse heritage resources of the Western Cape, recognises places of worship and sacred sites as part of the heritage resources. In the case of Oudekraal:

> *The question of the definition and meaning of heritage was raised. Not the question of heritage in the abstract, nor the particularities of the proclamation of heritage sites per se, but rather the question of the place and forms of heritage [and] its production, circulation and consumption in the aftermath of apartheid, colonialism and the spatial displacements that characterised it (Green and Murray, 2012: 215).*

The mysterious and mythical lake Fundudzi in Limpopo**,** South Africa, has become a world-acclaimed tourist attraction. Forming part of the Africa Ivory Route, the development of Lake Fundudzi took advantage of an initiative by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) that undertook to initiate and fund programmes that would facilitate community ownership and involvement in tourism, particularly aimed at disadvantaged communities (Khorommbi et al., 2012: 311). According to Khorommbi et al. (2012), this approach aspires to conceptualise tourism as being government-led, private sector-driven and labour-conscious. They (Khorommbi et al.) also emphasise that this industry should be community-based.

The lake was formed by a landslide in the Soutpansberg Mountains about 20 000 years ago, blocking the Mutule River. It is believed that there are communities in the lake, such as the ancestors, the crocodiles, and the half people (*tshidudwane*) that were killed by the ancient landslide (Siebert, 2016: 43). The lake appears to be completely self-contained as it does not overflow, and a legend has accordingly arisen that the lake is bottomless (Khorommbi et al., 2012: 312).

Developing Lake Fundudzi into a tourism attraction followed the Participatory Action Research (PAR) model. According to Khorommbi et al. (2012: 314), PAR was used to assist the community in the emergent process of collaboration, mobilisation, empowerment, self-realisation, and the establishment of community solidarity as well as to develop transferable skills and lateral, critical, analytical, creative, and innovative thinking needed for the development of the community. Tourists visiting Lake Fundudzi enjoy activities ranging from 4X4 trails, hiking and biking trails, bird watching, and cultural tours (with accredited tourist guides). The accommodation sites and ablution blocks along the way erected in the name of tourism and the somewhat relaxed ritual protocols could be seen as an artificial presentation of the once revered sacred Lake Fundudzi. However, there are traditional norms requiring the performance of certain

rituals before one can enter the lake. For example, one may not stop or get out of the car when passing through Thathe Vondo Sacred Forest. Consequently, such restrictions and requirements limit the number of people who visit the lake. Lake Fundudzi is a declared National Heritage Site (Grade I) because of its setting, rich history associated with living, sacred heritage, and scientific value (Department of Arts and Culture, 2014).

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed the heritage landscape and the origin and development of Heritage Studies as encompassing the field of this study. It revisited the heritage context and policy framework from global, regional (Africa) and local (South Africa) levels.

There have been limitations of heritage legislation and policy frameworks that have affected progress in addressing the challenges associated with the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. The limitations include the following: Eurocentric approaches to heritage management and legislation that are influenced by issues of language in the interpretation of heritage to African languages, a nature/culture dichotomy, non-involvement of traditional custodians of heritage, graves and burial grounds with a 60 years clause attachment before they can be protected under the heritage legislation and prioritisation of political heritage in South Africa, westernisation of cultural heritage, non-accommodation of African indigenous techniques and customary laws in heritage management.

This chapter also discussed the complex dynamics of religion vis-à-vis African spirituality, the interaction of African spirituality and land with reference to sacred sites that form part of the heritage in African or South African contexts. Furthermore, spiritual tourism was explored as a potential frame for formalising the management of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites that may lead to sustainable livelihoods for invested communities. The chapter concluded with notable case studies similar to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites and described how the challenges were approached and resolved.

CHAPTER 4
TOWARDS THE AFRIKANA-DECOLONIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In his work, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020: 190) raised the question of the real meaning of decolonisation. This chapter attempts to answer this question by first positioning African spirituality in the centre and rephrasing the question: “What is the real meaning of decolonising African gnoseology”. African gnoseology is a key pillar for this research, as it stands central to understanding the pilgrimage movement to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. It is also important to consider how colonialism affected African spirituality structures by retracing colonialism's origin and its forms.

As has already been documented, the Mohokare Valley sacred sites have been surrounded by numerous challenges. These relate to ownership contestation, criminal elements, the fact that two sacred sites remain undeclared, thereby falling outside of the parameters of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, the top-down approach to heritage management implied in the NHRA which leads to the exclusion of communities in management as well as the fact that these sites are located within private properties, which complicate issues of access to site users.

The above challenges are arguably attributed to colonial legacies. In order to uncover these colonial legacies, this study explored the colonial trajectories of Africa and South Africa, including tracing the negotiations towards the end of colonialism and following the processes and factors that disrupted decolonisation. It is important to situate this research in the context of colonisation in Africa, particularly in South Africa, as colonialism was not uniform worldwide. In order to address the special challenges of Africa, one needs to understand the nature of colonialism applied to African contexts that contributed to the hybrid culture and religion, legal and political systems, as well as ideologies and knowledge systems or gnoseology as the preferred term to reference African indigenous knowledge (instead of epistemology).

The purpose of this literature review is to explore the philosophical roots and existing knowledge of the theories informing this research by highlighting new research, identifying gaps, or recognising inconsistencies (Arshed and Danson, 2015: 31). This study approached the literature review by critically reviewing and analysing theories and concepts inherent to this study and arranging the supporting literature into a thematic structure. This chapter aims to conceptualise the theoretical framework informing this research. In order to devise the theoretical framework, the study draws on postcolonialism and decoloniality. Both postcolonialism and decoloniality attempt to address decolonisation but from different points of view. Postcolonialism based the process of decolonisation on a period after colonisation commonly referred to as a period after the Second World War. In contrast, decoloniality deals with decolonisation as the effects of the imposition of European powers on communities of the global south that dates back to the Atlantic slave trade.

The limitations of postcolonialism are addressed by superimposing decoloniality to overcome the conceptual limitations of postcolonialism to enhance the decolonisation of knowledge within an African context which rests on the key concepts of indigeneity and African spirituality. In order to address the specificity of African values and lived experiences to address the African challenges of colonialism, Afrocentricity is incorporated to refine the theoretical framework for the unique context of this research. Therefore, the theoretical framework is crafted from elements inherited from both postcolonialism and decoloniality. Subsequently, the critique of legacies of colonial capitalism, religion, hybridity, the use of European languages, and theoretical and academic-based approaches to research as elements inherent in postcolonialism are merged with the flexible approach of decoloniality. This shifts the scope of decolonisation back to the period of the Atlantic slave trade, highlighting communalism, spirituality, pluriversality, the use of African languages through the process of languaging, being community-driven, and using empirical and African values-based research methods.

The Mohokare Valley sacred sites, as epicentres of ancestral veneration and locus of African gnoseology explored through spirituality in this locality, are surrounded by numerous complexities ranging from the sacred to the profane and material. This chapter reviews literature that contributed to the theoretical framework selected for this

study by critically reviewing postcolonialism as a theory that has informed Africa(n) Studies since the early 1980s (Abrahamsen, 2003: 190). Due to the locality of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, close to the border between the Free State and Lesotho, Border Studies and Decoloniality are explored as an alternative theoretical approach. Afrocentricity will help to focus the study on the limitations and management issues of heritage and African gnoseology.

The strategic borrowing of concepts from postcolonialism and decoloniality and merging those ideas with the values inherent in Afrocentricity is an attempt to balance the sacrality of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites as centres for ancestral veneration. Subsequently, the profane implications are to serve as destinations for spiritual tourism brought about by the heritage and tourism industries. This approach allows this research to explore the nature of the African spirituality practised in the Mohokare Pilgrimage Movement and spiritual communities. Also, at the same time, repositioning the sites as spiritual tourism destinations that could lead to sustainable community livelihoods.

4.2 HOW DID WE LAND HERE? AN OVERVIEW OF COLONIALISM

4.2.1 Historical overview of colonialism

To understand the effects of colonialism on African spirituality, land, language, and custodianship, one must understand the historical background of colonialism, its forms in Africa, the move towards independence and the developments that affected decolonisation. Colonialism is a generic feature of human history. For Loomba (2015: 20), colonialism dates back to the second century BCE and the expansionist tendencies of the Roman Empire, the 13th century Mongol Empire, and the Aztec Empire rising to prominence from the 14th to the 16th centuries. However, this study is not concerned with colonialism as a generic historical feature. It is focused on the particular nature and legacies of European colonialisms that expanded into Asia, Africa and American territories from the 16th century onwards and imposed European languages, religion and control over land, natural resources and people. From a Marxist perspective, European or modern colonialism looked different than older manifestations because it developed alongside capitalism and was not only extractive

but also restructured the economies and societies of territories under its control (Loomba, 2015: 21).

Several projects were instrumental in the build-up of European colonialism. First, it was the age of exploration and discovery that was led by the Portuguese sailors who began voyaging southwest into the Atlantic Ocean in the 1300s. Prince Henry (the son of Portugal's King John I) also contributed to the expeditions by sponsoring the exploration that ventured along the southern tip of Africa. In 1488, Bartholomeu Dias accidentally discovered that it was possible to sail around the African continent after storms blew him around the southern tip of the Cape of Good Hope (also known as the Cape of Storms). After ten years, Vasco da Gama sailed around Africa and stopped at Mozambique. He returned to Portugal in 1499, proving the possibility of sailing south and east from Europe to Asia (Hamilton, 2010: 106-107).

The period between 1400 to 1600 entrenched the maritime trade in Europe. This was due to the modification of the compass, interest in using the map and advancements in shipbuilding. These activities led to quicker ways of reaching destinations and ferrying goods by sea when it took longer to use roads and landmarks. This was the beginning of exchange trade, where raw products were extracted from Africa, taken to Europe for processing, and sold back to Africa as finished goods. It was also a time when slaves were taken from Africa and transported to the Caribbean. The British East India Company maximised by growing opium in Bengal, bartering it to China for gold, using gold to buy other products from China, and transporting them to Britain. In this way, trade led to the rise of mercantilism in Europe between 1500 and 1880 (Feiler, 2015; Wilmsmeier and Monios, 2020).

It was in the 19th century that the 'Scramble for Africa' reached its zenith. This was instigated by the need for European countries to monopolise African mineral resources and expand their African territories. In 1879, King Leopold II of Belgium developed an interest in conquering the Congo Basin (Democratic Republic of Congo) after reading about mineral resources such as diamonds, rubber, coffee, and tea available in the area. Diamonds and gold were discovered in South Africa in 1867 and 1886, respectively. These discoveries of vast mineral wealth encouraged European countries to colonise Africa. The British had already started with their ambition of a

British territory stretching from Cape to Cairo. The French began to expand from the west of Africa. In order to prevent a possible war over the interests of European countries over Africa, Otto von Bismarck organised what came to be known as the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. The conference determined which portion of Africa would be apportioned to which European power (Craven, 2015; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2016).

4.2.2 Forms of colonialism

Different forms of colonialism can range from informal to formal colonialism. Citing an African example, Oliver and Oliver (2017: 4) suggested informal colonialism as the migration of Africans from north and central Africa to occupy the southern part, whereas formal colonialism started with European powers' occupation of Africa from the southern part. As highlighted by Loomba (2015: 24), colonialism presented varied histories and experiences that came in four forms, namely administrative colonialism, settler colonialism, plantation colonialism and territorial annexation.

Administrative colonialism is a process where a small group of people from the colonising country are moved to the colony. This form is what Moore (2005: 523) termed ‘classic’, where a long distance but strong political, economic, military, and cultural control is exercised over people of the colony working through local authorities and existing power structures. Settler colonialism is where people move in large numbers to a colonised country, imposing their superiority and mixing with the original inhabitants (Loomba, 2015: 24). Settler colonisation may also take a ‘standard’ type through which a power conquers neighbouring people (Moore, 2005: 523). Most colonised African countries were affected directly by administrative colonialism and settler colonialism, with the USA suffering from plantation and territorial annexation. Plantation colonialism also negatively affected Africa, where Africans were taken to work on plantations in the New World as slaves to advance the economy of colonial countries, leaving Africa deprived of its people and underdeveloped. This is called “Proletariana Afrocentricity”, representing Africans as victims of slavery but co-creators of modern civilisation (Mazrui, 2002: 25).

4.2.3 Southern African colonial history

It is important to highlight the historical events that led to the colonisation of Africa and left the colonial legacy that has affected the ways of life of the African people in general and of South Africans in particular. This is of specific relevance for this study because of the myths that justified colonialism, such as the presentation of Africa as a dark continent with its people being labelled as barbaric, heathens, wild and lacking moral senses. It was this same portrayal of Africa that came to reconstruct human knowledge structures that existed in South Africa from the period of the Portuguese seafarers, the mercantilism of the Dutch East India Company, the British occupation to the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the segregationist period (Loomba, 2015; Terreblanche, 2002). These events remain relevant because the segregation legacy of colonialism and apartheid still structures South African society and land holdings. The ensuing disconnection between African people and their gnoseology which was actively discouraged during colonial times, is another significant legacy with special reference for this research. This also brought about inequalities in terms of belief systems, education, work reservation and restriction of movement of African inhabitants created by the formation of the Groups Areas Act, native reserves, and homelands or bantustans.

The Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Diaz became the first to open up possibilities of reaching Africa by rounding the southern tip of Africa in 1488 (Stuckenberg, 1997: 19). This was then followed by the Portuguese traders who arrived at the Cape and other African shores of the Indian Ocean during the 16th century. They exported gold, ivory, animal skins, tortoiseshell, pearls, and raw cotton from Africa, including trading humans in the slave trade (Roque, 2017: 25). Terreblanche (2002: 153) estimated that the Portuguese forcefully transported around five million slaves from Africa (areas corresponding to the Congo, Angola, and Mozambique) in three hundred years of maritime trade.

Mellets (2020) has recently suggested that there were numerous ships and seafarers who arrived at South African shores prior to the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape. These people traded with the Khoi people as they needed fresh water, meat, vegetables and timber to repair their ships as they were making their way to the East.

History books invariably describe the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) as the largest trading company between Asia and Europe in the 17th century. Due to long sea voyages, the DEIC decided to establish a refreshment station at the southern part of Africa (Oliver and Oliver, 2017: 4). Jan van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 to establish the refreshment station between Europe and the East Indies in order to curb scurvy (a disease caused by lack of Vitamin C). He and a group of 70 men established themselves at the Cape. This was the first group of many to arrive at the shores of what would much later become Cape Town. On arrival, Van Riebeeck was impressed by the vast "unclaimed land" that could advance his vegetable cultivation and animal husbandry project. Later in 1657, in addition to the four company gardens set up in 1656, nine soldiers were given the rights to establish themselves as independent farmers on the land that the Khoikhoi used for grazing and providing water for their herds (Pooley, 2009: 9-13).

Under the administration of Simon and Willem Adriaan van der Stel of the Cape, the period between 1658 and 1731 saw an increase in the number of free burghers. About 250 free burghers were imported from Holland and given free land, financial support, and contracts to supply the DEIC with supplies of animal and vegetable products. There was, therefore, a need for labour, and more slaves were imported. A group of 174 slaves arrived in 1658 from Angola. This expanded the colonial process of land deprivation that paved the way for the 1913 Land Act. The miscegenation of the Dutch, slaves and local inhabitants produced a creole community that characterised the Cape (Terreblanche, 2002: 155-158).

The period between 1500 and 1880 is marked as the time when the economic power of European countries was based on the large inflow of gold and other natural resources facilitated by better trade routes and more ships used to expand their empires through colonial expansion. British colonialism was tied to imperialism where during this period, there was much financial capital that could not yield any profit when invested at home but needed the colonies that could provide labour, such as African countries (Loomba, 2005: 27). The late 18th century (1795 to be precise) saw the arrival of the British Empire at the shores of South Africa, who remained in power until 1910 following the bankruptcy of the Dutch East India Company. The newly founded British East India Company took over the control of trade between Asia and Europe

and the Cape Colony as the halfway station up to 1803 when the British colonised the Cape, ending over a century of Dutch influence (Terreblanche, 2002: 179; Oliver and Oliver, 2017: 1-5).

British colonialism of South Africa is categorised into four phases. The first phase (1795-1814) reflects an unsettled period, with the British treading carefully out of fear that the Dutch colonists would resist their conquest. The second phase (1814-1840) saw the British asserting their authority and advancing their economic activities by strengthening their militancy by bringing in ten governors who were former senior military officers who took part in the Peninsula War against Napoleon. During the third phase, from 1840 to 1890, the British established agricultural capitalism based on a repressive labour system and put the system of racial capitalism into practice. In the fourth phase (1890-1910), Britain took the imperialist approach, which became more aggressive and exploitative. This was when Germany and the United States succeeded in consolidating more international markets than Britain for industrial production (Terreblanche, 2002: 180-182).

British focus then shifted to minerals that were discovered in Southern Africa. In order to fully capitalise on the mineral wealth of Southern Africa, Britain had to expand its political, social and economic control. Throughout the four phases, the British enforced their economic, political, legal systems, and culture while displacing the feudalism and paternalism introduced under the Dutch East India Company, as well as communalism that was commonly practised amongst black inhabitants. During the early 1800s, the British abolished serfdom and slavery in South Africa in 1828 and 1836 with far-reaching consequences (Terreblanche, 2002: 181).

Unhappy with the abolishment of serfdom and slavery and yearning for their freedom from British rule, the Boers embarked on a more than a decade-long exodus from the Cape Colony on a journey that came to be known as the Great Trek (1836-1848). This reflected the intention to establish independent Boer republics (Saunders, 2002: 300) and to explore the possibilities of advancing economic production through slavery away from the British rule at the Portuguese Port of Delagoa Bay, where the slave trade was still active. However, this destination could not be reached because of the inaccurate maps of the 1830s that showed that Delagoa Bay could be reached after

crossing the Senqu or Orange River only to be met with long distances and mosquito-borne diseases. The Trek Boers ended up in the Free State, Natal, and the Transvaal (Etherington, 2001).

Crossing the Orange River into the Free State Province, the Trek Boers saw a vast area of what they believed to be 'empty land'. They were not aware that previous inhabitants were scattered and retreated to the Maloti and Drakensberg Mountains because of the devastation of the Difaqane wars. The Difaqane wars started amongst the Nguni nations in northern Natal and spread into the eastern Free State in the early 1800s. This was a time when bigger nations captured smaller ones in an attempt to expand their sovereignty and acquire more land and resources (Gill, 1997: 66).

The early 20th century saw the introduction of "democratic capitalism" in developed Western countries, which was later acquired in South Africa after 1994. Democratic capitalism was driven by class and racial superiority, land deprivation, deliberate proletarianisation and violent bloodshed.

> *The "logic" of democracy and capitalism is contradictory: while democracy emphasises joint interests, equality, and common loyalties, capitalism is based on self-seeking inequality and conflicting individual and group interests. The legal system that protects both democracy and capitalism is based on the principle of equality before the law but maintains inequalities in the distribution of property rights and opportunities in the capitalist system. The "logic" of capitalism – given the unequal freedoms and unequal rights upon which it is based – thus goes against the grain of the "logic" of democracy (Terreblanche, 2002: 16).*

4.2.4 The process and disruption of decolonisation

The process of decolonisation of former African colonies is complex and marks different waves of independence and decolonisation. For Ogba and Okpanachi (2014: 20), the process of decolonisation of Africa started at the fifth Pan-African congress held in Manchester in 1945. This process of decolonisation was advanced in Accra, Ghana, during the All-Africa People's conference in 1957, where 250 representatives of African states were present. Generally, decolonisation in Africa is cited as having begun in 1957 with Ghana's independence, followed by the independence of many

former colonies from 1960 onwards. Although at this time, African countries such as Liberia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, and Tunisia were already independent after gaining their independence between 1846 and 1956, which could be viewed as the first wave of decolonisation. In the case of South Africa, there are two recorded independences, from Britain in 1961 and 1994 when South Africa introduced democratic rule. The first independence was from British colonisation, and the second was from internal colonisation that lasted from 1961 to 1994, when South Africa was ruled without black representation (Oliver and Oliver, 2017: 2).

The former colonial subjects had anticipated decolonisation to be a political, social, economic, and cultural transformation. However, as the process unfolded, it took different forms from one colonised country to another. To explain such country-specific differences, Loomba (2015: 186) differentiated between nationalism as a political movement and nationalism as a cultural construct. Furthermore, a political movement can also take aggressive and non-aggressive forms. In many former colonies such as Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Zaire, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, where there were white settlers, the approach was violent and warranted aggression in response to violent colonial forms of governance based on white dominance and black subordination (Ogba and Okpanachi, 2014: 21).

Notable former colonies such as Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia applied both aggressive and non-aggressive forms. These countries formed liberation armies as part of anti-colonial struggles, and at the same time, they reinvented the positive outlook of being African and Black. The restoration of black pride was done through the Pan-African Movement that used literature as “part of a general process of cultural and political affirmation” (Quayson, 2000: 77). The classic example is that of Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe who, through his world-renowned novel, *Things Fall Apart*, was able “to prove that indigenous Africa had a viable culture before the white man came”. Literature was also used in writing life stories of leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda (to name a few examples) as a vehicle to celebrate Blackness (Loomba, 2015).

While most African countries gained independence during what this study views as the second wave of decolonisation from 1957 and given the state of contemporary

African countries, one can agree with Ogba and Okpanachi (2014: 16-18), who believe that African decolonisation has only been partially achieved. According to Dimkpa (2015: 18), the main focus of this generation of African leaders was on the transfer of political power and granting of independence from European colonial metropoles to African countries. While the independence of former African colonies may point to the transfer of political power, changes to the economy, education, culture, language of administration and justice as well as religion proved much harder to achieve (Birmingham, 1995: 5). The societies of former African colonies still show markers of persistent colonial legacies of power defining all aspects of society such as culture, labour and economics, human relations, and knowledge production, which Mignolo (2007: 463-464) terms the logic of coloniality. Because decolonisation followed the logic of coloniality, decolonisation remains unfinished business based on the arguments advanced below.

First of all, African leaders who were at the forefront of the African independence movement during the 20th century, such as Nkrumah, Kenyatta and Kaunda, were the products of colonial systems of education and political governance. Decolonisation for them meant achieving control over existing systems of governance rather than replacing colonial institutions and systems with alternatives. This meant that European political institutions remained intact. The leaders of newly independent African countries who may not have had access to modern education were also seen as political amateurs in need of assistance. For this reason, the United Nations arranged for some of the former colonial administrators to stay on after independence, while others came in as advisors of the decolonisation process with the facilitation of the United Nations (Lake and Leake, 2015: 3). For example:

> *In 1950 the United Nations decided that Eritrea should be linked to Ethiopia, and a slow process of integration began. At first, Eritrea retained democratic institutions and political parties of the type Britain encouraged in its self-governing colonies, but these were gradually wound down as Ethiopian laws replaced Eritrean ones, and in 1962, Eritrea was formally absorbed into Ethiopia…By 1951, however, the nationalists acknowledged the United Nations' decision that Libya must become independent and accepted that the best compromise was a federal system in which the province of Tripoli would have some autonomous powers under the overarching government of King Idris (Birmingham 1995: 10-11).*

Secondly, the African map was not redrawn when African countries gained independence but remained intact. The colonial partitioning of Africa, where different ethnic groups were unified in one geographical area whereas linguistically and culturally related groups were artificially divided, remains a complex issue (Birmingham, 1995: 5). This is illustrated by the case of South Africa (or the Free State Province) and Lesotho, where the Basotho people in the Free State share the same language and customs as the Basotho in Lesotho. Many are blood relatives who regard the King of Lesotho as the King of all Basotho in Lesotho and South Africa. However, the King of Lesotho does not have political power equal to kings in South Africa.

The third reason for the persistence of coloniality is that even after independence, economic control of African goods and markets resided in the Global North. The period between 1945 and 1960 is known as a time of economic progress in Europe after the devastation of WWII. This period also coincided with the decolonisation of countries from the Global South. When the Second World War ended, America devised a plan to offer financial aid to rebuild European countries affected by war (especially Western Europe). This plan was known as the Marshall Plan. At the same time and towards the end of WWII, the Bretton Woods Conference (formally known as the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference) facilitated the establishment of the International Monitory Fund and what would become known as the World Bank. Both the American financial aid and the loans from the IMF were instrumental in facilitating the economic recovery of Europe to the extent that they regained economic power, and developing countries imported industrial goods in exchange for their raw resources. This also led to newly decolonised countries looking back to their former colonies for guidance on development policies (World Economy and Social Survey, 2017: 26-39).

Fourth, the independence of former African colonies, while superficially changing the political dispensation, did not change the economic dispensation. In the case of South Africa, Terreblanche (2002: 95-100) remarks how during the period of negotiations at CODESA in Kempton Park in 1993, the African National Congress replaced socialism with liberal capitalism as their chosen economic model for a newly democratic South Africa. This change is attributed to the fact that formal negotiations to determine the transfer of political power were shaped by informal negotiations between the corporate

sector, Bretton Woods institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, and ANC leadership. In order to gain political power, ANC leadership committed themselves to a free-market economy leaving economic matters to the corporate sector (mining, industrial and banking) and wealth redistribution by way of economic growth (Terreblance, 2002: 62). The economic sector promised to solve poverty and unemployment problems facing black South Africans, but said this could only be done based on three conditions:

> *Firstly, South Africa should be democratised; second, the corporate sector (and with it also the power and property relations of the South African economy) should be left intact and granted all the freedom (i.e, all the 'free marketeerism' normally granted to a corporate sector in a genuinely liberal-capitalist system; and, third, a neo-liberal macroeconomic and export-oriented policy should be implemented in order to integrate South Africa into global capitalism (Terreblanche, 2002: 101).*

Fifth, persistent coloniality is also a function of how deeply Christianity remains embedded in many sub-Saharan African societies. Colonial religion, specifically Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa, influenced cultural transformation even more than colonial language and education did. Christianity arrived in Africa long before formal colonialism. The withdrawal of colonial administrators did not affect Christian missionary work. They (the missionaries) remained after independence. During this time, more black people had converted to Christianity and were able to assist white missionaries in advancing Christianity in rural areas where people still clung to their indigenous languages and customs. Thus, decolonisation largely affected political institutions but did not affect deeply religious African societies where Christianity held sway. While political independence may have been won, Christianity continued to rule the hearts of many African citizens afterwards (Birmingham 1995: 6).

Sixth, during the colonial era, European colonial powers such as Britain and France formed internal security services in their colonies to buttress political powers and maintain the status quo. When African countries gained independence, many of their previous colonial masters, especially Britain and France, provided military support and interventions. For example, Benin remained under French military control after it gained independence in 1960. Britain and France intervened in the Nigerian civil war of 1967 by assisting rival military factions (Birmingham, 1995: 23-25).

Seventh, decolonisation was disrupted by the Cold War from 1947 to 1991. This was an ideological clash between the policies and value systems of capitalist and communist countries (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020: 189). During the same period of the Cold War between the Eastern Communists and the Western Capitalist countries, decolonisation was unfolding in the formerly colonised countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. One of the aims of the Cold War was to either "prevent or slow down" the process of decolonisation. The Western powers achieved this through collaborative strategies to remain in power in the colonies (Fraser, 2013). Taking advantage of some of the newly formed independent African countries that were in crisis because of power struggles and dwindling economies that led to civil wars, the United States of America offered to intervene by providing financial assistance to many African countries in an attempt to sway them to its democratic policies. On the other side, the former USSR was also interested in attracting African countries to her communist ideals and extended her helping hand as a result (Bernstein, 2001). This interrupted the process of decolonisation, and those previously colonised countries retained institutions of colonialism and Western legal systems that empowered capitalism to flourish.

Eighth, during the mid-20th century, "globalisation" emerged as a notion that was aimed at universalising the world (the globe) by exporting symbols, products, and experiences from the Global North (developed nations) to the Global South (developing nations) (Scholte, 2005). Part of this development was to advance the coloniality of education and science, where it was a condition to understand knowledge economies centred around capitalism, the standardisation of scientific tests, and engaging in lifelong learning. Education has thus been facilitated by multilateral organisations that were empowered with the development and implementation of educational policies worldwide (Al'Abri, 2011; Boisselle, 2016). When I matriculated in Lesotho in 1992, the examination papers were set and marked in England. This was 26 years after Lesotho gained independence in 1966. According to Boisselle (2016: 4), science education is based on the Western approach that negates the role of spirit and focuses only on making sense through reason and is the trustee that can validate other knowledge. This is, however, in contrast to how science is perceived in other parts of the world, where knowledge is approached based on "the interconnectedness

of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of individuals with all living things and with the star world, and the universe" (Lavallee, 2009: 23).

Finally, colonial languages remained the language of administration and justice in post-independent African countries. Colonial languages, particularly English in countries such as South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Eswatini, continue to be predominantly used as the global language of instruction in education and as a mode of expression for the arts. Mafeje (1992: 15-16) sees the continued use of European languages in Africa as the degradation of African ethics and undermines the process of cultural revivalism. He (Mafeje) applauds the stance taken by Ngugi wa Thiongo, who went back to writing theatre plays and fiction in his language of Kikuyu, "as an attempt to re-establish a lost organic link between" himself and the community he comes from.

Based on the reasons above, it is evident that colonial structuralism was not dismantled by the decolonisation process and colonial legacies in terms of the economy, religious beliefs, military dependency, language, and education endured (Loomba, 2015). Colonial institutions, ideologies, policies, and laws remained in place. As a result, the borders created during the colonial period were not redrawn. Consequently, Africans remained deeply infected by ethnic and tribal divisions, with capitalism and Christianity shaping decolonised societies, which means decolonisation was "qualified and not an unfettered process" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020: 189).

In order to reveal how the persistence of coloniality manifests in post-independence Africa, a critical theoretical framework linked to decolonisation and this case, postcolonialism and decoloniality, the basis of the original theoretical framework of this study as seen through the lens of Afrocentricity, is required.

4.3 THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF DECOLONISATION

This study was philosophically informed by the critical analysis of Postcolonialism as a theory that has dominated Africa(n) Studies since the 1980s and Decoloniality (including Border Studies) that has emerged as an alternative theory to

Postcolonialism as presented in subsequent sections. By assessing the positive and negative aspects of both bodies of thought, it was discovered that although they diverge in certain aspects, both theories have elements that can be applied to enhance the project of decolonisation. By strategically borrowing and theoretically integrating complementary ideas from both bodies of thought to overcome conceptual limitations or gaps of each body of thought and viewing it through the lens of Afrocentricity, the belief is that a conceptual framework particularly suited to the specific context of this research can be devised. This may uniquely contribute to the decolonisation of knowledge production.

4.3.1 Postcolonialism and Africa(n) Studies

The emergence of Postcolonial Studies can be traced back to the 1950s when the French postmodern theorist Frantz Fanon investigated the psychology of colonialism through his broadly popularised book, “Black Skin, White Masks”, as an attempt to:

> *Examine how colonialism is internalised by the colonised, how an inferiority complex is inculcated, and how, through the mechanism of racism, black people end up emulating their oppressors* (Sardar, 2008: x).

In the 1970s, Edward Said began his seminal study of *Orientalism*. This began in Europe as a study of the Orient or areas that were part of European material civilisation and culture (Said, 1978: 10). This study was conducted by scholars from the Occident (mostly of European origin) who perceived the Orient as the primitive, uncivilised “other” and had aimed to reveal the juxtaposition between the Orient and the Occident in the form of advancement of the latter and backwardness of the former (Hamadi, 2014: 40).

Taking a feminist standpoint through her essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak,” Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) addressed the effects of a colonialism of race and class on Indian Women who were oppressed by the Hindu laws. The laws permitted widow sacrifices. They were silenced when a group of intellectuals calling themselves the Subaltern Studies Group critiqued the laws on their behalf. They were further marginalised by the imperialist division of labour that kept the male dominant. Spivak

called on postcolonial intellectuals to learn “to critique postcolonial discourse with the best tools it can provide and not simply substituting the lost figure of the colonised” (Spivak, 1988: 79-93).

In her seminal work, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Loomba (2015: 223-254) included globalisation in her discussion of Postcolonialism with particular reference to global capitalism and global feminism. Loomba reminds the reader that capitalism should not be overlooked as it was at the centre of colonialism and that capitalism played an integral role in the evolution of racial discrimination in the case of South Africa. Even though Postcolonialism neglected the issue of environment and indigeneity, these two factors considered in conjunction with colonial legacies and global capital can help understand that global capitalism remains the same capitalism introduced during colonialism. Sharing the same feminist sentiments with Spivak, she (Loomba) asserted that Postcolonialism should not have a general approach when dealing with the effects of colonialism. It should shy away from the fact that while colonialism was harsh on men, it was even harsher on women, who were mistreated by both traditional pre-colonial and Western laws introduced during colonialism. The suggestion is that women’s liberation must be treated as a global issue beyond focusing on specific regions.

Postcolonialism dominated the field of literature within which Chinua Achebe became known for his world-renowned novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), with Ngugi wa Thiongo producing the work *Decolonising the Mind* (1987). Postcolonial scholars such Homi K Bhabha and Ania Loomba took Fanon’s colonial psychoanalysis project further and redirected the course of Postcolonialism into Cultural Studies in the 20th century.

In his seminal work, *Location of Culture*, Bhabha (1994) elaborated on the notion of hybridity in that mimicry revealed the hybrid nature of postcolonial discourse. Bhabha (1994: 4-5) described hybridity as a state where a person may assume a liminal space between the acquired and the inherent identity, which he called mimicry. The term hybridity is inspired by Frantz Fanon’s (1967) *Black Skin White Mask* and *Of Mimicry and a Man*. Herein Fanon and Bhabha illustrated how the Western state of being, knowledge and language was positioned to be superior and appealing over the state of being, knowledge and language of colonial states. As a result, colonial subjects

attempted to emulate Europeans in terms of appearance and culture. In this way, colonial subjects made an effort to master European languages and to 'normalise' their knowledge to European knowledge, creating a process of disavowal of own knowledge, language and identity, but still appearing as 'Other' in the colonial gaze (i.e., "almost the same but not quite") (Bhabha, 1994: 86).

Postcolonialism expanded through postcolonial literary and cultural criticism and theory in the 1980s and 1990s to deal with the effects of colonisation on cultures and societies (McEwan, 2009: 34; Ashcroft et al. Eds, 2013: 204). According to Quayson (2000: 2), Postcolonialism involves a "studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies, as well as at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after-effects of Empire". Since its introduction, Postcolonialism has been widely applied to investigate and explain Africa's socio-political [situation] (Abrahamsen, 2003: 189). However, some limitations prevent Postcolonialism from addressing challenges facing African development, as elaborated in Section 4.6, based on the disavowal of African spirituality and the ignorance of African indigenous approaches to land administration.

Despite the limitations of Postcolonialism, this study also drew on the productive elements of Postcolonialism and merged them with notions from Decoloniality.

4.3.2 Border Studies and Decolonial Theory

The historical events of the 19th century along the South Africa-Lesotho border, captured by Ellenberger (1997) in the *History of the Basuto: Ancient & Modern*, and Gill's (1997) *A Short History of Lesotho*, provide the historical background of the invasion of the Free State by different powers and the conflicts that led to the creation of the borderline between Lesotho and the Free State. The so-called *Conquered Territory* (Eloff, 1979) and *The Question of Lesotho's Conquered Territory: It's Time for an Answer* (Lelimo, 1998a; 1998b) provide different and contradicting viewpoints of land tenure between the Boers and Basotho who were living in the Free State, and the three Basotho-Boer wars that took place between 1858 and 1868. These events were instrumental in fixing the current borders between Lesotho and the Free State,

leaving the fertile land west of the Mohokare River contested physically and spiritually. This border contestation is similar to the border contestations of United States-Mexico as well as Canada-United States, which shaped the course of Border Studies.

Border Studies was previously dominant in the field of geography and history. Recently it has evolved into an interdisciplinary field of study cutting across disciplines such as political science, sociology, ethnology, psychology, and anthropology with an emphasis on cultural and humanist points of view as well as becoming an object in linguistic and cultural studies (Laine, 2015: 14; Kurki, 2014: 1056-1063). Expanding the scope beyond disciplinary borders was not only seen as geographical borders but came to include psychological borders, which Mignolo (2018: 109-147) summarised as border thinking, a state of mind that includes "racial and sexual, epistemic and ontological, religious and aesthetic, linguistic and national" borders that have been caused by "the interior routes of modernity/coloniality and the consequences of international law and global linear thinking".

Mignolo and Walsh (2018) added to this by introducing the Theory of Decoloniality as a project of border thinking and as a pathway to decolonisation that was conceptualised during the Bandung Conference (1955) and the Non-Aligned Countries Conference (1961). In the two parts volume, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, Walsh and Mignolo (2018: 5) traced the process of decolonisation during the Cold War as an attempt to liberate Third World countries and transform them into nation-states. This process failed as "the patterns of colonial powers continued both internally (i.e., internal colonialism) and with relation to global structures", thus giving rise to decoloniality (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 5).
Walsh (2018) described decoloniality as:

> *…ways of thinking, knowing, being, and doing that began with, but also precede, the colonial enterprise and invasion. It implies the recognition and undoing of the hierarchical structures of race, gender, heteropatriarchy, and class that continue to control life, knowledge, spirituality, and thought, structures that are clearly intertwined with and constitutive of global capitalism and Western modernity (Walsh, 2018: 17).*

Mignolo raised three important points in Part Two of the book: 1) Decoloniality is not a concept based on privileging individuals with power to decide for other people as in the perspective of Western modernity; 2) decoloniality is working academically but also engages in non-academic work and; 3) it is not a state-led project but allows communities to delink from the colonial matrix by organising themselves in their localities (Walsh, 2018: 108-115). Decoloniality is centred around concepts added to the equation of advancing the process of decolonisation that are presented as *gnoseology*, *delinking*, *border thinking*, *pluriversality*, and *border dwelling,* which are unpacked below:

Gnoseology is defined as a discourse about gnosis. Gnosis has been introduced as knowledge held by a specific group of people, which in the case of this study is African spirituality. At times, gnoseology would mean knowledge in general as opposed to epistemology which is scientific knowledge. Mignolo (2000) maintained that from a decolonial perspective, it included episteme as part of general knowledge under gnoseology. However, he (Mignolo) used border gnoseology to distinguish knowledge produced from *the "*perspective of modern colonialism*",* which he calls interior borders and "knowledge produced from the perspective of colonial modernities in Asia, Africa and the Americas*",* known as exterior borders. From the Afrocentric perspective, the study has adopted *African gnoseology* to refer to knowledge produced in Africa prior to colonialism and as part of colonial subjectivity, which is differentiated from Western knowledge (Mignolo, 2000: 11). This kind of knowledge will also include indigenous knowledge that is held and communicated through rituals by pilgrims of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites (Breidlid, 2008: 141).

Delinking represents a decolonial ideology that puts forward the understanding that the world can be viewed in many ways and not only from the Eurocentric perspective associated with colonialism. To delink is, therefore, to open up to diverse possibilities "and principles of knowledge that have been colonised, silenced, repressed, and denigrated by the totalitarian march of the genocidal dimension of modernity" (Mignolo, 2007: 494).

Border thinking works as a unifier of the diverse knowledge of colonies with that of the colonial powers. The idea behind border thinking is the inclusion of perspectives

from other knowledge rejected by colonialism (Mignolo, 2007: 493). The understanding is that after one has delinked and accepted the idea that there are other possibilities, then one can think beyond the borders of Western knowledge and African gnosis.

Pluriversality as a concept was developed by Decolonial scholars asserting that there are different pre-colonial experiences. Expectations constructed during colonialism were based on the notion that local histories are common. The world has been compartmentalised into First, Second and Third Worlds, with people also classified according to race, gender and so on under the notion of universality. Indeed, there can be universality through the compartmentalisations and classifications that Decoloniality is not against. However, pluriversality replaces the universalisation of universal thinking based on the argument that sees differences in common and the ideology that supports the co-existence of many worlds in one where there is no domination of Western thought systems and ideologies over other ways of thinking and viewing the world (Mignolo, 2007). For the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, pluriversality is constructed based on the diverse pilgrimage movement.

Border dwelling means "to [find] something unknown [or] to establish the basis of something different" (Mignolo, 2007: 484). Dwelling in the border means people are aware that they have been introduced to Western knowledge through colonialism and at the same time, they are aware of their knowledge that was "disavowed and not killed", which they have been inhibiting "in [their] bodies, memories, and in the conversations of past, present, and future generations" (Mignolo, 2018: 206).

The process of decolonisation of knowledge based on Decoloniality Theory is interpreted below by assimilating African gnosis and Western knowledge to arrive at the process of delinking. It also results in one being empowered to understand that diverse colonial experiences and imperial modernity translate into pluriversality. This can assist one to dwell and think within the borders without European influence or dominance to be able to critically analyse knowledge production that is guided by the concept of leading the world towards a pluriversal link to the assumption of the universality as illustrated below:

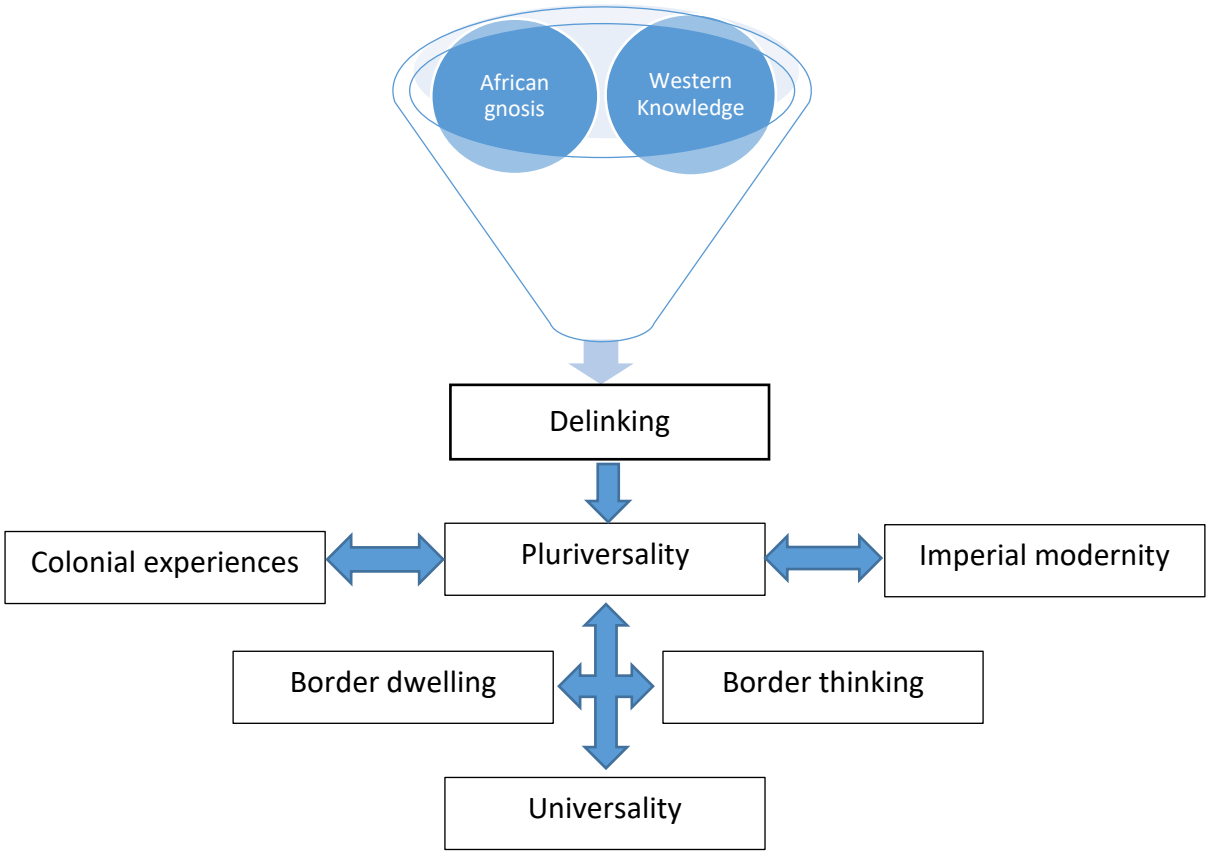


Figure 4. Illustrating the project of decolonisation through the Decoloniality Theory.

4.3.3 Theoretical integration

The merger of both Postcolonialism and Decoloniality is informed by the idea of combining the insights of multiple theories, known as theoretical integration. The concept of integrating theories has been in practice in policy studies, political science, and natural and social sciences. These studies are commonly known for synthesising theories applicable across multiple academic disciplines, those that complement one another and through comparison and contradictory approaches (Cairney, 2013: 4-9).

Borrowing from the field of criminology, Muftic (2009: 35) provided a detailed theoretical integration that puts theories into categories or types and introduces other alternatives to theoretical integration. Theories can be categorised into macro-, micro- and multi-level integration, where the macro-level looks into phenomena beyond the individual, whereas the micro-level centres around individual experiences or behaviour and multi-level refers to combining the macro- and micro-levels. The integration of

theories is conducted to achieve certain goals. Firstly, it is for the purpose of theory reduction, where there have been many theories that have been competing to address the same concept. Secondly, the goal of theory integration is to expand or increase variances where there are elements of the theory that need to be supported or reworked to keep the theory relevant. Finally, theory integration is also about developing a theory by clarifying and expanding on extant propositions and concepts.

There are two types of theoretical integration: conceptual integration and propositional integration. Conceptual integration identifies similar concepts in multiple theories, which are then absorbed into the conceptualisation of the integrated theory. In the context of this study, some elements are important in Postcolonialism, such as 'hybridity' that were absorbed into the Decoloniality Theory (see Section 4.8.4). Propositional integration involves the integration of two or more theories to form a new theory. According to Liska, Krohn and Messner (1989: 6-10), propositional integration can further be divided into three subtypes of integration: concurrent or parallel integration, end-to-end or sequential integration, and up-and-down or deductive integration.

Concurrent integration requires the comparison of common characteristics or forms of theories. This may also take the form of recognising overlaps or deviations in theories that are integrated. End-to-end integration uses concepts dependent on one theory that are independent of another to produce a theoretical framework that incorporates empirical insights from research and is inspired by a second theory. Up-and-down integration or deductive integration is accomplished by identifying a level of abstract or generality that will incorporate some of the conceptualisation of the constituent theories. This can be done by recognising that Theory A contains more abstract or general assumptions than Theory B and, therefore, that key parts of Theory B can be accommodated within the structure of Theory A. Alternatively, it can be done by abstracting more general assumptions from Theories A and B, allowing parts of both theories to be incorporated into a new theory C (Liska et al., 1989: 10).

There are also alternatives to theoretical integration. These include juxtaposing two theories in terms of empirical application to determine which theory has the greater explanatory power (Muftic, 2009: 37). Cairney (2013: 4-8) explained the different types

of combining theories through the “synthesis” and “complementary” approaches where the former is described as a way of combining a new theory to compete with the old in the way of producing a hybridised theory. In this context, Decoloniality is fairly new in comparison to Postcolonialism. On the other hand, a complementary approach is applied where two or more theories share some similarities and can produce insights that use a “common reference point”. An example of this is that both Postcolonialism and Decoloniality strive to facilitate the project of decolonisation even though this is approached from different time frames and localities.

4.3.4 Origins and development of Afrocentricity

Revered as the pioneer of Afrocentricity, Molifi Kete Asante exulted African and Africans in his book, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (2003), which encouraged Africans in Africa and the diaspora to take pride in being Black as an attempt to stand against oppression, racism, and classism (Asante, 1990: 2). Amongst many things, Asante advocated for the repositioning of indigenous African [spirituality] as an alternative to Islam and Christianity (Asante, 1990: 7). Asante followed with his 1987 philosophical book, *The Afrocentric Idea*, and *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Know*ledge (1990) where he argues for the ingenuity of African knowledge which encompasses spirituality and cosmology. This knowledge was publicised by Nabudere (2011: 1-7) as Afrikology. Afrikology came to be known as knowledge generation and application based in African cosmology.

The idea behind the introduction of Afrikology replaces the “scientific” knowledge that in the Western world has alienated humanity from itself and nature. Afrikology, therefore, revives African knowledge that was based on symbols that were in existence before written alphabets. Those figures that were in animal form and narrated through legends and folk tales lost meaning when the oral tradition was transposed into writing**.** Asante (1991: 172) also presented Afrocentricity as “the study of the ideas and events from the standpoint of Africans as the key players rather than victims”. The above approach in an empirical process allows Africans to assert their intellectual and psychological being to liberate themselves from being perceived as similar but different to Europeans.

Mazrui (2002: 25) defined two types of Afrocentricity in his work, *Africanity Redefined Collected Essays of Ali A. Mazrui*, namely Gloriana Afrocentricity and Proletariana Afrocentricity:

> *Gloriana Afrocentricity emphasises the great and proud accomplishments of people of African ancestry – those who built the walls of Zimbabwe and those who built the pyramids of Egypt. There is also Proletariana Afrocentricity. This emphasises the sweat of Africa's brow, the captured African as a co-builder on modern civilisation…Proletariana Afrocentricity is a story of victim as creator.*

In *Afrocentric Epistemology, Methodology, and Methods*, Ama Mazama (2003b: 26) stated that Afrocentric "methods and methodologies are derived from and informed by a particular paradigm" based on the following principles:

> *The African experience must determine all inquiry, the spiritual is important and must be given its due place, immersion in the subject is necessary, holism is a must, intuition must be relied on, not everything is measurable because not everything that is significant is material, and the knowledge generated by the Afrocentric methodology must be liberating. The methods used by Africologists vary depending on their particular topic of study. However, Africological methods devised by particular scholars must be informed by the principles outlined above.*

While credit has been given to scholars such as Asante, Mazama (2003a; 2003b) and Mazrui, to name a few, and to Temple University as a home for Afrocentricity, researchers such as Chawane (2016: 81-82) traced the origins of Afrocentricity back to Marcus Garvey. He argued that ancient Egypt gave civilisation to the world, a line of argument which gained momentum in the Black Power Movement of the 1960s and the Black is Beautiful Movement of the 1970s. Introduced by African diasporas in America and Europe, the two movements were centred on the idea of affirming African historicity and civilisation. Black or African scholars had to rewrite and validate African history through research in order to dispel myths that depicted Africa as a "Dark Continent" and Africans as "heathens" and "barbarians". The process gave rise to Black History that became the foundation for Black Studies in America and Europe (Adeleke, 2015: 200-202).

According to Schiele (1996: 286), Afrocentricity has three main objectives. Firstly, it seeks to promote an alternative social science paradigm more reflective of African cultural and political realities. Secondly, it seeks to dispel the negative distortions about people of African ancestry by legitimising and disseminating a worldview that goes back thousands of years and exists in the hearts and minds of many people of African descent today. Lastly, it seeks to promote a worldview that will facilitate human and societal transformation toward spiritual, moral, and humanistic ends and that will persuade people of different cultural and ethnic groups that share a mutual interest in this regard. There are also five characteristics of Afrocentricity revealed by Richards (2005: 6): spirituality, purposeful living, collectivism/communalism, tolerance, and empowerment, with spirituality the most significant. As explained by Richards (2005: 7), spirituality is one of the most important distinctions between Afrocentric and Eurocentric perspectives.

As indicated above, Afrocentricity added structure to this research, providing phases to follow in this study. It also added principles, methods, objectives, and characteristics that guided this study for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. Furthermore, Afrocentricity guided the conceptualisation and analysis of concepts such as spirituality, sacred sites, indigenous land, and heritage. The study also considered the historical legacy of colonialism. All these elements contributed to the theoretical framework, methodology, and policy and management recommendation. Chawane (2016: 80) underscored this by providing an Afrocentric methodological setting that “places Africa at the centre of any analysis of African phenomena” and cherishes “Africanness” as embodying an ensemble of ethics such as Ubuntu, communalism and understanding ‘being one’ with the environment through spiritual belief systems. Several ideas exist that bind Africans as one community, which was revived through the ideology of Afrocentricity, offering “some alternative to an assimilation that is either excluded by Europeans or seen by Africans as an admission of inferiority and defeat”.

Afrocentricity has been criticised notably by scholars of the Global North, particularly Kwame Appiah.[9] Some criticisms are based on the notion that Afrocentricity is against the idea of uniting the citizens of the United States of America by facilitating the project of unifying African Americans except for other nations of the country. The other criticism is that Afrocentricity uses unconventional methods of research, and because of differences in traditional cultures, language, religious or conceptual vocabulary that Africans share, it makes it difficult for scholars to approach knowledge inquiry through the preferred universal approach (Chawane, 2016: 93-96; Appiah, 1992: 26).

With full cognisance of the mentioned criticisms, Afrocentricity was applied in this study as it acknowledges the diverse languages, traditional and religious practices that make up African society and with the understanding that there cannot be a universal approach to research when there are diverse traditions that require scholarly and unscholarly methods of enquiry to accommodate community-based research projects.

4.4 AFRICAN GNOSEOLOGY: INDIGENEITY, AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY, INDIGENOUS LAND TENURE, LANGUAGE AND GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

The focus of this study was on African gnoseology that is central to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. It was established in Section 4.3.2 that gnoseology is a decolonial concept referring to knowledge in general. It is derived from the notion of gnosis conceptualised by Mudimbe (1988: 9) as referring to the process of “seeking to know, inquiry, methods of knowing, investigation, and even acquaintance with someone”. Gnosis was expanded as gnoseology by Mignolo (2000: 11-13), who included the concept of borders to create ‘border gnosis’ or ‘border thinking’ in an attempt to highlight those bodies of knowledge that were previously disavowed during colonialism. Border gnosis is based on his (Mignolo) notion of ‘dwelling in the border’, interpreted as knowledge produced from the interior and exterior of the borders of the colonial world system and the colonised cultures. Thus, knowledge can be developed

[9] The evidence of insider outsider is also seen from the positionality of Kwame Appiah who is the scholar of the Global North even though he is of Ghanaian descent.

from inside the borders (un-disciplinary) based on previous experiences and move to the outside (disciplinary) through acquired knowledge.

This study applied gnoseology in Africa with African values conceptualised as African gnoseology. African gnoseology comprises Afrocentric values, experiences and functions linked to indigeneity, African spirituality, African indigenous land tenure, African indigenous language, and African indigenous governance systems that were disavowed, and relegated to the margin but not killed (see Section 4.3.2).

4.4.1 Indigeneity

Indigeneity relates to something "originating or occurring" at a certain place. It is a knowledge source through which a person or people identify themselves with one another and where they descend from as well as their collective understanding of their physical and spiritual world (Walker, 2019: 4). It may not be used to imply the entire culture of a group of people but specific aspects that form part of the culture. For example, this study was concerned with the African spirituality venerated at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. Thus, African spirituality is that special knowledge experienced at the sacred sites. Indigeneity is shared through oral traditions accompanied by songs, rituals and prayer for the continuity and sustenance of their social, economic, political, and spiritual well-being (Walker, 2019: 3).

4.4.2 African spirituality

African spirituality was re-interpreted in this study through the belief in life after death. Death is the rite of passage through which a human being could assume forms and duties as an ancestor. *Badimo* (ancestors) are believed to be intermediaries or assistants of *Modimo* (the supreme being) (Zahan, 2000: 6-7). The Basotho, for example, are buried facing northeast towards *Ntsoana-tsatsi*, a place believed to be where the Basotho originated from. In pre-colonial times, they were also buried with their weapons, certain belongings, and seeds such as sorghum and pumpkin, items that they would use in the new life that they were destined for (Gill, 1997: 58). People who held a prominent position during their time such as *Marena*, were buried with their servants who were put to death when their masters passed away. The servants were

referred to as *phate* (sleeping mat). They were to presumably continue their duties beyond the world of the living (Khamokha, Interviewed 12/04/2007).

In most African countries, the approach to spirituality suggests a cyclical three-dimensional perception of space: the sky, the earth, and the ancestral spirit world. An illustration reproduced from Kalu (2000: 56) below shows the interrelation of the sky as the place of *Modimo* (God), the earth beneath the skies as the human world comprising land and water, as well as the spirit world which is 'under' the earth.

Sky – Place of Modimo – God

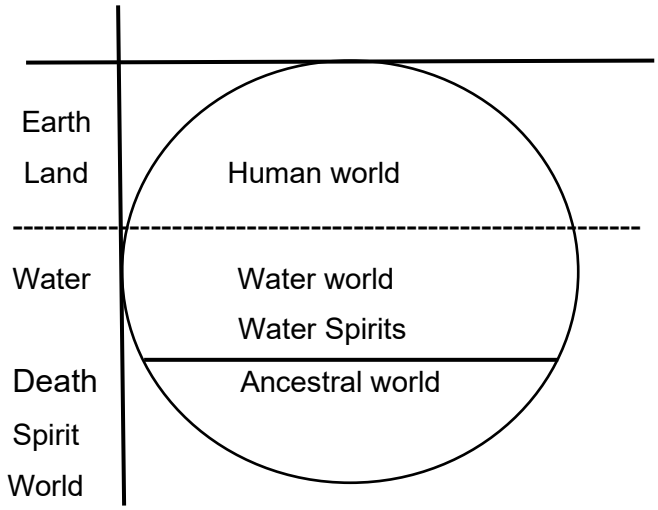


Figure 5. African Spiritual Worldview (Kalu, 2000).

As the *Badimo* (ancestors) assume the spiritual position and become intermediaries of *Modimo*, their responsibilities of administering the land and all its living things are left behind. Figure 5 shows water as the separating realm between the human world and the ancestral world. According to Kalu (2000: 56), water assists the ancestral world in being able to mirror the human world. This means that the activities that occur in the human world are reflected in the ancestral world. Thus, there is a belief amongst the Basotho and other African nations that there is another life after death - the spiritual life. It is also believed that water fluidity helps transform people into nonhuman, genderless beings who can also represent all people (Wicker, 2000: 198).

4.4.3 African indigenous attachment to land

The notion of Mother Earth in Africa shows the relationship between human beings and the environment. The understanding is that people are not superior to the environment but are obligated to protect the environment for survival in peace and harmony (Marumo and Chakale, 2018: 11695-11701). The land was neither communal nor private but an ancestral commodity that linked humans with *Badimo*. People settling it had the right to use it for physical and spiritual survival (Palagashvili, 2018: 286). The land was administered communally, with every community member having an equal share. At the same time, sacred land, forests, mountains and caves, plants and places were used for spiritual and cultural festivals such as *modutswane*, the rainmaking ceremony (Motshega, 2007:13).

4.4.4 African indigenous language

Indigeneity and environment also play a role in the construction of language. It is through being familiar with the culture of a certain nation that one can understand specific and literary terms of that nation's language (Mahadi and Jafari, 2012: 234). According to Skybina (2006: 130), language adapts to the natural environment that a nation occupies, influencing the accent that shifts from natural to social components. Through language, indigenous practices, philosophical beliefs, and knowledge of the environment as unifying elements of African communities are communicated (Moeketsi, 2014: 220). Pre-colonial African societies relied on the oral tradition by which social, economic, political, and spiritual messages were communicated through media such as songs, rituals, stories, and hand-crafted items (Walker, 2019: 3).

Mahadi and Jafary (2012: 230) revealed that language and culture are the two inseparable elements of human development. They believed that cultural patterns and social behaviours are communicated through language, which they termed 'linguistic relativity'. They (Mahadi and Jafary, 2012: 232) indicated that languages, which are completely different in their vocabulary and structure, convey different cultural significances and meanings, and this contributes to how people view the world as determined by the structure of their language. Asante (1988: 31) added that the sense

of language is in the precision of vocabulary and structure for a particular social context and that language serves as an instrument of social restraint.

4.4.5 African indigenous governance systems

According to Palagashvili (2018: 284), pre-colonial African societies were organised as nuclear families, clans, communities, and nations. Each of these groupings had a leader. Related nuclear families comprised a clan. Combined clans made up a community, and the communities in the same geographical spread with the same customs and language made up the nation. The leaders of these formations were seen as the living representatives of the ancestral spirits (*Badimo*) and looked after the welfare of the community. The ancestral spirit representation is a psychological transfer of power bestowed to heads of families or clans as well as *Marena*. *Marena* had a wider responsibility of leading their communities in their rituals, using ceremonial objects, and presiding over the land through fair distribution and management (Palagashvili, 2018: 286).

4.5 LIMITATIONS OF POSTCOLONIAL THEORY TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN GNOSEOLOGY

From the many aspects inherited from colonialism that remain and the challenges that could not be addressed because of the limitations of Postcolonialism, this study focused on African gnoseology. This is because it consists of indigeneity, African spirituality, African indigenous land tenure and attachment, African indigenous language and the African indigenous governance systems that are documented at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites.

4.5.1 Indigeneity

When European countries were drawing the maps that partitioned Africa into European colonies during the Berlin conference, they were excited to claim mountains, lakes and rivers even though they did not know where these mountains, lakes and rivers were located (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2016: 8). The geographical position of the aforesaid landmarks was of no importance, but what was important is

the meaning of those mountains, lakes and rivers to Africans. The colonisers were unaware of the significance of the landmarks for the African people. The latter valued them because of the knowledge that certain places were venerated, including the belief in the omnipresence of the ancestors and that the aforementioned mountains, rivers and lakes translated to indigeneity that was affected by the process of colonisation. Loomba (2015: 252-255) argues that indigeneity has been neglected in Postcolonial Studies due to internal colonialism that is in place as a result of the legacy of colonialism dominated by capitalism and religion.

4.5.2 African spirituality

Heelas and Woodhead (2005: 12) noticed a decline in commitment towards organised religion and the steady growth of people embracing spirituality. However, for Igboin (2014: 436), religion still exists in global and transglobal community politics. There have been at least two narratives upon which critics have based the impact of Postcolonialism. Postcolonialism is closely linked to the academies of the Global North and First World academia, while its preoccupation with literary criticism limited its scope in terms of the real-world experiences of ordinary people (Dirlik, 1994; Edozie, 2008; Abrahamsen, 2003).

One issue that remains contentious is that Postcolonial Studies focus on literary criticism at the exclusion of other forms of transmitting knowledge from other fields of study, such as social sciences (Bhambra, 2014: 118). In most cases, Postcolonial Studies are housed within literature or English departments at universities. Examples include Ania Loomba and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, literary scholars who focus on Postcolonialism. The location of Postcolonial Studies in literary or English departments skewed the application of Postcolonial Studies towards literary criticism while simultaneously limiting Postcolonial Studies from expanding on its application in other fields, as mentioned before. This state of affairs has made it difficult for Postcolonial Studies to appeal to African societies, especially since much of the work is produced in English and published in the Anglophone academic world with an over-representation of literary criticism and discourse analysis but an under-representation of the daily lived materialities of people living in the post colonies.

For centuries before colonisation, African societies relied on the oral tradition, where knowledge was passed from one generation to another through word-of-mouth. The oral tradition is still important in certain spheres, including the pilgrimage movement to the sacred sites in the Mohokare Valley, as oral narratives form part of the ritual activities practised at these sacred sites (Cawood 2014: 203). During colonial administration, language and writing were used to assert colonial cultural superiority over African indigenous cultures and languages predominantly reliant on oral traditions. The location of Postcolonial Studies in English Departments suggests that the policies of advancing culture through language still prevail (Dahhan, 2014: 40).

The role of missionaries during the 19th century was to convert Africans into 'civilised communities' as viewed through the lens of colonial missionary Christianity (Kaoma, 2020: 71). The process of conversion meant that Africans had to be delivered from the influence of African spirituality that was believed to be enslaving them into superstitious and sacrilegious practices (Igboin, 2020: 440). However, the point raised by Mignolo that "non-European knowledge was disavowed, denied and not killed", thus remaining the "bodies, memories, and in the conversations of past, present, and future generations" is seen through the hybrid and diverse Mohokare Valley sacred sites pilgrimage movement as a testimony of the resilience of African spirituality that managed to find its way into how Christianity is practised in Africa (Mignolo, 2018: 206)

4.5.3 African indigenous land tenure

The issue of land tenure is another element underrepresented in Postcolonial Theory. Postcolonial Theory is critiqued by Moorhouse (2016: 5) as having failed indigenous people by under-theorising the concept of land and failing to recognise how different people around the world relate to the land. Abrahamsen (2003: 191-193) highlighted the limitations of Postcolonialism that have also had an impact on the land issue in Africa, namely that Postcolonialism is too theoretical with impenetrable language and is based on an Eurocentric approach to land tenure that facilitated capitalism with its characteristics of inequality, exploitation, and oppression.

There have been attempts by Postcolonial scholars to address issues of land, especially African land tenure (see Section 3.5.2). For example, Du Plessis (2011: 49) emphasised land use as a communal or family "entitlement to property thus being embedded in social relationships rather than giving rise to an individual's exclusive claim over it as private property". The theoretical nature of Postcolonialism does not offer empirical solutions to the decolonisation of African indigenous land. Dominguez and Luoma (2020: 65) consider decolonisation to "mean the reversal of colonialism, including its political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts".

Furthermore, the approach to land in indigenous African societies in Southern Africa resembled a "bio-centric philosophy" that depicts humans as equals to other living things and not an anthropocentric approach where humans are perceived as the dominant species (Collins, 2014: 24). The bio-centric philosophy has been dismissed from the Western perspective as "romantic or essentialist that does not carry weight in global dialogue". Therefore, colonial powers reorganised traditional indigenous systems of land use in order to make them resemble European property systems (Banner, 2005: 273). This transposition of Western (Roman-Dutch/civil law and Anglo-American) concepts and foreign terminology is interpreted by Akuffo (2009: 62) as the veritable source of confusion between African indigenous land use and private property laws. However, Loomba (2015) viewed this as an intentional means to facilitate capitalism:

> *Along with slavery and colonialism, the takeover of the commons and the conversion of various forms of collective property rights into private property involved dispossessing large sections of the population, both in the colonising and colonised countries, so that wealth would be accumulated by a few (Loomba, 2015: 255).*

Latin America is also postcolonial even though it gained independence in the early 19th century, whereas most countries referred to as postcolonial became independent in the mid-twentieth century (Hall, 1996: 245). This makes it difficult to address the plantation and annexation colonialism that affected North and South America due to capitalism and the economic advancement of Britain, France, and Germany. Without looking at the period referred to above as postcolonial, the issue of annexation of parts of America is still considered through this study as land annexation was part and parcel

of colonialism where indigenous people were deprived of their land and made to work on the land to empower colonial interests (Terreblanche, 2002: 6). American states such as Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Kentucky (to mention a few) were plantation territories where mostly Africans worked as slaves.

4.5.4 African indigenous language

The issue of language in postcolonialism remains critical. Postcolonialism is described as the emergence of postcolonial literary (as a driver of language) and cultural criticism and theory of the 1980s and the 1990s (McEwan, 2009: 34). Asante (1988: 35) revealed how in South Africa, language was manipulated to advance colonialism and segregation through 'modifying the meaning of words' and in most cases 'suppressing the opposition language'. He (Asante, 1988: 31) further argued that the two processes made it impossible for Africans to direct [their] future without controlling their language. The continued use of postcolonial terminology suggests that much of the work produced within the postcolonial stream is actually written for Western consumption, similar to any other body of thought in global academia (Seremani and Clegg, 2016: 173).

From an Afrocentric perspective, words such as 'tribe', 'chief', 'hut', 'pygmy', 'witch doctor', 'native', 'hottentot', 'bushman' and 'cult' are untenable and should be prohibited as part of the decolonisation process (Asante,1988: 46). However, terminology such 'tribe', 'native', and 'primitive' are still being used by some early notable postcolonial scholars, which are problematic. For example, in *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha, 1994), the word 'native' appears more than 20 times where it is used in the same sentence with 'negro' as 'native or negro' and as 'native intellectual' or 'native individual'. Loomba (2015) used 'tribe' to refer specifically to Third World nations. Even though Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007) acknowledged the word primitive is discriminatory, they do not seem to have or suggest an alternative word as they continue to use it throughout the second edition of their book *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. This study acknowledges that these words may not have pejorative meanings in some parts of the world but were intentionally used to oppress people elsewhere. Because of this problematic terminology, some texts in Postcolonial Studies need updating to reflect current tendencies to avoid untenable terms.

The effects of enforcing colonial language and culture on Africans, especially those whom Britain and France colonised, caused conditions of hybridity and mimicry. This left Africans as masters of Eurocentric languages and the mimics of colonising cultures, which has stalled the advancement of African languages and cultures. Africa has produced literary experts such as Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who excelled in using the English language. However, Section 4.8.3. below shows how the two came to hold different views regarding the use of the Europhone language in the postcolonial world. It can also be argued that Postcolonial Theory does not reproduce the old culture, nor does it bring a totally new culture, but it continues with the dislocated culture, a mixture of worlds that came about due to colonialism (Rukundwa and Van Aarde, 2007: 1187; Young, 2001: 60; Loomba, 1998: 15).

4.5.5 African Indigenous governance systems

Despite the significant contribution to Postcolonial Studies by Spivak (1988), Bhabha (1994), Quayson (2000), and Loomba (2015), following the foundation laid by Fanon (1967) and Said (1978), Postcolonialism remains silent on indigenous governance systems of *Marena* as the custodianship of spirituality completing the circle of knowledge of indigeneity. Subsequently, colonial legacies remain unquestioned. *Marena* is the deliberate term used in this study to avoid using the more contentious words 'kings' or 'chiefs' as they are controversial in the contexts of South Africa and Lesotho, where the border created during colonialism came to divide a nation that was previously united linguistically and culturally. Gill (1997: 115) revealed that Moshoeshoe was known as *Morena e Moholo*, 'the Great King', during his reign. However, his successor, Letsie I, could not be addressed as the King because he reigned "under the authority of Queen Victoria of Great Britain". It was then that the term "Paramount Chief" came about.

Culturally, all Basotho who are in South Africa are the subjects of the *Morena e Moholo* (the Great King) of Lesotho (Morena Letsie III); therefore, there cannot be another King amongst the Basotho in South Africa. However, Morena Letsie III has no powers within the South African state. This is illustrated by an incident that occurred in March 2018, where Morena Letsie III and his protection team were subjected to an hour-long detainment by the South African security officers at the Maseru border post between

the Free State and Lesotho due to objections against the carrying of firearms by *Morena*'s security (Fabricius, 2018).

It is against this background that the Nhlapho Commission Report (2010) (named after Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo, who was the first Chairperson of the Commission) was established in terms of Section 22 Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework of Act 41 of 2003 to address the disputes and claims of Kingship in South Africa. The commission came to dispute any kingship amongst *Marena* in the Free State, citing their subjectivity with other kingships such as the Kingdom of Lesotho. The work of the commission has been challenged in the courts. Peires (2014:17) stated that the commission failed to look into the conflict between history and law, with "history by its very nature [being] a series of unique events, whereas law seeks to define and articulate the recurrent norms and usages by which any given society tries to function". The customary law which had to guide the commission was inadequately applied. This is an approach to law where customs that were in place before colonialism are applied to settle legal matters. It needs to be emphasised that not all customs may be legally binding. Customs are considered for their "reasonableness, long establishment, uniform observance, certainty and conformity". The Constitution of South Africa accommodates customary laws where it can be determined whether a case can be settled by statutory law or customary law (Hull, Babalola & Whittal, 2019: 2). With this in mind, Nhlapho's approach, therefore, lacked flexibility as is illustrated below:

> *Any attempt, therefore, to apply the consistencies of law to the inconsistencies of history is bound to fail. What would have happened, for example, if the Commission had applied its version of customary law to the well-known case of the Zulu kingdom? Ignoring the 1927 cut-off date, as it usually did, the Commission would have had no difficulty going back to 1840, some years before British colonial authority was imposed on the colony of Natal. That was the year in which Mpande fled his homeland to enlist the support of the Voortrekker leader, Andries Pretorius. In February 1840, the Boers destroyed the army of Dingane and proclaimed Mpande King of the amaZulu. The Commission should have asked whether that was in accordance with Zulu customary law* (Peires, 2014: 17).

Colonialism disrupted indigeneity and harmonious environmental interdependency. Postcolonialism did not contribute to restoring African belief systems and the

indigenous governance system. However, Postcolonial Theory is a critical theory aimed at exposing enduring colonial legacies in a postcolonial world by focusing on discourses and language. Postcolonialism is also a completely Western theory, given its roots in Orientalism, Marxism and Subaltern Theory. Its appropriation by English departments means that its scope of application is limited to academic concerns and the academies of the Global North instead of affecting real-world changes in the Global South. While Postcolonial Studies is important in exposing the enduring legacies of colonialism, it does not provide alternatives.

4.6 AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO AFRICAN GNOSEOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Based on the above limitations of Postcolonialism, many scholars came to conclude that Postcolonialism is too theoretical and does not contribute to the continuing project of Africa(n) Studies (Abrahamsen, 2003: 190). In addition, Dirlik (1994: 332) found Postcolonialism as abstract and less concrete in reference to the postcolonial world. This contrasts the term 'Third World', which was used before Postcolonialism.

However, it is not the intention of this study to discard Postcolonialism as the belief is that it still has much to contribute to the project of Africa(n) Studies. Firstly, this study adhered to Quayson's (2000: 9) "process of post-colonialising". This process separates the chronological meaning of the prefix "post, " implying that colonialism has been surpassed. Instead, post-colonialising positions Postcolonialism as a process and ongoing "struggle against colonialism and its aftereffects", whether in material or conceptual terms. Thus, the condition of Postcolonialism does not yet exist but is an ideal one is working towards. Secondly, the study heeded the advice of Hall (1996: 246) and Abrahamsen (2003: 210), who suggested that "Postcolonialism does not operate on its own" and can still be relevant when merged with a more empirical theory and field of study to investigate current relationships between power, discourse and political institutions and practices that can help in generating possibilities for transforming social and political conditions. Here, Decoloniality comes into the picture with its more empirical approach and the understanding that decolonisation is a process that can only be understood through the analysis of colonial conditions (Mignolo, 2018: 147).

The very nature of this study also informed the theoretical integration of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality, where many insights are derived from a broad range of academic disciplines (Cairney, 2013: 2). Decolonisation should not be confused with Decoloniality as the two are completely different concepts. Decolonisation refers to a process leading to the end of colonial rule, especially after the Second World War when European powers dismantled their rule over colonised countries, granting them independence. Decoloniality, however, is focused more on the decolonisation of knowledge. It is re-joining the world intending to be an equal contributor of knowledge that can be exposed for scrutiny and re-evaluation compared to other world knowledges. What this study is putting forward as knowledge embraced by Afrocentricity is spirituality that has been side-lined for centuries to give way to dominant world religions. Decoloniality is, therefore, more contextual and practice-based (Mignolo, 2011a; 2011b).

While the process of decolonisation is linked to the Bandung Conference of 1955 that representatives from 29 countries of Asia and Europe attended, Decoloniality came about in the late 1990s as part of the continued conversations of modernity and the (de)coloniality project (Walsh, 2018: 4). The theory extends the scope of decolonisation back to the Transatlantic Slave Trade of the 16th century. The incorporation of Decoloniality in this study is informed by the concept of 'borderland' and 'border thinking' as informed by the geographical position of the Mohokare Valley traversing the South Africa-Lesotho border.

Even though Postcolonialism (Middle East) and Decoloniality (Latin America) are linked to the Global South, they are not directly linked to Africa. Afrocentricity then meets Postcolonialism and Decoloniality at the intersection where there is a need for it (Afrocentricity) to render Postcolonialism and Decoloniality more sensitive to the nuances of African contexts. The Afrocentric paradigm requires the decolonisation of African people from cultural, religious, political, and psychological chains of hegemonic Eurocentric traditions (Bonsu, 2016: 110). This research contends that because of the limitations of Postcolonialism, the decolonisation process is not complete and remains ongoing. Postcolonialism is only a continuation of decolonisation. Decoloniality is an alternative vehicle facilitating the process of decolonisation based on its broader scope that dates back to the period of the Atlantic Slave Trade from the 1500s.

Postcolonialism interprets decolonisation as the period after former colonies were granted independence. Both Postcolonialism and Decoloniality, when applied to Africa, need Afrocentricity as an “unfolding relation”.

Decoloniality suggests ‘delinking’ from political ideologies of colonialism, such as capitalism and communism and for people to go back to ways of life and modes of thinking that Christianity disqualified. However, Afrocentricity adds the inherent hybrid nature of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites that must be considered and the understanding that one may choose what has to be brought back as not every aspect of precolonial African culture is relevant in contemporary contexts. Furthermore, because of colonial displacements of African cultural practices, there is little to go back to, and the idea of a “collective pure pre-colonial culture” is implausible and impossibly romantic (Loomba, 2015: 178).

The accommodative nature of Afrocentricity allowed this study to integrate the multiculturalism that Postcolonialism brings with its Eurocentric traditions as well as Decoloniality that allows socio-political elements from other nationalities. The intent was not to discard everything Eurocentric but to borrow concepts from African thought systems such as the West African ideology of *sankofa* (or *sekwele* in Southern Africa Sesotho) (Chukwuokolo, 2003: 34). The two terms mean to look back and fetch those African-centred philosophical concepts which have been forgotten (Deterville, 2016: 118). In this way, the same tools (such as languages) from the West created and applied under colonialism to marginalise others are the same tools that can now be used to the advantage of the previously colonised (Quayson, 2000: 12). Chinua Achebe believed that he could still continue using English in his writing for its wider audience. However, as part of the decolonisation project, he suggested a different approach:

> *I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings (Achebe 1975: 103).*

The different approach in applying English or other European languages in the decolonisation process is detailed in Section 4.8.3. Chapter 2 of this study has

demonstrated how pilgrims to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites are characterised by a fusion of Christianity and African Spirituality with members of African Indigenous Churches and spiritual healers sharing the same space at any given time, which is a sign of syncretism and is read as an element of postcolonial hybridity (Mokotso, 2015: 158). The case of the woman prophet, Mantsopa, who settled at Modderpoort near Ladybrand in the Free State at St Augustine's Anglican Priory, was a proponent of syncretism by being guided by the spiritual messages from the *Badimo* (ancestors) and at the same time employing the symbols of Christianity. In a way, she refashioned her traditional beliefs and Christianity into her own belief system. Her understanding of the way to *Modimo* (God) was that it is broader than narrowly presented by Christians (Mokotso, 2015: 158).

Gill (1997) revealed that syncretism was later advanced by forming the underground movement known as *Thapelo ya Sephiri* (secret prayer). The late 1920s also saw the emergence of Walter Matitta. He founded the Church of Moshoeshoe after claiming that he had a dream. In that dream, he was instructed by *Morena* Moshoeshoe I to establish a church that would satisfy the spiritual needs of the Basotho. This was followed by the Zionist and Apostolic Churches that adopted rituals and leadership styles that were more Afrocentric.

During the papal visit to Lesotho in 1988, Pope John Paul II pronounced his dissatisfaction over how the Basotho worshipped *Modimo*, in an imitation of the European way of worship (Ntlhabo, J.S., Interviewed on 20-04-2019). Revered as an ecumenically tolerant man in certain areas (Renehan, 2007: 69), the Pope had hoped to see the African version of praising *Modimo*. Following this, most of the Catholic churches in Lesotho started incorporating traditional drums during church services, adding African rhythmic and percussive flair to their hymn songs. In Southern Africa, drums are generally used by *Dingaka tsa moya* (spiritual doctors) during ritual ceremonies when they reconnect with *Badimo* (Hewson, 1998: 1033).

4.6.1 Convergences of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality

Both Postcolonialism and Decoloniality are driving the project of decolonisation. They both started as the works of the European diasporas, with Postcolonial scholars

focusing on the Middle East and South Asia, while scholars of Decoloniality refer mostly to South or Latin America as the interlocutor of their studies. Edward Said, born in Palestine, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha and Ania Loomba, who all hail from India, have been instrumental in advancing Postcolonialism and Postcolonial Studies. Argentinian-born Walter D. Mignolo has been the most prominent proponent advocating for Decoloniality. Both Postcolonialism and Decoloniality tolerate the hybridity and capitalist state of affairs that formerly colonised countries found themselves in as part of the legacy of colonialism. For this reason, they (Postcolonialism and Decoloniality) employ European language(s) as their main communication medium. It has been argued that both theories have effectively challenged the stereotype of "historical narrative and historiographical traditions emanating from Europe" to facilitate the decolonisation project (Bhambra, 2014: 115).

4.6.2 Divergences of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality

Postcolonialism is more academic and theoretical, whereas Decoloniality is more actional and community-based, with an intent to eliminate coloniality and improve the lives of those previously affected by colonialism. Therefore, the application of PAR as the methodology is about real-world action and change. Through academic processes:

> *Research is done to help decide how poverty can be reduced. But there is no research done to explain why we have poverty in the world. Decolonial knowledge aims to reveal the "causes" of poverty rather than accept it as a matter of fact and to produce knowledge to reduce its extension. To turn border thinking solely into an academic concern would mean to nourish "disciplinary decadence" and keep the horse behind the cart (Mignolo, 2000: xviii).*

Postcolonialism focuses on the period beyond 1960, known as the period of African decolonisation. Decoloniality dates back to the Atlantic Slave Trade, where the displacement of Africans and the extraction of resources (human and mineral) from Africa is seen as another form of colonisation, which should be considered when implementing processes of decolonisation (Mignolo, 2011a: 45-47). Bhambra (2014: 118) noted that Postcolonialism is limited in terms of geographical spread. A fair amount of postcolonial material makes reference to the Middle East and South Asia, which makes it seem to be intellectual discourse only relevant to those geopolitical

areas, thus not fully addressing decolonisation in other areas of the world that are also postcolonial, such as Africa. Mignolo's (2011a: 46) argument is that Decoloniality (decolonial thinking) is different from Postcolonial Theory or Postcolonial Studies as Decoloniality can be applied to different decolonisation projects because of its flexible and accommodative approach.

Postcolonialism as a field was created by literary scholars that were committed to the project of decolonisation through literary and cultural criticism. Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak, three of the most eminent postcolonial scholars, all hold doctorates in English literature from high-profile universities in the northern Anglophone academies. Decoloniality emphasises the decolonisation of former colonies' knowledge, especially knowledge disavowed during colonialism. In this research, African spirituality was interpreted as an integral part of African gnoseology.

Postcolonialism has been advancing the universal approach informed by globalisation that seeks to see previously colonised nations as one with the colonisers socially, politically, and economically. This is done by using the same Eurocentric strategies and systems. Decoloniality presents a pluriversal approach that aims to position previously colonised nations at the social, political, and economic levels with the colonisers. However, it uses different approaches presented from different values and experiences of the previously colonised nations and not a one-size-fits-all approach.

4.7 TOWARDS THE AFRIKANA-DECOLONIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to devise an appropriate theoretical framework for this research required acknowledging that colonialism in the form of political domination and occupation of territory has ended, but 'deculturalisation' still remains; and that Christianity has become dominant and deeply rooted in the hearts of most Africans. However, syncretism is evidence that Christianity has been remade through African spirituality, a marker of spiritual resistance. It also demonstrates a powerful force and shows how resilient African spirituality is in overcoming colonial oppression and denigration. In essence, the theoretical framework for this study was also syncretic and hybrid, merging elements from Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Afrocentricity to better understand how Christianity and African spirituality are fused and practised through

African Traditional Religion at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. These are at the centre of African gnoseology, which is knowledge immersed in spirituality from the Afrocentric perspective while also dealing with how the sacredness of such sites can be maintained while engaging in the more profane activities related to spiritual tourism towards grassroots community development.

4.7.1 Ontological foundation

Richards (2003: 34) described ontology as a study of being in relation to the nature of reality (what is the reality out there). The ontology in this study was founded on the basis that postcolonial Africa is dictated by hybridity. In as much as it is my desire to bring back those principles and values that guided pre-colonial Africa through Afrocentricity, the reality is that some elements in life may not be reversed, such as those that materialised as a result of colonialism. Therefore, this study borrowed concepts strategically from Postcolonialism and Decoloniality to advance a theoretical framework that encompasses pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial elements as a process of decolonisation. In this regard, Postcolonialism highlights the reality of the state of affairs and material concerns surrounding the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. Decoloniality is presented as the theory that accommodates alternative notions like gnoseology to direct the discussions that drive the process of decolonising knowledge presented at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites.

4.7.2 African gnoseology as epistemology

Epistemology is a certain way of understanding and making sense of the knowledge that the world presents (Al-Saadi, 2014: 2). The knowledge that this study mainly dealt with is the African spirituality that forms part of gnoseology which, according to Mignolo (2000) has been alienated during colonialism (see Section 3.5.4). This study also introduced African gnoseology to include Afrocentric values around which spirituality is centred. African gnoseology is also employed as a result of the notion of gnoseology that was introduced within the Decoloniality framework that was developed in South and Latin America. Africa is therefore applied to localise it. According to Mafeje (2001: 42), epistemology as a study of mental representations was developed by European scholars in Europe and has been used as a parameter to judge other forms of

knowledge. In this way, an investigation applied from the Eurocentric approach may isolate the spirit from any form of knowledge (see Section 4.3.5); therefore, gnoseology stands in as epistemology to guide the study based on spirituality as the primary value of Afrocentricity.

4.7.3 Axiology

Axiology is based on the shared values of Afrocentricity, Postcolonialism and Decoloniality. Afrocentricity strives for the liberation of Africans, African values, African spirituality and wisdom through research. Postcolonialism presents hybridity, and Decoloniality accommodates the notion that spirituality is central to all knowledge based on an African perspective.

4.7.4 Conceptualising the theoretical framework

Different forms of colonisation, as seen in Section 4.2.2, suggest that there are different approaches to decolonisation processes. In some instances, former colonisers left after independence, while in the case of most Southern African countries that were affected by settler colonies, the colonisers remained to be assimilated into the process of decolonisation forming part of the post-colony. At the same time, the disruptions of decolonisation (see Section 4.2.4) revealed that former African countries (notably the British and French colonies) may have obtained political independence, but that decolonisation remains qualified and unfinished. Introducing new national iconographies, such as flags and anthems, did not alter colonial borders and institutions. Nkrumah (1965) termed it neo-colonialism, which is colonialism in a new form. For Mignolo (2017: 3), this is “geopolitical decolonisation”, where colonisers were sent home but traded language, culture, religion, and governance structures, justifying this as compensation for African minerals that were taken to Europe. Because of the above arrangements, former colonised African countries remained in a hybrid state of affairs. Hybridity experienced in former colonial countries is actually the reverse of what the colonisers had anticipated. Hybridisation was planned to be a strategy of civilising the colonial subjects but fixing them as the ‘Other’. Thus, people changed in actions and values but remained the ‘Other’ in terms of race. However, the opposite happened, as explained by Loomba (2015: 172):

Anti-colonial movements and individuals often drew upon Western ideas and vocabularies to challenge colonial rule and hybridised what they borrowed by juxtaposing it with indigenous ideas, reading it through their interpretative lens, and even using it to assert cultural alterity or insist on an unbridgeable difference between coloniser and colonised (Loomba, 2015: 172).

Hybridisation in the above contexts refers to the state of affairs that most of the colonised arrived at by choice and is the choice they are prepared to live with. This is in line with what Achebe suggested with European languages, as previously explained. It speaks to the current synchronisation of African Christianity and African spirituality that also contribute to the current state of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. This research contended that for any project of decolonisation to succeed, hybridity has to be considered together with other governance structures and policies that are part of the legacy of colonialism.

The study, therefore, viewed and used 'postcolonial' as a condition of Africa and Africans courtesy of the after-effects of colonialism and not the post-colonial, which is a description of a historical period after decolonisation. Postcolonialism is used as an ideology aimed at unpacking persistent colonial legacies in the present (Loomba, 2015: 34). Afrocentricity, on the other hand, provided the platform for applying the hybrid or syncretic form of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality.

Pellerin (2012: 150) described Afrocentricity as a theory that does not prioritise new methods of interpreting data but rather creates a platform for research that is productive and liberating for African people. In this way, Afrocentricity becomes a revolutionary idea because it studies ideas, concepts, events, personalities, and political and economic processes from the standpoint of Africans as subjects and not as objects, basing all knowledge on the authentic interrogation of location and positionality, which describes one's own socio-political location in society (Asante, 2009: 1-2). For Pellebon (2007: 172), there are two objectives inherent in Afrocentricity:

…that seek to liberate the research and study of African people from the hegemony of Eurocentric scholarship and to return all Africans to their cultural centre – which refers to

the unique African Cultural System that comprises the main elements of African symbolism such as language, rhythm, spirituality, and values that have always been African culture.

Afrocentricity assisted this study in expanding the scope of decolonisation. In this case, decolonisation does not begin with granting independence to colonies. However, it goes back to the time when African slaves were freed. Within the parameters of this research, the idea that African countries are postcolonies or are in the postcolonial era was therefore contested. As a result, this study sided with Venn (2006: 3) by suggesting that formerly colonised countries are not fully emancipated, and the process of decolonisation still continues. In line with this, Quayson (2000: 9) argued that Postcolonialism is an ongoing process of postcolonialism. This implies that Postcolonialism should be removed from its reference to chronological supersession, which is implied by the prefix "post", which in most cases is interpreted as stating that the colonial state has been superseded. It is this process that Decoloniality seeks to complete.

The multiple lenses that Postcolonialism and Decoloniality brought to the study justified the combination of the two theories. In this regard, the study followed an alternative to theoretical integration and used both 'synthesised' and 'complementary' types of alternative theoretical integration (Cairney, 2013: 4-8). The process, similarities, and differences of concepts in both Postcolonialism and Decoloniality were compared to find common reference points and establish what could be taken from one theory to enhance the other. The common point of reference between the two theories has been established as the project of decolonisation, despite being approached from different time frames (Bhambra, 2014: 115).

Even though notable scholars such as Abrahamsen (2003), Bhambra (2014), Dirlik (1994), Edozie (2008), Loomba (2015) and Quayson (2000) have found a variety of limitations in Postcolonialism in completing the process of decolonisation, the theory offers useful concepts to help understand this study. For example, critiques of capitalism, religion, and language, together with hybridity, can productively explain the colonial legacies of African societies. As a result, the above concepts are borrowed from Postcolonialism to expand on the end goal of Decoloniality, which has great productive explanatory power in empirical research because it interrogates persistent

coloniality in order to address decolonisation. It covers a wide territorial range, and its time frame is extended to the pre-colonial period. While both Postcolonialism and Decoloniality offer ways to critique colonial legacies, Decoloniality offers alternative ideas such as gnoseology, accommodates communalism, allows for community participation, and applies a bottom-up approach to the project of decolonisation.

Furthermore, as both Postcolonialism and Decoloniality were formed outside Africa but are meant to serve the previously colonised African countries like other former colonies, the study then brought Afrocentricity into the equation to locate the process of decolonisation geospatially. The study also incorporated African values and addressed specific challenges of decolonising African indigenous lands, languages and spirituality that were highly affected by colonialism. Figure 6 illustrates the intersections or syncretisms of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality in an Afrocentric melting pot.

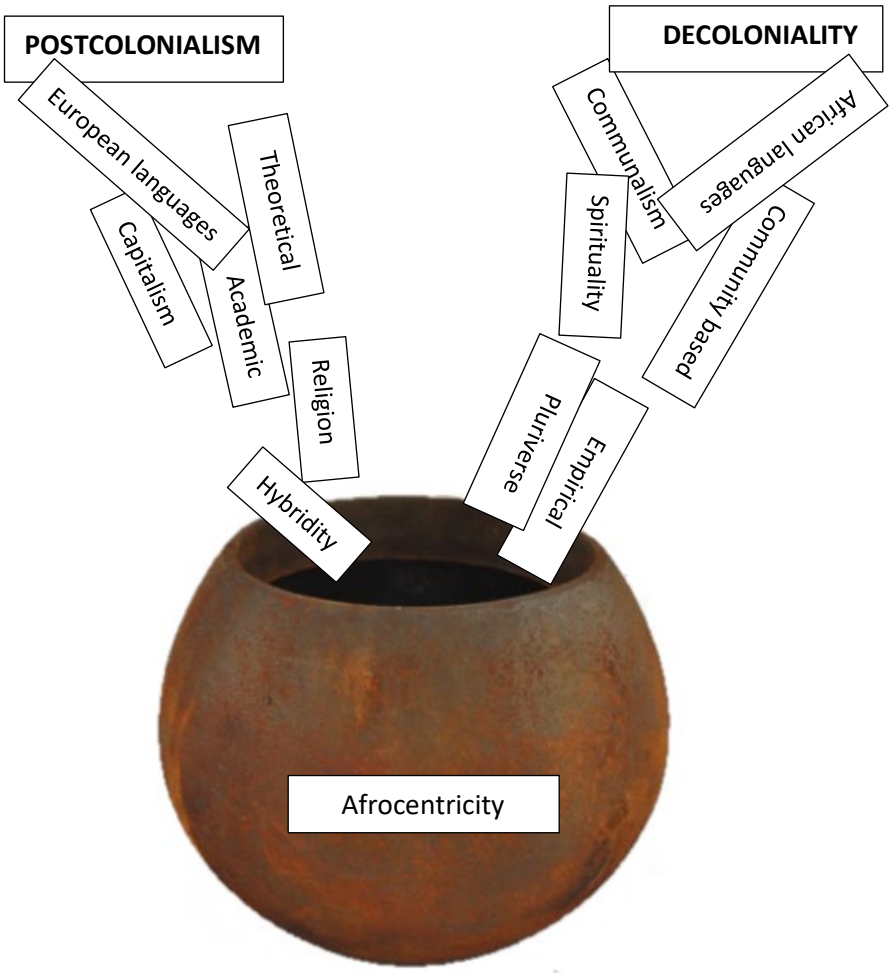


Figure 6: The melting pot of the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework

A pot is used in the above illustration based on the importance of the African earthen pots. It is used as a metaphor for human life. Pots are used as containers of liquid and solid substances in everyday life and as part of the occasional ceremonies and rituals (Nyamushosho et al., 2021: 5). There are also numerous meanings and symbolic values attached to clay pots in most African cultures. According to Cawood (2010: 212) and Nel (2014c: 295), the clay used to make pots is believed to have medicinal values ranging from healing ailments such as diarrhoea, boils, measles, rash, heartburn as well as being used as a nutritional supplement. This is one reason why it is harvested at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. The use of an African clay pot is borrowed from the belief in most African countries (notably, Mali, Kenya and Nigeria) where clay is a substance from which *Modimo* created the earth, the moon, the sun and human beings. The process of making a clay pot is equated to the life of a human being, where the harvesting of clay is similar to the development of a child in the womb. The moulding of clay into a pot then symbolises the child's growth and drying and firing as a person reaching adulthood (Turnbull, 2007: 55-57).

Once the pot is complete, it can be used to transform some contents poured into it, like the fermentation of sorghum beer and milk. Among the Basotho, the clay pot symbolises a womb. For this reason, when a child dies within three months after birth, he or she is buried with pottery shards. At this stage, the child was still in confinement (still in the womb) of an actual family house he or she was born in. The use of pottery shards symbolises putting a child back into the womb to take him/her to the land of the *Badimo* (ancestors) (Gill, 1997: 44). Pots were also used as ornaments given to newly wedded women to take with to their new families. Archaeologists use pottery to trace the movement of women from one group of people to another. Pots were also believed to "provide spiritual continuity between the living and the dead". They were used to accompany the dead to the "new world" as they believed death was only a passage through which people assumed another form to exist as Badimo (Pikirayi & Lindahl, 2013: 457-464).

The theoretical framework or lens devised for this research was conceptualised as the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Lens or Framework. The study took Postcolonialism as a process or desired postcolonial state that can be reached when entangled with

African gnoseology (knowledge) and transforming those elements that are still Eurocentric in order for them to serve the development of Africa through Decoloniality.

‘Africana’ is preferred instead of ‘African’ because ‘Africana’ denotes culture, beliefs, values, morals, and the state of being of African people in Africa and the diaspora (Carrol, 2008: 6). This theoretical framework uses ‘Afrikana’ instead of ‘Africana’ because of its association with “people who consciously choose to acknowledge, study, and celebrate their Afrikan heritage” (Kemayo, 2003: 13). Even though there are contestations over the original spelling of Africa or the original name of the continent, this study prefers to use Afrikana with a ‘k’ as it goes with the idea that a ‘k’ sounds more authentic than a ‘c’ which in English is used to replace a ‘k’ because the ‘k’ is silent. The use of ‘k’ is also a way of subverting English to contribute towards a contestation against African subordination as part of the decolonisation project.

The use of ‘k’ is derived from ‘Afrikana’ and ‘Afrika’ and represents a mode of thinking that does not define itself as anti-European/American, anti-white, or anti-capitalism but represents thinking that is ‘pro-Afrika’ and ‘Afrikan’ thus defining itself in the positive and not only giving direction by people’s definitions but values also, which would not be evident if defined in the anti-tradition (Madhuhuti, 1992: 23-24).

Stephen (2009: 4) argued that “Afrocentrists cannot function properly […] if they do not adequately locate the phenomenon in time and [place]”. Postcolonialism was limited to the period after the independence of colonised countries in the 20th century, with Decoloniality addressing a wider period. It included the 16th-century Atlantic Slave Trade and the 19th century, which saw European countries colonising vast tracts of other continents such as Africa and Asia. Therefore, Postcolonialism refers to conditions that came about due to colonialism and characterised postcolonial African knowledge in the form of spirituality, African indigenous land tenure, African indigenous languages, and African indigenous systems of governance.

Afrocentricity creates a platform for political engagement towards emancipation through its empirical nature (see Section 4.4.4). From Afrocentricity, the study deduced African gnoseology that rests on indigeneity and is understood as an interconnectedness of spirituality (African), indigenous people and the environment.

The limitations of Postcolonialism (see Section 4.6) suggested the integration of elements of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality. Therefore, the study presented African gnoseology as an epistemology while the merger of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality are presented as ontology. African gnoseology as epistemology is an interpretation of knowledge that is "personal, subjective and unique", which, as it is founded on African spirituality, requires immersion and involvement in the subject and not following scientific processes (Al-Saadi, 2014: 2). On the other hand, there are postcolonial realities of a hybridised society as a result of colonialism and the pluriversal approach that Decolonial Theory presents as part of ontology, as well as the axiology that is brought by Afrocentricity that guides the research through African values.

In order to fully understand the nature of African gnoseology, because of its abstract and intangible qualities, interpretation through a positivist and objective approach is not feasible. An interpretive and constructivist approach would be more appropriate as it allows researchers to learn about the world through their own perceptions, experiences, and interpretations without applying direct observation (Al-Saadi, 2014: 2-3). Through the strategic combination of elements from Postcolonialism and Decoloniality, the study aimed to facilitate a decolonial understanding of African gnosis as one knowledge base within the Afrocentric perspective, as illustrated in Figure 7 below. This is based on the concept of the African rondavel.

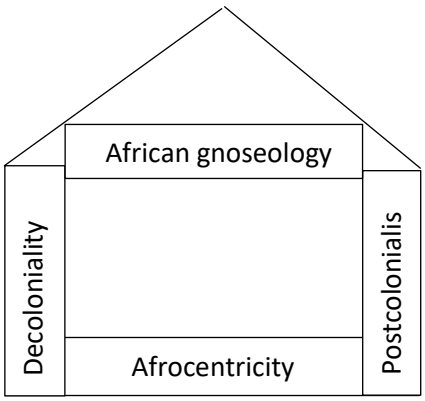


Figure 7: Illustration of decolonisation of African gnoseology through the theoretical intergration of Afrocentricity, Postcolonialims and Decoloniality.

The difference between the rondavel and the melting pot concepts is that the pot reveals elements that come with Postcolonialism and Decoloniality that are fused into Afrocentricity with its values and practices. The rondavel is a frame or a structure made

up of pillars reinforced with different elements from different theories. Therefore, the structural foundation is Afrocentricity with its African-centred approach to research that caters for African symbolism, language, rhythm, spirituality, and values (Pellebon, 2007: 172). Acknowledging that cultural systems have been affected by political and historical layers, decolonial and postcolonial theories are brought together to form the walls of the rondavel but firmly anchored in the Afrocentric foundation.

Postcolonialism as an academic and theoretical lens has its roots planted in the Western academy. It highlights the realities that those Western socio-political and developmental elements that came with colonialism, such as capitalism, Christianity and the issue of hybridity, still prevail in African colonies and should not be ignored when considering any development project. Hybridity specifically is seen by Yazdiha (2010: 36) as a means of deconstructing boundaries within race, language, and nation by allowing "collectivities to reclaim a part of the cultural space in which they move". Yazdiha (2010: 35) reinterprets hybridity from the point where:

> *…the far-reaching diasporic symbols and narratives that snowball into this thing we call national culture suggest that culture is itself a traveller collecting artefacts from various locations along the way, and its walls are too insubstantial to be used as a means of exclusion.*

Decoloniality provides room for *Letsema* (communalism) as an alternative to capitalism and communism as it involves community participation. *Letsema* is an old strategy where development is a holistic evolution of all the aspects of society, including political, social, psychological, spiritual, intellectual, technological, scientific, and cultural for the "advancement of the society as a whole as an aggregate of individuals" (Chukwuokolo, 2003: 28). Bhambra (2014: 134) suggested that decolonisation can be reached when previously dominated practices and the geopolitical locations of knowledge are acknowledged. African spirituality and its power to connect indigenous people to the land is one knowledge that seeks restitution from colonial marginalisation through the border thinking project of Decoloniality (Mignolo, 2000: xviii).

4.8 APPLYING THE AFRIKANA-DECOLONIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (ADTF)

A decolonial approach to African gnoseology that incorporates indigeneity and African spirituality has to start by acknowledging that from the Afrocentric perspective, colonialism did not commence during the 19th century but can be traced back to the period of the Transatlantic Slave Trade of the 1500s. Thus, the study interpreted 'postcolonial' by tracing history and experiences through a transtemporal frame of pre-colonialism, colonialism, and post-colonialism by considering those pre-colonial elements that are still relevant, merging them with colonial practices that are useful as a move towards a postcolonial state. In other words, this cyclical process sought to learn about the past to re-interpret the future. For Decoloniality to be there, coloniality had to take place.

While at the time of colonialism from the 1600s to the 1900s, some Africans never saw Europeans in their lives, believing that they were still similar to them, for others, the European presence was visible, but created boundaries that divided them (African and Europeans), and as in the case of Southern African countries, colonialists directly interacted with Africans in their everyday life; thus, creating a hybridised society (Loomba, 2015: 176). Hybridity, as a notion preoccupying Postcolonial Studies, can also not be ignored when addressing issues surrounding African spirituality. Hybridity resulted from varied forms of colonialism, notably linked to British and French settler colonialism. European languages and Christianity were imposed on African societies to replace local languages and African spirituality to refashion the colony as a reflection of the metropole.

Many people have noticed the change in the lives of Africans or previously colonised nations due to colonialism. It has also been noticed that the lives of the colonisers have been affected by the process. This can either be by choice where one would pledge allegiance to the metropole or adjust to the newly found sphere of the colony in the sense that:

> *The coloniser who accepts his role tries in vain to adjust his life to his ideology. The coloniser who refuses tries in vain to adjust his ideology to his life, thereby unifying and justifying his conduct (Memmi, 2003: 89).*

The above process revolves around enculturation. Section 4.7.4 showed that colonisers planned to civilise the colonial subjects but fixed them as the 'other', producing a hybridised society. However, for the colonisers to be in the position to transform formerly colonised cultures, they first had to understand them. Meaning they were first assimilated through a process of enculturation. For missionaries to be able to translate the Bible into Sesotho after arriving in Lesotho, they first had to learn the Sesotho language. Then came the process of acculturation. Acculturation is defined as change that groups go through when they come into contact with one another (Kunst et al., 2021: 20). An example of this is the Dutch settlers who later called themselves Afrikaners, adopting the language derived from Middle Dutch and the Malay slaves imported to the Cape of Good Hope as their own.

Coloniality is the process of building, transforming, and disseminating Western knowledge over the past 500 years. The process of colonialism transformed formerly colonised people to "sense and think" like the colonisers but still remain the "other" as interpreted by the colonisers. From a postcolonial perspective, hybridity has been accepted. However, from a decolonial point of view, there are options. One option is accepting a hybrid condition and the inferiority imposed through coloniality or elevating oneself to the position of superiority by sensing and thinking in a way equal to those superior in class and race. The other option is to delink. Delinking means not accepting the options presented above. This can be arrived at after being aware of the conditions of coloniality and accepting that those conditions were superficial and an imaginary construction designed for oppression and that all human beings are equal regardless of their places of origin. This can be possible through border thinking with the application of sociogenesis as a way of delinking from Western thoughts and classification (Mignolo, 2011b: 134-142). The Afrikana-Decolonial lens provides a platform for presenting a method of inquiry and presentation based on the understanding that diverse knowledge can be presented as alternatives to European knowledge and that African values and experiences are equal to the call.

One of the purposes of the theoretical framework was to direct the study methodologically (Grant & Osanloo, 2014: 13). The study, based on an Afrocentric perspective, required a culturally applicable and realistic understanding of African realities, and had to consider the historical, social, and contemporary experiences of 'Afrikana' people (Pellerin, 2012: 153). In this regard, the Participatory Action Research (PAR) employed in this study was therefore conceptualised as **Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR)**, which is explained in the next chapter on methodology**.** The nature of Afrocentric research suggests the involvement and participation of African people in the entire research project from beginning to end, following the principle of *Letsema* (Mkabela, 2005: 181). The approach appeals to Postcolonialism and Decoloniality as it accepts the hybrid state inherited from colonialism and suggests liberating processes of decolonisation. This, in essence, is commensurate with PAR and its focus on practical problem-solving and strengthening the interconnections of self-awareness, the unconscious and life in society but in this case and context, also informed by Afrocentricity (Chevalier and Buckles, 2013: 9-10). Through PAR, the identified community can use its own language as a vehicle through which participants can devise and use a set of communally agreed-upon symbols to express concepts, ideas, and psychological needs. In this study, the research was conducted in the language of choice of the participants (which is Sesotho). This is in line with Asante (1990: 10), who maintained that "for Africanists to arrive at the source of people's truth, they should engage through people's languages".

There are conflicts recorded in previous studies on the Mohokare Valley sacred sites between interest groups using the sites whom each wanted to impose their authority. However, Bhabha (1994: 4) argued that hybridity could entertain differences without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. Both religious and spiritual pilgrims frequented the sites at the same time. The sacredness of Naledi in the Mautse sacred site is, for instance, associated with a vision of the Star of Bethlehem (where Jesus Christ was born) (Cawood, 2010: 145). The Mohokare Valley has been a space where multiple cultural identities and modern and traditional practices have been coexisting until recently, forming a complex sacred place with hybrid and syncretised symbols of both the coloniser and colonised. For example, at these sites, one would find the burning of *phefo/mpepo* (incense) to seek an understanding of the Bible.

This study, therefore, employed a multi-level integration (combination of macro- and micro-levels) of engagement where individual motives that inform journeys to Mohokare Valley sacred sites were analysed together with what informs spiritual veneration in general (Muftic, 2009: 35). Informed by the convergences and divergences of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality explained in Section 4.7.1 and 4.7.2 above, the study followed a complementary approach of theoretical interaction where multiple theories of Afrocentricity, Postcolonialism and Decolonial theories as common reference points were used (Cairney, 2013: 7-8). Elements derived from Postcolonialism, such as hybridity, capitalism, European languages and religions, as well as legal and educational arrangements that were inherited from colonialism, were applied as part of the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework together with border thinking, pluriversality and community-orientated aspects from Decoloniality that also accommodates African gnoseology, communalism, African languages as an alternative approach towards the decolonisation project.

The journeys to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites were undertaken by individuals and groups or groups with individual goals supporting one another. This is an interpretation of the spirit of communalism which is part of the theoretical lens of this study. When understanding beliefs based on sacred sites of African people and, in this case, Mohokare pilgrims, ADTF also acknowledges that through hybridity as a result of the colonial encounter, belief systems are formed by various influences ranging from traditional African spirituality to Western-organised religion in nature. In the Afrikana-Decolonial Lens (ADTF), with hybridity as one of its pillars, the question of 'who is an African' was considered and whether it refers to black people only or includes white people living in Africa even if they have foreign ancestry. This study based the construction of an African on diverse cultures and the varied colonial experiences (Ikpe, 2010: 10). It also considered those African diasporas around the world, as summarised in the first verse of a poem entitled "I am an African":

> I am an African
> Not because I was born there
> But because my heart beats with Africa's
> I am an African
> Not because my skin is black

> But because my mind is engaged by Africa
> I am an African
> Not because I live on its soil
> But because my soul is at home in Africa (Visser, 2016: 1).

The issue of who can claim an African identity has also been a problem in the field of Diasporic Studies. The Presidential Address delivered at the 52nd Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association in New Orleans in 2009, revealed a disparity in who was referred to as 'black' in Europe. In Europe, only those who were from sub-Saharan Africa were called 'Black Europeans', but those from North Africa were known as 'African Europeans' (Zeleza, 2009: 8). Because this is not a study on critical race theory, the issue of race does not matter but rather the belief in African-rooted systems and values. This study, therefore, echoed Asante (2017: 239) in that "one may be a Black nationalist and not an Afrocentrist". Many people of African descent may not want to be associated with Africa. These people have an advantage of the language, memories, histories, and sensibilities they were born with but abandoned because modernity looked down on them.

However, from the vantage point of Decoloniality, these people are "dwelling in the borders" that they are in between. They may want to associate with Western culture. However, they will still be Africans in the eyes of the Europeans. Frantz Fanon realised he was black after coming to terms with Europeans always seeing him as such (Mignolo, 2017: 2-4). Similarly, the nature of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites has presented a world of its own that is not subjected to the laws of South Africa. For example, some people from Lesotho have been living at the sites without legal permits for many years. Ntate *Thabatsabadimo* is originally from Lesotho and mentioned that he has been staying at the cave since 1986.

From the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework, one becomes an Afrocentrist not because of being born in Africa or because of the colour of their skin but for embracing Afrocentric values and principles. The next section presents decolonising strategies of African gnoseology as epistemology, African indigenous land tenure, indigenous language and indigenous governance systems based on the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework (ADTF).

4.8.1 Decolonising epistemology: African gnoseology

Through the ADTF, African gnoseology is offered as an alternative to epistemology, recognising alternative forms of knowledge production through spiritual means. This study focused mainly on African spirituality, which is about ancestral intermediaries and recognises certain places as sacred because of ancestral spirit veneration. Ancestral spirits are key in African spirituality. When people die, it is believed that they undergo passage to assume a new form that takes them closer to *Modimo*, God, where they will assume new duties as mediators between the living and *Modimo.* The Basotho do not say a person is dead but "*o ile boya batho"* meaning 'gone to where people go'. This means communication at this stage changes form that continues to take place between the living and the spiritual world of the *Badimo* (ancestors) as part of knowledge production. Knowledge is produced through oral traditions, dreams, intuition, and rituals. In most cases, healers get their callings through visions and dreams. It is through oral traditions and intuition that their dreams are interpreted. At the same time, they have to perform rituals that connect them with *Badimo*.

Wicker (2000: 199) described the nature of African cultures as "open and tolerant", resulting in African spiritual beliefs assimilating a hybridised or creolised form as a result of colonialism. Because of the nature of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, as reflected in Chapter 2, the sites were used as initiation lodges where boys (and girls) go through rites of passage. However, these activities ceased when people were pushed out of the sites because of the proliferation of other pilgrims and because two sites, Mautse and Motouleng, were closed down. At the contemporary peak of the pilgrimage movement between 2008 and 2016, these sites were places where spiritual healers were trained or individuals reconnected with their spiritual beings.

Through the lens of the ADTF, African spirituality is also able to accommodate religion within its realm. According to Stephen (2009: 4), "religious experience is categorically different from religious practice", and also because of the hybrid nature of what came to be known as African Traditional Religion (ATR) or African Indigenous Religion (AIR) that fuses elements of Christianity and African spirituality. Many Christians are churchgoers who are fulfilled by going to church every Sunday. Some may occasionally feel an urge that compels them to go to church, or they will go for specific

purposes (e.g., the first Sunday service). This is similar to the drive experienced by pilgrims to visit the sacred sites from time to time to reconnect with their *Badimo* (ancestors).

In an interview with Ms Mokhehle (12/05/2020), she revealed how her grandmother, who is a staunch Christian of the Evangelical Church, would 'visit' the Catholic Church during Palm Sunday just to get blessed leaves (originally, Palm tree leaves were favoured, but in the case where the Palm trees were not found because of climate factors, other indigenous trees were selected) and would bring the leaves to use them for repelling a 'bad spirit'. In this case, the visit to another church is for a specific experience and not for practical reasons, which are spiritually motivated and not religiously inclined. This shows that institutional religion cannot do without spirituality, but spirituality can flourish without religion bound to tradition (Post et al., 2014). The belief that leaves may be used to ward off 'bad spirits' symbolises African spiritual principles interlinked with nature and land.

4.8.2 Decolonising African land tenure

Some places in Africa are sacred and deemed as places where ancestral spirits congregate and are venerated. The Mohokare Valley has several such places, as discussed in Chapter 2. The border creation influenced these sites in the 19th century, notably the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, where European countries negotiated the partitioning of Africa to different European powers. According to Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2011: 1), at the time when Africa was partitioned into European colonies, Europeans "had little knowledge of the geography and ethnic composition", and this came to leave a lasting effect on African states. The border separating the Free State Province of South Africa and Lesotho after the Basotho wars of the late 1800s and the introduction of the Land Act of 1913 resulted in the displacement of people from the Mohokare Valley. This made way for the creation of farms resulting in graves and other sacred places becoming locked within the boundaries of private properties, leaving a very complex state of affairs in terms of private land ownership and access to ancestral sacred sites. The tension between the values underpinning private property and the need for access to sacred sites located on private property is yet another tension linked to hybridity in Southern African postcolonial society.

Many African belief systems perceive the sky as the place for the Supreme Being, God, or *Modimo*, and the earth as the place for human beings and the ancestral world (*Badimo*) occupying the space under the earth, thus making the "land sacred because *Badimo* is ensconced in her womb" (Kalu, 2000: 61). In applying this view based on the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework, this research took the position of compromise. It acknowledged that land is sacred based on the Afrocentric perspective. However, because of the laws that have been inherited from colonialism that cannot be easily changed, it approached land from the European perspective, where it can be owned by human beings and used as a commercial commodity while at the same time acknowledging that there is land that from the African perspective belongs to the *Badimo* and should be treated as sacred.

During the colonial period, Africa was misinterpreted by European colonisers as vacant and unpeopled lands, which justified the appropriation of land for individual ownership by European settlers. Among the Basotho and parts of South Africa where traditional leadership is recognised as an example, land tenure is vastly different from European colonial views on land ownership. From an African spiritual point of view, people are one with nature; therefore, they cannot own the land. They belong to the land because this is what they rely on for physical and spiritual survival. In contrast, from the European perspective, people can acquire land and own it in line with the Great Chain of Being, where humans are not part of nature but in charge of it as ordained by God. The Basotho people use the customary tenure approach to land. The limited interpretation of the approach from the European perspective is that it does not belong to individuals but to the community who use it for a common purpose. While certain pockets of land can be used collectively for grazing livestock, gatherings and hunting, the Marena may distribute land to individuals to work it (Hull, Babalola & Whittal, 2019: 3).

The current laws of the Basotho on land can be described as a hybrid of Afrocentric and Western concepts. According to Duncan (2006), there are communal lands for animal grazing, cattle posts and areas where trees and grass can be cultivated. In the same breath, rivers, mountains, and caves do not belong to individuals. However, some pieces of land were distributed to individual families to establish their homes and plant crops for harvest, similar to private ownership. This land would remain the

property of those people for the rest of their lives and could be inherited. At some stage, with the advice of the missionaries, some people were placed in charge of the forests and other lands that were administered communally. This was for the conservation of plants found in the area.

Article 26.3 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People empowers states to provide legal measures in recognising and protecting the rights of indigenous people and individuals in accessing the “lands, territory and resources which they traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired” while maintaining their spiritual relationship with the land as read in Article 25 and 26.1 (United Nations, 2007). It is also based on the above declaration that Sanderson (2011: 169) has suggested that sacred lands should be ‘open’ and accessible to all, thus providing access to all users for cultural and spiritual purposes.

In line with the above, Carpenter (2005) has documented several legal cases that involved indigenous people in America suing for access to sacred land or sacred sites. The direction taken by this study through the application of ADTF is founded on the constitutional recognition of private land ownership and the rights bestowed to cultural, religious, and linguistic communities. The ideal approach offered through the ADTF is that of stakeholders’ participation guided by Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR), where consensus can be reached through peaceful negotiations. The legal approach has proven to cause unnecessary tensions and lengthy processes that can lead to conflict.

Sanderson (2011: 172-182) has also suggested steering clear of the contentious approach of land appropriation from its private owners but employing “easements” where usufruct (use rights) is permitted for those communities that have a special connection to the land and have continuously used the land for spiritual purposes. The approach facilitated through ADTF is to position stakeholders as authorities and decision-makers in the decisions made towards the management of access to sacred sites that are on private land. In this way, land users and private owners contribute towards authority over planning, development, policy making, sharing of resource use and revenue collected from the land.

Instead of having common or universal rules throughout the world, as came about facilitated through the concomitant spread of capitalism and colonialism, ADTF does not assume a universal form but rather a pluriversal one in that it accommodates the rights and basic needs of people (see Section 3.5.3), their physical, psychological well-being and taking cultural and ideology into consideration (Chibber, 2014: 75). In this regard, ADTF adopts the decolonial principle of reinventing pre-colonial African indigenous practices of land tenure by using APAR as a driver for the empirical research where the goal is to understand and document the practices through the ADTF, then finding a way to manage them within the parameters of spiritual tourism to generate grassroots community development but also to safeguard and promote these important manifestations of African spirituality as it informs gnosis, but doing so in such a way that the sacredness is not compromised.

This requires the management of the tension between the sacred and the profane, which in practical terms means incorporating elements of Postcolonialism where capitalism is employed to position Mohokare Valley sacred sites as sites of spiritual tourism. The same approach is seen in the management of Devil's Tower in the USA, where stakeholders agreed to balance commercial activities with sacred spiritual rituals of the Lakota people in America (see Section 3.6). Similarly, the inclusion of the Anangu, viewed as the primordial owners of the land where Uluru is located, into the management board of Uluru in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia. This allowed for the regulation of the tourist activities at Uluru, such as prohibiting rock climbing and photography while encouraging the tourists to experience Uluru from the Aboriginal perspective, where the rock is interpreted as an ancestor based on the principles of Tjukurpa (Anangu's belief in the creation of the world by the Ancestors) (Paschen, 2010: 70).

The land on which the Mohokare Valley sacred sites are located is not arable. However, there is fertile land nearby. When portions of land are put aside as sacred sites and are managed communally by those who use them, some farms can still be used for commercial farming through the capitalist system to address issues of food security. This highlights the hybridity of the sacred and profane activities of the sites that can be navigated to make them co-exist, provided that stakeholders can be brought to an agreement.

Tuck and Yang's (2012: 26) decolonisation approach argues for eliminating the property rights of settlers and the abolition of land as property, thus, upholding the sovereignty of indigenous land and people. However, this study does not call for reoccupation or the appropriation of any land perceived to have been appropriated during the colonial period but calls for a compromise of open but regulated access to sacred sites where all stakeholders are on board. Therefore, this approach takes a non-aggressive and constructive approach to Decoloniality, where the decolonisation of sacred sites is a negotiated process. The negotiation process is seen as a two-way process: The site users or the indigenous people who take spiritual survival from the sites will avoid lengthy, expensive, and combative legal action for land appropriation, encouraging property owners of land accommodating sacred sites to willingly free the land where sacred sites are situated for spiritual use, and potentially facilitate spiritual tourism which may economically benefit all role-players.

This approach also adopts the cadastral system of land tenure, where the already existing land tenure is changed to meet the current needs of society. This considers the hybrid nature of the sacred sites that the study intends to accommodate as part of employing Mignolo's (2007: 497) 'border thinking' where different and pluriversal knowledge are encouraged to advance a 'new common logic of knowing'. This is an attempt to create a place where "different worlds co-exist" (Mignolo, 2007: 499). The cadastral system considers the rights, restrictions and responsibilities of the people involved in the use of land. The right to exclusive use, ownership, occupation access and exclusion that forms part of the registered deeds in terms of the legislation are presented in parallel with the right to gain access, occupation, use rights and interests of indigenous communities as recorded in the collective memories of the communities that form part of African customary laws (Hull et al., 2019: 3-5). By facilitating cooperation and consensus between the landowners and site users, a peaceful compromise can be achieved, which redresses past imbalances, and may promote social cohesion and nation-building.

4.8.3 Decolonising language through languaging

Decolonising language through the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework (ADTF) acknowledges that African languages and cultures were affected by

colonialism when European languages and cultures were imposed on African societies. Aside from its economic reasons, European colonialism resulted in the imposition of European cultures using language as a driver for control, with the notion of expanding the boundaries of European metropoles in African, Asian, and American colonies. The enforcing of religion, culture, and language from European perspectives as a form of 'civilising' colonised people was considered suitable recompense for the minerals and other resources taken from Africa (Piola and Usman, 2019: 112). An interaction with colonised nations produced different outcomes, specifically concerning language, as European languages were highly influenced by factors such as the natural environment, culture and language of the colonised nations.

The empirical research (data collection) for this research was conducted mostly in Sesotho, a language used by most people visiting the Mohokare valley sacred sites. As previously mentioned, Sesotho is spoken by the Basotho, a nation formed by *Morena* Moshoeshoe I from different clans, such as the Bakoena, Bafokeng, Bataung, Barolong, and Bakholokoe. These clans were initially linguistic groups that later formed the dialects of Sesotho with the influence of Khoisan, IsiXhosa and IsiZulu languages (through the intermingling that took place during the *Difaqane*). Sesotho is spoken mostly in Lesotho and the Free State Province of South Africa (Futhwa, 2013: 6-13).

The two African literary giants, Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o have different views regarding the use of English or African languages in advancing African literature and culture. The latter believes that English or other European language writers of African descent are taking from African culture and enriching European cultures as a justification for writing in African languages, as detailed in his book *Decolonising the Mind* (1986). On the other hand, the former feels that [Africans] "must look for an animal whose blood can match the power of his offering". With this, Achebe (1975: 93-101) is referring to African writers using a language that enjoys national (and international) status, such as English. These sentiments are shared by Mignolo. In an interview with Delgado, Romero and Mignolo (2000: 23-30), Mignolo revealed that had he written in Spanish (which is his home language), he could not have gained much attention and declared that for the postcolonialists to achieve their goals they should

work within the colonial structure of power and the colonial difference that was in place before them.

This study followed the standpoint of Asante (2007: 43), who suggested that the process of decolonising language based on the Afrocentric perspective does not urge one to translate the current material into African languages but suggests lexical refinement or transliteration of African terms. This means that the "terms and definitions used to define African people are not outsourced from other cultures, but instead are derived from African social-historical experience and languages" (Pellerin, 2012: 151). In addition, even though language is seen as one element that could advance development in terms of equal recognition of local and hegemonic languages, from the Afrocentric perspective, it remains central to the idea of liberation; thus, permitting space for Afrocentrists to apply the language of their choice as the first liberation has to be the liberation of language (Asante, 2014: 10).

The Mohokare Valley lies on the western side of the Mohokare River, forming the border between the Free State Province of South Africa and Lesotho. These two countries acquired English as British colonial territories (South Africa as a colony and Lesotho as British Protectorate). In addition to English, Sesotho and Afrikaans (in the Free State) are the two most widely spoken languages in this area.

Skybina (2006: 137) revealed that English could be grouped into three variations: English as a national language, English as a second language and English as a foreign language. To the British, English is a national language, while to British colonies, like most of the sub-Saharan countries, English became the second language. Indigenous languages in those countries were, therefore, national or nation languages, whereas to those countries that were not exposed to English before, like many West African countries (e.g., Burkina Faso and Senegal, which were French colonies), English remains a foreign language.

In the research conducted on historical and ethnographical documents as well as dictionaries produced in America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (which are English-speaking countries), on how language can adapt to the "new needs it [is] transplanted to", varieties were discovered. These resulted in American English,

Canadian English, Australian English, New Zealand English and South African English, which are due to natural adaptation to the new territories (Skybina, 2006: 129). Nigeria and South Africa are both English-speaking countries. However, there is a disparity in terms of the English accent between the two countries. Similarly, the Sesotho accent in Lesotho is different from that of South Africa. According to Skybina (2010: 149), the natural environment contributes to the shift of accent from “vegetation and land” to social components as the illustration of how nature influences culture. In addition, according to King (1994: 135), language is one of those cultural elements that have been used to create both real and imaginary boundaries:

> *…real, because it limits comprehension between cultures that do not share the same language; imaginary because it is not fixed either in time or in space, for languages change when they come into contact with other more 'powerful' ones...* (King 1994: 135).

The Free State and Lesotho are separated only by a border but with similar landscapes, vegetation and ecology. Interestingly, the Free State Province is part of South Africa, where eleven languages are recognised as official languages, but in Lesotho, there are only two (Sesotho and English). Sesotho is spoken by 60% of residents of the Free State (The Use of Free State Official Languages Act, 1. 2017) and is the first language of Lesotho. However, the exclusive use of Sesotho in this study would be problematic also and would limit the possible dissemination range of the research to only residents of Lesotho and the Free State. This is further complicated because the orthography of Sesotho in Lesotho and that of the Free State differs. Attempts were made in 1959 to revise and unify Sesotho orthography for use in both Lesotho and South Africa, but language experts in Lesotho rejected South African proposals (Demuth, 1989: 3).

A long telephone discussion with Dr Mahanke, who is a linguist and the head of language services at the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation during the COVID-19 lockdown (28/04/2020) also shed light on how in the 1980s, a delegation from the then Homeland of Qwaqwa (Free State, South Africa) went to Lesotho to discuss the possibility of standardising Sesotho orthography in South Africa and Lesotho. He revealed that in their third encounter, the process fell apart. One of the delegates from Lesotho announced that he was sent to convey that Lesotho would

not accept South African attempts to dilute 'their pure orthography', which led to the collapse of the discussions.

On the other hand, Mrs Mamothibeli Sehlabo (interviewed on 9 June 2021), Sesotho author and cultural orator born in Lesotho and now based in Bloemfontein (capital of the Free State), has a document entitled "*Ho ngola le ngolo ea Sesotho – Litlaleho tsa liphutheho* (1984-1985)". This document proposed implementing the changes in Sesotho orthography that were agreed upon in the 1980s by the Sesotho Teachers Association and other knowledgeable people of African languages both in Lesotho and South Africa. The Principal Secretary of the Minister of Culture submitted the document to the Minister of Education to consider implementing the proposed changes of Lesotho orthography to be the same as that of Sesotho in South Africa. However, according to Mrs Sehlabo, the changes proposed above were never implemented.

The Sesotho language was documented in writing after the arrival of French Missionaries in 1833 in Lesotho. The Missionaries needed to learn Sesotho to translate the Bible into Sesotho and for the Basotho to be able to read the Bible in order to advance the missionary project. The process led by Eugene Casalis started with the compilation of Sesotho grammar and translation of the Bible into Sesotho between 1841 and 1872 (Moeketsi, 2014: 218). Thus, Sesotho orthography is based on French linguistic rules and cannot be viewed as pure Sesotho. Lesotho, for instance, is derived from *le sud,* which is French, meaning the south. Matlosa (2017: 56) recognised that languages should be guided by the global standards as set by the International Phonetic Association to make it easier for international communities to pronounce words from other languages; it is also within the rights of any nation to choose not to participate as in the case of Lesotho.

While the above-mentioned proposal of standardising orthography in South Africa and Lesotho may have been well-intended to dissolve linguistic boundaries between the two neighbouring countries, Lesotho's refusal could be read as resistance to hegemonic political power through language, which was the norm during colonial times where linguistic scholarship and the drive towards the standardisation of language were often imposed. Sticking to their own orthography, the Basotho in Lesotho maintained boundaries through the use of indigenous languages that are

characterised by their own accent with limited code-switching as opposed to Sesotho used in South Africa with influence from other languages such as Setswana, Afrikaans and isiZulu (Rudwick, 2006: 67-68). This could also be seen as an effort to ensure the continuity of the Sesotho language and prevent a situation where Sesotho in Lesotho will be relegated to 'heritage language' which, as Garcia (2005: 605) stated, is the language that was only used in the past, vaguely remembered and cannot be passed on to future generations. The measure of keeping to Lesotho Sesotho orthography was also to ensure that Sesotho, with the orthography used in Lesotho, grew in its 'purity' while promoting nation-building based on traditional aspects. 'Purity' is in inverted commas because of the established French influence on the Sesotho language. Furthermore, this is also in line with Article 13 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, which states:

> *Indigenous people[s] have the right to revitalise, use, develop and transmit to the future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons* (United Nations, 2007).

The above arguments were taken into consideration when considering the language to employ in a study that lies at the intersection of Afrocentricity, Postcolonial and Decolonial theories. However, this study was not conducted within the field of linguistics but focused on the impact of borders created during colonialism that replaced 'languaging' with language. As a result, English, and Sesotho, in this regard, were the preferred languages for this study, adopting Mignolo's (2000) concept of 'languaging'. 'Languaging' refers to the process of replacing and displacing the traditions of imperial languages by reintroducing those natural and cultural beliefs that link the language with the land or area (Mignolo, 2000: 220-221). Love (2017: 117) states that "there must be languaging before there can be languages." In other words, language is based on the practices of 'languaging'.

Cunnins (2019) described 'languaging' as a process of "bringing into being by doing", meaning that the message is not contained in words but in the context of presentation. He illustrated this by referring to joint speech as one form of 'languaging' that could be rituals, performativity, or musicality. Rituals, performances, and music were or still are

regular features at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites or any other spiritual gathering. Even though people visiting Mohokare Valley sacred sites come from diverse cultural backgrounds, these rituals and oral traditions serve as a form of communication by blending emotions, symbols, and images of the people (Cawood, 2014: 216-217). For example, '*Thokoza',* meaning 'thank you' or 'greetings', together with a call and response utterances '*Lesedi!...Kganya',* meaning 'let there be light', are commonly used on a daily bases by spiritual people.

This study recognised the need to understand African spirituality through the process of '*languaging*'; thus, it used Sesotho as the language of engagement. '*Languaging*' will make it relatively easy for an individual to understand African spiritual activities and to participate in them without necessarily mastering the language through which it is presented. Therefore, the study followed the process of fusing two languages at the same time in what Mignolo (2000: 231) called *'bilanguaging'*. Care should be taken not to confuse '*bilanguaging*' with *bilingualism* which maintains two languages in "their purity but at the same in their asymmetry". 'Bilanguaging', in this case, means inserting structures and concepts from the Sesotho language not as grammar but as a political way of redressing the asymmetry of languages and subverting the coloniality of power and knowledge.

Mignolo (2018: 55) illustrated the differentiation between language and '*languaging*' by using the example of Latin American Studies. He positioned "English as the hegemonic language and the languaging of scholarship" while presenting "Spanish and Portuguese as subaltern languages and '*languaging*' of cultures to be studied" even though the Spanish and Portuguese are colonial languages and are not indigenous to Latin America. In this study, English remains the language of scholarship. African ethnic languages spoken in the areas where the study was conducted (Sesotho) are the subaltern languages and the 'languaging' of cultures. This means that communication between the participants and researcher was made in Sesotho and written in English for academic and administrative purposes. In addition, those elements embedded in African spirituality will be presented as they are but interpreted in English.

Furthermore, even if English remains the main language of communication, Afrocentricity is positioned as a redefining process that will also ensure Africans rid their language of degrading terms inherited from colonialism. Thus, Sesotho terms were used in place of those terms considered degrading and do not carry the accurate Sesotho meaning. Asante (1988: 46) identified terms such as ‘tribe’, ‘chief’, ‘hut’, ‘pygmy’, ‘witch doctor’, ‘native’, ‘hottentot’, ‘bushman’ and ‘cult’ as words that beg new definition or elimination. Where no words could carry the correct meaning of African words or expressions, those words and expressions were presented in African languages (Sesotho in this study's case) and explained in English. Silva (1997: 2) has observed that English spoken in South Africa is different from English in other English-speaking countries (e.g., Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America). The influence of multilingualism and diverse cultures has been well-established in South Africa.

This study aimed to address the issues of African spirituality and the challenges of sacred sites through the ADTF. Mohokare Valley sacred site users and stakeholders were the direct beneficiaries of this study. Beneficiation came in the form of their participation in the research through Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR) and playing a pivotal role as active stakeholders in the management of the sacred sites. The study attempted to contribute to the surviving oral tradition passed down from one generation to another and the strides made by recently emerging indigenous scholars, intellectuals and activists educated in Western institutions. Through the languaging and bilanguaging processes of Decoloniality, the wider world, including Africa and the African diasporas, were exposed to the wisdom of the Basotho’s indigenous language, indigenous governance systems, and specialised knowledge of spirituality without having to master the Sesotho language. In such instances, English becomes useful as the language medium. Sesotho was used to accommodate the participants of this study due to the ‘locus of enunciation’ and to facilitate data collection (Mignolo, 1994: 54).

Therefore, ideas expressed in Sesotho of a cultural nature were written in Sesotho with an English explanation in brackets. In addition, employing the concept of ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ (Mignolo, 2018: 177). African Languages (or Sesotho in the more localised manner) can be used to disseminate findings in Africa (or the Free State

Province of South Africa). English can be used to publish for a global audience, thus joining the centre in distributing African knowledge to the world.

The study took cognisance of 'creolisation' (Cohen, 2007: 371) from Postcolonial, Decolonial and Afrocentric perspectives. Herein people of foreign origins had assumed African citizenship and somehow became localised but, in a way, also contributed to a hybridised society.

> *[Creoleness] is an identification in relation to a territory and to the historical processes that created that territory. But, above all, it is defined by an 'interior attitude.' by a mode of being rather than by a way of looking* (Mignolo, 2000: 242).

An example is Jonathan "Johnny" Clegg (1953-2019), who was born in England, moved to Zimbabwe and finally to South Africa, where he espoused the African Zulu culture and became one of its renowned exporters through his musical career. This earned him the nickname of the 'White Zulu', thus defying the barriers of apartheid. Creolisation, especially in urban areas of Africa, bred 'culturally creolised' forms of different media, from music and culture to language (Swigart, 1994: 175). In Lesotho, for instance, people can converse in what is believed to be 'pure' Sesotho without mixing it with English words. 'Pure' is in inverted commas because of the already established influence from other languages of the clans that formed the Basotho nation as well as the French influence on written Sesotho in Lesotho that may render it impure. The situation described by Swigart (1994: 177) as 'urban varieties' prevails in the Free State and its towns. Here, one can witness hybrid forms of Sesotho, which is a mix of Sesotho, English and Afrikaans. English, the dominant instruction and research medium at South African universities, emerged as the language that can carry the message of this study to its intended audience. This is because it is conducted in South Africa, a country with British colonial history where English is dominant as a business and education medium.

4.8.4 Decolonising custodianship in terms of African gnoseology

This study shared the sentiments of Koenane (2017), who maintained that the African gnoseology of indigenous governance systems still plays a role in today's socio-

political arena. It also supported the argument of Guri and Vershuuren (2014). They believed Africa needs an indigenous government system to incorporate 'positive aspects' from other systems. However, indigenous governance systems have not been afforded a role in the management of heritage in the NHRA, creating tension between the sacred and the profane. *Marena* is operating at the local level referred to by the NHRA. However, in terms of the Act, the local level refers to the local municipalities.

The Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework (ADTF) acknowledges that there are different levels of spiritual veneration, and each level has a dedicated custodianship. These start within nuclear families, moving to a clan and then a nation. All these levels have custodians who should be responsible for sacred places where ancestral spirits reside and guide members within each level during rituals and ceremonies meant to reconnect people with their ancestral spirits. It is common practice in Africa to have one person recognised as the head (or ancestral chosen one) of the family or the clan. It is also known that the collective of clans forms a nation, and the Morena leads that nation. The *Morena* can either be a custodian of African spiritual practices or delegate the powers to an elder in the village or a respected *Ngaka* (healer).

This study argued that African spirituality is directly connected to the land or environment informing African gnoseology. In this regard, *Marena* (plural of *Morena*) must be empowered to administer the land earmarked for African spiritual veneration. It has also noted that the land used for collective spiritual veneration is not any place but places (e.g., rivers, forests and mountains), as mentioned in Section 2.4.1. In Ghana, indigenous governance systems accommodate local Ghanaian *Marena* as facilitators of development, promoters of peace and discipline as well as playing a role of custodians of the land, while clan heads are deemed relevant as they unite family members, make offerings on their behalf to their ancestors, and care for those in need. The Okomfos (spiritual leaders) provide spiritual guidance, intercede with the gods for wealth, heal the sick and infirm, and treat people with spiritual afflictions (Guri and Verschuuren, 2014).

Indigenous governance systems amongst the Basotho are also known for promoting the participation of all members of the community. This is seen, for instance, in the

sitting of the (*khotla)* court where people are seated in a half-moon or full circle formation where one could also air one's views without being intimidated by the position of any community member even if the views were not favoured by the majority (Koenane, 2019: 3).

This research contended that rituals performed in the name of African spirituality are not and should not be government projects but community-led initiatives with plans and decisions starting at the local level and advancing to the national level (bottom-up or grassroots approach). There can be initiatives conducted in collaboration with government or academic institutions. However, these institutions should not lead the engagement but rather play a supporting role.

4.8.5 Balancing the sacred and the profane: Institutionalising Mohokare Valley sacred sites through spiritual tourism

With regard to issues of management of sacred sites, Samakov and Berkes (2017: 2) argued that sacred sites could not be privatised because one person cannot exclusively own them and they needed some kind of public property status to be open to all potential visitors who may have relational values concerning that site. However, they (Samakov and Berkes) also believed that sacred sites require some kind of institution to play a custodial role in protecting and maintaining the site. The observation made by Shackley (2001: 10) is that sacred sites are seldom under private ownership (in contrast to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites). Most are managed by volunteer organisations, including charities, religious sects, and religious organisations whose main priority is often site conservation and the encouragement of worship. The secondary objective includes education, mission, and perhaps the offering of hospitality. In this way, Mantsopa Cave is managed by the St Augustine Mission of the Anglican Church.

Some sacred sites are included within the public sector and are under government or local authority control. However, the Mohokare Valley sacred sites are situated within private properties or contested land. In this case, Ndoro et al. (2008: 54) recommended a management protocol by way of agreements and memoranda of understanding that enables private and local owners of the sites and others who may

have custody of the resources to be involved in the management of the resources through a consensual and collaborative approach. Cultural heritage development in Africa offers a unique opportunity for community empowerment through integrated rural development, with the potential to mobilise resources for cultural tourism (Eboreime, 2008: 3). McIntosh et al. (2002: 39) revealed that visitors to indigenous tourism attractions could also gain increased awareness, understanding and appreciation for indigenous cultures and the situation of indigenous people on major issues.

According to Pellerin (2012: 151), Afrocentricity is one paradigm that, when followed correctly, should be able to facilitate the exchange of one matter to another for the mutual benefit of all. In this regard, it can facilitate the interaction of the material and the spiritual or the profane and the sacred.

From an imperial and capitalist viewpoint, nature is separated from culture in the same way as spirituality was detached from land. Here, land is commoditised, whereas spirituality cannot yield any profit but is only related to life (Mignolo, 2011a, 2011b). However, with this study that applied elements of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality to work together with those of Afrocentricity, a compromise can be reached. Access to heritage sites, graves of *Badimo* and the Mohokare Valley sacred sites that are situated within private property may be problematic, especially when they are closed to the general public. As a result, through ADTF, the study brings together elements of capitalism through Postcolonialism and communalism from the Decolonial and Afrocentric points of view. This research contends that African spirituality as a product of Afrocentricity can be packaged for tourism through the Mohokare Valley sacred sites.

Pre-colonial Africa had strategies in place for the management of sacred sites. For example, there were strict laws that people had to follow when entering a graveyard. Women were supposed to wear a hat or head scarf, and men had to remove their hats. They were also supposed to maintain silence as a sign of respect. These rules ensured that people did not desecrate graveyards. The *Marena* were responsible for the spiritual aspects of the community and were seen as the ones to intercede on behalf of the community (Lagat, 2008: 204). There were permanent resident site

custodians or curators known as spirit mediums appointed to maintain them and to receive pilgrims (Heng, 2016: 219; Mahachi et al., 2008: 44; Moyo, 2013). According to Mahachi et al. (2008: 44), in cases where there was no custodianship onsite, the sites had to be respected by the people living around them and not to be destroyed or tampered with. In this regard, local communities played a central role in site management. The respect was expressed in and strengthened by a set of rules, especially on what must not be done at a sacred site, called taboos which are unwritten laws for the protection of sites (Mahachi et al., 2008: 44). From the onset, colonialism undermined these traditional taboos and structures which were viewed as a threat to colonial interests (Lagat, 2008: 206). This research intended to find a way to balance the tension between the sacredness of the sites involved and profane activities such as tourism to ultimately reinvigorate the Mohokare Valley sacred sites in an approach that can benefit all.

The release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 and the unbanning of South Africa from international participation emerged with many opportunities for South Africans. Some took to the tourism industry to introduce what came to be known as cultural tourism and heritage tourism. Culture and heritage are difficult to describe, making it difficult to distinguish between cultural and heritage tourism. The current interpretation of heritage also includes culture aspects. However, this study separates cultural tourism from heritage tourism based on the revealed limitations of heritage when interpreted in other languages, as seen in Chapter 3. Therefore, cultural tourism refers to the form of tourism where tourists travel to experience and view the knowledge, beliefs, customs, and songs which are intangible. Heritage tourism is informed by the predominant Eurocentric approach where heritage tourism is characterised by battlefields, monuments, museums, and sites which are tangible (Adams, 2008: 201; Green, 2010: 5). This study attempted to transform the approach to tourism that is inherent in cultural tourism, where exploitative tourist operators in the pursuit of capitalism employed indigenous people to demonstrate the ways of life and performances in everyday life for tourists with minimal benefits.

> *[The activities] came in the form of a standardised script (commonly written by anthropologists) that is set in the pre-colonial era; only simplified information is shared with*

the tourists, and care is taken not to offend tourists, especially with colonisation information (Bunten, 2010: 290).

Examples of such cultural tourism establishments include Shaka Kraal in Kwazulu Natal, the Shangani Village in Hayziview, Lesedi cultural Village (owned by Protea Hotels Group), and the Basotho Cultural Village in Qwaqwa (Eastern Free State South Africa). The Basotho Cultural Village was initially a parastatal falling under Agriculture and Eco-Tourism. It is now directly run by the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation. Based on how the above establishments are constituted and the standardisation of the stories, it is evident that they are packaged for Western consumption. More specifically, the coloniser's gaze, as referred to in Postcolonial Studies, is at play where African people are depicted as backward or exotic (with skins of animals in some cases), which attracts tourists to these establishments. This is what this study aimed to avoid when presenting spiritual tourism. In noting how culture and heritage have been commercialised through tourism consumption, Timothy (2011: 429) advised that the owners or custodians of the culture consumed in cultural tourism be in control of "what elements of their culture should be shown to tourists and which parts should remain hidden".

Heritage tourism is viewed as a form of tourism steeped in colonial legacies dominated by European means of interpreting heritage, which remained part of the process of geopolitical decolonisation that was adapted and adopted by African states after gaining independence (Mignolo, 2017: 3). The model of spiritual tourism designed through the ADTF, shifts away from Western capitalism that benefits only a few to community development. In this model, spiritual communities are seen as equal partners in the project and have a say in what should be presented to tourists. Firstly, it should be a community initiative. Secondly, the approach does not suggest a universal approach to what is presented to the tourists. Thus, there is no standardised script because spiritual experiences differ from one person to another. Thirdly, cultural protocol at the sacred sites should be seriously observed at all times, considering the IKS Bill that provides guidance on beneficiation for knowledge holders.

Borrowing from Bunten's (2010: 296) approach to indigenous tourism, spiritual tourism positions African spirituality as a more valuable commodity beyond any monetary

value. It abides by collective ownership that recognises the *Badimo* (ancestors), who are the guides of African spirituality, with *Marena* as the representatives of the *Badimo* (ancestors) and spiritual communities as custodians who share their individual experiences through educational platforms. Therefore, spiritual tourism should be twofold: Firstly, as a form of educating local people about African spirituality that has been disavowed during colonialism and, secondly, as a driver of the action plans (management plans) so that the sites may be managed as sacred sites but also as spiritual sites which could earn an income for local communities as per the empirical nature of the study.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Answering the question of the possibility of decolonising indigeneity or African gnoseology is not a straightforward dichotomous 'yes' or 'no'. It is an approach that requires negotiated understanding, compromises, and application of alternatives. Understanding that even though colonialism led to the disavowal of African gnoseology and was replaced by Christianity, African gnoseology is one element concealed in African peoples' consciousness and rooted in their hearts. Though they did not reveal it to the colonisers, it infused their songs, music, dance and stories that they carried with them when exported as slaves, working as serfs and low-paid labours during colonialism while servicing colonial capitalism. Understanding also that while the system of colonialism and capitalism, and its associated religion, socio-political and legal structures were imposed, the spiritual roots of African people remained entrenched deep in the belly of Mother Africa, leaving her people hybridised, creolised and syncretised.

This chapter presented an overview of the history and forms of colonialism applied to African countries in general and South Africa in particular, as well as the process and disruption of decolonisation. The philosophical roots of decolonisation were revisited in terms of Postcolonialism, Africa(n) Studies and Border Studies which were also discussed, leading to the strategic merger of Postcolonialism and Decoloniality theories. The chapter also discussed the origins and development of Afrocentricity as the third theoretical pillar informing this research while also introducing African gnoseology as an important concept informing this study in reference to elements such

as indigeneity, African spirituality, indigenous land tenure, indigenous language, and indigenous governance systems.

The limitations of Postcolonial Theory in addressing challenges of African gnoseology were also discussed with an alternative approach to addressing the imperatives of African gnoseology revealed as part of the move towards the development of the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework guiding the research of this study. The practical application of the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework was then employed to decolonise African gnoseology, indigenous land tenure, indigenous language and governance systems. The chapter concluded by balancing African gnoseology's sacred and profane elements in institutionalising the Mohokare Valley sacred sites through spiritual tourism.

CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: AFRIKANA-PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (APAR)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the Participatory Action Research methodology applied in this research from an Afrocentric perspective coined as Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR). The Afrikana-Decoloniality Theoretical Framework informed the research methodology of this study, which required an African-focused method that allows Africans to participate in research as partners in the research process from the beginning to the end. This chapter also reveals the role I played as the researcher in this research project and the processes of collecting data through the Concerns Report Method. It also introduces other methods of data collection applied in the study, such as observation, positioning the researcher as a participant, and interviews. Furthermore, the chapter also presents Participatory Action Synthesis as a data analysis and presentation method. However, first, it is important to establish my positionality as the researcher.

5.2 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY: WHERE DO I FIT?

Researchers always grapple with the issue of positionality, whether they are insiders (a researcher who personally belongs to the group participants also belong to) or outsiders (a researcher who is not a member of the group participants belong to (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). My positionality played a significant role in this research. It is both a personal and a professional undertaking. Personally, I am a cultural insider but, at the same time, an outsider, as I am a researcher and heritage official by profession. My role is also not only limited to being a facilitator but is extended to participating in real rituals as one of the data collection methods. As a Mosotho from Lesotho, I had the advantage of having pre-existing experiences of the customs and values of the Basotho that I was able to reframe and apply in this study. However, I do agree with Narayan (1993) who stated that one cannot be omniscient, therefore most of the tacit knowledge I acquired was through this study. However, my insider-outsider

positionality assisted me in resocialising and guarding against my own ethnocentrisms and perceptual biases while searching for meaning from participants presentations (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982: 47).

The Afrocentric approach to research requires an Afrocentrist researcher to be part of the subject being researched, and at the same time, the researcher should, as stated by Milam (1992: 20), be an "activist or practitioner who is accountable both to disciplinary peers and to the larger communities". Generally, the assumption is that the insider in research may have an added advantage. However, Hayfield and Huxley (2015) have noted that the outsider researcher may have an advantage as the insider may take some of the issues for granted. The naïve questions that the outsider may ask could reveal valuable information. Generally, researchers start as outsiders and assume both positions (insider-outsider) during the process. Even though I, as the researcher, speak the same language as the participants and is a cultural insider, I was subjected to the same experience as any other outsider researcher where I was not freely accepted by members of the Witsie's Cave Tourism Project during our first meeting.

This study was conducted at a time when members of the Witsie's Cave Tourism Project were no longer trusting after having fallen victim to fraudulent schemes organised by people they had trusted before. Thus, I therefore had to work hard to convince the project members to reach a point of trusting me. However, this came at a cost as the project members started creating high expectations and believed that I may be able to assist in changing their lives for the better. This describes a situation that Hayfield and Huxley (2015) identified as a threat that could cause ethical difficulties and create problems around data collection and analysis.

My interest in the Mohokare sacred sites can be traced back to 1998 when I started working at the Basotho Cultural Village in the eastern Free State as Tourist Guide. Part of my duties as a guide included guiding visitors through the open-air village, where ways of life and the evolution of the Basotho architectural styles were presented. Together with the *Ngaka* of the village, we would also take visitors on a herbal tour where different plants were identified and their medicinal values were revealed. On certain occasions, I would embark on a heritage route where different

heritage sites in Qwaqwa were visited. These sites included Witsie's Cave, one of the sacred sites in this research which served as a case study for testing the integrated management plan for sacred sites. My background knowledge of Witsie's Cave was enhanced by my Master of Arts in Heritage Studies, where I investigated the significance of the Witsie's Cave as a heritage site. I also interacted with Witsie's Cave from a professional level, whereas a researcher employed by the Free State Department of Sport, Arts and Culture had to assist with enquiries relating to the cave.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was exploratory and participative and thus qualitative in nature. The overarching interdisciplinary fields of study were Africa Studies with special reference and overlap with Heritage Studies (Sorensen and Carman, 2009: 3). The study of heritage has increasingly been recognised as important by scholars, practitioners, and institutions. This study employed Participatory Action Research (PAR) viewed through an Afrocentric lens and articulated as Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR) within the parameters of this study.

5.3.1 Participatory Action Research: An overview

"*We've been researched to death*" – Goodman et al. (2018).

Part of the challenges observed in Chapter 2 included the limited access to and restrictions of spiritual healers to practice their trade at sacred sites freely. Based on this backdrop, the study followed the unconventional, yet emancipatory research approach known as Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR cuts across the disciplines of social science. Breda (2014: 4-9) associates PAR with the social and organisational psychologist Kurt Lewin (1890-1947), the founder of Action Research. Action Research was further developed in the late 20th century through the involvement of participants by Brazilian educator and philosopher Paolo Freire and Colombian critical sociologist Orlando Fals Borda and became known as Participatory Action Research. PAR emerged as an emancipatory approach for "both the researcher and the participant that… allows participants to use their local knowledge about the issue to inform the research process and to increase its meaning and pertinence". It

is characterised by two strands, one of which is more political activism with the quest for social justice. It is associated with South and Latin America with the inclusion of Brazil. The other, which is less radical and less political, has its roots in North America. PAR is built around the cyclical steps of establishing data through the partnership of a researcher and participants that circulate around planning, action, reflection, and evaluation. The process can also employ non-orthodox activities relevant to the participants' culture and environments, such as musical performances, dance, games, workshops, and other artistic endeavours. There are several reasons why PAR was chosen for this research. First, PAR was selected because it involves local people's participation from the beginning of the project to the end. Secondly, PAR is action-oriented with the aim of yielding tangible results or immediate solutions to the problems of local people. Thirdly, it is flexible in the methods of collecting data that do not conform to rigid or predetermined methods of conventional research (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995: 1669).

PAR was found suitable for this study because of its focus that involves three types of change: the inclusion of the development of critical consciousness of the researcher and the participants, the improvement of the lives of those participants in the research process and the transformation of societal structures and relationships (Maguire, 1987, cited in Macdonald, 2012: 38-39). At the same time, it follows the bottom-up approach, which is emancipatory and locates power within the local communities (Breda, 2014: 1; Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995: 1667-1668).

The table below shows the differences between the PAR and conventional research methods in detail:

Table 3: Comparison process between participatory and conventional research

	Participatory Research	**Conventional Research**
What is the research for?	Action	Understanding with perhaps action later
Who is the research for?	Local people	Institutional, personal and professional interests
Whose knowledge counts?	Local people	Scientists
Topic choice influenced by?	Local priorities	Funding priorities, institutional agendas, professional interests

Role of researcher?	Facilitator, catalyst	Director
Methodology is chosen for?	Empowerment and mutual learning	Disciplinary conventions, 'objectivity' and 'truth'
Who takes part in the stages of the research process?		
Problem identification	Local people	Researcher
Data collection	Local people	Researcher, enumerator
Interpretation	Local concepts and framework	Disciplinary concepts and frameworks
Analysis	Local people	Researcher
Presentation of findings	Locally accessible and useful	By researcher to other academic or funding body
Action of findings	Integral to the process	Separate and may not happen
Who takes action?	Local people, with/without external support	External agencies
Who owns the results?	Shared	The researcher
What is emphasised?	Process	Outcomes

Redrawn from Cornwall and Jewkes (1995), Table 1, p. 1669.

5.3.2 Afrocentric approach to research

Critics of PAR have argued that it is mainly a Western model of research and uses Western methods to produce data and validate knowledge. It also holds the imperialist and the localist positions. This means that "knowledge is uniquely distinguished by virtue of its rationality" and that knowledge is based on particular sets of values (La Grange, 2001: 141). At this juncture, this study employed an Afrocentric method of data collection. It aimed to provide participants with a way of telling an alternative story to the stories that have been researched and told by Western researchers for the West and to guide research with values of Afrocentricity (La Grange, 2001: 143).

Molefi Asante (2016) defined research conducted within the Afrocentric paradigm as "research that does not position Africans as victims or objects to be studied, but instead seeks to treat Africans as subjects and active partners in research". The other suggestion made by Asante is for Afrocentric researchers to "distinguish between the

language of centredness and the less precise language of decentredness in relation to culture" by using "sentinel statements as clues to marginalisation and decentredness" (Asante, 2016: 229). Sentinel statements are defined as:

> *Those statements that signal a text's location during the earliest part of an analysis [that] are used as standards by which the Afrocentrist views an entire text (Asante, 2016: 229).*

In this way, Afrocentricity becomes a political ideology that studies ideas, concepts, events, personalities, and political and economic processes from the standpoint of black people as subjects and not as objects, basing all knowledge on the authentic interrogation of location (Asante, 2009: 1). Meyers (2016) introduced methods of reclaiming the Afrocentric Worldview in five phases:

Phase 1: [Students] document evidence verifying African historical records.

Phase 2: Emotional and intellectual identification in which students conduct their own investigation, raising questions and answering them in terms of research of personal relevance.

Phase 3: Demystification, in which emphasis is placed on defining and clarifying structural elements, form, content, and other devices of the discipline.

Phase 4: Focus on integrating, synthesising, internalising, and reflecting on what has been learnt.

Phase 5: Demonstrate mastery by applying the information in a product of their own creation for future generations of humankind and thereby taking their place in the African legacy continuum (Meyers, 2016: 249).

5.3.3 Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR)

Developing from the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework that is aimed at taking positive elements from Afrocentricity, Postcolonialism and Decoloniality, this study did the same with research methodologies. The combination of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and African-Centred Research is presented in this study as Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR).

PAR works toward bringing change to the intellectual, social, and material bonds of colonialism. PAR has been defined as "a collaborative process of research, education

and action explicitly oriented towards social transformation" (Glassman and Erdem, 2014: 207; Kindon et al., 2007: 9). PAR differs from other research methods in that it seeks to bring about positive change, not simply investigate, or describe an issue (Miller et al., 2015). Similarly, African-Centred Research (ACR) is research where indigenous African people are significant participants and typically senior research team members. ACR promotes the notion that relevant research output can be said to have been achieved when it could satisfy not only the material needs of the people but also their intellectual, spiritual, and cultural needs (Mkabela, 2005: 184). This is the reason a study incorporating ACR should also be informed by the principles involved in the African experience where **spirituality** is given its due place; one has to be fully **immersed** in the subject while considering **holism** and relying on **intuition** as well as ensuring that the approach is **liberating** (Mazama, 2003b: 26).

5.3.4 Adding a case study for the integrated management plan

Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site was selected as a case study to develop and implement the integrated management plan because of its accessibility and familiarity. I used Witsie's Cave for my Master of Arts Degree. Despite the challenges around the Mantsopa sacred site, as explained in Chapter 2, it seemed to be better managed than the rest of the sacred sites in the study. However, the management approach may not necessarily be suitable for a sacred site.

Initially, the Witsie's Cave Tourism Project was identified as the focus group for this part of the research. Several meetings were held with project members, revealing the dynamics that warranted a stakeholder approach. I already knew most of the stakeholders before the research process commenced. Due to my prior study at Witsie's Cave, I already knew of *Morena* Moloi of the Makholokoe and *Morena* Libenyane Mopeli of Monontsha village. I also understood that Monontsha was part of the Bakoena Royal Council. However, during the period I was working with the Witsie's Cave Tourism Project I was made aware of *Morena* Sefofo Mopeli of Poelong, located closest to the cave.

Working for the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, I as the researcher could easily access the information of declared sites. However, it was only

when Mr Rantjhemane Moloi requested the Department to grant him full control of Witsie's Cave that I became aware of the Bakholokoe Traditional Council that Mr Rantjhemane Moloi represented. Once the participants were identified, they were met individually and as groups. That is where the study was introduced, and permission for participation was sourced.

5.4 DIMENSIONS OF RESEARCH

5.4.1 The phenomenon under study

The phenomenon under study is the Mohokare sacred sites, their associated pilgrimage movement, and their challenges in the formal heritage sector. Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site is a case study for developing an integrated management plan that could also be adapted for the other sites.

5.4.2 The nature of the research

The nature of the research was qualitative. The research aimed to collect rich data for thick description drawing on both primary interviews conducted with the pilgrims, spiritual healers, heritage practitioners, farm owners and people working on the sites. This also included observational data and existing secondary data.

5.4.3 Population

The Mohokare Valley sacred sites are populated with numerous sacred sites starting from where the Mohokare River source is located to where it joins *Senqu* (Orange River) near Bethuli in the southern part of the Free State Province. These sites are in the form of caves, springs, and pools of water. The focus of the study was primarily on the four sacred sites that have been elaborated on at length in Chapter 2. Each of the sites has its own stakeholders. These will be explained below.

5.4.3.1 Mantsopa

Mantsopa forms part of St Augustine's Anglican Church. As part of the church's tradition, members from different districts where the church has branches would gather at Modderpoort for a church service and a conference at the end of August every year. The church service is also attended by people who are not necessarily members of the Anglican Church. These people were identified as the first group of stakeholders. Mantsopa's Cave Church, grave and spring have been declared provincial heritage sites. In this regard, the National Heritage Resources Act requires that heritage authorities in the provinces continuously inspect the state of heritage sites. These were the first two bodies forming part of the stakeholders of Mantsopa's precinct. The other stakeholders comprised regular pilgrims who paid allegiance to Mantsopa (e.g., individuals, groups of spiritual healers and religious denominations). Other visitors to the site include government departments (Tourism, Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Agriculture and Rural Development), academic researchers and tourists, as well as the member of the Bataung clan whose *Badimo* were buried on the site. The Bataung community resided in the area around the 1800s. It is common practice for the Basotho to visit the graves of the *Badimo* (ancestors) regularly. As shown in the image below, one grave is located next to Mantsopa's grave.

Image 25: A grave of one of the Bataung people next to Mantsopa's grave (by M. Ntlhabo)

5.4.3.2 Mautse

Mautse is a valley with different sacred places, caves, pools, and springs. Even though it is currently closed, it was the stated intention of the farm owner to re-open the site as a tourist destination. In this case, the site users coming from different churches, individual and group spiritual healers (*Dingaka*), neighbouring farm owners, the local municipality, and government departments (e.g., tourism) would then form part of the stakeholders' establishment.

5.4.3.3 Motouleng

Motouleng is one cave with numerous sacred spots within it. It is believed to be where all the *Badimo* (ancestors) reside. Multiple stakeholders are attached to Motouleng, such as the owners of the farm where Motouleng cave is located, owners of the farms surrounding Motouleng cave, the pilgrims, and the tour operators conducting tours to the cave before it was closed in 2020.

5.4.3.4 Witsie's Cave

Witsie's Cave, like Mantsopa, is a declared provincial heritage site, resulting in the Provincial Heritage Resources Authority being a stakeholder. The area of Qwaqwa is where the indigenous leadership system is mostly observed in the Free State Province. Two leadership councils have been contesting the ownership of Witsie's Cave. These are the Makholokoe Traditional Council and the Bakoena Royal Council, as explained in Section 5.3.4 above. Subgroups of the Makholokoe (Mafikeng Traditional Council and Bakholokoe Tribal Council) and the two *Marena* of Monontsha and Poelong village (part of Bakoena Royal Council) have also been claiming ownership over the cave, justifying their participation as stakeholders. Forming part of the stakeholders' participation is the Witsies Cave Tourism Project, which is currently running tours at the site. These include the Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality and Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality for their contribution to developing the site, the South African Police Services, the site users (*Dingaka*, tourists) and researchers.

5.4.4 Unit(s) of analysis

Units of analysis for primary data included the four sacred sites that form part of the Mohokare Valley (Mantsopla, Mautse, Motouleng sacred sites and Witsie's Cave), the stakeholder groups attached to each site (pilgrims and workers at Witsie's Cave), individual participants as well as secondary data in the form of photographs and maps.

5.4.5 Samples and sampling

The study followed qualitative research methodology taking a naturalist approach. Before I settled on Witsie's Cave as the case, I first visited all the sites (Mantsopa, Mautse, Motouleng, including Witsie's Cave) to understand and compare their current states. Mantsopa appeared organised with the management body (St Augustine's Anglican Church) with formal programmes, rules and regulations that minimised challenges. Mautse was closed, and Motouleng did not have a structured body that one could work with. All the parties were working in isolation. Witsie's Cave presented itself as the best option for testing the Afrikana-Participatory Action Research because it had a constituted structure that I was already familiar with as Witsie's Cave was the case study for my Master's Degree. The study followed purposive and snowball non-purposive sampling. I already knew participants that could be approached for participation in the study, especially for Witsie's Cave. However, some participants were included after having been recommended by those already known. In the case of Mantsopa and Motouleng, the approach was to randomly select people found at the sites. The Integrated Management Plan based on APAR was designed and implemented at Witsie's Cave. However, it is part of the action plan beyond this study to extend this approach to the other sacred sites.

5.5 THE APAR RESEARCH PROCESS ADAPTED FOR THE CASE STUDY

5.5.1 The Concerns Report Method

The research process, employing APAR, using the case study of Witsie's Cave to develop and implement an integrated development plan, was based on the Concerns Report Method of Participatory Action Research. It was developed by Arellano et al.

(2015), as shown in Figure 8 below. Participatory Action Research follows the cyclical steps of establishing data through the partnership of a researcher and participants that circulate around planning, action, reflection, and evaluation. This was expanded to the Concerns Report Method (CRM) of Participatory Action Research because of the concerns surrounding the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. This is also because, through CRM, one can approach data collection based on the values and functions of the community. This allows for data collection to be guided by Afrocentric values and experiences.

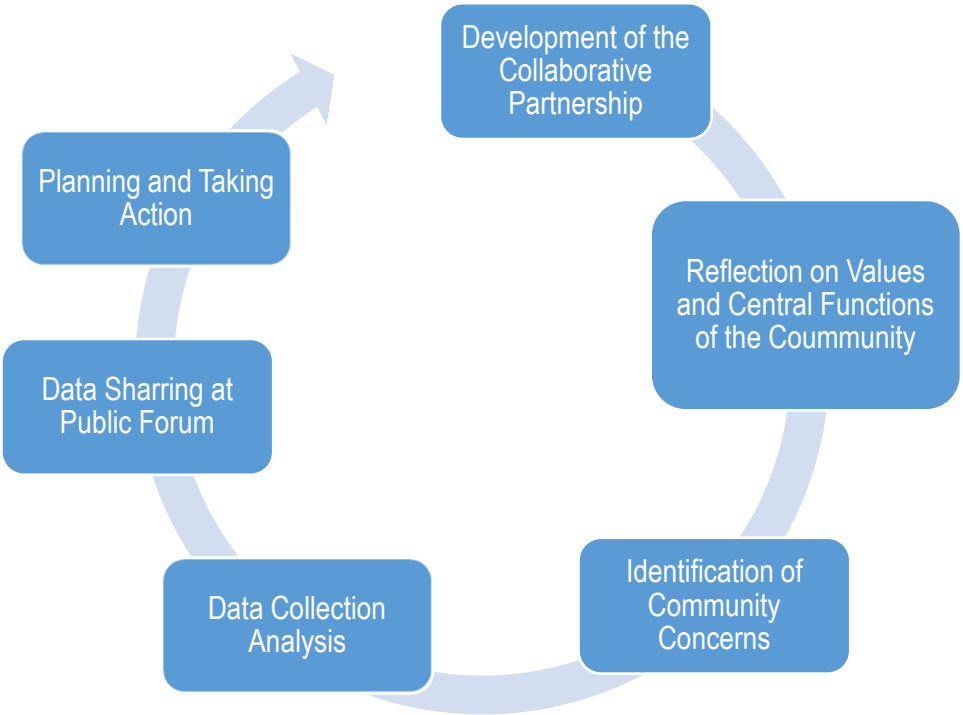


Figure 8: *Main phases of the CRM reproduced from a Participatory Action Research Method in a rural Mexican community (2015)*

Step 1: Development of collaborative partnership

The step of developing collaborative partnerships informed the process of stakeholder identification. Most of the stakeholders were identified based on their interests or attachment to the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site. This was based on the already known parties from previous research studies and from requests made by individuals and parties that had written to government.

Step 2: Reflection on community values informed by characteristics of Afrocentricity

Decoloniality as part of the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework enabled this study to incorporate values central to the Basotho people's day-to-day lives. It included the functions of *Marena* in line with the indigenous governance system, as well as Afrocentric principles as an alternative way of including the pre-colonial ideologies to inform the postcolonial activities with Afrocentric views.

Step 3: Identification of community concerns

This step incorporated concerns derived from previous studies and research projects that focused on the Mohokare Valley sacred sites and those raised by Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site stakeholders through interviews and stakeholder meetings.

Step 4: Data collection analysis

Data collected for the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site as the case study was analysed and compared to the other three sacred sites that formed part of the study (Mantsopa, Mautse and Motouleng). The study employed a single case study to develop and implement an integrated management plan to extend the application of this plan to the other Mohokare sacred sites in the future. The challenges facing Witsie's Cave were not unique but applied to the rest of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. As a result, while the focus was on Witsie's Cave in terms of an integrated management plan, reference was also made to the other sites to ensure that the solutions suggested for the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site could also be applicable to the other sites.

Step 5: Data sharing at public forum

Data sharing took place in several spheres. Firstly, with individuals and bodies that had shown interest in acquiring and managing Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site or had specific attachment due to spiritual reasons and through stakeholder meetings.

Step 6: Planning and taking action

The sixth step was where all the stakeholders were brought to one place to meet for the first time to plan collectively and take action.

5.6 SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

5.6.1 Existing literature on Mohokare Valley sacred sites

Data collection was multi-faceted and involved the generation of empirical data through observation, participant observation, interviews, focus groups, and by consulting existing secondary literature on the Mohokare sacred sites, while data collection for the case study was solely applied to Witsie's Cave to develop and implement an integrated management plan. The primary data collection method in terms of this case study was the Concerns Report Method of Participatory Action Research, as explained in Section 5.5.1.

5.6.2 Observation

At least five field trips were taken to Mantsopa, Mautse, Motouleng and Witsie's Cave between 2018 and 2020. In 2018 Mautse was already closed, but the owner of the property surrounding Mautse allowed me to go through the site. My observation started when travelling to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. On the road, observation was made on the small and more individual vernacular memorialisation. These were identifiable by crosses on the side of the road that marked the places where people died. This was extended to the observation of the sites that came about because of tragedy involving many people. Two sites were visited as part of the sites of tragedy: Geneva station between Hennenman and Kroonstad, where 21 people died when seven carriages of a train travelling from Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg caught fire after colliding with a truck, and the Sol Plaatjie Dam in Bethlehem (see Section 3.6.4).

It was also important to observe activities at the sites known as sites of spiritual veneration (Mantsopa, Mautse, Motouleng and Witsie's Cave). While there were limitations on the visit to Mantsopa Cave, Mautse has been closed to the public since 2016. The daily activities of people residing at the spiritual sites were observed at Motouleng. Witsie's Cave only permitted day visitors at that time. Observation focused on the type of objects placed as part of memorialisation at the site and whether there was any observable care of the site. In terms of the observation of sites of tragedy, the goal was to determine whether efforts were made to memorialise the site through

individual initiatives or an official and government-led kind of memorialisation. Photographs were used to capture the details of each site and people found at the sites[10].

5.6.3 Researcher as participant (participant observation)

According to Cornwall and Jewkes (1995: 1668), researchers are also participants in Participatory Action Research in terms of participant observation. I engaged in participant observation in a personal sense when in December 2020, I consulted with healers (who also happened to be participants in this research) as I felt things were not going well in my life. This led to my participation in prophetic and healing rituals involving medicinal herbs. The prophecy revealed two important personal revelations: 1) that I am the Ntlhabo family head, and 2) that I have not performed any ritual for the *Badimo* (Ancestors) since moving to Bloemfontein from Qwaqwa (where I lived for more than 20 years). The first part was not surprising. However, the second part was astonishing as, according to my knowledge, a *Pha-Badimo* ritual was performed in April 2019 as a way of announcing my new home to the *Badimo*. However, I realised through the prophetic revelation that I did not do things right. For the ritual to be recognised, I should have first gone to the graveyard to notify my *Badimo* about the ritual that I intended to perform and provide dates for the occasion, which I did not do.

5.6.4 Individual and group interviews

Individual interviews were conducted to gather the life experiences of people residing at the sacred sites and their knowledge of the sacred sites. Two of the participants interviewed at the sacred sites were the longest-term residents. Their interviews lasted for about 45 minutes, while there were 10-minute interviews with people who were only at the sites for short periods (less than a week). There were other participants I already knew frequented the sacred sites (even those that were closed), which I interviewed to either present their own experiences or to verify the information presented by other site users as a means of triangulation. Most of the interviews were

[10] Photographs were solely taken with the consent of participants. Where such photographs are included in this thesis, participants insisted on the use of their photographs for recognition of their role and knowledge.

unstructured, taking the form of informal discussions. For the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, interviews were formal and semi-structured, lasting between one and two hours. These interviews aimed to inquire about the challenges of the site and suggestions for problem-solving strategies to resolve the challenges.

5.6.5 Website searches

Websites were searched to establish if there were opportunistic activities relating to tourism where tour operators could present themselves as gatekeepers of the sites. Keywords or phrases, "Motouleng", "spiritual sites of the eastern Free State", and "tours to the eastern Free State sacred site" were used to search for information on the Internet. Thousands of websites were found with similar themes. The focus was on websites mentioning any of the sites that are part of this study. At least ten websites with tourism content relating to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites were short-listed for deeper analysis.

5.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This study used Participatory Action Synthesis to analyse and present the collected data. This approach synthesises primary research data from previously conducted research projects, as presented in Chapter 2. Data were gathered through individual interviews, observations during field trips and stakeholder meetings (focus groups). This presentation and interpretation constructed "meaning and interpretation through a communal approach focused on a wider, deeper interrogation of the data and its analyses". Similar to Participatory Action Research, Participatory Action Synthesis still follows a cyclical process of action and reflection that can be approached either through a Reciprocal Translational Analysis, where previously collected data is integrated and compared to inform the interpretation in the new study, as well as the Refutational Analysis where previous data is opposed as distinct accounts. This study's data presentation and interpretation followed the former (Savin-Baden and Wimpeny, 2007).

The study arrived at the type of management plan interpreted through the **Afrikana-Decoloniality Theoretical Framework** but with special reference to the data gathered

at Witsie's Cave**.** This management plan was based on the Basotho people's values, functions of the Marena and guided by the characteristics of Afrocentricity,

5.8 RESEARCH QUALITY

The empirical nature of the research informed by the Participatory Action Research cyclical and reiterating processes allowed for the strategies to be initiated and practically tested. What could have been my assumptions based on prior knowledge was then validated through practical engagements with the participants, who based their contribution on their experiences. Several research projects have been conducted on the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. These research projects generated new knowledge relating to the sites when they were conducted. However, the newly generated knowledge has not been effective as it has not been applied practically to effect change, which is one of the bases of good quality research (Belcher et al., 2016). This research attempted to translate knowledge uncovered during previous research projects and the outcomes of this research into empirical change. Being conducted from the Afrocentric perspective involving diverse stakeholders through Afrikana-Participatory Action Research Methodology, this research brought about interventions at the local level of the community of Qwaqwa. They were identified as participants and drivers of the project. The bottom-up approach employed has also been democratic, with equal participation of all stakeholders. The approach and strategies were interpreted into an integrated management plan, a practical guiding tool.

5.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The University of the Free State granted ethical clearance for this study (Ref UFS-HDS2017/1493) in 2017. The ethical clearance was valid from 07 August 2018 to 07 August 2021. An extension was applied for and granted due to the delays in completing the study and, particularly, the COVID-19 pandemic and the strict lockdown in South Africa constraining fieldwork during this time. One ethical clearance condition was translating the informed consent forms into Sesotho, as the research was likely to be conducted predominantly using Basotho participants.

5.9.1 Risk and mitigation

Given the nature of my profession and as mentioned before, I was already familiar with most of the participants identified for this research. I have lived with and amongst many of the participants while working at the Basotho Cultural Village. As a cultural insider, I was also familiar with the cultural protocol involved and the language spoken by most of the participants. In this respect, the nature of this research held no direct physical harm to participants. Participation was required to be undertaken in an environment most convenient for the participants. In order to mitigate any unforeseen risk, I approached sensitive matters such as ritual slaughtering and witchcraft with care, ensured not to impose my ways of thinking, and always sought advice from the participants to maintain harmony.

5.9.2 Informed consent

It was important to request permission to access the sacred sites from the farm owners and the *Marena* in the case of Witsie's Cave. There were people already known to me, who are knowledgeable on the subject of this study. Some of these people had already been informed about the intention of the research and agreed to participate. However, consent was formalised through a consent form. This document was written in Sesotho (and translated to English for academic purposes), a medium of communication for most participants. Prior to interviews or any form of interaction with the participants, where possible, I would set appointments at least a week ahead of time. Before the interviews, I would inform participants about the purpose of my visit, that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation if and when they felt like doing so. I also informed them that the information gathered was for the purpose of the study and was only going to be shared amongst other stakeholders and with the promotors and examiners of the thesis through the University of the Free State. They were also notified that in the event that I may intend to utilise the information for other purposes, they would be notified and asked for their consent.

5.9.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Some issues in the Basotho culture, such as witchcraft, are taboo and may be sensitive. Where and when participants wished to remain anonymous, provision was made to not reveal the identities and confidential information of the participants, except to reveal information to the supervisors of the study. However, this situation never arose.

5.9.4 Vulnerable participants

There was no direct risk to the participants as the research was based on a naturalist approach and not invasive and alienating modes of inquiry. However, in terms of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, most knowledge holders were older people who were purposively sampled participants. Therefore, by virtue of their advanced age, they were deemed vulnerable under the terms of ethical clearance at the UFS, and care was taken when dealing with them.

5.9.5 Beneficiation, reciprocity and remuneration

Participants were not remunerated for their participation as the study was entirely self-sponsored. This was clearly communicated to all participants prior to the research. Past experiences demonstrated that in cases where money is involved, the quality or legitimacy of the research may sometimes be compromised. Due to the nature of this research, no special beneficiation was promised to the participants. However, the research was rather framed as a collective contribution between me and the participants towards fostering an understanding of the phenomenon under study and providing meaningful change to society.

5.9.6 Deception

No deception formed part of the research. Transparency was key to the success of this research, as deception could have harmed the trust between me and the participants.

5.9.7 Conflict of interest

The research was intended for academic advancement and to find practical solutions to the material challenges at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. No vested interest in the research outcome occurred, and I did not materially benefit from the research. No funding or grants have been sourced or received.

5.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter demonstrated my positionality as an insider in this study and my participation through the Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR), a research methodology involving participants as research partners and employing Afrocentric values and experiences to research. It provided an overview of PAR, an Afrocentric approach to research and a merger of PAR and Afrocentric research methods that produce APAR as part of the research design.

The chapter also introduced Witsie's Cave as a case study for the design of an integrated management plan. Dimensions of research covering the phenomenon, the nature of research, and the population of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites in terms of focusing on individual sites and revealing the stakeholders linked to each were also covered. Also presented in this chapter were the units of analysis and a description of the sampling process to show how participants were selected and recruited and how the selection of Witsie's Cave as a case study was arrived at.

Furthermore, the chapter presented APAR research processes adopted for the case study and the six steps of the Concerns Report Method of Participatory Action Research as the primary data collection methods, as well as observation, researcher participation and interviews as part of the data collection methods. This study adhered to a strict ethical procedure to minimise risks that could harm the participants and lead to the collapse of the research. Matters of confidentiality and anonymity, the vulnerability of participants, beneficiation, reciprocity and remuneration, deception, and conflict of interest were dealt with and clarified through a consent form written in the language of participants (Sesotho).

CHAPTER 6
DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Mohokare Valley is a farming area found west of the Mohokare River between Ladybrand and Qwaqwa. This is where the four sacred sites introduced in Chapter 2 of this study are located. The sacred site that served as the case study for developing and implementing an integrated management plan was Witsie's Cave in Qwaqwa. Evidence of rock art found in the sandstone caves in the area shows that the San once inhabited the area. The area was occupied by the Makholokoe in the 1800s, as explained in Chapter 2 and was named Witsieshoek. During their sojourn, the Makholokoe discovered the cave known as Witsie's Cave. Both Witsieshoek and Witsie's Cave were named after *Morena* Lephatsoane Oetsi (phonetically expressed as Witsie in Afrikaans).

Chapter 5 introduced Reciprocal Translational Analysis of Participatory Action Synthesis as a method of data analysis and presentation applied in this study, where previously collected data is integrated and analysed together with new findings of current research to shape new interpretations (Savin-Baden and Wimpeny, 2007: 691). The interpretation of existing and new findings will be made in reference to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 4 as the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework (ADTF). This theoretical framework guided the study to interpret and present data from an Afrocentric perspective based on African values, principles, and functions, mainly because the study revolved around issues of African spirituality. Chapter 5 discussed Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the research design directing this research. This research design allowed me to study the challenges faced by these sacred sites in the formal heritage sector and to arrive at a practical solution with the community members (of Witsie's Cave) as partners in the research.

Data presented and interpreted in this chapter is based on the following: the management of sacred sites as informed by the findings and recommendations of previous research projects, the concern over permanent stay at the sacred sites, the

idea of people empowered to pray for others, evolution and meaning-making of the site, presentation of participants' knowledge, the presentation of data following the Concerns Report Method (CRM) of PAR as well as the outcomes of my participation as researcher in the research.

The data presentation and interpretation process took several steps that synthesised documented challenges, findings and recommendations on data from previous research projects and studies conducted on the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. These were integrated into and compared with the data collected through the CRM applied in this study that informed stakeholders' management and the Integrated Management Plan of Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Data were collected through observation while driving along the Mohokare Valley and at the sacred sites. Photography was mostly used to document details of the sites, especially at Mautse, where the site was closed, and there were no pilgrims. A combination of photography, notetaking, recorded interviews, and meetings were conducted with pilgrims, site workers, site owners, groups of *Dingaka* (spiritual healers) and individual *Dingaka* (spiritual healers) in the case of Mantsopa, Motouleng and Witsie's Cave. These were conducted during the three field trips taken with the supervisor and those trips and meetings I arranged between 2017 and 2022 at the four sites. Some interviews were conducted not at the sites but randomly at different places and dates. There were sites visited for tourism information relating to Mohokare Valley sacred sites, as shown in the tables below.

Table 4: *2017 data collection*

Date	Site / place	Method of data collection
12/10/2017	Bethlehem	Meeting with 6 Dingaka (spiritual healers)
31/10/2017	Mautse	Meeting with land owner
09/11/2017	Bethlehem	Meeting with 6 Dingaka (spiritual healers)
15/11/2017	Mautse	Meeting with 3 Dingaka (healers) and farm owner

Table 5: *2018 data collection*

Date	Site / place	Method of data collection
16/07/2018	Mantsopa	Observation
17/07/2018	Mautse	Observation
18/07/2018	Motouleng	Observation and 4 interviews (pilgrims)
19/07/2018	Witsie's cave	Observation and 1 interview (guide)
21/11/2018	Witsie's cave	Meeting with 6 site workers

Table 6: *2019 data collection*

Date	Sites / place	Method of data collection
04/01/2019	Witsie's cave	Meeting with 5 site workers
09/04/2019	Mantsopa	Observation
10/04/2019	Mautse	Observation
10/04/2019	Motouleng	Observation and 4 interviews (pilgrims)
11/04/2019	Witsie's Cave	Observation and meeting (workers)

Table 7: *2020 data collection*

Date	Site / place	Method of data collection
28/04/2020	Telephonically	Interview (Dr Mahanke)

Table 8: *2021 data collection*

Date	Site / place	Method of data collection
04/01/2021	Mantsopa	Observation
08/10/2021	Monontsha	Meeting with Morena Sefofo of Poelong
29/10/2021	Phuthaditjhaba	Bakholokoe Representative
03/11/2021	Namahadi	Presentation at Royal Bakoena Council
05/11/2021	Phuthaditjhaba	Stakeholders' presentation/meeting
	Kestel to Bethlehem	Interview in transit

Table 9: *2022 data collection*

Date	Site / place	Method of data collection
08/07/2022	Telephone	Interview (Dr Mahanke)
06/08/2022	Motouleng	Group (6) interview at the new entrance
06/08/2022	Clarens	2 short interviews
11/08/2022	Mantsopa	Observation and 1short interview (worker)
11/08/2022	Mautse	Observation
11/08/2022	Motouleng	Observation
12/08/2022	Telephone	Interview (Owner of the farm housing Motouleng)

Table 10: *Websites visited*

Website	Caption
www.showme.co.za/tourism/	Visit sangomas in the eastern Free State highlands
www.sa.vanues.com	Attractions Free State / Motouleng – caves Motouleng caves in Clarens Messages from the ancestors
www.ioL.co.za	A visit to Motouleng fertility caves
Htts://clarensxtreme.co.za	Visit sangomas in the eastern Free State Highlands.
www.clarensnews.co.za	A visit to motouleng fertility caves
www.social .shorthand.com	Motouleng caves, Free State's hidden spiritual gem
www.wheretostay.co.za	Fertility cave information/where to stay

www.travelground .com	Explore these lesser-known South African caves
www.sanparks.org	African spirituality weekend
http:weekendgetaway	Clarens escape-guests of Clarens escape can visit Motouleng sacred caves and Maloti route 26.
www.thabomofutsanyana.gov.za	Tourist attractions of the eastern Free State
http://in.pinterest.com>African destinations	Discover Motouleng fertility caves

Summary of data collection

Observations = 12

Individual interviews (in person and telephonically) = 17

Group interviews = 1

Meetings = 8

Presentations = 2

Websites = 12

6.3 MAPPING IT OUT: STATE OF MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES AND PILGRIMAGE MOVEMENT

6.3.1 Mautse

Mautse remains closed, and people are not allowed to enter. However, the entrances to both Mautse valley and the residential house have been upgraded with sandstone walls, a steel gate, and a guardhouse, as shown in the pictures below.

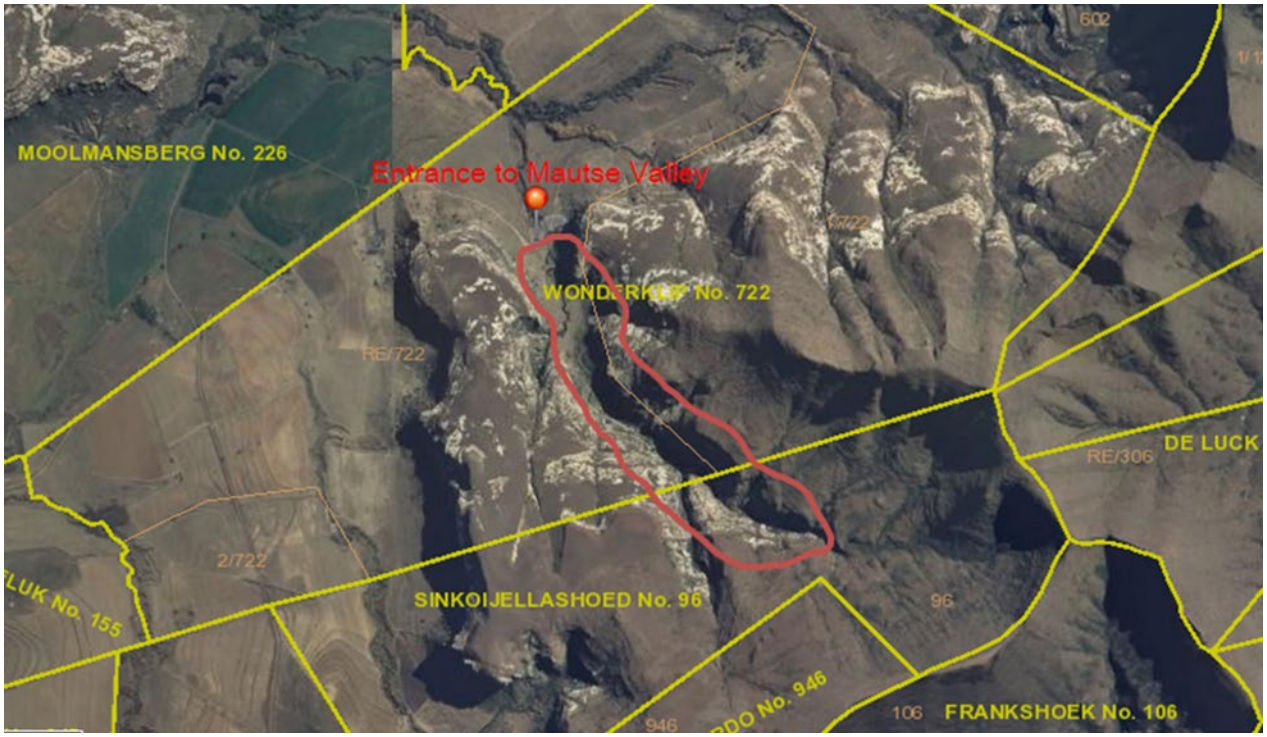
Image 26: Showing the new entrance to Mautse valley (by M Ntlhabo).

Image 27: The new entrance leading to the residential house at Sekonjellashoed (by M Ntlhabo).

Although I was unable to establish the exact intention of the gates erected at Mautse as the owner of the property had passed away, I speculate that the erected gate and guardhouse at the entrance may have two meanings. It could be a sign that “we are accepting visitors in a formal way”, or it may represent heightened security to deter unwanted visitors.

The nominations of Mautse and Motouleng as heritage sites were submitted to the Grading and Declaration Committee of the Free State Heritage Resources Authority in 2016. The Committee’s 2021/2022 Report stipulated that “there has been resistance from owners of the sites” that has stalled the process of declaring the sites. The Grading and Declaration Committee had envisaged the two sites to be declared as national sites because people visiting the sites come from all over South Africa and other parts of the SADC region. In terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, 25 of 1999, Section 27 (3), any person can nominate a site for declaration. However, in a case where a site is located on private property, the owner of the property or land within which the site is located has to consent to the Heritage Authority to proceed with the processes of declaration.

Map 3 below shows the position of Mautse valley, transecting two farms. In the past, Mautse included Nkokomohi, which is on the site of Moolmansberg. This has also been closed, but the evidence in Section 2.3.2.1 showed that people still visit the site (where the original clay harvesting sites were located).



Map 3: Showing Mautse Valley transcending Wonderklip and Sekonjellashoed (recreated with ArcGIS Web Map. https://csggis.drdlr.gov.za).

6.3.2 Motouleng

Motouleng was closed in 2020 at the beginning of the first South African hard lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, pilgrims were able to find another entrance to gain access. The new entrance is located 8 kilometres away from Clarens on the way to Fouriesburg. The field trip taken in 2018 revealed that another entrance was used as an alternative entrance when the main entrance was still in use (see Image 28 below). However, this entrance was also closed (Figure 29). However, another entrance was created where the fence was cut to allow access to the cave. On 12 August 2022, I had a telephone interview with the owner of the farm where the cave is located. She raised concerns about accidents that may happen where the vehicles now park to access the new entrance (see Image 30). She is also concerned about the distance people have to walk from the entrance to the cave. It is estimated at 8 km, which can be challenging for elderly people to walk as opposed to the 1.5 km they used to walk when using the old entrance (see Maps 4 and 5 below). Furthermore, she voiced concern over people trespassing on her property, especially since she does not benefit from the entrance fees that were collected from the old entrance,

including the alleged payment made when the wall was built on Lusthof farm where the gate and the parking space are located (see Map 4). We agreed to have a meeting where I promised to drive to Clarens (a town adjacent to Motouleng cave) to present my proposal of attempting to solve the challenges facing the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. On the 24th and 25th of October 2022, I made several calls to her to arrange a meeting but was unsuccessful. The sudden unavailability of the farm owner came as a surprise, especially after we had agreed to continue our conversation. However, the reality on the ground was understandable. My study came at the time when anything that has to deal with issues of land remain sensitive in South Africa courtesy of national discourses on the expropriation of land.

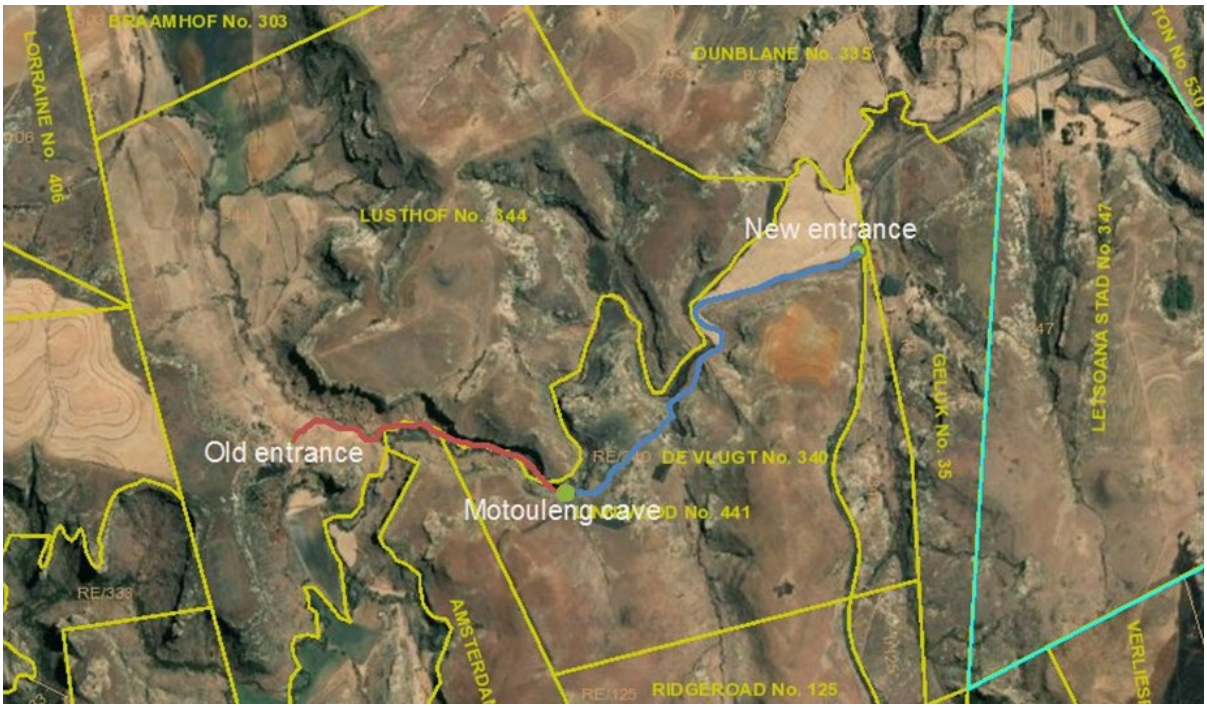
Image 28: Pilgrims arriving at Motouleng from the northern entrance in 2018 (by M Ntlhabo).

Image 29: An alternative entrance on the northern side that is now also closed (by M. Ntlhabo).

Image 30: Vehicles waiting for pilgrims with Free State, Northwest, Lesotho and Gauteng registration plates (by M Ntlhabo).

Image 31: Pilgrims arriving at the new entrance of Motouleng from Sebokeng in Gauteng (by M Ntlhabo).

Map 4: Showing the location of the cave. This is not on the same farm as the main gate and the car parking (recreated with ArcGIS Web Map. https://csggis.drdlr.gov.za)

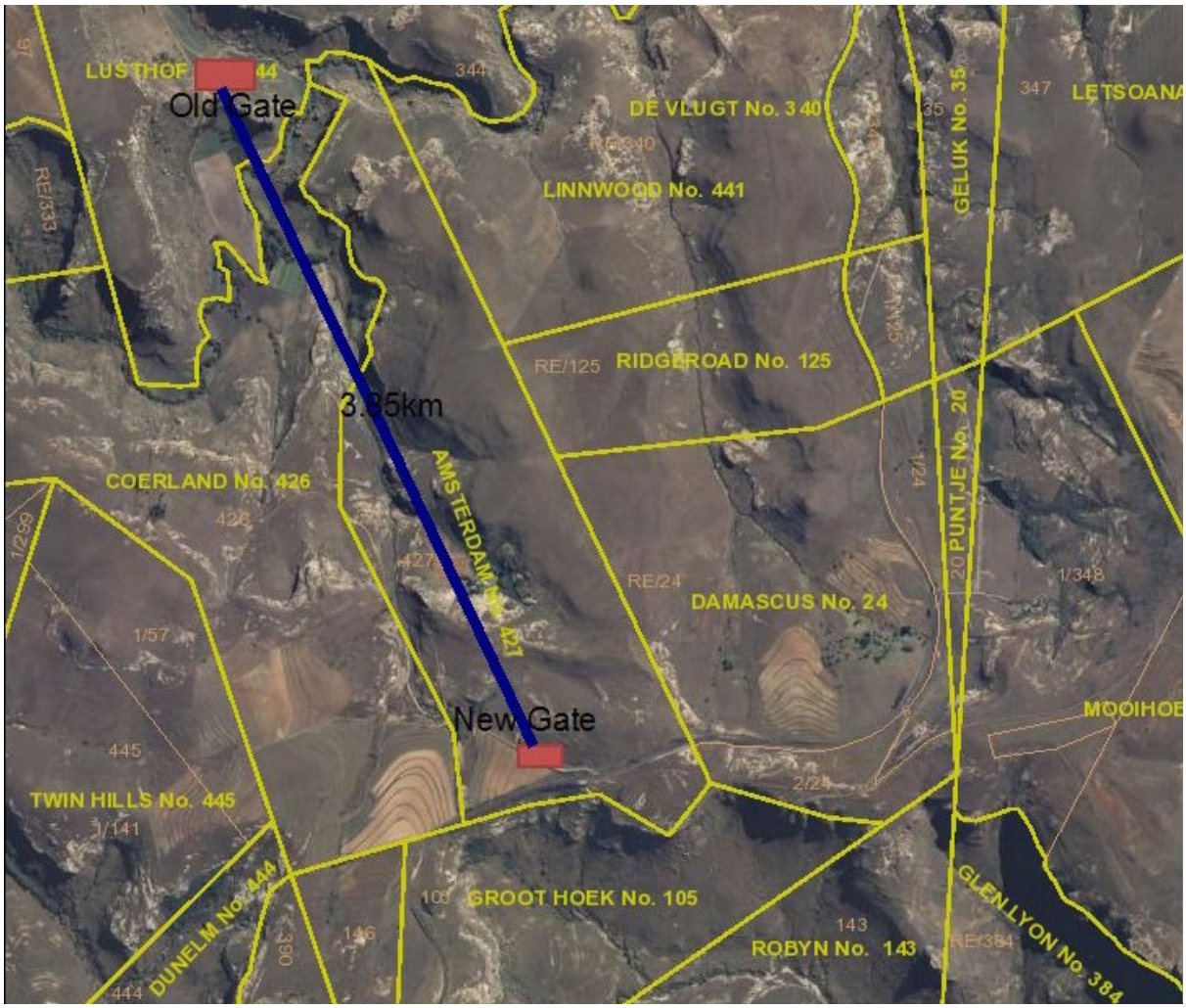


Map 5. Showing a path to Motouleng cave using old entrance (in red) and blue line showing a path from the new entrance (recreated with ArcGIS Web Map. https://csggis.drdlr.gov.za)

Image 32 and 33 below show a newly installed gate on the road leading to Lusthof Farm (where the old entrance was located), denying pilgrims access. The gate is only 500 kilometres from the R711 road from Fouriesburg to Clarens. From this gate, one can drive approximately 3.8 kilometres to arrive at the gate, where initially, people had to pay to enter Motouleng cave (see Map 6 below). A closer look at the gate above shows the wagon wheels. Wagon wheels symbolise both movement and continuation of a journey. These elements formed part of the laager during the Boer Trek. The laager is the circular formation of ox wagons arranged for protection (Jacobs, 2014: 19). The continuation symbolised by the wagon wheel may indicate a commitment to protecting own property. However, this is just suggestive and not a conclusive meaning, as the use of the wheels may have been aesthetically motivated.

Image 32: Showing stop and no entry signs on the way leading to Lusthof where the main gate leading to Motouleng is located (by M Ntlhabo).

Image 33: Showing a closer look of the new gate leading to Lusthof (by M Ntlhabo).



Map 6: showing a new entrance and route leading to Motouleng after an old entrance was closed in 2020 (recreated with ArcGIS Web Map. https://csggis.drdlr.gov.za).

6.3.3 Mantsopa

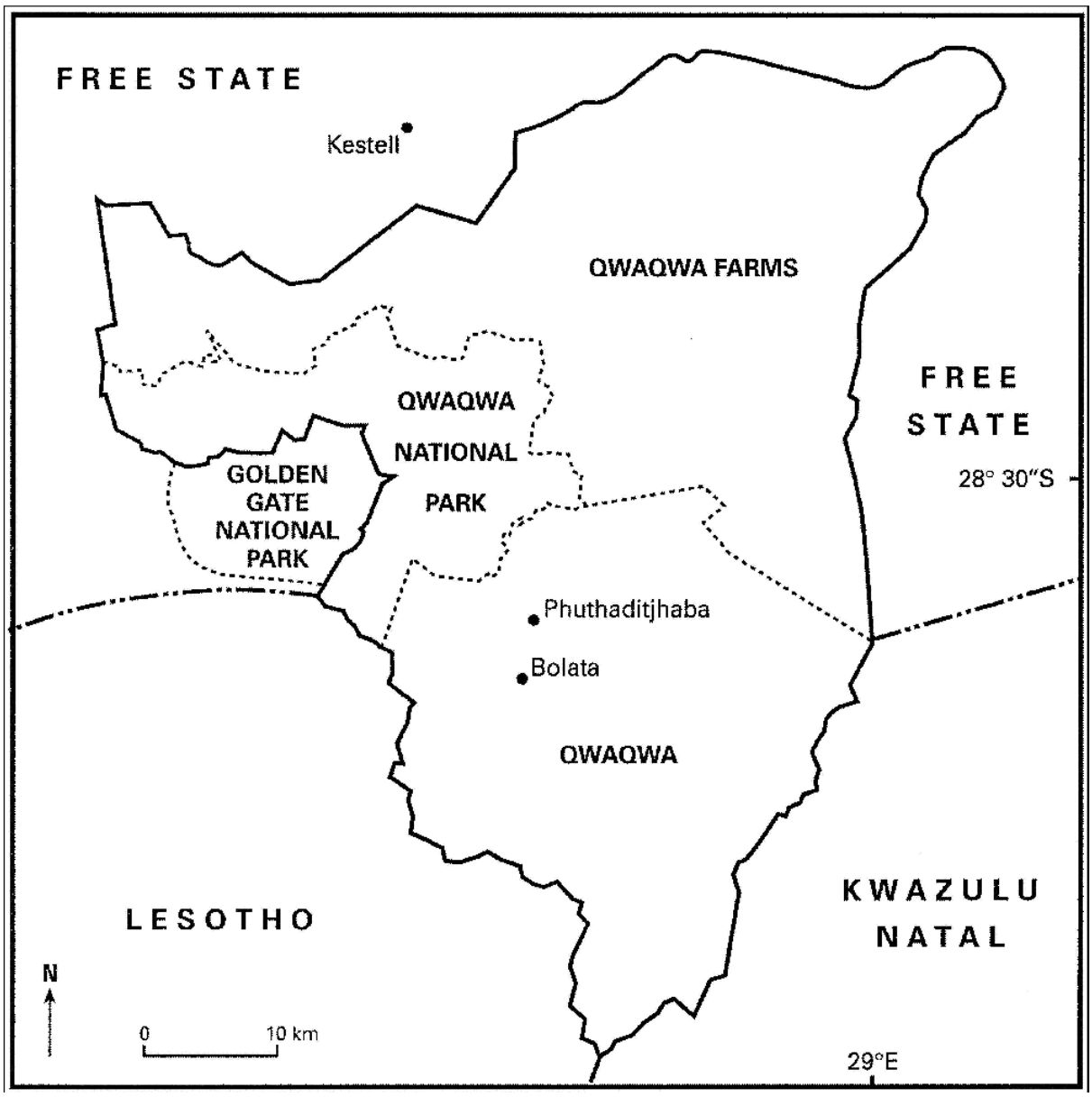
The field trip conducted on 11 August 2022 showed that the pilgrimage at Mantsopa Cave is still ongoing. There has also been a price increase for people entering the Anglican priory, as shown in the information board below. One of the guides at Mantsopa cave explained that they still do not allow people to sleep in the cave, but those who booked accommodation may spend the night near the cave, where there is a fire pit and an altar for sacrifices. The guide also explained that there are currently more visitors claiming that they have been shown the cave at the Spitskop (small, pointed hill) and are visiting it. The cave at Spitskop was documented by Cawood (2010) as the purported original cave that Mantsopa used during her stay at Modderpoort or *Lekgalong la bo tau,* as the area is also known (see Section 2.3.1). The other interesting point is messages to God that can still be viewed at Mantsopa.

Image 34: Information board at Mantsopa (by M. Ntlhabo)

Image 35: Fire pit and altar at Mantsopa (By M. Ntlhabo)

6.3.4 Witsie's Cave

Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site is located in Qwaqwa. Qwaqwa is located between the borders of Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal (as shown in Map 7 below), where the sources of the three rivers Mohokare, Thugela and Namahali are situated.



Map 7. Position of Qwaqwa at the corner of Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal (sourced from semanticscholar.org).

Historical records reveal that after the conflicts between the Boers and the Makholokoe of 1856, Qwaqwa remained unoccupied until 1867 when *Morena* Paulos Mopeli Mokhachane moved from Mabolela near Ladybrand to settle with his people in

Qwaqwa. In 1936, Qwaqwa became a reserve in terms of the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936. It was known as Witsieshoek Native Reserve. This Act regulated buying land for Black people to farm but with the supervision of Trust officials. In 1939 the reserve became the 'betterment territory'. Through this arrangement, land allocated for Black people was administered by limiting the number of livestock, introducing cattle breeds to be reared and prohibiting grassing on other parts of the land. The preferred breeds were the Afrikaners and the Swiss bulls. This arrangement led to the Battle of Nahoma of 1950, where the above system was not accepted by the Basotho living in Qwaqwa (Barnard, Stemmet and Semela, 2005: 184-185).

Qwaqwa is a mountainous area covering about 48 000 hectares (Twala, 2010: 815). It is rich in cultural heritage and is ruled through a combination of political and indigenous governance systems. It was a designated homeland for the Basotho from 1974 until 1994, when South Africa became a democratic country. During the homeland era, it was ruled by Prime Minister TK Mopeli of the Dikwankwetla National Party. Qwaqwa falls under the Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality, Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality, and Kestel and Harrismith towns. Ten of the 13 traditional councils of the Free State provincial are located in Qwaqwa. Three traditional councils form part of the Batlokoa ba Mokotleng: Phomolong, Thibella and Dinkoeng traditional councils. Namahadi (The Royal House), Thaba Bosiu, Thaba Tsoeu, Matsieng, Bolata, Monontsha and Mabolela traditional councils fall under the Bakoena ba Mopeli (sourced from www.cogta.fs.gov.za on 06/06/2022).

I spent 18 years in this area after arriving from Lesotho in 1996. I was known by most of the people in the area because of my role as the local newspaper journalist and editor, as well as occupying the managerial position at the Basotho Cultural Village.

6.3.4.1 Challenges of Witsie's Cave Heritage Site

Challenges surrounding the Mohokare Valley sacred sites were derived from observation and interaction with the participants through individual interviews and during the stakeholder meetings. The challenges and sources of these challenges are listed in Table 11 below:

Table 11: Challenges of Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site and sources

Challenges	Data source
Management - Contested ownership - Lack of adequate management skills. - Lack of accountability systems - Undefined activities and programmes - Inadequate documentation of visitors - Limited awareness/promotion - Lack of development project	- Letters requesting management and ownership of from Makholokoe and Bakholokoe communities. - Concerns from the stakeholders meeting of 5 November 2021 raised management challenges as narrated by Morena Sefofo below: *Hona le basebeletsi ka mane ka lehaheng be ipitsa Witsie's cave Tourism Project, ba qadile, hoha jwale ebile ba lwana ba tseka ditjhelete, re etsa jwang ha hole tjee/?* (There is a group of people working at the cave calling themselves Witsie's Cave Tourism Project. They have already started but we don't know who put them there. They are now fighting, what do we do about that). - Other management challenges were documented from participatory observation.
Conservation - Natural and human threats	- Conservation threats were picked up from participatory observation while I was on a tour to Witsie's Cave.
Contravention of the sacred - Break-ins - Muggings of visitors - Unsustainable commercialisation of clay. - Drawing graffiti on the walls of the cave	- Contravention of the sacred was recorded through interviews: during the meeting with members of Witsie's Cave Tourism Project
Infrastructure - Poor road infrastructure leading to the cave - Lack of parking space - Lack of maintenance of the buildings - Unavailability of ablution facilities and water supply at the cave	- Challenged of infrastructure were documented through participatory observation when taking tours to the Witsie's Cave.
Policy / legislative - Inexplicit role of *Marena* and *Dingaka* in the NHRA	- The conclusions of inexplicit role of *Marena* and *Dingaka* together with the inexplicit protection of sacred sites were

- Inexplicit protection of sacred sites - Inconsistence of spelling of the name of the site	arrived at through the engagement with the National Heritage Resources Act of South Africa where, Whereas the dilution of the sate name was observed from road signs and publications

6.4 DATA CONVERGENCE

This section converges extant data from previous research projects with new data collected for this study. These incorporate management issues of the sacred sites, permanent residence at the sacred sites and people praying for others, the evolution and meaning making and the use of participants' knowledge.

6.4.1 Management of the sacred sites

Du Plooy's (2016: 281) main concern over the Mohokare sacred sites was the lack of proper management and security. She recommended conducting a study that would "investigate better human waste management and develop guidelines to decrease the human footprint at the sites". The research project on the Oral History and the Cultural uses of Clay at the sacred sites in the Eastern Free State (Cawood, 2010) came to present four **(4)** scenarios that could be applied to address the management issues of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites.

Scenario 1: A call to pursue a formal declaration of the sites, either as provincial or national heritage sites;
Scenario 2: Called for the establishment of a community/stakeholders' forum;
Scenario 3: Proposed an approach where sacred sites could be researched and managed on a project-based platform; and
Scenario 4: Suggested the maintenance of the status quo and monitoring of the deterioration of the sites for possible future intervention.

Attempts have been made to declare all four sites that are part of this study as some kind of heritage site. To date, only two sites (Mantsopa and Witsie's Cave) have been declared Provincial Heritage Sites. However, the declaration of the remaining two sites is marred with controversy. Firstly, previous research has proven that, what is now known as Mantsopa's Cave, was first used as a temporary dwelling by the five brethren

who established the priory after their arrival in April 1869 at Modderpoort farm, as a chapel, a school for black people, a dairy and pumpkin store, as well as a horse stable by the British soldiers during the South African War that took place between 1899 until 1902 (Cawood, 2010: 127; Hodgson, 2003a: 221; Colman, 2009: 34). This information contradicts revealed data about the cave that is believed to be the original Mantsopa's Cave. This is located on the south-eastern side of Spitskop, about 500 metres from the Anglican Priory and closer to Mantsopa's well-known spring.

Secondly, the declaration of Witsie's Cave was nominated by a person or group of people who is or are not the legal owner(s) of the cave or the land on which the cave is located. The process of nomination and declaration of the heritage site requires the consent of the owner of a property within which the site is located. In the case of Witsie's Cave, it was discovered that the land falls under the Bakoena Royal Council, even if it reflects the history of the Makholokoe. In this regard, the Bakoena Royal Council was supposed to be consulted to obtain their consent, which did not happen.

The above background reveals that a part of the heritage that forms part of Mantsopa's legacy is not protected. Also, the declaration process of Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site must be revisited to avoid future conflicts. Based on the above illustration, the suggested scenario of managing the sites as declared heritage sites could not be considered as an option for this study. Furthermore, Cawood (2010: 256) stated that management of the sites, as formally declared heritage sites, does not necessarily shift the responsibility of management to either SAHRA or the NHC as the two bodies are only overseers and the management responsibilities still remain with the communities.

Scenario 2, which requires the establishment of a community/stakeholders' forum for the management of the sites, was found suitable to address the current management challenges facing the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. This can also be conducted with projects from time to time implemented at the sites, as suggested in Scenario 3. In relation to the case study at Witsie's Cave and the development and implementation of an integrated management plan, a stakeholders' forum made up of parties having an attachment to Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site was established. The forum formulated a management plan to address challenges raised in Chapter 2 and

facilitate development projects at the site. The management plan was based on case studies where sacred sites, similar to Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, were successfully managed through stakeholders' engagement. Scenario 4 about the maintenance of the status quo and monitoring of the deterioration of the sites for possible future intervention was not an option as, once the sites have deteriorated to such an extent that they fall out of use for a considerable period of time, there may not be anything left to salvage in terms of the meaning and significance of the sacred sites. Mautse is one such example. After the eviction of pilgrims in 2016, structures were demolished, reducing them to ruins. Walking through Mautse Valley in 2018, it was difficult for me to make sense of the place without the decorated huts and vibrant people with colourful costumes. Thus, the place lost its meaning with people who interacted with it.

6.4.2 Permanent residence at the sacred sites

The complexity of people residing permanently at the sacred caves has been raised as an issue by several scholars, including Nel (2014b) and Cawood (2014). The matter was also discussed during a meeting with the Bakoena Royal Council on 3 November 2021. During that meeting, it was made clear that any stay at the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site exceeding three days would not be permitted. During the course of this study, three (3) people who were interviewed at Motouleng were staying there permanently. Two of the individuals originated from Lesotho, and the other one was a South African citizen. It has been recorded that they have been at Motouleng for periods between seven months and 35 years. Their stay has been deemed as permanent due to the periods involved and because they reported not knowing when they would be released to return home (see Section 2.5.3.2 regarding the period of stay that varies from one pilgrim to another). The idea of lengthy or indefinite residential periods depending on the *Badimo* is illustrated in the testimonies below presented in the original Sesotho (followed by the English translation).

Ntate Skhosana's interaction with Motouleng started in 1981:

> *Ka 1981 kene ke kula ka bontshwa lehaha lena, ke fihlile mona ka fola. Ka 1984 kene ke rongwe hore ketlo kena ka nokeng ka mona ka tlase ka mona. Ka fihla ka nka matsatsi aka etsang seven, hae! Ke ntse ke ya ke fihla ke rapela feela ka hodima letsha. Jwale ho ne ho tshabeha ka nako eno, ho sobe le batho ba bangata tjena, le matsha ana a tshabeha, ke ne ke ile ka bontshwa motho ya dulang ka mono, kgele! Ntho e tshabehang ha kaalo, e hlooho di seven, empa he qetellong ke ile ka kena ka qeta ka tsamaya. Hona jwale ke se ke nkile seven months kele mona (Interviewed on 18 July 2018).*
>
> In 1981, I was sick and was shown this cave, I got here and healed. In 1984, I was sent to go into to the river down there. I took about seven days, hey! Going and just praying near the lake. At this point it was scary, there had not been as many people, and the lakes were scary, I had been shown a person that lives in there, [exclaimed in horror]. Something so scary, with seven heads, although in the end I went in, I finished and left. Right now, I have been here for seven months.

The experience of *Ntate* Lestatsi have to serve an indefinite period is described as follows:

> *Na ke le letsatsi ke tloha Lesotho kwana, ke tshwere lemo sa bobedi, mme ke tshwerwe ka mona, hore na nka hlokahallwa Lesotho kwana, nka kulelwa, ha kena tjhanse ya hore nka pata motho eno… tsebo hake tsebe hore ke tlo dula nako e kae, ba mpitsitseng ke bona batla nlokolla ha ba qetile ka nna, habaso mphe hore na ketlo tsamaya neng (Ntate Letsatsi, Interviewed on 18 July 2018)*
>
> I am Letsatsi from Lesotho, this is my second year here, I have been arrested here. Even if my family members can pass away in Lesotho, or anyone fall asleep, I don't have a chance of going to bury the deceased person…as to when I am going to stay here for how long, I don't know, those who called me here will tell me when I have served my term, they haven't told me when I am going to leave *(Ntate Letsatsi, Interviewed on 18 July 2018)*.

Nkgono Mmabolele reporting having spent five years staying at the cave:

> *Nna ke tloha mane TY Lesotho. Ke fihlile mona ka 2013. Ke haufinyana le ho tsamaya ntate, ha selemo sena se fela ke a tsamaya (Mamadiba interviewed on 18 July 2018).*

> I am from TY Lesotho. I arrived here in 2013. I am going to leave very soon sir, when this year ends, I am leaving.

Nkgono Mmabolele appeared to be adamant about leaving at the end of the year, but often the day of release may be postponed should the *Badimo* fail to provide the requisite sign that the pilgrim may depart.

The issue of permanent residence at the cave has multiple interpretations. Firstly, this violates migration laws in the case of Lesotho citizens. There are permits that are issued to Lesotho citizens to stay in South Africa for different purposes. These permits may vary between a month to five years. People can come to South Africa for health reasons, they can be granted a study or work permit but there is currently no permit for being in South Africa for spiritual purpose that may last up to several years. On the other hand, this translates to these people seeming as though they are above the law since no legal actions are being taken against them. Coplan (2001: 14) presented the occupation of the Mohokare Valley as a protest over the land that Moshoeshoe lost during the Basotho Wars. The occupants are said to be claiming the land spiritually. Secondly, the situation can also be viewed as humiliation and/or empowerment. Humiliation because the people do not belong anywhere; they are just in between as they "have not yet become full members of the new society". Empowerment because they have acquired a permanent position outside their national borders, literally being in between the borders (Kurki, 2014: 1061). The view of *Ngaka* Sihle Mbongo[11] (interviewed on 5/11/ 2021) is that the people who claim to be locked in the caves are being untruthful. She said that some situations could lead to one being 'locked up' in the cave. For example, a person who committed a serious offence such as murder. As *Dingaka*, they are chosen to help the people, but some take advantage of the powers bestowed upon them and start doing wrong things. Another example could be a person(s) who defied their ancestral calling. "They are there serving their sentence, and it is true that they do not know when they will be released".

This reinforces the concept of African spirituality that does not conform to the idea of original sin and redemption, where people are judged for the sins they inherited from

[11] Not her real name.

their *Badimo* (ancestors). In African beliefs, when people commit any form of transgression, they are punished while still alive (Zahan, 2000: 3). On the other hand, *Ntate* Tumelo Lenong (interviewed on 12/01/2022) explained that there are people who can be chosen as *Amakhosi* (custodians or gatekeepers) of the sacred site. These people are there to assist with prayers, especially to help with the letters written to *Modimo* (God). While it is acknowledged that there should be custodians or gatekeepers at the sacred sites, it should also be understood that journeys taken to the caves are conducted occasionally. When people are at the site permanently, the site loses its meaning as a pilgrimage site or shrine and becomes a settlement. In this case, those people always return to the sacred sites and spend some time cleaning and posing as mediators.

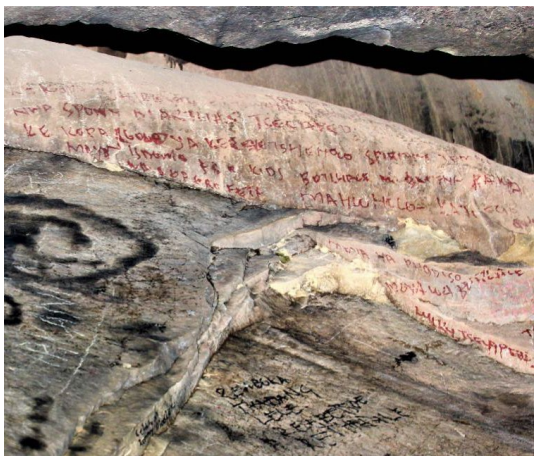


Image 36

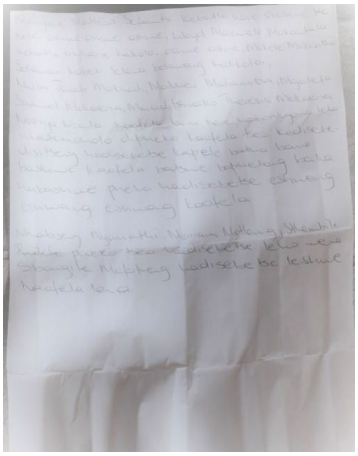


Image 37

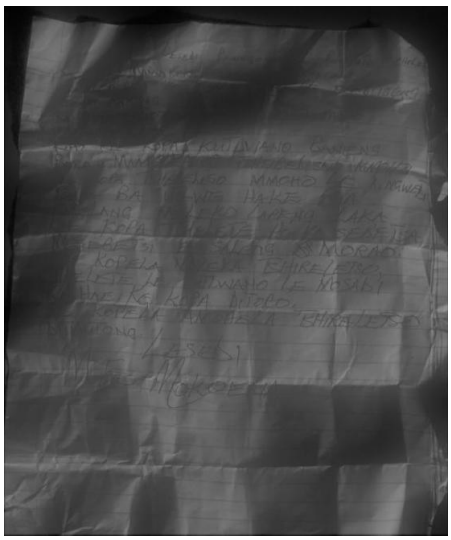


Image 38

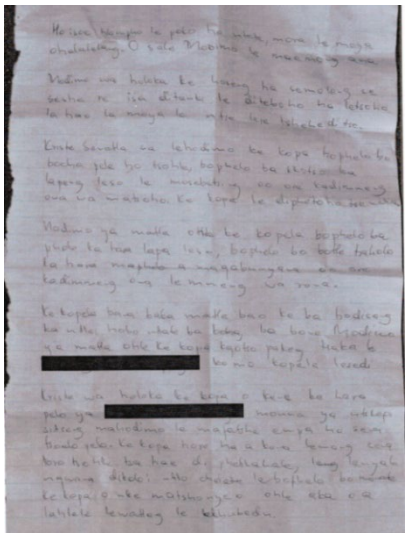


Image 39

Images 36-39: Messages written on the rock (top left) and written letters found at Modderpoort on 4 January 2021 and 11 August 2022 (by M Ntlhabo).

The letters depicted above in Image 37 and 39 were found at Mantsopa's Cave on 4 January 2021 and 11 August 2022. Initially, I focused on the paper letters, but I also discovered messages written on the wall of the cave. One of the mandates of the gatekeepers or site custodians is to ensure that the letters do not end up in the wrong hands and facilitate the messages to reach *Modimo* (God) and the *Badimo* (ancestors) through prayers (interview with Ntate Lenong on 12/01/2021). This, however, is not the case with Mantsopa. According to one of the guides, the letters are left overnight in the cave and then burnt the following morning. This contrasts with the messages written on the wall that is more permanent. Messages written on the cave wall contravene the National Heritage Resources Act. Mantsopa is declared a provincial heritage site, and as per the protection guidelines of such sites, changing the appearance of the site without permission is illegal. It was out of curiosity that I read the letters. Most of the messages requested peace in the family, good health and wealth, and strength to get through the challenges of life. There was also a letter containing a long list of people whom the writer wished to die and was requesting the *Badimo* (ancestors) to help speed up their dying process. This illustrated the clear tension between the sacred and the profane where the pilgrims have their own understanding of how they want to communicate with *Modimo* (God) and the *Badimo* (ancestors). However, rules of law govern the declared heritage site, which proscribes certain behaviours.

6.4.3 On a proxy mission

During the visit to Motouleng on 1 July 2019, I met with a 95-year-old woman, Nkgono Masechaba Sefali[12] who was on a proxy mission. During her interview, Nkgono Masechaba described the purpose of her visit to Motouleng as an instruction from *Badimo* (ancestors) to pray for *Masole* (soldiers).

[12] She wanted her real name and photo to be used.

Image 40: Nkgono Masechaba at Motouleng (by M Ntlhabo).

The idea of praying for soldiers was briefly explained by *Ntate* Tumelo (interviewed on 5 December 2020) as an instance where a person will go to a sacred site to pray and carry prayer messages from many people who would like to reach their different ancestors. Places such as Mautse and Motouleng are believed to host *Badimo* from all over the world. *Nkgono* Masechaba could have been given the specific instruction of praying for the soldiers who died in different wars. The prayer is to help them cross over into the spirit world. These processes may find one returning to the same sacred site many times as they (the soldiers) would not all cross over at the same time but one or a few at a time. The other possibility of 'praying for the soldiers' is to ask *Modimo* and *Badimo* to help the living soldiers not to use their weapons unnecessarily, preventing harming innocent people and, thus, making it a prayer and call for peace. Proxy pilgrimage or substitute pilgrimage is not new in religions or pilgrimage studies.

Muslims for example have an arrangement where a person can go on a hajj pilgrimage of behalf of another person who is unable to go either due to physical or financial challenges (Mols and Buitelaar; Muslim World League, 2021: 23). The practice of praying for other people is also common in the ZCC (Zion Christian Church), where a prayer session could be dedicated to leaders, teachers, and soldiers in the country.

Nkgono Masechaba's name befits her calling. The name *Masechaba*, Mother of the Nation, is enough for one to get commissioned by the *Badimo* (ancestors) to pray for others. An ancestral commission or instruction is one of the eight broad categories of motivations for people undertaking a pilgrimage to sacred sites. This includes the following: religion and faith; individual and group healing; social cohesion, group and social bonding; reflection, contemplation, finding purpose and roots; seeking help and assistance, finding ancestor linkages, securing blessings/fortune; recreation, renewal, escape from work and city; political reclaiming (contesting the site/space), (Du Plooy, 2016: 187-188).

6.4.4 Evolution and meaning making

Previous studies by Ntlhabo (2011) and Moephuli (2016: 212) have revealed that Witsie's Cave did not carry spiritual powers in the past. Associated narratives put forward were not focused on spirituality but on historical events. This is evidenced by the lack of sacred stations in the cave compared to those found at Mautse and Motouleng. However, it has recently been noted that more people are visiting the cave for spiritual purposes. During the field trip to Witsie's Cave on 31 March 2022, I found traces of burnt *Mpepo* / *Phefo* (incense), snuff containers, sorghum beer (likely used as libation offering) and burning candles commonly used as part of rituals when one is communicating with the *Badimo* (Ancestors) (as shown in the images below).

Image 41: Snuff containers and burning candles found at Witsie's Cave (by M Ntlhabo).

The spiritual activities visible at Witsie's Cave could be attributed to the closure of Mautse and Motouleng as people had to find a new spiritual destination within the broader Mohokare Valley. Just like other sites of the Mohokare Valley, Witsie's Cave shares a similar landscape. It is characterised by waterfalls and pools, caves, and thick vegetation, and is secluded in the mountains (see Section 2.4.1). Moreover, just as more people were starting to visit Witsie's Cave to pray and harvest clay, there have been discoveries of two more sites that are now used as ritual sites. The first site is a pool of water and rocks. According to Mr Mlungwana Msibi, one of the guides at the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, there is no name attributed to the pool site as the ritual use is fairly new. The finding of this new spot could be because of the steep and strenuous path that leads to Witsie's Cave and that it can be difficult for elderly people to navigate. This site is about 420m from the reception area, as illustrated in the map below.

Image 42: Areal view of new sacred spots found at Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site (redrawn from google maps).

Image 43: Newly found sacred site: Water pool at Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site (by M. Ntlhabo).

Eade's (2020: 8) argument that a sacred site's meaning can be created or altered through ritual performance and connection with the divine is applicable here. My initial interaction with the case of Witsie's Cave between 2009 and 2010 was focused more

on Oetsi as the leader of the Makholokoe and historical events highlighting conflicts between the Boers and Makholokoe in 1856 and how Oetsi escaped through the tunnel to seek refuge in Lesotho. Two participants (*Ngaka* Morabe and *Ngaka* Mathobisa interviewed in 2009) revealed that Witsie's Cave did not have powers similar to those of Mautse and Motouleng.

This study's focus was on Oetsi as the medicine man and rainmaker, with the cave that was, in the past, referred to as an escape tunnel now being interpreted as a sacred cave where Oetsi would perform rituals to create a mist to cover an entire area when enemies attacked. It was in the same cave that he would perform rain-making rituals during the time of drought. Msibi (the guide at Witsie's Cave), who accompanied me to the cave on 31 March 2022, referred to the cave as "*lehaha la badimo",* meaning the 'Cave of the Ancestors'. He requested me to cleanse my face and head with the water dripping from the roof of the cave and call upon my *Badimo* (ancestors) to help and guide me. Inside the cave, there was evidence of candle wax on the rocks and bottles used to collect water dripping from the roof of the cave, as seen in the picture below.

Image 44: Mlunguane Msibi inside the dark cave (by M Ntlhabo).

While a group of people who used to work at the cave in the past comprised ordinary people, the current group primarily include spiritual people (mostly wearing beads and

colourful cloths). Pilgrims coming for spiritual purposes feel comforted when guided by these people who appear as ritual experts with authority in the spiritual field (Eade, 2020: 18). Since the closure of Mautse in 2016 and Motouleng in 2020, there has been an influx of people visiting Witsie's Cave for spiritual purposes. As a result of the new activities at Witsie's Cave, it is developing into becoming a valley with multiple sacred caves and water pools. The image below shows the position of the main cave of Oetsi (Witsie's Cave) and the Dark Cave. This is also why Witsie's Cave became a good test case for an integrated management plan. However, the use of Witsie's Cave for spiritual purposes seems to ebb and flow as people found alternative access routes back to Motouleng. Perhaps this justifies the belief that even if there are sacred spots at different sacred sites, all *Badimo* (ancestors) are at Motouleng.

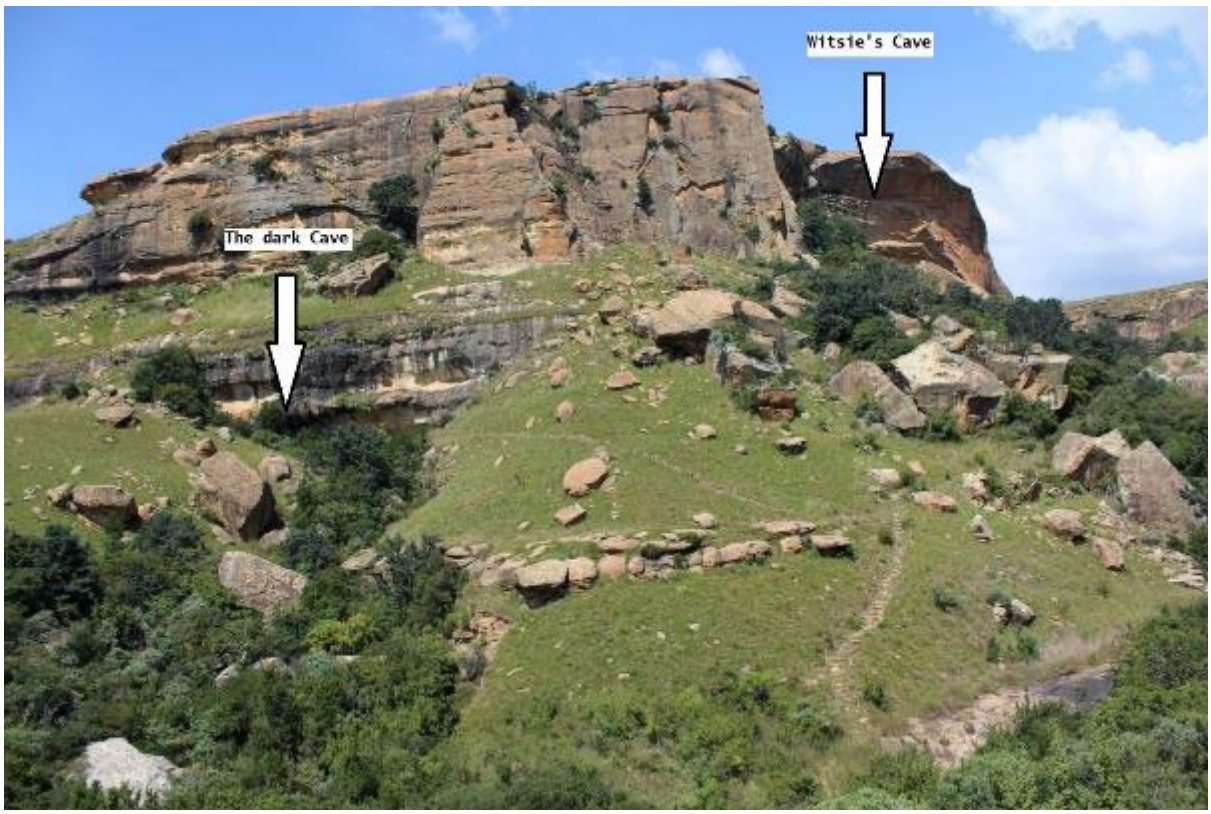


Image 45: Witsie's Cave and the Dark Cave (by M. Ntlhabo).

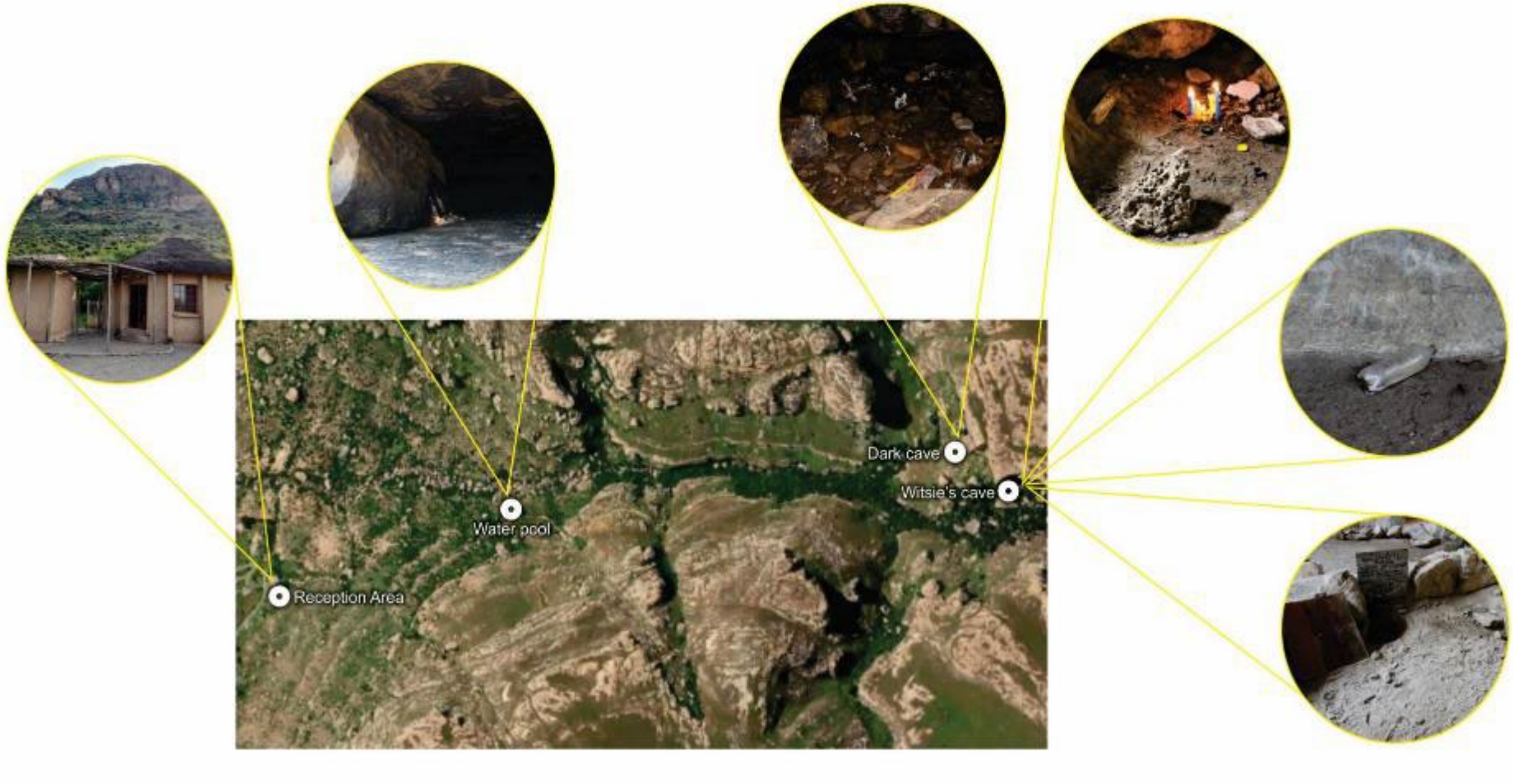


Image 46: Illustrating activities at different spots at Witsie's Cave Valley (photos by M Ntlhabo, graphics by C. Barlow).

Table 12: *Explanation of Image 46*

Spot	Details
Reception area	This is where people first arrive before taking a tour of the cave. The building is part of the developments that Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality funded.
Water pool	Burning candles were found at the pools, proving that people have started performing rituals at this spot. This is very close to the reception area.
Dark cave	Candle wax and candle plastics were also found in the dark cave to show that people also go there for prayers.
Witsie's cave	Burning candles, snuff containers, burned *phefo / mpepo* essence, sorghum beer bottles and a signboard can now be found inside Witsie's Cave, which was not the case around 2010.

6.4.5 The use of participants' knowledge

With PAR, participants can use their knowledge to inform processes and the meaning of the research. One of the points raised during the first stakeholder meeting on 5 November 2021 was the need for the cave to be cleansed.

> *Dumelang bo Mme le bo Ntate, Nna ke le Ntsoaki Semela, ke ipiletsa ho Marena aka ka hore lehaha le hlatsuwe, lehaha lena le silafetse. Hona le ditwantshano ka mona ka lehaheng, empa ha o hlaha ka nqane ha o fumane letho, ke hona ke reng lehaha le hlatsuwe…ka khomo, kea leboha (Ntsoaki Semela, 5 November 2021).*
>
> Greetings ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ntsoaki Semela, I am appealing to *Marena* to say the is a need for the cave to be cleansed. The cave is contaminated. There are constant conflicts there but we don't really know what is the source so we want the cave to be cleansed… with a cow *(Ntsoaki Semela, 5/11/2021).*
>
> *Morena Moloi, ke hopola hore esale ho qhalwa mali ka mono…Hono ha ho konsene mmuso, a konsena ka ho otloloha wena morena. Mali a sale a qhalwa ka moo, abo ntata mohola rona, ke poulelong ya rona rele Dingaka hore ha hoso hlatswuwe (Ngaka Ncala: 5 November 2021).*
>
> Morena Moloi, if I remember well, ever since the blood was spilled in the cave… that does not concern government, it directly concerns you *Morena*. The blood of our ancestors that was spilled in there is affecting us as the healers and need to be cleansed (Ngaka Ncala, 5/11/2021).

In the culture of the Basotho, several rituals are performed at different social stages, including the ritual meant to complete the rite of passage of death. When a person

passes away, a cow is slaughtered. The deceased would be covered with a cowhide and buried together with some personal belongings and seeds. *Moswang,* or grass particles in the process of digestion in the grass-eating animal, would also be poured on the grave of the deceased. After the burial, the family members would enter a period of mourning which could last for a month and between six months or a year (for the deceased's wife). This period was symbolised by the cutting of hair by the deceased's relatives and wearing a black band around their necks and a full black costume for a widow. After a month, a second ceremony was held where cattle, sheep, goat, or chicken would be slaughtered to accompany a cleansing ritual. At this stage, the deceased's belongings would also be given to family members (Gill, 1997: 58).

It has been recorded that after the Boers attacked the Makholokoe in the cave (Witsie's Cave), some people, including *Morena* Oetsi and his first wife, escaped. Those killed and left in the cave were never given a proper burial. Therefore, a cleansing ritual was necessary to complete the burial processes of those who died in the cave and to cleanse the descendants of the Makholokoe.

There are historical accounts that the *Difaqane* wars of 1800 forced some people in the interior of Southern Africa to turn to cannibalism. Peete, *Morena* Moshoeshoe's grandfather, who fell behind the rest of his party during a foot journey because of old age, fell victim to cannibals on their way from Botha Bothe to seek refuge at Thababosiu. Upon arrival at Thababosiu, Moshoeshoe realised what had happened to his grandfather and sent his warriors to bring the cannibals to him. He then made a gesture that surprised his people by referring to cannibals as his grandfather's graves and instructed rituals to be performed on them as they would have been on actual graves. Their stomachs were smeared with *moswang.* This was done as if it was done on real graves (Ellenberger, 1997: 217-227). *Moswang* can be mixed with gall and aloe. The mixture is poured on the grave to prevent bad spirits or to connect the dead and the living. It is also applied to the human body to symbolise the end of the mourning period.

6.5 CHALLENGES OF THE MOHOKARE SACRED SITES

The challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites were arrived at through the primary aim of the study to navigate between the sacred and the profane. This was through revisiting the heritage landscape and applying the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework. The challenges revealed the following: the sacred contestations and profane materiality's, the hybrid nature of the sites, spiritual tourism, ownership contestation, ancestral attachment claims, stakeholder infighting, oral mythmaking claims, opportunism, and effects of colonialism on sacred sites.

6.5.1 Sacred contestations and profane materialities

Section 2.6.1 discussed how different belief systems compete based on the sacred contestations and profane materialities at the sites. During the presentation made to the Bakoena Royal Council about the intention of establishing an integrated management committee for Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage site on 3 November 2021, the council made it clear that a stay in the cave for a period longer than three days would not be accepted. They argued that it leads to a settlement, as was experienced with Mautse and Motouleng. The pilgrims believe that an overnight stay inside the cave is more fulfilling and is bound to yield positive results. This is built around the belief that sacred sites are where the *Badimo* (ancestors) resides, and it is at night that they come back from their 'assignments'. It is then that they can give attention to those who are in the cave. It was established that people were still not allowed to sleep in the Cave Church at Modderpoort. However, during the fieldwork of January 2021, where I spent a night at Modderpoort, at around 11 (at night), I witnessed a person who appeared to be sick being taken out from the accommodation facilities supported on both sides by two people with other two other people walking alongside. They escorted the sick person in the direction of the cave. It could be possible that the people booked the accommodation knowing that they could take the person to the cave at night. The above narrative demonstrates how despite profane rules of administration in place at the sacred sites, people are willing to take risks to achieve spiritual fulfilment.

In a telephone conversation with the owner of the De Vlugt farm on which Motouleng cave is located, she raised concerns about the long distance the pilgrims have to cover currently to reach the cave. The estimated distance is about 7 to 8 kilometres. According to the owner, it is farther than what they used to walk when entering from the southwestern approach to the cave that has been closed since 2020. This, however, does not seem to bother the pilgrims. Prior to the closure of the southwestern access point to reach Motouleng cave, Clarens Xtreme Tours (an eco-adventure tourist outfit) conducted guided tours to Motouleng. They are currently trying to convince the owner of the farm in control of the shorter access route to re-open this access route so that the guided tours can continue. The willingness of pilgrims to undergo physical suffering and trials in order to reach their sacred destination is in line with Di Giovine's (2015: 187) observation that physical and emotional suffering have always characterised or motivated travels to sacred sites. Section 3.5.4 illustrated the sacred and profane dynamics regarding tourism, where the meaning of a journey undertaken by pilgrims is built on emotions and difficulties that the journey may present (Olsen and Timothy, 2022). On the other hand, tourists' experiences are centred around the joyful activities of exploration with no meaning necessarily tied to it.

The individual experiences of the pilgrims at the sacred sites form part of the tourists' exploration. Urry (1990) popularised this as a tourist gaze. However, unlike other tourism experiences that use actors such as at the cultural villages, the pilgrims at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites do not benefit from tourism activities as they are excluded as stakeholders. This can be a means for them to earn a livelihood from their own spiritual beliefs and experiences. Spirituality is one of the elements forming part of the decolonial paradigm included in the ADTF. It also forms part of the notion of spiritual tourism that the study intended to formalise but as a platform where all stakeholders can benefit from. Section 26 of the Indigenous Knowledge System Act 6 of 2019 also supports indigenous knowledge holders, such as the pilgrims of the Mohokare Valley Pilgrimage Movement, benefiting from their knowledge when used for commercial purposes.

6.5.2 'Ownership' contestations

Pilgrims at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites always refer to the caves as "*mahaheng abo nkgono lebo ntate moholo*", meaning the caves of our grandmothers and grandfathers. Section 4.9.2 explained the Afrocentric viewpoint of land ownership: "people are one with nature; therefore, they cannot own the land. They belong to the land because this is where they rely on for physical and spiritual survival". This interpretation conflicts with Western concepts of ownership, where "people can acquire land and own it". Section 4.9.2 also showed that the current laws of the Basotho have a hybrid approach to land administration that is partly based on Afrocentric and Western concepts where there was a communal approach and the private ownership of land. This is over and above the hybrid nature of the sites that has been presented as a contestation of religious or spiritual superiority from different points of view by different pilgrims (see Section 2.6).

The contestation of legal and spiritual ownership over sacred sites discussed in Section 2.6 seems to continue. Shortly after the old entrance leading to Motouleng was closed, the fence on the northern side near the road to Clarens was cut to create a new entrance (see Section 6.3.2). It is clear to people going to Motouleng that they are trespassing on private property. However, their understanding is that the cave belongs to the *Badimo*, their ancestors, and they have a right to access it. It has been seen how tedious and lengthy the land claims process can be judged by the land claim over Modderpoort Farm, which took over 20 years to settle (see Section 2.6), which does not render this avenue a feasible alternative.

Another ownership contestation revolves around sacred spiritual beliefs and profane elements attached to heritage management. During fieldwork conducted on 11 February 2022, it was discovered that the headstone of Mantsopa's grave had been painted. The guide at Mantsopa sacred site revealed that one of the pilgrims came with paint, claiming to have been instructed through a dream to paint the grave's headstone. From a spiritual point of view, the person was allowed to paint the grave, perhaps with an understanding that it was beautifying and preserving it. However, based on the fact that the grave is also declared as a provincial heritage site and as

per the profane requirement of heritage sites, it is illegal to transform the appearance of the site without a permit.

The act of some site users to nominate the sites without the consent of the landowners within which the sites are located is another indication of contestation of ownership. The 2021/2022 report of the Grading and Declaration Committee of the Free State Heritage Resources Authority that stated that the nomination of Mautse and Motouleng was done without the blessing from the landowners (see Section 6.3.1) may be read in two different ways, that is that either the landowners were not properly consulted during this process or that the landowners asserted their constitutional powers as property owners.

6.5.3 Competing ancestral attachment claims

Previous research projects revealed ancestral attachment claims presented by the Makholokoe, who based their claim on the fact that their ancestors were killed in the cave, therefore, making it a grave (see Section 2.6.3). During the stakeholders' meeting on 5 November, the attachment claims were extended to the cave occupation by *Manguni* and *Amaswati* during early the 1800s (Narrative by Mr Nqcala). It is the view of Mr Nqcala that it is not appropriate for anyone to lay a claim over a river, gorge, spring, mountain, or cave. He could not help to bring in the Swati ancestral attachment claim to Witisie's Cave but said *Modimo* (God) chose *Marena* as guardians over rivers, gorges, mountains, and caves. This statement suggests that all people have a right to claim everything created by *Modimo* (God). He supported the recognition of the two indigenous leaders of the communities that laid claim to the cave to be afforded their space in providing guidance. As a result, his suggestion was a conciliatory approach towards addressing the challenges facing Witsie's Cave and other similar sites, which further justifies the application of APAR.

6.5.4 Stakeholder infighting

This study has established cooperation at different levels of the *Marena,* from the highest to the lowest level, including other stakeholders. However, there has been infighting, some physical, amongst the members of the Witsie's Cave Tourism Project.

The cause of the conflicts was over leadership contestation and money collected from the tourists and pilgrims. Because of non-payment of tax to the South African Revenue Services, the bank account of the Witsie's Cave Tourism Project was suspended. This led to members collecting and keeping the revenue at their homes. This money was then shared at the end of every month. However, this arrangement led to dissatisfaction from some of the members, which resulted in two factions working at the cave. Each faction has its own clients, and the money collected is only shared amongst the faction members. The management committee has convened several meetings to resolve this matter. In the last meeting, most stakeholder committee members felt that the workers should be dismissed, and the cave should be closed temporarily. However, one of *Marena* pleaded with the members to give them a last chance. He said, "at the end, they still remain our responsibility, and we have to make sure that we don't create criminals out of them". By these words, this *Morena* was evoking the pre-colonial values, principles, and functions of indigenous leadership systems that ADTF embraces.

6.5.5 Competing oral mythmaking

The stakeholder infighting presented in Section 6.5.4 above is understood to derive from competing oral mythmaking. It has been revealed that the Witsie's Cave Tourism Project members were divided into two groups because of infighting caused by power struggles and access to monies collected. One group stated that one of the healers who visited the cave claimed medicinal plants were growing on the path leading to the cave. The 'medicine' was intended to prevent visitors from coming at a time when the members of the opposite group were present at the cave. It was also intended to harm those who walked on the path. In retaliation, the other group sourced the services of another healer to prevent any harmful occurrences at the cave.

What also surfaced at Witsie's Cave as part of oral mythmaking is the notion that not one group of people can claim Witsie's Cave as their own. During the stakeholder meeting on 5 November 2021, *Ngaka* Nqcala spoke about a certain Mr Tshabalala, who was a Swati by origin and became a friend of *Morena* Oetsi. According to *Ngaka* Nqcala, the cave was first introduced to Tshabalala by the Khoisan, who first occupied

the area of Qwaqwa. The cave was presented as a suitable hiding place to be used in times of trouble. Thus, Mr Tshabalala introduced the cave to *Morena* Oetsi.

6.5.6 Opportunism

There have always been opportunistic elements in the form of illegal trading and criminality at the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, some of which contributed to the closure of Mautse in 2016 (see Section 1.3). Witsie's Cave was also exposed to criminal elements where people who herded livestock on the mountains robbed visitors. Another example of opportunism is the organised tours to the sites and self-appointed tourist guides and interlocutors at the sacred sites. Table 10 under Section 6.2 showed numerous websites advertising tourism activities at some of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, packaging African spirituality for the tourist gaze. Image 47 was extracted from the website of Clarens Xtreme Adventure Company, one of the major tour operators in the Eastern Free State. The website's content was posted in 2012, describing Motouleng Cave with pictures of structures, the sandstone cliffs, and spiritual healers at the site.

One of the Clarens Xtreme tourist guides (interviewed on 06/08/2022) explained that before the closure of Motouleng in 2020, they were conducting a 4-hour tour from Clarens to Motouleng cave, the Golden Gate Highlands National Park, and the Basotho Culture Village. He also explained that when arriving at Motouleng, they would hand over to an on-site tour guide whom they paid for his services. Some people also performed 'vision readings' for the tourists at an additional fee. According to the guide, their director was still eager to continue the tours. However, the owner of the farm on which the entrance was situated is not willing to re-open the gates. Another example is the information obtained from the Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality website that advertised tourist attractions in the Eastern Free State. The information features Mantsopa and Motouleng sacred sites as attractions (see Table 13 below).
While the information on Mantsopa includes the contact numbers of the tour guides around the area of Moodderpoort, there are telephone numbers of the Thabo Mofutsanyana information office posted for more information. The product status column of the table states the following: *At Motoulong, a fee of R25 is payable upon*

arrival. The money goes towards supporting the local community that allows visitors to explore this magnificent and spiritual cave.

Visit Sangomas in the Eastern Free State Highlands

Date: 26/11/2012 | Posted in Clarens | Cultural Experiences | Eastern Free State | Ficksburg | Free State | South Africa | Tourism | Tourist Attractions

As far as South African cultural experiences go, there can be few as authentic or as enlightening as a visit with traditional witch-doctor healers, called Sangomas, on their own sacred tribal ground. One such place is found just outside Clarens in the Free State Highlands, at the foot of the Maluti Mountain range of Lesotho.

The Fertility Caves are located at the Motouleng Cave Heritage Site about 18km from Clarens. The Caves are situated beneath the largest of the multi-hued stone overhangs the Clarens area is famous for, thought to be the second largest sandstone overhang in the Southern Hemisphere.

Also called the Holy Cave, the 1ha long overhang incorporates a number of smaller cave areas and has stone walls and huts built into it, with symbols and messages scrawled on them, some mysterious, some in plain English and referencing modern times, such as the scourge of HIV.

The Caves are frequented annually by thousands of women who go there to burn candles and make offerings to the Ancestors for help getting pregnant or in thanks. The Caves are also used for girls' initiation ceremonies, by the sick and their relatives who go there for healing, and by many others, old and young, who are looking to connect with the spirit world, understand their dreams or give thanks to their ancestors.

Sangomas are most associated with the Motouleng Caves, holding ritual ceremonies and sacrificing chickens and goats, as they have done for centuries, and some live there for months at a time or longer. Some stay for years – drawn to the Cave by dreams that tell them their spiritual calling. However, you are as likely to see the many Sotho Christian Zionists who make pilgrimage s to the Caves, often in throngs, brightly dressed and singing to God. Old and new spiritual beliefs and customs need not be mutually exclusive, and at Motouleng, they have combined to make a whole greater than the sum if the two parts.

A fountain at the entrance to Motouleng is called Sediba sa Bophelo – the Fountain of Life – and people drop silver coins in the fountain for good fortune as they do elsewhere in the world.

Getting there: The Motouleng Cave can be reached via an easy 2km hike from a farm 15km out of Clarens, and while local tribes members come and go as they please, it is advisable to visit the caves on a guided tour out of respect for the Sangomas and initiates who live there, their ancestors, and for the fact that it is sacred ground. On any day the cave can be all but totally empty, or buzzing with life and ceremony, with offerings being made and candles burning. You may be advised to wear a long skirt or cover up in some way.

For more info and to book a tour call Clarens Xtreme +27 58 256 1260

Image 47: Extract of the Clarens Xtreme website sourced from htts://clarensxtreme.co.za.

Table 13: *Mohokare Valley sacred sites presented as part of the tourist attractions in the Thabo Mofutsanya district.*

1. TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN THABO MOFUTSANYANA REGION

PRODUCT	PRODUCT DESCRIPTION	CONTACT DETAILS	PRODUCT STATUS
Modderpoort	It was in fact not before 1869 that Canon Henry Beckett, the Superior of the Society of St Augustine, accompanied by four brothers, set up the mission, initially in a cave converted as church and dwelling. This church becomes a place of pilgrimage for local as well as foreign communities. The Sunday closest to the feast of St Augustine a diocesan service is held outside the cave church.	Johan Fritz and Thabo Manong. 078 567 9940/ 051 924 3318 are the current Tour guides around the area	A booking has to be done for tour. On average takes an hour and half. Entrance is R15 per person and additional R25 for the tour guide
❖ The Cave Church	The middle Stone age levels of Rose Cottage Cave have produced several radiocarbon dates of greater than 50 000 years, and because of the restricted half-life of carbon, these dates obtained from charcoal samples are likely to be minimum estimates.		
❖ Rose cottage cave	A long, long time ago in a land not so far from here a powerful prophetess was born, named Mantsopa. She was believed to hold the gift to see into the future and to communicate with the ancestors. She correctly predicted that the Basotho would win the war against the British and that would be followed by a good harvest.		
❖ The Grave of Prophetess Anna Mantsopa Makhetha	Many of her prophecies came true and due to that she had large following. She was also taken in by the missionaries to help them in converting people into Christianity. She went to live at Modderpoort where she died at the age of 111years in 1904.		

Motouleng Ancestral Cave	Nestled in a narrow river valley with beautiful rock formations, it's easy to see why this place is a sacred ground. The area has the largest cliff overhang in the southern hemisphere which is spectacularly beautiful. The Sangomas live in traditional huts inside the cave. Traditional healers and herbalists come to learn from the ancestors. A short 30-minute hike leads you to the cave where you must respectfully ask permission from the Sangoma to enter the cave. There are several areas for prayer where you may light candles and leave gifts of food for the ancestors. The cave holds a San people's burial area and a place for the elder women to pray. A drink from the sacred spring makes this an extraordinary historical and cultural experience.	Thabo Mofutsanyane Information Office 058-7130012	At Motoulong a fee of R25 is payable upon arrival. The money goes towards supporting the local community that allows visitors to explore this magnificent & spiritual cave

6.5.7 Effects of colonialism on sacred sites

Section 2.6.7 revealed how the Mohokare Valley sacred sites were affected by the inherited colonial arrangements. These arrangements centre on the idea of colonial private property and land ownership conflicting with sacred sites central to African spirituality. African spirituality links the land, human beings, and spiritual beliefs holistically (see Section 3.5.2). Moreover, the existing heritage legislation in South Africa has not effectively protected sacred sites due to its Eurocentric approach to interpreting heritage, its lack of incorporation of other entities and the exclusion of local communities in policy and management decision-making in a top-down approach.

However, the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework (ADTF) offers a solution to these complexities by changing the perspective of sacred sites to loci of indigenous knowledge. Viewed from the vantage point of indigenous knowledge:

> *In all locations, IK is the foundation of indigenous governance, ecological stewardship, social, ethical linguistic, spiritual, medical, food, and economic systems so that the continual production and reproduction of local land-based knowledge is the basis of indigenous identity and sense of place in the world, as well as of indigenous groups' very survival as distinct peoples (Grey, 2014: 3230).*

In line with the statement above, indigenous knowledge is meant to facilitate the following:

- *The affirmation of African cultural values in the face of globalisation;*
- *Practical measures for the development of services provided by IK holders and practitioners, with a particular focus on traditional medicine, but also including areas such as agriculture, indigenous languages and folklore; and*
- *Underpinning the contribution of IK to the economy – the role of IK in employment and wealth creation; and interfaces with other knowledge systems (Department of Science and Technology, 2015: 11).*

Section 9 of the Protection, Promotion, Development and Management of Indigenous Knowledge Act, 6 of 2019 (hereafter referred to as the IKS Bill) includes indigenous

knowledge as property of indigenous communities that is interpreted in line with Section 25 of the Constitution of South Africa (1996).

Based on the above, the IKS Bill could be a valuable instrument to overcome the deficiencies of existing legislation. It could protect the Mohokare sacred sites (seen as heritage sites in the South African context) and the knowledge practised within those sacred spaces, including the associated languages which is presented as one of the drivers of indigenous knowledge policy and forming part of intangible heritage. As a result, the study does not dismiss the NHRA but argues that the NHRA should be complemented by the IKS Act to close gaps and overcome its deficits in addressing the complexities of these sacred sites by integrating it with other pieces of appropriate legislation.

6.5.8 Lack of integrated management plans

Section 2.8 revealed that Mantsopa and Witsie's Cave are declared as provincial heritage sites, whereas Mautse and Motouleng remain undeclared and vulnerable. In terms of Section 47(3) of the NHRA, it is the requirement of any heritage authority to develop a management plan for the heritage resources it owns, controls or may be vested in. The search for any management plan in relation to the two declared sites was unsuccessful, and no management plans could be found. The Act (NHRA) also stipulates a conservation management plan. The conservation management plan may limit the scope of a plan where it can be viewed as looking into aspects of protecting a site from destruction, whereas other elements need to be considered when developing a management plan, such as community participation. While there were no effective management strategies in place for Witsie's Cave and a limited version for Mantsopa's sites, judging from the arranged guidelines of activities, it is clear that the interests of the pilgrims are not fully accommodated at Mantsopa. The kind of management plan this study recommends through the ADTF accommodates all interested parties as interpreted through the pre-colonial concept of *letsema* meaning communalism.

6.5.9 The challenges of grassroots memorialisation

Grassroots memorialisation has emerged as another challenge facing the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. These types of memorialisations have been found in the form of graffiti of individual names and religious/spiritual denominations on the wall and rocks at the sites. There were also structures erected at Mautse and Motouleng attached to individuals. One example is that of the buildings on the southern side of Motouleng that were linked to the late *Ntate* Sam Radebe. Some of these structures were or are made for sleeping purposes. The graffiti is meant to mark the days the visitors were at the sites; these can also be interpreted as a means of laying claim to the space and links to a form of spiritual connection to the site.

Graffiti dates back to ancient and medieval times. This in essence seems to be a form of intangible heritage as it transforms spaces into places by recording events and identities of people that visited those places. While graffiti may have been accepted in the past, it became discouraged when the concept of cultural heritage was introduced (Ingrams, 2016: 6; Trentin, 2020: 297) This kind of spiritual connection seems particularly strong at Motouleng in line with the stated belief that all *Badimo* (ancestors) reside at Motouleng. Similar to the situation at Mantsopa (see Section 6.4.2 above), graffiti on the heritage sites is deemed illegal as it transforms the appearance of the site. The Wesleyan Church National Heritage Site (the founding venue of the African National Congress), has adopted what is called *"Marking the register*". This is where after a tour through the site, visitors are allowed to write their names or messages on the boards as evidence that they visited the site.

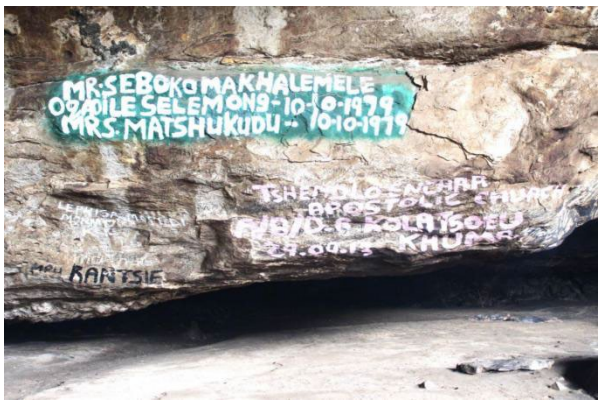


Image 48

Image 49

Image 48 and 49: Graffiti at Motouleng cave (by M. Ntlhabo).

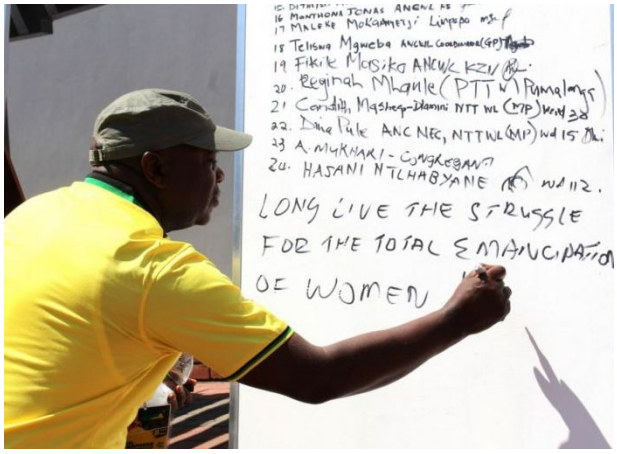


Image 50

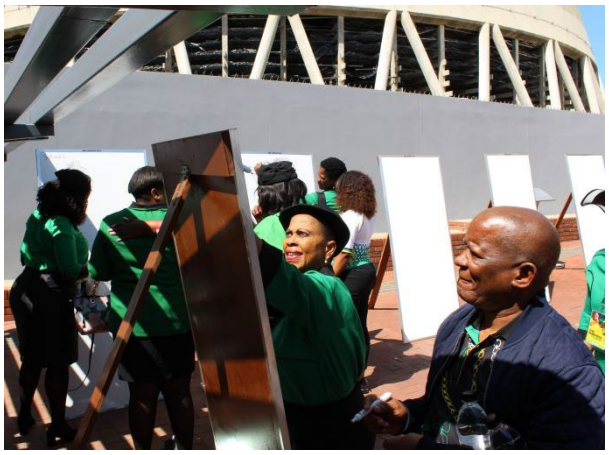


Image 51

Image 50 and 51: Members of the African National Congress "marking the register" at the Wesleyan Church (by M Ntlhabo).

Chapter 3 presented forms of grassroots memorialisation that used to be mostly observed by white South Africans. However, data collected for this research demonstrated a shift in memorialisation where black South Africans are also marking the places where their family members died. The picture below on the left (Image 52) was taken at Geneva Station between Hennenman and Kroonstad in the Free State (South Africa), where a train collided with a truck on 4 January 2018 and killed 21 people. The picture on the right (Image 53) is that of Marikana Hill, where 41 people, mostly black mine workers[13], were killed on 16 August 2012.

In black South African communities, groups normally conduct a ritual of collecting the spirit of the departed to its final resting place, as explained in Section 3.5.1. Thus, nothing will be left at the site after the spirit has been collected. One can only recall the site through memory but without signs of evidence or overt memorialisation. For this reason, it was significant to find one cross with a Xhosa name at the Geneva crossing accident, likely due to the fact that the passenger train was travelling from Port Elizabeth (now known as Gqeberha) in the Eastern Cape, where Xhosa people are found in large numbers, to Johannesburg.

[13] While the majority of the dead were black mine workers, there were also black mine security guards who died during this accident.

Image 52: Taken at the Geneva Railway Station between Hennenman and Kroonstad in the Free State, South Africa, where the train collided with the truck in 2018 (by M. Ntlhabo).

Image 53: Showing crosses representing people who died at the Marikana Hill (sourced from Carpriconfm.co.za 21/05/22).

It was surprising to find two graves (Image 54 and 55 below) on the side of the R532 road leading to God's Window and the three rondavels in the Thabachweu Municipality in Mpumalanga, South Africa. The graves are about 500 metres apart. The tombstones are new, and it is evident they have been well looked after. The tombstone shows that the people 'buried' there were born in 1720 and 1729, respectively. The one on the left shows the date of death as 1956, meaning that this person lived for 236 years. In the culture of the Basotho, there is a dedicated space where all the people are buried. Only those struck by lightning or drowned were buried where they died. The belief was that they could bring bad luck to the village that could cause many people to die the same way. Though the reason for the graves being on the side of the road is unknown, one can think that this may be an attempt to claim the land through memorialisation, which is another aspect of heritage.

Image 54 *Image 55*

Image 54 and 55: Two graves found on the site of R532 road between Sabie and Grasskop in Mpumalanga (by M Ntlhabo).

The visible grassroots memorialisation that seems to be proliferating amongst black South Africans is an evident sign of the acculturation process. Acculturation is described by Sam and Barry (2010: 473) as a situation where individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds meet and influence one another. According to them (Sam and Barry), “not every group or individual enters into, participates in, or changes in the same way during their acculturation”. This can mean that the one cross seen at Geneva Station may multiply into many crosses as people return to this area to pay respect to their family members who passed away. Furthermore, it is possible that the crosses placed at Marikana were ‘staged’ to add emotional impact to the legal case that was opened after the killing. If different people had brought the crosses, they likely would not have been identical, as is the case.

6.5.10 Spelling variation and inconsistency

Section 4.6.3 has shown how colonialism was advanced through the hegemony of colonial languages in South Africa at the cost of local languages (Asante, 1989: 31, 35). This study discovered a general assumption among participants that the original name of the Makholokoe leader was 'Oetsi', lending his name to the specific area in Qwaqwa and the cave (Witsies' Cave). The name became phonetically articulated in Afrikaans by the new settlers who did not speak the local language, and the area was called Witsieshoek (instead of Oetsi's Hoek) and Witsie's Cave (rather than Oetsi's Cave). The cave is still best known publicly as Witsie's Cave and was even declared a provincial heritage site under this rendering.

Image 56 and 57 below show the two signs at the intersection leading to the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, which are just two metres apart. The Department of Transport commissioned the one on the left, whereas the other one is the product of the Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality, which is identifiable with the logo at the bottom left of the board. For the signs to be positioned at the same place with two different spellings may also show that there is no collaboration between the government entities. If there had been cooperation, the two parties could have agreed on the preferred spelling, thus, erecting only one board. The heritage hiking trail post below shows another version where the cave is presented as "Wetsi".

Image 56: Two sign boards showing spelling variation (by M Ntlhabo)

Image 57: Poster advertising a hiking trail to Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site.

The IKS Bill (see Section 6.5.7) acknowledges that at least 100 languages disappear yearly, with 2 500 endangered due to globalisation. The above spelling variation of Witsie's Cave is another legacy of colonialism in relation to African languages. This is where colonisers transposed certain African words and names into their languages to ease pronunciation and understanding, which ultimately distorted the original African words and names. In order to mitigate this legacy, the IKS Bill provides for the integration of strategies and initiatives from different sectoral departments. In the case of language, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture can play a significant role in language protection and promotion (Department of Science and Technology, 2015).

Even though the notice of the provincial gazette in Section 2.7 captured the name as Witsie, all stakeholders of the Witsie's Cave Management Committee agreed to submit a nomination to the Provincial Geographical Name Change Committee to correct the spelling of Witsie or Wetsi and renaming the heritage site as "Oetsi's Cave Provincial Heritage Site". Once done, they can submit it to the provincial legislation to correct the name on the gazette.

6.6 DATA PRESENTATION FOLLOWING THE CONCERNS REPORT METHOD (CRM)

The approach to data collection was to identify one site as a case study that would be used as a test case for developing and testing an integrated management plan to serve as a catalyst for all Mohokare sacred sites as similar challenges cut across all the sacred sites. As a result, Witsie's Cave was identified as the case study for this research.

Meskell's (2016: 272-277) engagement at the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape between 2003 and 2011 revealed complexities that a heritage site made be faced with especially after its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list where economic developments may take precedence over socio-political concerns. However, she believes that such complexities can be addressed through an integrated management plan. From the first stakeholder's meeting of the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, the issue of such an integrated management plan dominated the discussions.

The idea of a stakeholder's committee was borne from the interview with *Ntate* Tabatsabadimo at Motouleng on when he said:

> *Motho onale teng ka morao mane, matlong ane aka morao o kile a kopana le makgowa a mose kwana are a reka lehaha lena… yaba batho bana ka tsatsi le leng bare ke saene dipampiri tseo ba tlileng le tsona re le ka mane le bona, yaba ke botsa hore pampiri e ke ya eng? mm! mm! Re batla hotla etsa di toilete mona, motho enwa osa rutile batho bana hore batle ba nthetse ka hore batlo etsa di thoelete, yaba kere atjhe, taba ena e thata e le e buang, monna wena bolella batho bana e thata taba ena e ba e buwang ba re ke saene moo setjhaba se leng siyo, hoja ebe kena le setjhaba sena se mona mahaheng kaofela ba utlwe ntho eo hothweng ke e saenele, ache yaba ke hlolane le bona (Ntate Tabatsabadimo, interviewed on 18 July 2018).*
>
> There had been a person further down, in those dwellings inside the cave who had come across white people from overseas attempting to buy this cave…Then one day these people told me to sign papers that they brought while we were in there with them, I asked them what the paper was for. Mm! mm! We want to build toilets here, this person taught these people to lie to me and say they were going to build toilets, I let out a sigh of defeat and told them they are telling me the impossible, Man! Tell them what they are asking is difficult, they are telling me to sign in the absence of the community, If only they were here to hear what is that I am asked to sign for, then I stood my ground (Mr Tabatsabadimo, interviewed on 18 July 2018).

The study employed the six steps of the Concerns Report Method (CRM) of Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR) as part of data collection while at the same time applying the Afrikana-Decoloniality Theoretical Framework (ADTF). The data presentation and interpretation methods were informed by the challenges raised in Section 2.6. It also considered the findings of the research projects listed in Section 2.5 and merged them with Witsie's Cave stakeholder concerns revealed during the individual interviews and the joint stakeholder meetings.

This synthesis of data is re-interpreted with solutions suggested by stakeholders through the CRM method of APAR, guided by Afrocentric values of inquiry that were informed by the five characteristics of Afrocentricity. These were discussed in Section 4.4.4 as spirituality, purposeful living, collectivism/communalism, tolerance, and empowerment (Richards, 2005: 6). The process also included the five phases of

Afrocentricity presented in Section 5.3.2, where as part of the role of APAR, a researcher has to bring knowledge as part of his or her participation (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 318), in this case, I documented evidence verifying African historical records (Phase 1), conducted an investigation through questions and answers as part of emotional and intellectual identification (Phase 2), defining and clarifying structural elements of processes of APAR (Phase 3), integration, synthesising (Phase 4) and demonstration of mastery (Phase 5).

Step 1: Development of the collaborative partnership

A partnership was developed through the identification of parties that have an interest in Witsie's Cave. Amongst the parties were the Makholokoe communities, whose *Badimo* (Ancestors) were killed in the cave. A closer look at Witsie's Cave revealed that there have always been ownership battles amongst the Makholokoe. In 2008, a sub-group of the Makholokoe at Mafikeng in Qwaqwa submitted a letter requesting the President of South Africa to grant them ownership of Witsie's Cave (see Appendix 1). In 2016, another request was sent to the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, requesting the release of Witsie's Cave to the "Bakholokoe" (as they refer to themselves) (see Appendix 2). There has also been a contestation between the Bakoena (under which Witsie's Cave is geographically located) and the Makholokoe because of the spiritual attachment, as mentioned above.

Furthermore, there has been contestation between the *Morena* of Monontsha village and that of Poelong village. The two villages fall under the jurisdiction of the Bakoena Royal Council. The *Morena* of Monontsha claims that the cave falls under his area of leadership, whereas the *Morena* of Poelong states that the entrance to the cave is in Monontsha and the actual cave is in Poelong. Since the cave is declared a Provincial Heritage Site, the Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (FSPHRA) is one of the stakeholders. The FSPHRA is part of the Free State Department of Sports, Arts, Culture and Recreation. In addition to the stakeholders, there is also the *Dingaka,* who use the cave for spiritual purposes together with a group of people known as the Witsie's Cave Tourism Project that has been conducting tours to the cave. Some academic and independent researchers have conducted research on Witsie's Cave, including myself. All parties mentioned above were invited to form part of the Stakeholders and Management Committee of Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site.

Table 6.1 below shows the stakeholders and their attachment to the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site in more detail.

Table 14: *Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site stakeholders and their attachment to the site.*

Stakeholder	**Attachment**
Makholokoe community	Spiritual attachment: because their ancestors who died in the cave during the 1800s conflicts with the Boers.
Poelong village	Locality: where the actual cave is closest to.
Monontsha village	Locality: Where the entrance and the path leading to the cave start.
Royal Bakoena council	Authority: The two villages of Poelong and Monontsha fall under the Royal Bakoena Council. Everything that falls under the two villages has to be reported to the Royal Council.
Bakholokoe community	Declaration: For nominating the cave as a heritage site.
Witsie's Cave Tourism Project	Business: currently running a business at the cave.
Free State Heritage Resources Authority	Legislative: Providing guidelines for protecting and managing the cave as a declared provincial heritage site.
Researcher	Research and facilitation of stakeholder participation in management processes.
Dingaka	Site users: using the cave for spiritual purposes.

<u>Step 2: Reflection on community values informed by Afrocentricity</u>

The decolonial foundation of the Afrikana–Decolonial Theoretical Framework enabled this study to incorporate values that have been central to the day-to-day lives of the Basotho people, incorporating the functions of *Marena* as well as Afrocentric principles as an alternative way of bringing in pre-colonial ideologies to inform postcolonial activities with Afrocentric views. The Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site is based in the Free State, specifically in Qwaqwa. This is the area of the Basotho people who are culturally related to the Basotho in Lesotho and are subjects of Letsie III. The process investigated the values and functions of the Basotho and their leadership systems to guide the research project, data collection and presentation.

The specific local values that were considered included *Kgotso* (peace), which was one of *Morena* Moshoeshoe's most significant values (Mafuoa, 2015: 24), *Letsema* (communalism), *Mafisa* (loan system) (Brent, et al, 1987: 8) and *Hlompho* (respect) which is held highly among Basotho and is expected from young and old and can be applied through verbal and non-verbal communication gestures (Fandrych, 2012: 68). The above values are presented in conjunction with the revival of the function of *Marena* as facilitators and custodians of land and spirituality as discussed in Section

4.8.4. These values were presented together with the Afrocentric principles of spirituality, immersion, holism, intuition, and liberation that are required for a research project from an Afrocentric vantage point to inform management plans based on the appropriate values, functions, and principles. The values, functions and principles are discussed in more detail below.

- *Kgotso (Peace)*

The Basotho people are closely associated with the notion of peace (*Kgotso*). They espouse the virtue of mutual caring with the understanding that there is nothing that can be resolved through war. *Morena* Mohlomi, the Seer, first developed the philosophy of peace. He regarded peace as his sister. Within the Basotho culture, a sister is a person in society who is in a fragile position that needs to be protected. The same philosophy would later be passed down to his leadership mentee, Moshoeshoe I, who later became the founder of the Basotho Nation and one of the greatest recognised leaders of his time. Legends revealed that Moshoeshoe I yearned for peace until he 'bought' missionaries with cattle to come to Lesotho as he was told they were people of peace. The Basotho Nation and other nations were involved in inter-marriages in the past as a strategy for avoiding wars, as attacks on another village meant attacking one's own children. Given the importance of *Kgotso*, differences would be resolved peacefully during the development and implementation of an integrated management plan. During the first stakeholders' meeting, some parties wanted to bring past conflicts into the meeting. However, one of the elderly people who were part of the meeting reminded them that the purpose was to unite all the stakeholders for the benefit of people working at the cave.

- *Letsema (Communalism)*

The Basotho people worked collectively through work parties known as *Matsema* (Letsema – singular). It was through *Matsema* that they would equalise the workload and even incorporate songs in their working activities. Against the backdrop of *Letsema*, everyone involved in this management committee was expected to contribute to the success of the Integrated Management Plan. The contribution could

either be through work experience, skills, knowledge acquired formally or informally, monetarily or through any kind of support.

- *Mafisa (Loan system)*

It was through the concept of *Mafisa* that *Morena* or the wealthy people in a village would loan cattle to the poor to eat and feed their children. A ploughing field could also be loaned to those in need in order for them to be able to plough, plant and harvest. In this case, Witsie's Cave is deemed as that 'field' or 'cattle' from which the community could earn a living. Also, the members of Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site could earn a living through tours to the cave, bottling and selling water from multiple sources on the mountain, as well as selling handcrafts.

- *Hlompho (Respect)*

The Basotho culture also adheres to the principle of *Hlompho* or respect towards each other, but also from young people towards their elders and for common people to respect *Marena*. It does not mean that when ordinary people are on the same management committee as *Marena*, they are automatically at the same level. Due respect will always be given to the position of *Marena* as part of this management plan, just as when the *Morena* would gather men of the village in the *Kgotla* (courtyard to discuss important matters). Respect is important for the purpose of settling disputes and arriving at agreements amicably.

- *Functions*

It is *Marena's* function to facilitate their subjects' spiritual and physical well-being. *Marena* would also lead their subjects in matters of spirituality. This management plan aimed to restore Marena's function and position them as the custodians of land on which the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site is located, and the spiritual values bestowed on the cave.

Step 3: Identification of community concerns

This step incorporated the concerns derived from previous studies and research projects that focused on the Mohokare Valley sacred sites together with those raised by the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site stakeholders through interviews and stakeholder meetings. Table 15 below contains a combination of the concerns of previous research projects and those that were raised as part of the Witsie's Cave stakeholders' engagement.

Table 15: Concerns raised in previous research projects (PRP) and Witsie's Cave Stakeholders' (WCS) concerns.

Challenges	Narratives	Source
Management challenges		
Contested ownership	Contestation of ownership was mainly between legal owners of the farms on which sacred sites are located and the pilgrims who claim spiritual connection or ownership of the sites. With Witsie's cave, it was between different Marena at the higher level and those contesting at the local level because of close proximity to the cave.	PRP / WCS
Lack of adequate management skills	Lack of adequate management skills referred to the people who are currently conducting tours to Witsie's cave.	WCS
Lack of accountability systems	There was a time when members of the Witsie's Cave Tourism Project would not account to anyone regarding money collected from visitors. Everyone who received the entrance fee would pocket it and use it as he or she wished.	WCS
Inadequate documentation of visitors	People entering the sacred sites were not documented in any form. It could be difficult to trace their next of kin if anything happened to them.	PRP / WCS
Limited awareness/promotion	There are limited awareness and marketing programmes intended for the promotion of the Witsie's Cave as a heritage site and tourist destination.	WCS
Lack of development project	There are currently no plans to develop the site that could create more jobs for the community, even though the site can benefit from its provincial heritage status.	WCS
Policy / Legislative matters		
Inexplicit role of Marena and Dingaka in the NHRA	The heritage legislature does not explicitly define the role of Marena and Dingaka in the heritage management processes.	PRP / WCS
Inexplicit protection of sacred sites	The sacred sites are treated as heritage sites within the heritage legislation, but the two are not the same.	PRP / WCS
Conservation		
Natural and human threats	Natural and human threats come in the form of a collection of clay and drawing of graffiti in the cave affecting natural appearance and causing erosion which the NHRA prohibits.	WCS
Criminal elements		

Breakings	The building used for manufacturing arts and crafts at Witsie's Cave has been broken into several times.	WCS
Mugging of visitors	Pilgrims and tourists were robbed of their valuable items, reducing the number of people visiting Witsie's Cave.	WCS
Infrastructure		
Poor road infrastructure leading to the cave	Because of poor road infrastructure, it is difficult to access Witsie's Cave, especially during rainy days.	WCS
Lack of parking space	There is no parking space, especially for buses at Witsie's Cave.	WCS
Lack of maintenance of the buildings	Buildings constructed with assistance from the Department of Tourism and Maluti-A-Phofung Local Municipality are not maintained because of a lack of maintenance budget.	WCS
Unavailability of ablution facilities and water supply at the cave	Ablution facilities are only available at the reception area of Witsie's cave, but there are no ablutions at the cave, which is similar to other sites.	PRP / WCS
Cultural issues		
Need for cleansing of the cave	Because of the people who died in Witise's Cave and were not given a proper burial, there is a need for cleansing the cave.	WCS

Step 4: Data collection analysis

The analysis of the collected data revealed that the above challenges are not exclusive to one site but are relevant to all the sites. For example, the issue of ownership contestation at Witsie's Cave is also eminent at Mantsopa, Mautse and Motouleng, where there are legal owners of the properties and pilgrims who claim ownership through spiritual attachment. As a result, this allowed for the study to use one site as a case study to devise and offer potentially feasible solutions that can be adapted and applied to all sacred sites. The main challenges hampering the development of the sites were effective management and ownership contestation, which this study addressed through a stakeholder approach and integrated management plan.

Step 5: Data sharing at public forum

The data sharing step of the Concerns Report Method was documented through meetings with stakeholders. It was important for me to manage my insider-outsider positionality in these meetings in order to ensure that one side does not suffer at the expense of another. I positioned myself as a facilitator of the meetings and not as a chairperson whose word is final. In this regard I would only facilitate the direction of discussions without imposing my experience from the insider's position or my knowledge as an outsider.

Table 16 below shows dates and outcomes of community engagement meetings that culminated in a meeting where all the stakeholders were present.

Table 16: Outcomes of stakeholder meetings.

Date and place	Participants	Details and outcomes
24 November 2016 (Bloemfontein)	The Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, Free State Heritage Authority, Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, FS Heritage Authority and Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation	This is the meeting that the Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, Free State Heritage Authority, Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation called after receiving a complaint from the site users about the closure of Mautse and the eviction of pilgrims. The goal was to find ways of resolving the matter.
24 November 2016 (Ficksburg)	Mautse Site Users, the Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, Free State Heritage Authority, Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation.	Immediately after the above meeting, the plan was to meet with the site users to get more information to support their case. I was then instructed to conduct research and make recommendations. That is what motivated this study.
12 October 2017 (Bethlehem)	Traditional Faith and Outreach Projects	When the investigation unfolded, I discovered that the group we met in Ficksburg was not the one that submitted the initial complaint, but rather TFOPA that also nominated the site for declaration. I then arranged a meeting where I presented the organisation with the plan of forming a working team with them and planned to meet with the new owner of the farm where Mautse is located
31 October 2017 (Sekonjellashoud farm)	The owner of the property surrounding Mautse	I met with the owner of property, where I introduced myself and suggested a meeting with members of TFOPA. The request was accepted, and the date of the meeting was set for 15 November 2017.
09 November 2017 (Bethlehem)	Traditional Faith and Outreach Projects	In this meeting, I (together with TFOPA) had to strategize on how we were going to approach the meeting with the site owner to convince him to reopen the site.
15 November 2017 (Sekonjellashoud)	The owner of property surrounding Mautse and TFOPA	We were well received by the landowner. We presented our request of offering ourselves to work closely with him on a plan to re-open the site. The owner of property explained that he still intended to open the site but needed some time to figure out the plan and would call them when the time was right. He even allowed us to visit the site on that day.
01 June 2018 (Bloemfontein)	Presentation at the Commission for the	A call for a presentation on the processes followed when declaring Mautse as a heritage site was sent

	Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities,	to the Director of Heritage, Museums and Language Services under DSACR. This request was forwarded to me as I was already dealing with Mautse and other sacred sites. I took this as an opportunity to provide more details about the sites and clarify that Mautse was not formally declared but was nominated for declaration pending the participation of the landowner in the process.
31 July 2018 (Qwaqwa)	Witsie's Cave Tourism Project	With the dynamics around Mautse and other sites of the Mohokare Valley, I then identified Witsie's Cave as a case study. This was the first meeting with a group conducting tours at the cave, where I introduced myself and requested to work with them as the participants.
21 November 2018 (Qwaqwa)	Witsie's Cave Tourism Project	This involved presenting my study in more detail, and members of Witsie's Cave Tourism Project presented their programmes and challenges that were more similar to those found in other Mohokare Valley sacred sites.
04 January 2019	Witsie's Cave Tourism Project	While attempting to come up with the solutions faced by Witisie's Cave Tourism Project, it was discovered that most of their problems could not be resolved as they involved other stakeholders. In this meeting, it was then agreed to cast the net wider and involve all the stakeholders claiming the site.
08 October 2021	*Morena* Sefofo of Poelong Village	*Morena* Sefofo Mopeli is one of the people identified as having a stake in the site. The project of the study was then presented to him. He accepted the call to participate.
29 October 2021	Bakholokoe Representative	The call for participation was also extended to Bakholokoe as they nominated Witsie's Cave for declaration as a heritage site.
03 November 2021	Bakoena Royal Council	Royal Bakoena Council has been contesting over the ownership of Witsie's Cave. I found it important to also involve them as part of the steering committee and stakeholders. Therefore, it was necessary to make a presentation to the council before the stakeholder's meeting.

Step 6: Planning and taking action

On 5 November 2021, all stakeholders were brought to one place to meet for the first time to plan collectively and take action. In this meeting I first gave an overview of my study. I made a presentation on the challenges facing Mohokare Valley sacred sites, including Witsie's Cave. I informed them of my Afrikana-Participatory Action Research methodology as an approach to attempt to come up with solutions. Thereafter, I opened the session for discussions in line with Eade's (1991) argument that the meaning of a sacred site is constructed around conflicting views and attestations which was confirmed in this meeting.

The first inputs came from *Morena* Moloi. The view of *Morena* Moloi was that the heritage sites should be directly managed by government as is illustrated in the Sesotho testimony followed by an English translation:

> *Ha profensing re kaba le sebaka seka kgethwang ele heritage etla tsamaiswa ke mmuso ka tlhokomelo le hore bohle ba eleng hore ba sebetsa mono ele ho hlokomela sebaka seno babe ka tlasa tsamaiso ya mmuso, le lehaeng ke nahana hore dibaka tsena tseo oseng o boletse hore tse ding tsa tsona ebile di kwetswe hona jwale, bothata e bile ba hore di tsamaiswe ele poraefete, ha di le poraefete di tlilotswa taolong ha ele ho bua nnete hobane monga sebaka otlare lenna ke saka, ka mantswe a mang tshebetso e tla etwa mono etlaba tshebetso etla laolwa ke yena jwalo ka ele sebaka sa hae… empa ha dibaka tsena di tsamiswa ke mmuso mme ba ikamahanya le molao otla etswa ke mmuso, qabang tsena ha ke kgolwe di tlaba teng (Morena Moloi (05 November 2021).*
>
> If we can have a place identified as heritage, it is best if it is run by government. The officials employed to manage it should also be employed by government. Even at local level, I think those places that you have mentioned that some of them are now closed… the main problem is that they were run privately. Everything goes out of control when managed by a private individual as he or she can make discisions that only suits him or her, but if such places are run by government and people abide by set rules and regulations, I don't think there can be any conflicts (Morena Moloi (05 November 2021).

Ngaka Ncala was the second the speak and presented an entirely different viewpoint.

> *Morena Moloi ke buella… ole morenaka le Morena Mopeli. Ha keye ka hore mang ke mang, empa poulelo yaka ke hore ha lehaha le qala leba hoba mmuso, ho tlotla emong wa ba dipolotiki areng nna taba ena hake e kene hobane ke mokeresete a itseng, kapa abasa nka lehlakore. Empa ka baka la hore setjhaba kesa Morena re utlwa re lakatsa ha re le setjhaba sa Marena… Marena a mabedi ao ebang a teng ka mona, kapa a mang a teng, rona re le setjhaba sa semoya re bangata haholo, re kopane le bakeresete le batho feela ba lorang, ba folang moo haba fihla teng, re llela ho lona, mme re tshehetsa lona, hobane setjhaba se senang morena… re timetse hona jwale. Taba ya heritage ha re e nka re e beha mona rere mmuso o tlotla…Morena Moloi hake o telle ntate ka tlhahiso ya hao, empa ke bontsha matla le boitseko ba moAforika ha a itseka hahabo. Mona hare itseke ha batho ba bang, re itseka habo rona mo re tsebang hore dintwa tse mahlonoko tse itseng di lwannwe ke lona, le bo radipolotiki pele ba fihla, ke Marena arona aneng a lwana dintwa tsena. Rene re fodiswa ke lehlaka Qwaqwa mona, lehlaka leno bana ba Mopeli ba le nkile ho rona re le Manguni, empa eitse mmuso ha o fihla morenaka taba ya mokete wa lehlaka wa fela (Ngaka Ncala, 05/11/2021).*

Morena Moloi, I speak here as your subject…and you *Morena* Mopeli. I am not taking any side, but my concern is that if the cave is under government, there would be one of the politicians who might say he does not want to associate with the issues of the caves as he is a Christian, or even being biased. But because the nation is the subject of *Morena*, we feel we belong to you *Morena*…The two of you *Marena* or others who are in here, we as spiritual community are so many, we include Christians and other people who receive visions who get healed when they go there (to the caves), we are appealing to you and we support you because a nation without *Marena*… we are defeated right now. If we take our heritage and place it in the hands of government…*Morena* Moloi, I am not disrespecting you, Sir with your input, but I'm just showing the power and the protestation of Africans when they protest where they belong. We are not protesting here as foreigners, but we are here as we know that the greatest battles were fought by *Marena* in the past, even before the politicians arrived, it was our *Marena* who were fighting those battles. We were healed by the reeds here in Qwaqwa, the reed ceremony was taken by the Mopeli's from us Nguni's, but when government arrived my *Marena*! And that was the end of that ceremony *(Ngaka Ncala, 05/11/2021).*

The third input came from *Ntate* Maphale Moloi:

Ha ke kope hore ntho eka lwanelwang ebe seriti sa borena. Ya bobedi ebe seriti sa di heritage site tsa rona mme hobe le tsamaiso e hantle, hobe le komiti eka kgethwang etlo utlwisisa hore haba rongwe batla sebeletsa setjhaba. Komiti ena ebe yona eka thusang ho etsa dipolane le diporoposale mohlomong, kapa ba thuswe ke ona muso hore dintho di tsamaiswe jwang. Dibaka tse ngata tsa heritage rea bona di porofenseng tse ding di boemong bo hodimo. Ho lwantshiwe hape hobe le botsetedi ba bohahlaudi, hobe le bahahlaudi ba tlang batlo di etela ha dibaka tsena di fuwe matla. Ha holoholo ke llela hore hobe le dingolwa tse eleng hore ditla amana le rona rele batho ba batsho, re seke ra dingolla batho ba bang, mona hobe le di ofisi tse ka bokellang dingolwa tse ka hara dibaka tse hona moo. Nalane ya rona e seke ya nkuwa ya iswa mohlomong Bloemfontein kapa nashenale moo setjhaba sa rona se satlo e bona, empa di kenywe hape marangrang molemong wa batho boohle (Maphale Moloi, 5 November 2021).

I am not asking for something to be fought for and the dignity of royalty. The second is the dignity of our heritage sites, and if there is no good management, then the committee that is elected will understand that no one wants to serve the public. This committee will help to make plans and proposals, maybe, or they will be helped by the government so that things can be managed. Many heritage sites we see in other provinces are at a high level. It has also been fought against tourism investment, as well as tourists who come to visit when these areas are empowered. I am crying that there are no articles that will be related to us black people, we should not write to other people, here there are no offices that can

> collect the articles in the areas right there. Our history should not be taken to perhaps Bloemfontein or nationally where our people will see it but should be put back on the Internet for the benefit of all people *(Maphale Moloi, 5 November 2021).*

The above discussions paved way for the meeting to recognise *Marena* as the leaders of the nation. *Ngaka Ncala* in a way disagreed with Morena Moloi, but he executed his message in a very respective and peaceful manner. It is through the above discussions that the nature of Participatory Action Research in general as a liberating research approach is evident. Under normal circumstances, whatever that was said by *Morena* was going to be followed and taken as a final word, but *Ngaka* Ncala voiced his perspective. There are two side to the issue of liberation here. First *Ngaka* Ncala liberated himself by voicing an opposing viewpoint to the *Morena* in a meeting. It should be noted that he was doing this in a very respectful and peaceful manner. I mentioned respect and peace as key values of the Basotho that I have incorporated into Afrikana-Participatory Action Research in particular. Secondly, *Ngaka* Ncala liberated *Morena* Moloi from his inherent understanding of government being above the indigenous system of governance to make him understand his position in leading the community. *Ngaka* Ncala referred to the fact that they know *Marena* as the ones who led them through difficult battles in the past even before the arrival of the politicians.

It was Mr Maphale Moloi's inputs that somehow provided most of the main points that needed to be taking into consideration. He mentioned the committee that needed to be established (meaning stakeholder's committee). He talked about assistance that can be sourced from government (not inviting government to take a lead). This bordered on Zhu's (2016) observation of how the community of Lijiang reconstructed their life into a world heritage site where government provided officials to assist with business plans and proposals. In the case of the Witsie's Cave then the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation together with the Free State Heritage Resources Authority became suitable partner. Mr Moloi also talked about rewriting history for local community consumption and the development of archives to house the research on site, and not to send research material to Bloemfontein or the national archive for storage. Instead, he called for making such material accessible online and available

to all. This point suggesting future research and interpretation projects to be embarked on was well taken and also informed the integrated management plan.

Based on the above deliberations, I summarised the discussion with the main points that was raised across the board. Firstly, I stated that I understood them to say that all parties are agreeing on the establishment of a stakeholders' committee and to restore the rightful positions of *Marena* as the community leaders. This was then interpreted to mean that in this committee, the *Marena* would be positioned as the chairpersons of the committee. I then expressed my support for the suggestion to develop a management plan to be inspired by the discussions emanating from the meeting. I explained that many countries approach the management of heritage sites through an integrated management plan providing at least three examples (Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site, Matobo Hills Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site and Tsodilo Hills World Heritage Site) where the stakeholder management approach was employed. It was agreed that people who were in the meeting were going to be part of the stakeholder's committee. The attendees of the meeting collectively agreed on the development of the Integrated Management Plan and I undertook to develop a draft based on their inputs, which I did. The plan is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 as part of the recommendations. It represents the action plan that must continue to be implemented even after the conclusion of this research, as is the expectation in PAR.

6.7 THE CALLING

It was during December 2020 when I felt unsettled in my life. I consulted with the healers I came to know as participants in this study. This resulted in participation in a prophetic ritual and a healing procedure that involved medicinal herbs. The prophecy revealed three key points:

1) That I am the Ntlhabo family head;
2) I have not performed any ritual for *Badimo*, my ancestors, since moving to Bloemfontein from Qwaqwa and;
3) That my wife had inherited a spiritual gift from her grandmother.

The first part of the prophecy did not come as a surprise, as discussed in Section 5.4. However, the second part astonished me because, to my knowledge I performed a *Pha-Badimo* ritual in April 2019. This was done as a way of 'announcing' my new home to *Badimo* (the ancestors). However, as the processes of conducting this ritual were revisited, it was discovered that I took shortcuts in my approach. Firstly, I failed to 'announce' the ritual to *Badimo*. This is normally done by going to the graves of *Badimo*. Secondly, during the process of preparing *jwala ba Sesotho* (traditional beer) and slaughtering the sheep that would be eaten on the day of the ritual, the one performing the ritual should continuously be talking to the *Badimo* (ancestors).

According to the Prophet that I consulted, it is the responsibility of the family head to perform rituals for the *Badimo* regularly as proxy arrangement. This can be done every six months or once a year, and all the family members must be present during the ritual. Section 2.4.2.4 revealed the responsibilities of the family head, which include looking after their family property and ensuring that the family legacy continues into future generations. Section 4.9.4 has also shown the relevance of the head of the family or clan as they lead the family in spiritual rituals while caring for the destitute (Guri and Verschuuren, 2014).

In January 2022, something surprising occurred. A phone call came through from a person claiming to be my wife's father. He divulged that he lives in the town of Burgersfort, Limpopo. The area is familiar to my wife as that is where her mother grew up and returned later to live until she passed on. The shocking aspect of this revelation was that my wife grew up with one man she had known as her biological father for 48 years of her life. The man she had known as her father has also passed on. The person who claimed to be her biological father agreed to participate in a paternity test, and the results came back positive. In April 2022, we (me, my wife and children) went to Burgersfort to meet her biological father for the first time. During this visit to Burgersfort, I visited the graves mentioned in Section 6.5.9 (Image 50 and 51) above.

With everything that had been revealed, there remained the issue of the spiritual gift the Prophet had said my wife had inherited from her grandmother. The question arose whether the gift was coming from the side of the newly found paternal family or from the family she grew up in. Perhaps this case was similar to that of *Nkgono* Masechaba

presented in Section 6.4.3 above, where it was shown that the *Badimo* (ancestors) can look beyond their family circle to find a person suitable for a spiritual calling whether or not being a blood relative.

Part of the process was to reconnect my wife with the spirits and plead for harmony from all familial sides: her maternal family, her biological father and the family that raised her. For this purpose, a ritual had to be performed at the river. Going to the river revealed the desperation of people who had to cut the fence to get access to the river as a means to answer their sacred calling, once again demonstrating how profane rules and sacred needs can lead to contestation. This is yet another sign that shows the importance of African spirituality, including for the pilgrims to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites.

6.8 MOHOKARE VALLEY SACRED SITES: HERITAGE, IKS AND TOURISM POTENTIAL

Chapter 2 presented an overview of the history and heritage associated with the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. The type of heritage is also informed by rituals that are part of African spirituality (see Section 3.5.1). The rituals are informed by indigenous knowledge, thus making the sacred sites loci of indigenous knowledge systems. During the field trip in April 2019, one of the healers was found at Motouleng with a patient suffering from a skin disease. He explained that he can use the herbs to heal his patients and that his treatment is more effective when performed at Motouleng as he incorporates prayers as part of the treatment.

> *Ntate, mohlankana enwa ke ntse kemo alafa ka ditlhare le ho mo etsetsa tshebeletso. Ke nako e telele hore a fole, jwalo ka ha ane a ntse a kula ha nnyane ha nnyane ho fihlela ese ele kgolo, le ha fola e hloka nako hobane rona hare sebedise metjhini ya ho seha motho le ho ntsha ntho e mojang re e ntsha ka tsona ditlhare tsena…(Ntate Sebeko, 19 April 2019)*
>
> Sir, I have been attending to this young man with herbs. It will take quite some time for him to heal just as he has been sick little by little, until he got to this point, for him to get better it will take time because we do not use any machinery to perform surgery on a person, to

> remove what is bothering him, we remove it with traditional medicine…*(Ntate Sebeko, 19 April 2019)*

The patient confirmed his treatment via traditional medicine at Motouleng as follows:

> *Ho bile le nako ke ntse ke tsamaya ke kula haholo, jwale ho bile le nako ya hore ba nsetjhe madi… ke hore di thesete tse ngatangata ke be keya le bo Cape Town bare bona ba bona ke tshwenywa ke letsatsi ho bane ba bona moo letsatsi le fihlelang teng ke hona moo ke kulang. Jwale ke ne kesa dumele hore moo ka tiritimente eo ba neng ba ntse ba mpha yona pholo yaka ene etlatswa teng. Jwale ke mona mahaheng ho ntate Sebeko ke inwella ditlhare, ee, rea tseba, le ditoro rea bontshwa hore pholo e tseleng ntate.*

The above testimonies illustrate that IKS, by definition, brings together the sacred and the profane and this is illustrated by traditional medical knowledge where spirituality and the knowledge of traditional medicinal plants are closely intertwined. In South Africa, sacred sites are treated as heritage sites, however, Section 3.5 revealed the limitations of heritage legislation and policy frameworks in addressing the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. As stated before, this study contends that a possible salutation can be to incorporate the IKS Bill and related policies to inform the management of the sites in conjunction with the NHRA.

The South African IKS Bill and related policies are central to the safeguarding of the indigenous knowledge of local and indigenous communities as it provides opportunities to record and share their knowledge, ensuring that they gain livelihoods from the production of food and medicine derived from indigenous knowledge as well as benefiting from the commercial use of indigenous knowledge. The Indigenous Knowledge Systems Act 6 of 2019 defines an indigenous community as “any recognisable community of people – (a) developing from, or historically settled in a geographic area or areas located within the borders of the Republic; (b) characterised by social, cultural and economic conditions, which distinguish them from other sections of the national community; and (c) who identify themselves as a distinct collective. The Mohokare Valley Pilgrimage Movement fits within this definition as a special kind of community attached to a unique environment (sacred sites), where IKS is attached to spiritual beliefs and functional knowledge on survival.

Therefore, the Mohokare Valley sacred sites are repositories of IKS through which communities can earn a living by commercialising indigenous knowledge and tourism activities. However, the IKS Bill strictly enforces partnership agreements between the person(s) intending to use indigenous knowledge for commercial use and the relevant communities. Thus, the opportunistic tourism activities that have been taking place around the Mohokare Valley sacred sites (see Section 6.4.6) must be transformed into a partnership with the knowledge holders or custodians (pilgrims and *Dingaka*) of the sacred sites.

6.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the data collection process from the beginning of the study to the end. It mapped out the state of Mohokare Valley sacred sites and the pilgrimage movement using narratives, pictures, and maps. The chapter also converged data from the previous studies conducted on the Mohokare Valley sacred sites with the new data collected for this study. The main themes distilled through the converged data were management issues, permanent residency at the sacred sites, the concept of proxy of substitute mission, evolution and meaning-making of the sacred sites with a focus on the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site and the use of participants' knowledge. The process led to the unpacking of various challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites: the sacred contestations and profane materialities, ownership contestation, the competing ancestral attachment claims, stakeholder infighting, competing oral mythmaking, the opportunism of criminal elements and tourism activities, effects of colonialism on sacred sites, lack of integrated management plan for declared heritage sites, the challenges presented by grassroots memorialisation as well as the spelling variation and inconsistency of Sesotho names.

The chapter also provided the personal experiences that I went through during the process of the study. These experiences formed part of my personal participation in the research, which was interpreted as a personal calling that I had to answer.

While Chapter 5 introduced the six-step Concerns Report Method of data collection and interpretation, this chapter provided details on practically following the steps to provide specific data for the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site. This came with

more details on how stakeholders were identified based on their attachments and claims and the application of values, functions and principles that the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework and APAR inform. Concerns derived from previous research projects and those gathered during this research and data-sharing processes led to the stakeholder committee formation and the creation of an integrated management plan. The chapter finally posited IKS as a bridge between heritage sites and sacred sites when considering the Mohokare Valley sacred sites as sites for spiritual tourism.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the conclusion of the study. Findings that relate to the distinctions of heritage sites from sacred sites and the nature of heritage sites as tangible, as opposed to sacred sites that are more intangible in nature, are presented. The limitations presented herein include the hybrid nature of the Mohokare Valley Sacred Sites, which are believed to be one element that will always form part of the characteristics of the sites. Other limitations experienced during this study mainly came about due to the COVID-19 National lockdown and the demands of the newly implemented POPI Act (Protection of Personal Information Act). The chapter also presents issues around the shifting of leadership powers in Africa that took place before colonialism.

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are made. For example, developing a policy that can be designed solely to manage sacred sites in South Africa. Such a policy should be separate from the current National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 and informed by the IKS Bill. Another recommendation is to design an integrated management plan for the Mohokare Valley sacred sites based on the study's Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework, which encourages African-grounded research and the participation of all stakeholder communities with values and principles attached to African experiences.

The study concludes with a critical self-reflection of my experiences throughout the commission of the research and present future action plans that are informed by the process of Afrikana-Participatory Action Research.

7.2 SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

This study was informed by the challenges facing the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. This section provides a summary of the key themes that are central to this study.

Firstly, the study uncovered tensions between the sacred and profane materialities of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites that emerged as a result of South African heritage legislation that disadvantage the Mohokare Valley sacred sites because of a Eurocentric top-to-bottom approach that excludes local communities in the management of the sites. Secondly, the limitations of Postcolonial Theory were considered in addressing the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites.

This study presented the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework and its methodological manifestation of Afrikana-Participatory Action Research. This was used in an attempt to provide empirical solutions for the challenges mentioned above that embrace communalism as one of the Afrocentric values, as well as working as a collective of stakeholders in creating the Integrated Management Plan for sacred sites that are still managed as heritage sites in South Africa. This bottom-up approach empowers the local community to make their own decisions in managing the sacred sites. The study also presented spiritual tourism as an alternative approach to institutionalising Mohokare Valley sacred sites but with the pilgrims benefiting from the knowledge that is presented at the sites.

7.2.1 Difference between heritage sites and Mohokare Valley sacred sites

While the study discovered that sacred sites in South Africa are nominated and declared through the same processes of nominating and declaring heritage sites, it is important to acknowledge the difference between the two types. Heritage sites can be anything that may be bequeathed from one generation to another, while sacred sites have a connection to the environment and spirituality.

Furthermore, heritage sites commemorate an individual or collective victory, joyful past experiences, or even places of awe, such as places with distinctive architecture or magnificent landscapes. On the other hand, sacred sites are places of hardship, meaning people always go to the sites when experiencing sickness or seeking their identity. Experiences associated with Mohokare Valley sacred sites are something that people do not wish to inherit. However, they end up inheriting such experiences because they do not have a choice. Du Plooy (2016: 201) revealed how the participants in her research described it as difficult, burdensome and at times

troublesome to follow the calling involving frequent interactions with the *Badimo* (ancestors) through the sacred sites. Chapter 2 illustrated how many of the sites are situated in locations that are hard to reach and require great effort from the pilgrims to journey to.

While heritage allows for the alteration of a site through a permit, altering a sacred site weakens it and may de-sacralise it. This is mainly because, in many cases, the heritage sites are manmade while the sacred sites are in a natural setting. For example, the built heritage monuments, graves, and streets on the list of more than 150 heritage sites in the Free State are mostly located in towns whereas the Mohokare Valley sacred sites are in secluded areas, as shown in Chapter 2.

7.2.2 Heritage sites (tangible) and sacred sites (intangible)

Section 3(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 clearly states, "*a place or object is to be considered part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because of… (g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons".* This extract clearly shows that the Act's emphasis is on the object or place with cultural and spiritual value. At the same time, a sacred site is intangible with an emphasis on the actions associated with spirituality, where the objects and places only acquire spiritual values when used as part of a ritual and may not have the same powers thereafter.

Also, because heritage sites are meant to stand as a symbol of triumph or splendour, they are located where they can be easily seen. On the other hand, these sacred sites cannot be easily observed because of the subtle and abstract characteristics that make them difficult for people from different cultural backgrounds to understand. Heritage sites are usually a collective undertaking, whereas sacred sites may carry strong individual connections and motivations. Mbiti (1991: 20-21) described sacred places as "places where people meet with God, and as a result, they are private places that do not need any form of disturbances".

The NHRA of South Africa has been applauded for being one of the best legislation frameworks in Africa, which may be attributed to its promulgation after the advent of

democracy which allowed lawmakers to benchmark with the legal frameworks of other countries (Abungu and Ndoro, 2008: ix). The Act specifically incorporated intangible heritage, which is defined as "living heritage" in the Act. It has been applauded for its consideration of indigenous communities of South Africa as well (Hall, 2008: 70). However, critics of heritage legislation in Africa, such as Ndlovu (2011), do not see this recognition of living heritage as sufficient to set the NHRA apart from other pieces of legislation:

> *The Act is not necessarily about the conservation of living heritage. Instead, as a heritage resources legislation, it is about protecting and conserving sites that have a connection to living heritage in order to provide access to those who may wish to perform various ritual activities (Ndlovu, 2011: 32).*

In addition, property laws in South Africa may contribute to contestations between access to heritage or sacred sites when they are located on privately owned land, which may disempower indigenous custodians of land and cultural heritage located on the land (Ndoro and Pwitti, 2006: 179). The differences between Heritage Studies, heritage management and legislation, as well as sacred sites as loci of indigenous knowledge that are guided by the IKS Bill, together with the distinction between religion and spirituality (in Section 3.5.1), have informed the adjustment of the valuation scoring criteria as seen in Table 16 (Aulet & Duda, 2020). The criteria should focus on determining spiritual versus heritage significance for sacred and heritage sites, as presented in Table 17.

***Table 17**: Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site's determination of spiritual vs tourist significance based on valuation scoring criteria adopted by (Aulet & Duda, 2020) from the optimal and comparative content analysis method frequently used in geographical studies.*

THE DETERMINATION OF SPIRITUAL VS HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE			
Spiritual significance	**Points**	**Heritage significance**	**Points**
Pilgrim accessibility 0-No accessibility 1-Opened only during services 2-Opened regularly a few times monthly 3-Opened on specific dates and on request	0-5	**Tourist accessibility** 0-No accessibility, permanently closed 1-Opened occasionally, a few times a month 2-Regularly, a few times a month, not during services 3-Regularly, on specified days and on request 4-Opened during weekdays and on demand during weekends with limited hours 5-Accessible without limits	0-5

4-Opened during weekdays, on demand during weekends for limited hours. 5-Opened without limits	**5**		**5**
Sacral service availability 0-Once per month or per year 1-Only on Sundays 2-Weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) 3-Regularly and on request 4-Regularly and special services 5-Daily liturgical acts, blessings	0-5 **5**	**Transport accessibility** 0-No public or private vehicle access 1-Very random, only with private vehicle 2-Public transport available several days a week 3-Various public transport available during the week	0-3 **3**
Sanctuary official (Yes or No)	0-1 **1**	**Tourist services** 0-No tourist services 1-Basic services (information or signs) 2-Two to three services available (parking, toilets, information) 3-Well-developed basic services (park, information, guides) 4-Services available seasonally 5-All services all year round	0-5 **5**
Significant blessing or reliquary 0-No special blessings or reliquary 1-Random special blessings 2-Available during celebrations 3-Always available with saints	0-3 **3**	**Part of the regional/national/world heritage** (yes/no)	0-1 **1**
Spiritual motivation 0-Non-spiritual motivation 1-Spiritual equal to non-spiritual 2-Spiritual motivation dominant	0-2 **1**	Non-spiritual motivation 0-Spiritual motivation 1-Spiritual equal to non-religious 2-Non-spiritual dominant	0-2 **1**
TOTAL SCORE	**15**		**15**

The sacred and profane divide derived from the spiritual elements that Witsie's Cave projects and the stated characteristics of the declared heritage site has been bridged by considering IKS, specifically the IKS Bill. This produced a balance between the spiritual and heritage significance of the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, where both spiritual tourism and heritage tourism activities scored 15 points each.

In order to balance the tension between the profane and the sacred, the aim was to avoid the desecration of the site while promoting the site as a heritage site for spiritual tourism. The method can be applied to other sites to enhance the sustainability of the sacred sites and it can be motivated for application to other sites.

7.2.3 Management and ownership contestation over the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site

Chapter 2 has shown that the management challenges facing the Mohokare Valley sacred sites are complex and can be viewed as due to colonial legacies and capitalist tendencies. The system of capitalism introduced private ownership, where the sites that individuals would not normally own prior to colonisation would now mostly fall within privately owned land. Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site is not an exception to this occurrence. The research into Witsie's Cave has revealed yet a bigger contestation between *Marena,* who were contesting the ownership of the site. This contestation has hampered the site's development and sustainable operation. The site could not take advantage of its status as a declared provincial heritage site and therefore benefit from a partnership agreement that could have been entered into (between the communities surrounding the site and the Provincial Heritage Authority). Because of this lack of formal management and accountability structure, the site could also not apply for funds from funding agencies such as the National Heritage Council.

As PAR requires, all authorities should be informed before the commencement of research. The *Morena* of the Makholokoe, leader of the people claiming a spiritual connection to the cave because of the killing of their ancestors (*Badimo*) in the cave, was informed about the intended research study. The *Morena* of the Monontsha village, where the cave is located, was also informed. However, during the research process, it was discovered that other authorities played a part. First, the discovery was that, in terms of demarcations, the reception area of the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site is located in Monontsha, and the cave is situated within the borders of Poelong village, which falls under the jurisdiction of another *Morena*. It was also discovered that at least three levels of leadership were linked to Witsie's Cave from the Bakoena Royal Council, as illustrated below.

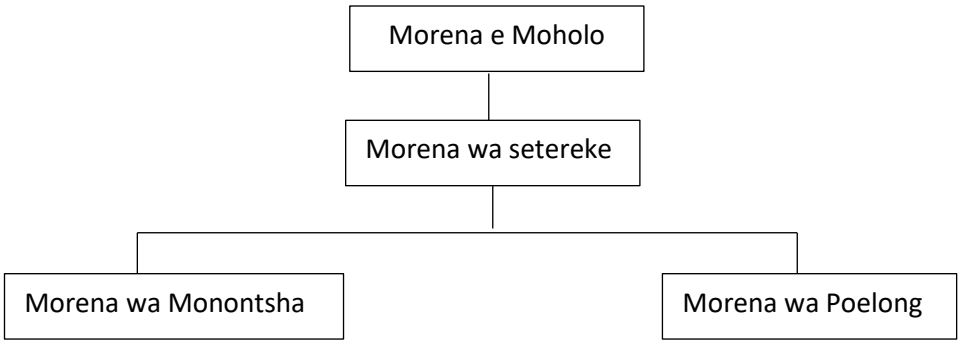


Figure 9*: Showing organisational structure of Bakoena Royal Council*

Starting with the two local *Marena* at the village level was deemed inappropriate as they were only regarded as subjects of the *Morena* of the Bakoena, who made the overall decisions on all the matters affecting the Bakoena in Qwaqwa that filters the information through to the *Morena wa setereke* (District leader). It was discovered that many of the parties laying claim to Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site were not aware of the declaration of the site after being nominated by a sub-group of the Makholokoe. This happened without the knowledge of the recognised *Morena* of the Makholokoe, who, as part of the procedure, was supposed to consent for the cave to be declared a heritage site. At the same time, the Bakoena Royal Council was unaware of the declaration even if they claimed that the cave was on their land and was under their custodianship through the *Morena* of Monontsha village. Neither the Makholokoe Traditional Council nor the Bakoena Royal Council knew how the project operating at Witsie's Cave was established, as this information was only known by the *Morena* of Monontsha village.

7.2.4 Hybridity

Hybridity is one of the elements that this study borrowed from Postcolonialism and will be presented as part of the recommendations. The hybrid nature of sacred sites documented in Chapter 2 will remain and must be considered when planning for the development of sacred sites.

One of the concerns recorded in Section 6.6 was the issue of the unavailability of ablution facilities and the lack of water supply at the sacred sites. Many people might

not deem this a concern. One could assume that the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site and other sacred sites alluded to in this study must be preserved in their natural state without the interference of modern facilities. At the same time, the water needed for spiritual purposes need to be collected from natural springs and flowing streams.

Drs Stephanie Cawood and Tascha Vos (2009-2010, 2018-2019) from the University of the Free State conducted a study on the four sacred sites (Mantsopa Spring, Mautse, Motouleng and Witsie's Cave) where they researched "the link between the socio-cultural dynamics of heritage and water quality at the sacred sites in the Mohokare Valley". This study revealed that the sites were under stress, especially those of Mautse and Motouleng, during the 2009-2010 period. This was because of the increasing number of people visiting and residing at the sites. This was recorded based on the high concentration of faecal coliforms found in sacred bodies of water that are harmful to humans.

With the closure of Mautse and Motouleng, it has been reported in Section 6.4.4 that more people visit Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site for spiritual purposes. Thus, the challenges experienced at the above sites can also occur at the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, considering the hybrid nature of the sacred sites above. Yazdiha (2010: 36) welcomed hybridity as a means of deconstructing boundaries within race, language, and nation by allowing "collectivities to reclaim a part of the cultural space in which they move".

Chapter 4 discussed how Moshoeshoe built the Basotho Nation out of different clans and nations during the Difaqane Wars. The element of physical and psychological borders discussed in Chapter 4 also contributes to the dynamics of sacred sites producing hybridity and the acculturation issue observed through the grassroots memorialisation discussed in Section 6.3.1.

According to Kurki (2014: 1059), a hybrid culture which came into existence because of the emergence of borders and boundaries (either physical or psychological) that created a fusion of cultural features cannot be returned to any previous forms. Hybridity is, therefore, a crucial concept in helping understand the diverse, complex, and syncretic spiritual and religious nature and practices associated with the

Mohokare Valley sacred sites. The sites are heritage sites and sacred sites at the same time based on the interpretation of intangible heritage attachment and being viewed as IKS repositories. This also underscores the hybrid interface between the sacred aspects of pilgrimage, the more profane activities related to the informal market economy, and the tendencies that function concurrently with sacred activities. While a particular area may be sacred for a certain group of people, other groups may view it as a more everyday material space and use it as such. Therefore, even within the Mohokare Pilgrimage Movement, there are no universal attachments of sacredness, but rather hybrid variations ranging from the sacred to the profane, linked to personal experiences.

The balance between the sacred and profane was shown through spiritual and heritage activities in Table 7.1 above. This table also demonstrated the hybrid nature of Witsie's Cave, as is the case of all the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. This is the balance that this study attempted to bring into the management of the sites while repositioning the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, and the other sacred sites in the Mohokare Valley, as sites for spiritual tourism.

7.2.5 Shifting of leadership powers

The Mohokare Valley sacred sites have some form of attachment to indigenous governance systems. This is mainly because of their location, which historically has been the area of the Basotho. In the culture of the Basotho, each area has its leader in line with the indigenous governance system. However, with the colonial rules that gave rise to private ownership, the owners of the farms that house the sacred sites can be viewed as holding the same status as *Marena,* who gained their custodianship through the process of a leadership power shift. In other words, their position as the owners of the properties will not be challenged. However, it will be given the same respect as afforded to *Marena*.

Section 4.2.4 showed the psychological transfer of ancestral spirits to the heads of families or clans as well as *Marena*. This has always been understood as being passed on from one generation of the same lineage to another. However, under colonialism, this system was disrupted. However, the study determined that this may not always

be the case. The Basotho people have a saying, '*Borena bo retsitse*', which means the leadership lineage has shifted. This can be experienced in many ways.

Firstly, it can be in a situation where the reigning *Morena* passes on without having had a son who would take over as the heir to the throne. A practical example is *Morena* Moremoholo Mopeli, one of the Chairpersons of the Witsie's Cave Stakeholder's Committee. *Morena* Moremoholo Mopeli was the last-born child of the three children of the late *Morena* Motebang Mopeli and Mofumahadi Mathokoana Mopeli. *Morena* Moremoholo Mopeli was crowned *Morena e Moholo* of *Bakoena ba Mopeli* in Qwaqwa in 2018. This was after the passing of his brother, *Morena* Thokoana Mopeli, who did not have an heir (a son).

The second situation can occur where a person gains followers based on their spiritual gift. This kind of leadership was introduced in Section 1.9.16 as sacred indigenous leadership. *Morena* Oetsi, for example, was not the leader of the Makholokoe. He gained followers because he was a medicine man with rain-making powers. Section 6.4.4 revealed how he would perform rituals in the dark cave to create a mist to cover the mountains when enemies attacked them. This is similar to the story of *Morena* Mohlomi of *Bakoena ba Monaheng*. He was also not originally the leader of the Bakoena clan, but Nkopane was. *Morena* Mohlomi had spiritual powers that made him travel to different places to assist people. Because of the weaknesses of Nkopane in leading the Bakoena clan, Mohlomi was entrusted with the position. Mohlomi, on the other hand, mentored Moshoeshoe for the leadership position. Moshoeshoe was the son of Mokhachane, the younger brother of Libe. He was a minor leader of the Bakoena of Mokoteli. Mantsopa, the daughter of Makhetha, the younger brother of Mohlomi and Moshoeshoe's advisor, acquired her powers from Mohlomi. She also gained popularity from her accurate predictions of the wars, drought and the coming of white settlers (Hodgson, 2003b: 146-147).

7.3 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

7.3.1 The National Lockdown

The 2020 National Lockdown occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was also during the time that the fieldwork and interaction with participants of the research individually and through group meetings were supposed to happen. This affected the research since movements and meetings were restricted due to the spread of COVID-19. I am based in Bloemfontein, the capital city of the Free State Province. However, the case study for this research and the stakeholders were located in Qwaqwa (except the Makholokoe, who are based near Harrismith), the north-eastern side of Free State, more than 300km away from Bloemfontein.

Many people experienced the National Lockdown positively. Some people worked from home, thus saving on travelling expenses and expensive office space. People also took advantage of the availability of technology and used communication platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom Meetings. However, this situation was to the detriment of this study. Using this type of technology could not work in an area like Qwaqwa. The area has poor network coverage as constant electricity cuts affect the network towers and make it difficult for people to charge their mobile phones. This also includes people's lack of knowledge of modern technology. Furthermore, I was psychologically affected during the lockdown, especially with the passing of close family and friends. It was only during levels two and one (between mid- and late 2021) that I was able to conduct fieldwork again, delaying the study by at least a year.

7.3.2 The POPI Act

The grace period for the enforcement of the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013, also known as the POPI Act, ended on 30 June 2021. The Act advocates for the "protection of personal information processed by public and private bodies". While my intention was to abide by the requirements of this Act, it was impossible to obtain consent from the people who were interviewed prior to 2021. The whereabouts of some of the people who were interviewed at the Motouleng Sacred Cave could not be

traced. This followed the closure of the site and the eviction of people during the COVID-19 lockdown.

7.3.3 Sensitivity around land

This study took place when debates in South Africa were centred around the expropriation of land without compensation. First, the African National Congress introduced the subject through its 54th policy conference in 2017. This was followed in 2018 by the then-President of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma. He made a pronouncement in Parliament about the decision to review Section 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Sihlobo and Kapuya, 2018: 1). At the time, anything that had to do with the issue of land created a hostile environment and posed a threat to the landowners who owned land as private property under Section 25 of the Constitution.

7.3.4 Limited access to literature

Even though it was my intention to include works from renowned voices in pilgrimage, spiritual, cultural, heritage and geographical studies such as Kiran Shinde Dean MacCannell, Jas' Elsner Simon Coleman, Ian Reader, and Rodney Harrison, I was unsuccessful in accessing these books as they are not included in the library collection of my home institution, which means I would have had to purchase them, likely from abroad at great cost. Unfortunately, this proved impossible due to financial constraints as my research was entirely self-funded. Many seminal book sources from the global North are not necessarily freely or cost-effectively available to scholars from the global South if they are not included in the library collections of their home institutions as they are behind paywalls. This is part of the global asymmetry related to the political economy of academia and must be recognised as a general limitation for scholars from the global South.

7.3.5 Non-documentation of pilgrims

Table 14 listed inadequate documentation of visitors as one of the management challenges of the Mohokare Valley Sacred Sites. This was in relation to tracing the

next of kin of pilgrims in case of emergency. This also posed as a limitation as I was unable to trace the pilgrims of Motouleng after they were evicted during the COVID-19 lockdown of 2020. Towards late 2021 when lockdown restrictions were lifted, I went to Fouriesburg and Clarens Police Stations trying to find out what happened to the pilgrims at the time when they were evicted. Pictures that circulated on social media showed pilgrims disembarking from a police van that is why the closest police stations were my first stop. No one at either of these police stations had any recollection of these events. If there was a register kept of visiting pilgrims at Motouleng, their contact details would have been accessible, and it would have been possible to explore how eviction impacted their spiritual lives and whether they returned to Motouleng afterwards or made alternative plans, such as visiting Witsie's Cave instead.

7.4 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The value of this research is primarily situated in its transdisciplinary Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework. It involved Afrocentricity with values centred around spirituality and its grounding of the research in Africa as locus of engagement, the recognition of hybridity as one of the legacies of colonialism as an aspect of Postcolonialism as well as the Decolonial Theory that accommodates change through alternative non-conventional research designs. An example of such a research design is the Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (APAR), which had been instrumental in providing empirical results through the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site as a case study for this project.

The problematisation of sacred sites in the context of the formal heritage sector in South Africa in this study also warranted a different approach when addressing the complexities of the Mohokare Valley Sacred Sites. This included the incorporation of other policies that are relevant to the Mohokare Valley Sacred Sites as well as broadening the role of stakeholders and fostering better unity among them.

This project and similar projects have the potential to unite a nation as required by the AU's Charter for African Cultural Renaissance. This has been seen where *Marena* and other community members were previously contesting the ownership of Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site. However, they cooperated and formed a stakeholder

management committee, subsequently developing an integrated management plan for the site.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.5.1 Practical recommendations for the sacred sites

It is recommended that the Free State House of Traditional Leaders, the National Indigenous Knowledge System Office (situated in the Department of Science and Innovation) and the Free State Heritage Resources Authority collaborate when dealing with issues of sacred sites. Pieces of legislation dealing with the above bodies seem to be commensurate with one another. Section 5(7)(a) of NHRA states that "the identification, assessment and management of the heritage resources of South Africa must take account of all relevant cultural values and indigenous knowledge systems". This then brings in the IKS Bill that provides a legislative guideline for the protection, promotion and management of indigenous knowledge and the management of the rights of indigenous knowledge communities. At the same time, indigenous knowledge is part of the belief systems, conservation methods, techniques and customary laws and forms part of the responsibility of the traditional communities led by *Marena* as stipulated in the Traditional and Khoi-San Act. The arrangements around the integrated management of the sacred sites could be negotiated and effected through agreements and/or memoranda of understanding.

It is also important to constitute a body that will represent the site users collectively and advocate for their rights and responsibilities. The Health Practitioners Act 22 of 2007 was promulgated to facilitate such a body. However, its scope is limited to "traditional healers" and offers services to South Africans only. It has been discovered that the site users are *Dingaka* (healers) and individual pilgrims who take journeys to the sites for various reasons. These people are from South Africa and different places in Southern Africa. Through such a body, information relating to the sacred sites can be disseminated.

7.5.2 Policy recommendations

At the policy level, the recommendation is to develop a policy aimed at safeguarding and managing sacred sites as a long-term project. Also, to incorporate the IKS Bill as an interim solution to be implemented with the National Heritage Resources Act. The IKS Bill makes provision for the safeguarding of indigenous knowledge through the National Indigenous Knowledge System Office (of the Department of Science and Innovation). The NHRA deals predominantly with the profane aspects of the heritage or sacred sites and the IKS Bill bridges the gap by focusing on the sacred aspects of the sites derived from African spirituality.

Due to the above differences between heritage sites and sacred sites, the limitations of current heritage legislation and policy frameworks in addressing issues and places associated with spirituality are highlighted. Challenges facing sacred sites and grassroots memorialisation are attributed to the Eurocentric approach of the formal heritage sector and have alienated indigenous custodians of heritage. Due to the use of difficult-to-understand language, the exclusion of graves that are younger than 60 years, the top-down approach and the nature/culture dichotomy presented in Chapter 3, this study recommends the following:

- There should be a policy that deals with sacred sites that should be separate from but complementary to any heritage legislation.
- This policy must, amongst other things, establish a body that will advocate for the protection and promotion of sacred sites (Sacred Sites Protection Authority) that will govern the management and protection of sacred sites. This body must be empowered to establish a database of sacred sites based on the collective memory of the communities that should be guided by the Cadastral System of land tenure (see Section 4.9.2). The body should control access and use of the sacred sites, maintain the integrity of sacred sites, and examine land on which developments are to take place based on the elements revealed in Chapter 2 of the nature of sacred sites (Impact Assessment).

The policy should cover sacred sites that can be identified through their pre-colonial nature (see Section 2.4.1), as well as grassroots memorialisations and places of natural disaster or accident (i.e., those that came about as a result of tragedies discussed in Section 3.5.1). The policy should also cover graves in general, as Section 3.5.6 revealed that, in terms of African spirituality, a grave is sacred no matter how long the grave has been in existence. This study also acknowledges that the places of tragic events may be identified differently based on different cultural backgrounds. For instance, in the USA, the memorialising of a site of tragic and violent events can have the following outcomes:

- **Designation**: A site is marked – something important happened here – but not sanctified;
- **Sanctification**: A sacred place set apart from its surroundings and dedicated to the memory of an event, person or group;
- **Rectification**: A site is 'put right', repaired and reused;
- **Obliteration**: Active effacement of evidence of particularly shocking or shameful events (Faro, 2014: 114-115).

***Table 18**: Proposed category ratings for sacred sites*

Category	Nature of sacred site	Responsibility
Individual / Family	Grassroots memorials, graves within family yards, family shrines	Family / Clan
Local Community	Community graves / Village graves	*Morena* at the local level
National / International Communities	Sacred sites (mountains, caves, forests)	*Morena* e moholo

The concurrent use of Acts focusing on heritage aspects and that of the sacred is not something new. In the case of Australia, there has been the Aboriginal Heritage Act of 1972. Unlike the National Heritage Resources Act in South Africa, it has been explicit in dealing with the protection of places and objects connected to the traditional cultural life of the Aboriginal people and sacred, ritual, or ceremonial sites that are of importance to persons of Aboriginal descent.

The above Act was amended in 1980. The amendment seems to have mainly decreased the powers conferred to the Aboriginal people and weakened the protection of heritage sites of the Aboriginal people. For example, the amendment came to insert into Section 5(a) to (d) the requirement for 'importance and significance' and limiting Section 5(b) to 'sacred, rituals or ceremonial sites' with Section 5(c) being restricted to the application of the Act to cover places of importance and significance to the cultural heritage of the state. The original emphasis that was given to the Aboriginal people was reduced. In 1984, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act was declared. This Act relied more on the power of government over Aboriginal issues as provided by the Commonwealth.

The amendment mentioned above of the Aboriginal Act of 1972 and the introduction of the government-driven National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Heritage Protection Act could have paved the way for the introduction of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act of 1989. While the Aboriginal Heritage Act deals with the protection of the Aboriginal peoples' tradition, culture and heritage, the focus of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act came to address the spiritual aspects of the Aboriginal people in Australia (Collins, 2003: 252-253).

Unlike in the case of Australia, where the body falls under the government, the proposed body in South Africa should be an independent body that may not be politically influenced to facilitate a bottom-up policy approach. However, in the absence of a sacred site policy, as is the case currently in South Africa, and of which the establishment of such a policy is a lengthy process, the concurrent application of the IKS Bill and associated policies and the NHRA provides a feasible option that I argue can bridge the gap between the sacred and the profane.

Until such time when a proposed independent body to handle issues of sacred sites is established, the existing National Indigenous Knowledge System Office of the Department of Science and Innovation can serve as a body that deals with matters relating to sacred sites as sacred sites have been documented as loci of indigenous knowledge, which means that the IKS Bill can complement the National Heritage Resources Act.

7.5.3 The Integrated Management Plan

I also recommend that a management plan be established for each and every sacred site. The type of management plan recommended by this study will ensure that spirituality, as one phenomenon that surrounds the sacred sites, should be given its rightful space and informed by Afrocentric values and principles, as discussed in Chapter 6.

This study developed the Integrated Management Plan for the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site as a case study. This management plan is intended to be a catalyst that can be applied to all the sacred sites of the Mohokare Valley. The management plan for a heritage or sacred site may not be new. However, the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site Integrated Management Plan is a product of the APAR, which is the research methodology applied in this study with the CRM of data collection and interpretation detailed in Section 6.5. The Integrated Management Plan was also approached by borrowing from the Afrikana-Decoloniality Theoretical Framework guiding the conceptualisation of this study. The APAR methodology entails equal partnership to research. This is one reason why taking the stakeholder management approach to the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site was important. APAR also calls on research to be African-oriented by incorporating African values and principles into the processes of research, where spirituality is a dominant phenomenon.

Through the lens of Afrikana-Decoloniality, the study could look back to pre-colonial practices while addressing postcolonial challenges. The first step was to revisit the relevant African Indigenous Governance System. In this system, the *Marena* are the custodians of the land, spirituality, and sacred sites. In the past, the *Marena* worked closely with *Dingaka* and the Elders of a village and heads of clans or families. *Marena* could delegate *Dingaka* and the Elders to work as custodians and/or gatekeepers of sacred sites with the responsibility of ensuring that protocol is followed at the sites. In the current context of South Africa, as explained in Section 3.5.5, the *Marena* are not empowered to participate in the current formal heritage sector through the National Heritage Resources Act.

The Management Plan recognises *Marena a Maholo* of the Bakoena, under which the Witsie's Cave is located, as the land administrators or land custodians and the *Makholokoe* as the spiritual custodians of the cave. The two *Marena* are positioned as the Chairs of the Management Committee. When constituting the committee, there was no need to elect chairpersons, as with other committees and boards. The position of *Marena* is uncontested. This is a permanent position based on the fact that the position of *Morena* is permanent until they die. *Marena* is also empowered to take an active role in the management committee or delegate their responsibilities to others. Because of *Morena* Moremoholo Mopeli's commitments as a member of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, he has nominated *Morena* Tsolo Mopeli of Mabolela Village, who is also the chairperson of the Bakoena Royal Council.

It has also been shown in Chapter 2 that all the other sacred sites have connections to *Marena*. For example, the area of Modderpoort used to form part of Moletsane of Bataung. *Morena* Mopeli Mokhachane was residing at Mabolela, also not far from Modderpoort. Mautse is also known as Sekonyela's Hat. This is because Sekonyela's or the Batlokoa's Fortress of Jwalaboholo is very close to Mautse and just 10 kilometres outside of Ficksburg. However, it is not within the power of this study to restore the leadership responsibilities over the abovementioned sacred sites to the *Marena.* However, this is where the idea of *Borena abo ritsitseng* (leadership that shifted) comes in (see Section 7.2.5 above). Through this principle, the current custodian of land will still be recognised.

Other *Marena* are part of the committee as representatives of their communities. The two *Marena* were co-opted into the Management Committee because of their close proximity to the cave and are empowered to address immediate challenges that may hamper the management of the cave. All this is done on behalf of the committee. They also have to resolve conflict amongst community members who are part of the management support of the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site.

Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site management is based on the bottom-up approach. The approach empowers local communities through the governance system of *Marena* to be decision-makers in the management of the site. This borrows

from Decoloniality, which seeks to reverse the colonisation of knowledge and a top-down approach (Mignolo, 2007: 492).

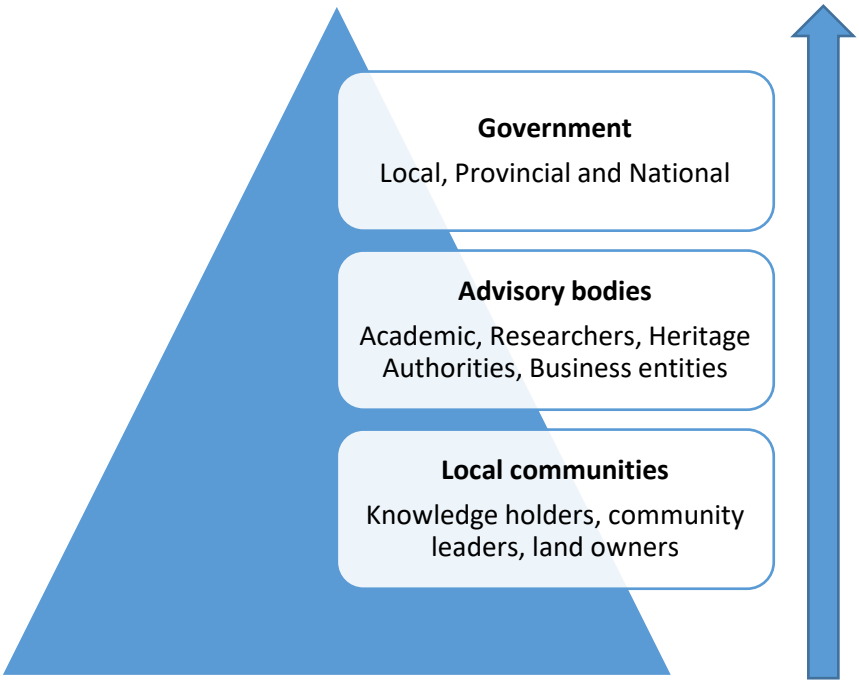


***Figure 10**: Bottom-up approach of Witsie's Cave Management*

Benefit sharing

Currently, the stakeholders or management committee receive no monetary benefits from their involvement with Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site. It is anticipated that all the stakeholders contribute towards the development of the site, following the *Mafisa* loan system. Based on the developments that may materialise at the site, more jobs may be created for both Bakoena and Makholokoe communities, meaning that both leaders would have realised their responsibilities of ensuring the well-being of their subjects. It can also be said that in future, there can be an honorarium available for stakeholders and royalties that will be channelled through the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site Trust (yet to be established) to create more development projects. The IKS Bill provides for royalties to be paid to knowledge holders using their knowledge for commercial purposes.

Legal framework

The National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, the Protection, Development and Management of Indigenous Knowledge Act 6 of 2019 (IKS Bill) and the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act No. 3 of 2019 are the legal frameworks guiding the development of the Integrated Management Plan. What these Acts have in common is the issue of partnership or agreements governing arrangements with stakeholders following the Afrikana-Participatory Action Research approach of this study. There can be an agreement entered into between SAHRA or the provincial heritage resources authority and a heritage conservation body, a person of a community for the conservation, improvement, or presentation of heritage resources in terms of Section 42, Subsection(1)(a) of the National Heritage Resources Act. The Protection, Development and Management of Indigenous Knowledge Act (IKS Bill) reserves the right for indigenous communities to register and benefit from using their indigenous knowledge. Section 13 Subsection (3) of the Act stipulates that:

> *An individual member of the indigenous community holding indigenous knowledge who wishes to make commercial use of the indigenous knowledge— (a) must obtain permission from the indigenous community; and (b) may only make commercial use of that indigenous knowledge in a manner and subject to the indigenous community-imposed terms and conditions as formalised in an agreement with the trustee.*

Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act No. 3 of 2019 recognises the existence of traditional and Khoisan leadership in South Africa. The Act empowers the traditional and the Khoi-San leadership in administering the affairs of their communities in line with their customs and traditions. It also provides a platform where traditional and Khoisan leadership can enter into written agreements with each other, with either government at national, provincial, and local levels, or with other persons, bodies, or institutions regarding community development projects.

The above legal framework will therefore guide the planned agreements between *Morena wa Makhol*okoe and *Morena wa Bakoena,* between the management committee and the Free State Heritage Resources Authority, between the committee and the implementing agent (Witsie's Cave Tourism Project) as well as with other public and private institutions as it may be required as part of the implementation plan.

Section 47 of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 requires a conservation management plan to be developed for heritage resources management. The conservation plan takes into consideration the protection of a heritage site from effects that may render it to lose its heritage values of significance. The focus is mainly put on the site, whereas with an integrated management plan, many elements are taken into consideration that may also include the conservation plan. The Witsie's Cave Integrated Management Plan is one tool that is designed based on the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework and the Afrikana-Participatory Action Research that calls for 1) the centring of African spirituality in matters of heritage/sacred sites, 2) redressing the past imbalances, 3) recognising community needs and participation as part of the site management plan.

The Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework allowed the study to document challenges attributed to colonial legacies. The strategies to overcome the challenges were applied in this Integrated Management Plan using pre-colonial values and practices (*Letsema* or communalism and the *Mafisa* loan system), colonial legal and educational systems and postcolonial hybridity. While the Integrated Management Plan constitutes the management committee led by *Marena* as the custodians of the site, this is complemented by another arrangement of appointing a business entity to run the cave, from a capitalist perspective, following legal and economic systems derived from colonialism.

***Table 19**: Presentation of challenges facing Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site with strategies for overcoming the challenges.*

Challenges	**Strategies to overcome challenges**
Management - Contested ownership. - Lack of adequate management skills. - Lack of accountability systems - Undefined activities and programmes. - Inadequate documentation of visitors. - Limited awareness/promotion. - Lack of development project.	- Site integrated management. - Co-management agreements. - Formulation of management committee and management support structure. - Conduct skills and resources audit. - Design site access form. - Conduct capacity training (financial admin, first aid, tourist guiding, project management, arts and crafts). - Develop activities and programmes. - Conduct research for new projects. - Register the site as a legal entity. - Identify more stakeholders.

	- Develop a marketing plan. - Raise funds for projects. - Benchmark with similar sites
Conservation - Natural and human threats.	- Compile a conservation plan.
Contravention of the sacred - Breaking ins. - Muggings of visitors. - Unsustainable commercialisation of clay. - Drawing graffiti on the walls of the cave.	- Involvement of the South African Police Service. (SAPS)
Infrastructure - Poor road infrastructure leading to the cave. - Lack of parking space. - Lack of maintenance of the buildings. - Unavailability of ablution facilities and water supply at the cave.	- Involvement of the local municipality. - Negotiations with owners of properties near the entrance of the site.
Policy / legislative - Inexplicit role of Marena and Dingaka in the NHRA. - Inexplicit protection of sacred sites. - Dilution of site name.	- Recommend amendment or new policies. - Submit nomination for name change to Oetsi Cave Provincial Heritage Site.

Even though the Sesotho language is used during meetings since most of the management committee members are fluent, the reports are always compiled in English. This is to allow for the Integrated Management Plan (based on the Afrocentric perspective) to be shared with people beyond the immediate context and within the broader formal heritage and academic sectors.

The Integrated Management Plan is also informed by the attempt to increase community participation in formal heritage management. Chan (2016: 14-15) adopted and modified an eight-level model of participation that Arnstein introduced in 1969 to determine the degree of public participation in policymaking. Arnstein's model shows no participation at the lower two steps of the ladder. The only community participation being realised, in the form of "tokenism", is from the third to the fifth steps of the ladder. Active participation, experienced through partnership, power delegation and full control of the community, is realised in the last three steps of the ladder. Chan's model of participation for heritage management shows that the lower levels of the ladder are stages where government and experts in heritage take charge of educating and protecting either intangible or tangible forms of heritage. This is done before informing and consulting with a heritage community for purposes of either partnering with the community or handing over heritage products to the community for self-management.

However, in the case of this study, the eight-step ladder was turned upside down, as shown below.

Education / Promotion
Protection / Conversation
Informing
Consultation
Advisory
Partnerships
Grassroots led negotiations
Self-Management

***Figure 11**: Illustrates Chan's eight step model of participation turned upside down.*

Inverting the ladder is to ensure that the processes are bottom-up, unlike in the current nature of heritage legislation and management, where processes start from the top and filter down to local communities. The eight-step ladder of community participation implies that the process starts by first educating people about their ways of life since colonial policies decided how and where Africans should live. However, the opposite should happen where sacred sites are managed in consultation with all stakeholders involved at grassroots level. This is done while allowing elders and knowledge custodians to advise on ways of protecting, conserving, and educating or sharing information. Therefore, the plan is to establish the body first and involve government at a later stage.

I presented a draft plan based on previous meetings to the stakeholders on 28 January 2022 and requested further inputs. It was signed off by both *Morena* of the Bakoena and *Morena* of the Makholokoe in their capacity as the chairpersons of the steering committee on 30 March 2022. The idea of the management through collaboration that the NHRA suggests may be an attempt to address the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites. However, the top-to-bottom approach and the exclusion of *Marena* is one approach that needs to be revisited, as alluded to in this study. It took Australia five years to realise that there were issues that could not be addressed through

heritage legislation but needed special legislation. After it was discovered that the Heritage Protection Act of 1984 did not fully address the constitutional religion clause, the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act of 1989 was introduced as the legislation to address [spiritual] issues (Collins, 2003: 252- 253).

In the view of this study and that of Afrocentrism, the crosses seen on the roadsides, graves (regardless of age), those places of horrific tragedy, as well as the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, as places associated with spirituality from the African perspective, should be protected. Protecting these would be to the benefit of those communities who believe that the spirits of their relatives and *Badimo* are alive in those places. The processes of nomination and declaration may not be similar to heritage sites, which is what this study intends to suggest.

The Integrated Management Plan is also a product that is based on the five phases of reclaiming the Afrocentric worldview. Records in the form of previous research projects were first studied, and the researchers (me and my community partners) then conducted our own investigation to define and clarify some elements, forms and content derived from data collected from Mohokare Valley sacred sites. The study then integrated and synthesised outcomes of previous research projects with the findings of this study. This is then interpreted through this Integrated Management Plan that is a product of our (including participants) “own creation that can be presented to the future generations of humankind and thereby taking their place in the African legacy continuum” (Myers, 2016: 249).

The Stakeholder Management Committee will guide the Witsie’s Cave Provincial Heritage Site for a period of 5 years. After this period, the arrangement will be reviewed, adjusted, and implemented for the next period that the committee will determine. The committee meets once a quarter, where the reports are tabled, and the future activities are mapped out. Below is the list of activities that are planned to be implemented in five years.

7.5.4 Witsie's Cave Implementation Plan

The implementation plan will be used as a tool for measuring the achievements of planned activities over a period of five years. It is a working guideline that may be updated when needed. It will also be reviewed, and the new plan will be developed for a further five years. Table 20 provides the details of activities that are planned to take place at the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site during the period of five years with the first year presenting quarterly targets.

***Table 20**: Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site five-year implementation plan.*

Activity	**2022 Quarterly targets**				**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**Implementing Agents**
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4					
Settling of differences									
Signing of agreements									
Identify more stakeholders									
Conduct skill and resources survey									
Conduct training									
Visit one or more sites/projects									
Cleansing of the cave									
Develop site activities/programmes									
Costing of site activities and programmes									
Develop site entry forms & guidelines									
Register the site as a legal entity									
Open a bank account									
Register with SARS									
Develop site conservation plan									

Lobby for name change/correction									
Develop & implement marketing plan									
Conduct research for future project									
Raise funds									
Implement and run projects									
Recommend amendment of introduction of new policy									
Review management plan									

Monitoring is one element that will be taken seriously in this management plan. It is important to ensure that daily activities at the site run smoothly and that the implementation plan is adhered to. The management committee will make random visits to the site on a weekly basis. The facilitator will meet with the site management to compile monthly reports. Quarterly meetings will be held by the management committee where monthly reports and the progress on the implementation plan will be presented. After five years, the management plan will be reviewed.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was based on the Afrocentricity paradigm. However, it could be interesting to research topics within feminism related to sacred sites and indigenous knowledge. The IKS Bill and related policy position women as “repositories of indigenous knowledge” and “primary natural resource managers”. However, they have not been recognised fully for these roles.

The study has also revealed that indigenous leadership played a role in terms of the custodianship of sacred sites. The Mohokare area has links to *Marena,* who once occupied the area and can be involved in managing sacred sites as part of redressing past imbalances. However, many sacred sites are spread over the Free State Province

and throughout the country. A topic researching the possibilities of legal restoration of custodianship of sacred sites through indigenous governance systems that were displaced during colonialism can also be commissioned.

7.7 CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION

Due to the nature of this study, being more action-orientated, the critical self-reflection took the form of an in-action reflection instead of an on-action reflection (Cheng, 2015: 1). The mere fact that the study was able to bring all the stakeholders related to Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site together to participate as a management committee and contribute towards the formation of the management plan is in itself a considerable achievement relating to the quality of this research. There is also a set of objectives listed in Section 1.4 that the study intended and succeeded in achieving.

Firstly, the study provided a detailed site description and understanding of the complex dynamics of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, as presented in Chapter 2. Secondly, Chapter 3 provided an overview of the heritage landscape within which this research is situated, detailing the complex interplay between the sacred and profane tensions found at the sites. Thirdly, in Chapter 4, the study successfully linked Postcolonial Theory, Decoloniality and Afrocentricity to offer an original theoretical framework that came to be interpreted as the Afrikana-Decoloniality Theoretical Framework. Fourthly, the application of Afrikana-Participatory Action Research (PAR) as research design led to practical solutions and a proposed integrated management plan for the sacred sites in question, as detailed in Chapter 5. Fifthly, the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites in terms of the heritage landscape and theoretical framework were unpacked in Chapter 6. Lastly, and most importantly, it was to demonstrate the sacred and profane dynamics at the sacred sites in question and develop an integrated management plan for these sacred sites in line with the principles of APAR to offer practical solutions (see Chapter 7).

The study successfully proved that heritage management and its policies were not suitable for managing sacred sites that the study had aimed to investigate at the beginning. This was done by revisiting the meaning of heritage and its interpretation compared to the interpretation of sacred sites. The process uncovered the limitations

of heritage legislation and policies when applied to sacred sites. Furthermore, it has been discovered that Postcolonialism, as a theory that has dominated Africa(n) Studies, also has its own shortcomings that made it difficult to resolve the challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites, especially when looking into the connection of spirituality and the environment.

This study also validated several assumptions: The assumption that the sacred sites are different from heritage sites by nature and interpretation and that the conventional research methodologies that most of the previous research projects followed could not address the challenges facing Mohokare Valley sacred sites. This study proved these assumptions by applying Afrikana-Participatory Action Research. This led to the stakeholder management of Witsie's Cave and the introduction of the Integrated Management Plan with its five-year implementation plan.

This study managed to unite *Marena* and other parties claiming Witsie's Cave through stakeholder management. However, the plan was also meant to work as a benchmark for other sacred sites in the Free State. However, there is no guarantee that the strategy will be implemented across the board, especially where private landowners are involved. This is due to the sensitive nature of the land issue in South Africa, but it is nonetheless worth trying. One drawback of managing via stakeholders is that the approach seems to have been interpreted as a form of employment where suddenly, there were names of people brought forward where it was claimed that those people were knowledgeable of the site and could assist the Management Committee with their knowledge. My pre-existing knowledge of Qwaqwa (where Witsie's Cave is located) and prior involvement with Witsie's Cave assisted me in making informed decisions about the people brought to me as I knew many people in the area.

This study furthermore allowed to realise my own capabilities. I am by nature, a reserved person. Having to invite *Marena* and other stakeholders into one meeting and steering the direction of the meeting came as a surprise to me. Through this experience, I came to believe that the whole process was a calling. I did not understand why I was so interested in sacred sites, starting with the Witsie's Cave as part of my Master's degree and incorporating other Mohokare Valley sacred sites. Dealing with sacred sites and discovering data that links me directly to some of the

sites through clan lineage (as narrated in Section 1.3), the reason for my interest and connectedness to the sites became clear.

At the same time, coming from government could appear as a sign of hope that could make *Marena* and the stakeholder committee members think that I would bring about change to their situation to the extent that many believed in me. In the past, when there was conflict between members of Witsie's Cave Tourism Project, their issues were presented to the *Morena* of Monontsha Village. However, along the process, this shifted to a situation where when these people had disagreements, they would directly call me to intervene. This could also be their way of following the management plan in trying to sort out their conflicts.

Currently, none of the parties have issues. However, this may become a challenge in the future, especially should *Marena* feel their leadership position is being threatened. The stories of Prophet Anna Mantsopa Makhetha and Prophet Walter Matita are practical examples of this situation. Mantsopa left Lesotho to go and reside in *Khalong la bo Tau*, what is currently known as Modderpoort. On many occasions, Mantsopa accurately predicted several events, including the Basotho victory over the British at the battle of Berea in 1852. She also predicted victory in the war between the Basotho and the Orange Free State Boer Republic of 1865-1866; however, they were defeated instead. While she was blamed and banished to Modderpoort, she claimed that her instructions were not followed correctly (Hodgson, 2003a: 216-217).

The same happened with Walter Matita. He was invited to Qwaqwa by the then *Morena* Ntsane Mopeli and Reverend Ross of *Lefika* (NGK) in early 1900 to offer prayers for *se nkoke* (an illness) that had erupted. He cured the people, preached the word of God and instilled morals. Out of envy, priests from different church formations in Qwaqwa started rejecting his ways of preaching and healing. Others wanted to maintain their way of life involving drinking and infidelity, which he preached against. The people accused him of many things, such as men accusing their women of coming home late after his sermons. He was eventually reported to the local *Morena,* who ordered the authorities to expel him (Semela, 2014: 45-46).

In the same vein, things may go two ways in my situation. I may succeed in bringing about change through this study. This may be commended, but it can also be a threat to other people who would have wanted to use a project like this for political self-empowerment. There have been several projects that were directed to Witsie's Cave and have not materialised. On the other hand, the project may fail to achieve the intended goal. The blame will be directed to me without considering that the nature of the project warranted the participation of all parties involved, meaning that the success of the project depends on all stakeholders. In order to mitigate this potential threat, the approach should always maintain a subject-subject relationship where there is a balance of power between the researcher and the participants where the researcher does not make final decisions (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 319).

7.8 FUTURE ACTION PLANS IN LINE WITH APAR

Two projects have been initiated through this study as a result of the Afrikana-Participatory Action Research. The first is the stakeholder management of Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site in Qwaqwa. I plan to work with the stakeholders through the five years implementation plan of the Integrated Management Plan as the facilitator to ensure that the planned activities are achieved.

The second project is compiling a database of all sacred sites in the Free State. Through this project, the Cadastral System of land tenure discussed in Section 4.9.2 will be put into place. This is where the already existing land tenure will be negotiated for change to meet the current needs of society. This will consider the rights, restrictions and responsibilities of the people involved in the use of land. The right to exclusive use, ownership, occupation, access, and exclusion that forms part of the registered deeds in terms of the legislation are presented in parallel with the right to gain access, occupation, rights of use and interests of indigenous communities, as recorded in the collective memories of the communities that form part of the African Customary Laws (Hull et al. 2019: 3-5). Both the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site and the Free State Sacred Sites database documentation projects are planned to facilitate the following:

1. The management approach of the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site will be used as a benchmark that will be applied to other sacred sites in the Free State. It will be used when negotiating with property owners on whose land the sacred sites are located and the provincial government. This is meant to follow the non-aggressive approach of Decoloniality that was discussed in Section 4.9.2, where the process will avoid the current route of land claims and legal action.
2. The plan is also to register a trust that will advocate for the sacred sites and facilitate a process of creating policies specifically designed for sacred sites while, in the meantime, still following the nomination and declaration of sites through heritage management policies but also abiding by the processes of protecting IKS located at the sacred sites under the IKS Bill.
3. The database project will assist in this process. More sites will be identified through the use of the collective memory of the communities. This approach will be used to inform the Cadastral System of land tenure that has been introduced in Chapter 4 of this study.

The motivation for the above-planned policy and management approach is drawn from the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People adopted from the 107th Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly held in 2007 (see Section 3.4.4). Articles 12; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29, and 36 reserve rights for indigenous people to gain access to land where religious and cultural sites are located for the purpose of practising their spiritual and religious traditions and maintaining relationships with the land as part of their spiritual beliefs. At the same time, this is being afforded a right to the conservation and protection of the environment while keeping a socio-political, cultural, and spiritual relationship with their own members, whom they are divided with because of international borders. The state is also empowered to recognise and protect the land and resources of indigenous people and establish customs and land tenure systems with the participation of indigenous people in the processes (United Nations, 2007).

7.9 FINAL CONCLUSION

Presenting his views in the first stakeholders meeting of the Witsie's Cave Provincial Heritage Site, *Ngaka* Tjhopo Nqcala projected his satisfaction with the approach of this study that comes at the right time even though it is 27 years late.

> *Indeed, many of us had anticipated change from 1994 onwards, but when some things changed, others remained the same. We, therefore, have to understand that there will never be a pre-colonial Africa. The effects of colonialism are here to stay. All we have to do is to adjust the safety belt and move on.*

'Adjusting the safety belt' means finding alternative solutions to socio-political challenges that one is faced with. This study has attempted to find a balance between the sacred and the profane challenges of the Mohokare Valley sacred sites by offering the Afrikana-Decolonial Theoretical Framework, which is a combination of values taken from theories of Afrocentricity such as African spirituality, Postcolonial hybridity and pre-colonial practices presented through Decoloniality. These are elements of change that facilitate empirical solutions that are guided by Afrikana-Participatory Action Research.

It is my wish that the Integrated Management Plan that was developed through the use of the ADTF and APAR can be adapted and adopted for projects similar to the Mohokare Valley sacred sites inspired by the spirit of Afrocentricity and the Basotho idiom that says *Letshwele le beta pooho* – we can achieve more as a collective.

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Mafikeng Traditional Council
P.O.Box 60002
Witsieshoek
9870

Enquiries:

1st

Chief Moloi L.S.
Cell: 072 656 7001
Chair Person
M.D. Moloi
Cell: 072 174 0880
Date: 16 May 2008

Reference: 16/08

The Honourable State President
Pretoria
0001

OWNERSHIP CLAIM FOR WETSI'S CAVE IN WITSIESHOEK AND THE AREA WITSIESHOEK.(Qwa-Qwa).

1. **Purpose**
To obtain approval for Witsieshoek area and Witsi's cave.

3. **Background**

3.1 **Geographigal Area for Wetsi's Cave**

The Cave is situated at Monontsha Village in Witsieshoek.It has been founded by our Grandfathers Chief Wetsi Moloi who went to hide in there with his People at the Battle between him and Joseph Orpen in the year 1856.Orpen Killed more than 2500 People inside the cave and their remainings are still lying under the rocks which fell on them after he (Orpen) shot the Cave using Canons but Wetsi managed to escape and fled to Lesotho.

3.2. **Development.**

There are developments taking place by Maluti-A-Phofung Municipality in that area without our knowledge.We,as makholokoe Tribe feel unhappy about such behaviour, as we regard that place as the Grave of our Grandfathers and Grandmothers. We have our own plannings about that area and also request your assistance for the correct measures to be taken to obtain ownership of that place.

4. **Conclusion**

4.1.
The cultural of each tribe is encouraged to be followed and taken into consideration by the Law that is why we forward our plea to the Office of the State President for assistance to ownership of the Cave inherited from our biological Grandfathers. The most Important Issue is to teach and encourage the new

Generation about the reality of Makholokoe and the sad story that took place there.

4.2.

The Area Witsieshoek was founded by our biological Grand Fathers Wetsi & Pheta Moloi in 1839.We lodged a Claim about this to the former State President but received a phone that our matter will be attended to.(ref.16/08). The Commission of Traditional Leadership Dispute and Claim as well as the Minister of Land Affairs are aware of this matter.

In conclusion, the said Cave was used as an assembly and shield house by our Leader Wetsi, therefore we found ourselves as the right and correct Claimers of the ownership in any legal proceedings of the Common Law.

I hope that this matter will reach a favourable consideration.

Yours truly,

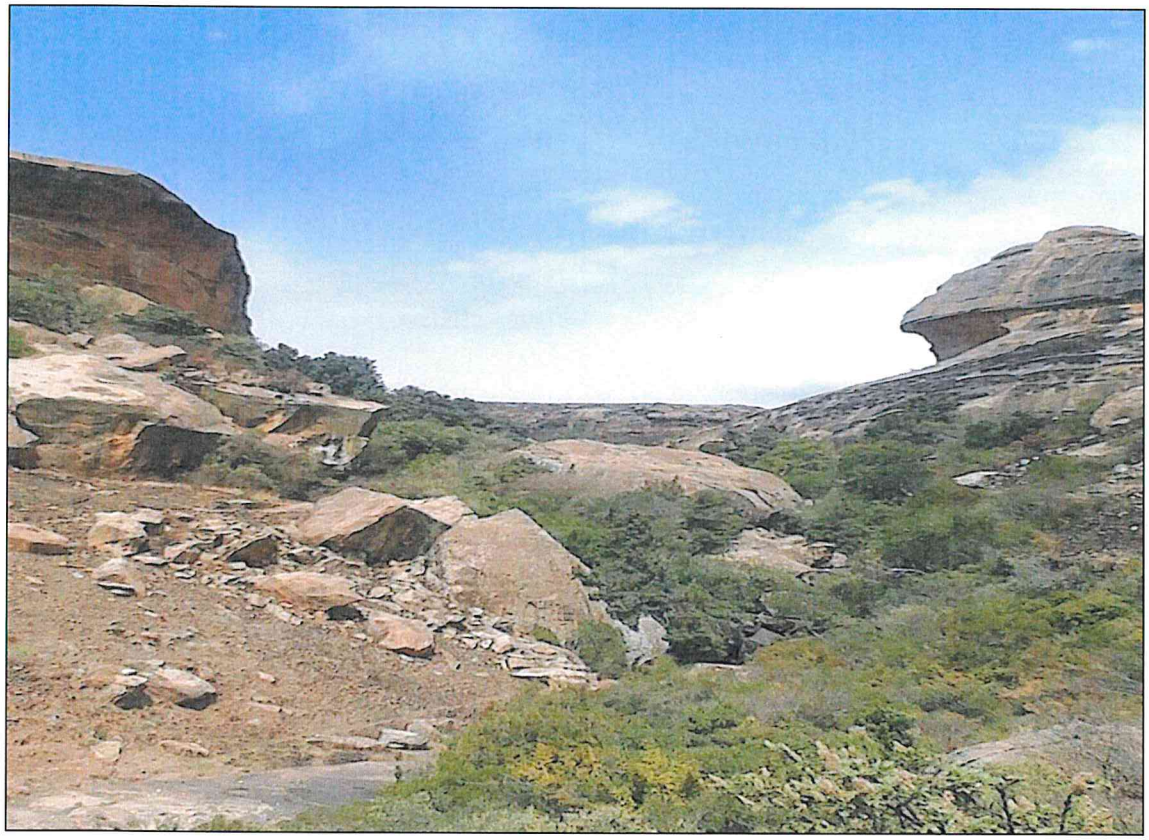
Chief
Mr.L.S. Moloi Makholokoe Chief.

Chair person
Mr.M.D. Moloi

MAKHOLOKOE CHIEF
MORENA L S MOLOI
2008 -09- 29
P.O. BOX 60002
WITSIESHOEK, 9870

Appendix 2

THE WETSI'S CAVE



Enquiries:

Mong. Moloi Rantjhemane Josef

078 8111415 / **7zero3@webmail.co.za**

To: Mr/Mrs/Minister/Prof/Dr/…

Mong. Jeff
jeff@sacr.fs.gov.za/khethav@sacr.fs.gov.za
Bloemfontein, 9300
Free State Province

Dear Sir/Madam

- **Request to release the Wetsi's Cave Heritage site/land to the Bakholokoe Tribe.**

We/the Bakholokoe Tribe request the FSPHRA/Minister/Province to release the Wetsi's Cave Heritage site to the Bakholokoe Tribe.

The Cave is now visited by the Bakholokoe tribe often from cardinal points in September each year to celebrate their culture and the entire community is also doing the visits. The area is not yet developed and is not save for tourist's attraction. The Wetsi's Cave came first at hearts to be released to us and its boundary/demarcation and is situated in the mountainous area of Monontsha village of Witsieshoek, Maluti-A-Phofung municipality, Free State Province. The history shows that the area was discovered by the Bakholokoe during the hard times of WARS and battles when they hidden themselves in to secure their nation. Due to the delay constraints to put the truth about the cave, the process of establishing the developments in area has been slow.

We want to address the following:

1. Taking into consideration that this site constituted the mind and soul of the society and considering that we come from a divided society.
2. Unity in Diversity represents symbols of unity in public spaces and we want to preserve the unity of our diverse communities.
3. We need to reconcile history and heritage of Wetsi's Cave/Morena Wetsi Moloi's Cave/the Bakholokoe cave.
4. We want to ensure Wetsi's Cave heritage site contributes to the development and well-being of South Africans like other Heritage sites.

Background

The Bakholokoe tribe has re-asserted with confidence and they have been organised themselves as a pressure group in decades ever since the ages of Morena Khetsi Moloi, the founder of the Bakholokoe tribe. They acted actively and represented themselves with strong tribe/committee/leaders in the South Africa, though their aims of progression were disrupted by interference, hatred, wiping out of their history and massacre/genocide. The tribe insist to live their own heritage, culture and stayed organised.

The efforts of the Bakholokoe indicate that a lot is being done to promote the cave and the use of information by the tribe leaders and the community. It is hoped that by the end of the next vision 5 years, the site will have its own heritage platform and have own history collection and resources, which will further assist next generation of the Bakholokoe and the community in becoming informed, literate, productive and independent citizens.

Vision

- To develop the site.

The Bakholokoe Tribe Witsieshoek
886 H, Riverside, Phuthaditjhaba, 9866
078 8111415 / 7zero3@webmail.co.za
We stand by our Government, we stand by our leaders.

Mission

- The Bakholokoe aims to enhance the cave to the heritage standard and nature of caves life for all inhabitants of the South Africa.
- To provide readily accessibility in the cave and the Bakholokoe information services this will support cultural, learning and information to all.
- To obtain the full rights approval ownership (Title Deed) of the cave.
- To write the true history of the cave once we have the full rights.

Strategic Objectives

- To strengthen the cave's infrastructure.
- To staff the cave.

Developments

- The development project will focus mainly on the infrastructural areas, provide tourist best information centre and employ the staff.
- To support tourism goals that will result in the strengthening of heritage structure in this rural area to meet the needs of tourism level.
- The project we aimed will close the gap that happened between 1700 – date.
- We will also support the government mandate on heritage developments and partner Local authority, FSPHRA, NHC, Municipalities, Education department, Health department, Sport Art Culture and Recreation department and align with all government departments.

Conclusion

- As Wetsi's Cave lies within the Maluti-A-Phofung municipality and has the great history of heritage of this area, we hope our Government will take the matter to a conclusion by following all the necessary procedures to bring to us good news. Though we are aware that, Rome was not built in one day. Urgent meeting may be called to discuss this matter on the Saturdays and remember that, *the majority of our people are the Sesotho and Sekholokoe speaking people.*

With all respect,

Mong. Moloi Rantjhemane, et al.

(The Bakholokoe Tribe committee leader)

The Bakholokoe Tribe Witsieshoek
886 H, Riverside, Phuthaditjhaba, 9866
078 8111415 / 7zero3@webmail.co.za
We stand by our Government, we stand by our leaders.

Appendix 3

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS·UV
THE HUMANITIES
GEESTESWETENSKAPPE

Faculty of the Humanites

07-Aug-2018

Dear **Mr Ntlhabo**

Ethics Clearance: **Navigating between the sacred and the profane: Mohokare sacred sites, spiritual tourism and the challenges for the formal heritage sector.**

Principal Investigator: **Mr Makashane Ntlhabo**

Department: **Centre for Africa Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)**

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of the Humanities. I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Research Ethics Committee of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2017/1493**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted from 07-Aug-2018 to 07-Aug-2021. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours Sincerely

Dr. Asta Rau
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of the Humanities

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Approved