

A Critical Analysis of the Effects of Tourism on Cultural Representation: A case study from Leboeng

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Abstract.

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This research critically analyses the effects of tourism on cultural representation. That is – how people represent their culture to tourists through the sale of crafts and dance performances. The research was carried out in Leboeng village, on the border between Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces, near the small town of Ohrigstad. I carried out fieldwork in March 2004 until May.

The central question that this thesis attempts to answer is; what are the effects of tourism on the way people represent their culture? This question entails a critical analysis of how the local culture is subjected to tourism influence. Furthermore, the question involves the analysis of whether the way in which people represent their culture is the same as the way in which they live in the village.

Participants for the study were people who permanently live in Leboeng, those who sell craft products, and dance performers. Is this cultural representation an accurate reflection of village life? Basically the study relied primarily on craft projects within the village. I used participant observation in acquiring data.

Cultural representations are also made through museum exhibits. It is important to examine why tourists appreciate crafts and cultural performances. The main challenge of tourism lies on what can be perceived as culture. Is culture embedded in some form of fiction and artefacts? How people construct their identities and subsequently their culture is the response to tourism. What roles do women and men play in craft production and representations? People respond to tourism by making crafts for sale in the tourism market.

Key Words : Leboeng, Tourism, Culture, Cultural Representation, Museum, Performance, Craft, Gender, Ethnography, Lifestyles

Date: 13 December 2004

Declaration

I declare that '*A Critical Analysis of the Effects of Tourism on Cultural Representation: A case study from Leboeng*' is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Masete Frank Mamadi

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Signed:.....



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Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to make a contribution to the academic debate around cultural representations by critically analysing the effects of tourism on the cultural representation of the people of the Leboeng rural settlement. The central question concerns the effects of tourism on the way people represent their “culture”.

According to Richards (1994: 2), representation is made in the form of objects and images. Richards further argues that it is through such objects, images and performances that people’s lives are represented as those of the other. I argue that cultural representation happens when the lifestyles of others are represented through objects, images and performances. This view is well supported by Richards’ (1994: 289) assertion that there can be cultural misrepresentation when such lives are portrayed contrary to how people live. The lives of the other are then represented uniformly and therefore those represented are constructed as having a collective identity. It is through cultural representations that the past is linked with contemporary circumstances. However, historical conditions are primarily responsible for the production of cultural representations. Cultural representations are made to show what is presumably people’s lived reality, while it is paradoxically not always the case (Richards, 1994: 289). In my thesis, I argue that the people of Leboeng represent themselves as “other” to tourists.

Tourism, as argued by van Beek (2003: 252) is the world’s fastest growing economic sector. In South Africa cultural tourism particularly has seen growth (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996: 1). Tourism has, by and large, an impact on host communities. The post 1994 political dispensation in South Africa has placed much emphasis on economically engaging previously neglected groups through their inclusion in the tourism industry. This has been achieved through, among others, employment creation based on the sale of crafts, which happen to be highly in demand on the part of tourists. In rural areas, local people play a crucial role in craft production and sale as a form of hosting tourists. The process of hosting tourists is presented as an effort to preserve and use indigenous knowledge and culture on the part of host communities.

The meaning of culture has raised major debates among anthropologists interested in representations. The main challenge of tourism in this context rests in which parts of the perceived “host’s” “culture”¹. would be of interest to the guests.

This dissertation is a result of an ethnographic study where my primary focus was on people’s everyday life and their involvement in cultural representation. During fieldwork, I was studying people’s daily life-styles that contradict with what they present as their culture in tourist settings, or “front stage” as MacCannell (1989) prefers to call them. The fieldwork primarily relied on participant observation in craft projects within the village.

This thesis, thus, provides an anthropological critique by analysing the effects of tourism on cultural representation. I argue that people’s way of living is represented as static by themselves and a local museum (the Museum of Man), and that people represent their culture to tourists primarily through the sale of crafts and dance performances, as these are what tourists appreciate in the search for cultural authenticity. I finally discuss why cultural representations are different from the way people are living in the village.

My fieldwork allowed me to look at challenging questions. Is culture embedded in some form of fiction and artifacts? How do people construct their identities and subsequently their culture in response to tourism? I also ask: Which role do women play in craft production and representations, as people in Leboeng respond to tourism by making craft for sale in the tourism market.

I find the gender aspect particularly important because women are, according to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism’s white paper (1996) report, responsible for securing the provision of craft training and other opportunities so as to expand the skill base of rural women. However, I argue that women remain marginalized, and are subjected to dominant attitudes of men within cultural craft projects.

My thesis argues that the interaction between local people and tourists plays a significant role in the process of cultural representation. I assume that tourism has an impact on their cultural constructions and therefore, their identity. Tourism has an impact on rural communities, but residents of such communities also respond to tourism through

¹ I am aware of the problematic uses of the “culture” concept, but will henceforth omit the inverted commas for the sake of readability.

representation. Rural tourism requires in-depth academic investigation given the fact that cultural representations made by rural people play a pivotal role in attracting tourists. An investigation of the relationship and inter-link between tourism and culture inevitably requires ongoing academic investigation and analysis.

Approach to this mini-thesis

The ethnographic nature of the project, particularly my living in the village for three months, allowed me to study how the people of Leboeng live. As a black ethnographer, I am from a similar background as the people with whom I worked in my fieldwork. I speak the same mother tongue as the people of Leboeng (Sepedi) although it is not my exact home area (which is more than 200 km away) and there are some dialect differences. Still, it was an exercise in doing “anthropology at home”. Hence, some social trends in the village were not strange to me. That does not necessarily imply that I drew conclusions on what I might claim to know, but the in-depth study was indeed imperative to find facts that are essential for this dissertation.

My approach to this dissertation was reinforced by my capacity as a researcher and the fact that I share certain ways of living with the community. Views of participants developed my position as a researcher. As the study is about cultural representations, it remained crucial to ask participants about their perceptions of culture. During this stage I realised that people do not live their daily lives in line with what they present as their culture. Ethnography was thus appropriate in order to have a broad understanding of how people’s lives differ from the representations that they produce for tourists.

Relationships with my informants did not develop over night, but living with people on a daily basis for an extended period enhanced such relationships. Close bonds developed between some informants and myself due to the fact that I understood their situation and lived among them. Attending some of the social activities in the village and eating local food also enhanced my knowledge about local social dynamics. During fieldwork period I attended the funeral of the local chief (*kgosi*) and village ceremonies where dance is also performed. I also attended a village meeting (*kgoro*) and it is in

Leboeng where I cast my vote during the national elections in April 2004. I also participated in social activities by teaching at the local high school.

Chapter Outline

In the first chapter I review the relevant literature and develop the theoretical framework for this thesis.

In the second chapter I discuss the methodology of the research. I not only explain how I acquired data, but also discuss issues of ethics in research. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the problems and constraints I encountered during fieldwork.

In chapter three, a historical overview of tourism and projects in the area is provided. I present the history of the community, tourism and craft projects in the area during the period between 1984 and 2004. The historical overview of tourism is linked to the political and economic history of the area and changes in tourism during the above-mentioned period.

Chapter four critically looks at social practices in Leboeng village. What are the everyday lifestyles of people in the community? Here I look at how the community lives on a daily basis. This chapter, forms the basis for challenges to tourism, examining whether representations made to tourists reflect how people live. I discuss whether representations are consistent with the everyday lives of people. For instance, traditional attire and beads are being proudly shown to tourists during dance performances, however, it remains important to ask whether they dress like this in daily life as well, or is the intention only to impress tourists? Further, is the attire worn when performing to tourists the same as that worn in the village when tourists are not present? Comparison is not confined to performance only, but also the usage of cultural articles. In this chapter I shall further provide a detailed discussion of the role of women and men in cultural representation. I will look at the roles women and men play in the craft project and what they do there. As such, issues of femininities and masculinities will inevitably be studied, partly, to determine if discrimination does exist in the context of cultural representations. I will also look at how women are being utilised in the representation of culture – which can be in the form of traditional attire or of tasks to be performed.

Chapter five deals with the effects of tourism on the local culture in terms of representation. The first section of this chapter is based on representations through exhibitions made at the local museum, the Museum of Man. I further explain the local understanding of culture. Cultural representations are done through the production and sale of crafts and the performance of dance and rituals. A full analysis of the interface of tourism and cultural representations shall be made.

In chapter six I provide a concise discussion comparing “daily life” and “cultural representation”.

In the final chapter I provide some concluding remarks, concerning my impressions and reflections.



Chapter One

Tourism and Cultural representations: A Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

After one gets an idea regarding what's to be researched, one has to find what has already been done in such research area. I started with the process of literature search in 2003. My research interest has always been cultural representations, so even though I shifted the exact topic a couple of times, the literature I had already consulted remained important. Initially I had thought of writing about museums and I collected literature for this. I later decided to study the effects of tourism of cultural representations. The literature on museums I had consulted before remained important, however, as I also included an analysis of museum displays in this mini-thesis. When I finally decided to examine the relationship between tourism and cultural representation, I continued with the search for more literature, this time, more specifically focusing on tourism.

Much has been published about tourism and representations in different disciplines, such as Sociology, Development Studies and Geography, among others. However, my emphasis will be on anthropological literature although I cannot dispute the fact that literature from other social science disciplines is also helpful.

Ongoing research in cultural tourism is important for the growing field of tourism anthropology. Anthropologists inevitably take the tourism discourse as a point of departure in the analysis of representations. The study of tourism by anthropologists is not new. Serious studies of tourism, according to Nash (1996:1) can be traced back to the period of the early 1960s. Changes that host societies undergo through the experience of tourism have been a concern in tourism anthropology research for some time (Grunewald, 2002:1004). The past years saw the proliferation of publications on tourism by anthropologists and therefore, the analysis of tourism through a plurality of authorship. I found recent literature useful in the sense that new insight about representations is provided. Notwithstanding reliance on contemporary literature, I also

used some old articles that I found useful. Staged authenticity, among other concepts, as dominant in the cultural tourism discourse is prevalent in both old and new literature.

1.2 Cultural Representation

Volkman (1984) was one of the first authors who noted that people can realise the importance of representing imagined lifestyles, obviously not practiced in everyday life, in order to generate income. Volkman (1984) further maintains that in the process, contemporary culture is represented so as to define the ethnic identity (through ritual performance) of modern Taroja people in Indonesia. Their construction of ethnic identity is done to give meaning to the present.

Overall, tourism is a powerful contributor to the cultural change of host societies due to the interaction between tourists and local people (Smith, 1977: 3). Cultural change is prevalent in the sense that the hosts construct their lives in their encounter with tourists. Nash (1992:217) is of the view that tourism implies transactions between different people, that is between the tourists and host communities. On the other hand, as found by van Beek (2003:274) in his recent article entitled “*African Tourist Encounters: Effects of Tourism on Two West African Societies*”, tourists bring their own culture with them. The representation of culture is the result of such encounters between hosts (locals who make representations) and guests (tourists) because the hosts sell what they claim as their culture. During the process, people tend to represent their lives differently from the way they live in order to satisfy tourists’ curiosity and their (tourists) presumptions about the lives of the hosts. In his case study in West Africa, van Beek (2003: 274) found that tourists come to Africa because they are interested in other cultures. At the same time, however, the locals have their own perceptions about tourists, whom they see as rich people and “walking wallets”. The truth is, tourists get a different picture of people’s dynamic lives and this issue has perpetuated some hot debates among anthropologists who are interested in the anthropology of tourism. As argued by Cohen (1993:37), it is of concern that tourists do not get to see people’s lives and the adverse conditions they are in.

The contemporary concept of tourism is, as argued by Lanfant and Graburn (1992:88), closely tied in with economic development, while contradiction exists between representations and people's way of living. This leads to Appadurai's contention that there can be serious problems of representing imagined lives and local realities (Appadurai, 1991: 199). Ateljevic and Doorne (2002: 4) take this statement further, arguing that representation can be in crisis if the political system desires such representation in certain ways. It thus remains pivotal to study lifestyles of a particular society and the connection with what's being represented to tourists.

Cultural representations are a source of entertainment for tourists. That can be in the form of traditional dance performances and the sale of traditional crafts, as I have indicated earlier. In view of Walle (1998: 181) the colourful and exotic lifestyles of the host culture play a big role in attracting tourists.

It is also essential to represent what tourists can regard as culture in order to satisfy their expectations. Deitch (1977: 182) emphasises, in one relevant study, that pottery continues to be made using methods which are purely local and the styles remain local. This pursuit is done for the representation of the beauty of African crafts so as to impress tourists. He argues that there is no doubt that tourists want to see what they perceive as African culture. Despite endeavors to preserve and conserve what is thought to be African culture, such culture, in view of Shorter (1998: 23), is dynamic and is inevitably subjected to "convention" and "invention". This important observation sparks a paradox regarding the authenticity of representation due to cultural dynamics.

Ryan (2002: 953) has argued that if cultures are authentically represented, tourists can learn more about lifestyles, heritage and arts in an informed way. However other authors such as Echtner and Prasad, (2003: 669) rejected the possibility of authentic representations in the sense that past "no longer existing" culture is represented rather than modern lived culture. Even though the past lifestyles no longer exist, tourists' perceptions about the lives and customs of ordinary people remain unchanged, and people in turn represent their lives as static. As a matter of fact, tourists still perceive old represented ways of living as beautiful culture. People, though, are cautious not to be tempted to represent their contemporary lives since tourists might not be impressed in that regard.

1.2.1 Cultural Representation and the Museum

Apart from people making representations of their own lives, museums also have a role to play in representations. Lavine and Karp (1991: 1) are of the opinion that museum exhibitions inevitably make certain assumptions about the lives and the people whose culture is being represented. The assumptions resulting from museum representations are considered as not representing people's lives, and serious questions are raised regarding the exclusion of the diversified perspectives on culture (Lavine and Karp, 1991: 6-7). Displays and collections in museums make claims about the authoritative nature of exhibitions and the meaningfulness of cultural objects (Karp, 1991: 12). Karp (1991: 12) further complains that there is lack of creativity in making exhibitions because museums do not take into account the diversified cultures and different perspectives. The museum according to Karp, makes things complicated, due to multiple gazes within and among "cultures". The critical study of museum collections by anthropologists should be appreciated since such claims made in museums are challenged and questioned.

The future of anthropology in museums, as recommended by Ames (1992: 139), is very crucial to the destiny of anthropology and social sciences in particular. Anthropology thus made a significant contribution in critically analysing and questioning the authenticity of museum displays.

Ames (1992: 139) claims that:

Most of the criticism of museums flows from the simple fact that they are self-appointed keepers of other people's material and self-appointed interpreters of other people's histories. They circle around the question of who controls the rights to manage and interpret history and culture.

Ames' assertion clearly shows that because the control of museums is usually not in the hands of the people whose lives or cultures are depicted in the institution, this may lead to wrong interpretation about the lives of people, and in that pursuit the lives of such people may be interpreted as static. Museum exhibitions, through collections, depict the lives of people without their involvement. During my research I found that The Museum of Man in Leboeng is a typical example of how the lives of people are misinterpreted.

Some of the displays at the museum of man include paintings of Venda, Pedi, Zulu, Xhosa, among others. A friend of the museum owner (not a resident of the village) made these paintings. The depiction of Pedi women shows them wearing what is claimed to be traditional clothes. However, women in Leboeng, and Pedi women in particular, do not dress like they are depicted in the museum.

For the most part, people's way of life is exhibited as static. Museums are thus concerned with exhibiting what Steiner (2002: 406) refers as "the cultural other". Steiner (2002: 409) further argues that museums have replaced traditional sites of ceremonial practice since it is in the museum where society's culture and identities are constructed.

Overall, the museum is a way of seeing other cultures and inevitably draws certain assumptions in the process (Alpers, 1991: 27). It is only when the object is carefully crafted that it can be culturally informing (Alpers, 1991: 27). Alpers (1991: 30) concludes that justice can be done to people only if culture is represented correctly, although most writers such as Lee (1994) doubt that genuine or correct representations are possible.

Baxandall (1991: 33) supports this argument when he states that when displayed, objects are subjected to examination and such objects are presented in stands or on walls where there are labels, leaflets or catalogue accompanying them. It is obvious that the information accompanying objects on walls, stands, etc is based on assumptions, constructions and perceptions about culture. Cannizzo (2001: 163) feels that it is true that cultural and ideological assumptions have influence on museum displays and their curators and how they make collections.

Baxandall (1991: 34) writes, furthermore, that it is impossible to exhibit objects if there are not certain constructions attached on them. This leads to a situation whereby the viewer will look at such objects from the perspective of another culture since such a viewer has got assumptions and conclusions prior viewing museum exhibitions (Baxandall, 1991: 34). However, Greenblatt (1991: 42) argues that exhibited objects placed in museums can make the viewer to regard such objects as unique.

Exhibitions are the product of formalised negotiations on how they should be made. Exhibitions are not made prior to critical observations and experiences with the "real" lifestyles of people, but are made on the basis of assumptions of what culture is.

On the other hand, Bouquet (2001: 178) doubts a just representation of the museum and its collections, since such collections should be presented to the whole public, not to specifically educated group, as is mostly the case. Bouquet's critical assertion is supported by Walsh (1992: 125) who writes that the elite and educated want to satisfy their needs through leisure and that the consumption of heritage in museums tends to satisfy their cultural demands. Bouquet (2001: 179) also suggests that museums must be seen as places of cultural production and a social arena. Bouquet (2001: 195) concludes that cultural knowledge is vital for those placed in museums (specialists) so as to make culture materialise.

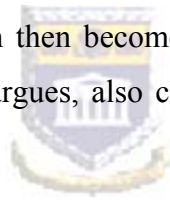
Bennet (1995: 11) suggests that museums should concern themselves more with making displays of the everyday lived culture. Drawing from the example of a museum in Beamish, in the North of England, Bennet (1995: 117) found that exhibiting daily lives and customs of ordinary people unavoidably resulted in a "peopling of the past" whereby cultures of ordinary poor people are perceived as inferior to bourgeois culture. When lived culture is exhibited, justice is never viable due to ignorance of the contemporary lives of ordinary people in the so-called lower strata of the society. I found that the Museum of Man near Leboeng is in a similar situation whereby the old lifestyles are depicted. Collections in the museum include both excavated and invented articles. Although people in Leboeng no longer produce maize meal, collections in the museum include huge wooden containers "*motshe*", which were used in the past to crush maize. Yet people nowadays buy maize meal at the local shops. Those who had knowledge to produce maize meal are either very old or passed away. As argued by Baxandall (1991: 34), tourists draw conclusions and presumptions about people's lives by merely visiting the Museum of Man.

1.3 Challenges of Tourism

The construction of culture and identity plays a crucial role in representations. Lanfant (1995) maintains that people are encouraged to make cultural representations to tourists. Representations are, nevertheless, rife with fiction and constructions. There are, as White (1995: 27) found in his study on the San, some fiction and artifice in order to provide the

anticipated meaning of culture and heritage. Sharon Macdonald (1997: 156) also contends that representations such as performances of culture that are destined for tourists, are not real, but staged authenticity. Tourism as such finds itself in conflict with what is real, meaningful or truthful as a result of what Whittaker (1999:37) refers to as fiction and artifice. Although societies go a long way in conserving what they perceive as culture, they still do not comprehend what culture implies. Lanfant and Graburn, (1992: 102) have argued that societies are expected to conserve what is traditional while at the same time they must come up with a “re-emerged” tourist product, thereby deviating from the lived culture. Paradoxically, while people are encouraged to “preserve their culture” for the sake of tourism, once culture becomes commercialized it deviates from contemporary culture (Lanfant, 1995: 37). Local populations, according to Lanfant (1995: 31) must not only “conserve” their culture, but they must also respect the tourists different “cultures” in the encounter with tourists.

According to Fairweather (2002:32) it is through performance that local people attempt to “preserve” culture, which then becomes heritage. Discourses of culture and heritage, as Fairweather (2002:32) argues, also change meaning in the face of tourism and heritage:



Under the influence of an emerging heritage industry these terms are once again acquiring new meanings, suggesting both commodities that can be marketed and lifestyles that can be made to justify differentiation between people (Fairweather, 2002: 32).

The other way through which representations can be influenced is through an unequal distribution of rewards. In the Kaggga Kamma Nature Reserve in the Western Cape province South Africa, a group of the San stayed at the reserve with limited rights to use the environment and they were expected to entertain visitors through dance, as reported by White (1995: 40). Furthermore, White (1995:41) found that some income, although small, was generated through the production of curio items that were sold to the farmer’s curio shop for resale to tourists at a higher price. Such articles included beadwork, bracelets, necklaces, leather bags and also bows and arrows.

In another case of Kagga Kamma, Buntman (1996:271) also states that the San are marginalised both socially and politically. In Buntman's view (1996: 271), the tourism industry has opened some opportunities for the San because they could earn some income through making representations to tourists. There are some paradoxes regarding the manner in which such representations are made. She wrote that the authenticity of the lives of the San people needs to be questioned – is the so-called preservation of such culture and tradition is exactly the way the San live (Buntman (1996: 271). Tourists still struggle to experience real culture, and are, as MacClancy (2002: 429) has noted, disappointed not to see authenticity or what can be regarded as culturally real. He writes that:

To some tourists, the most acceptable solution to their self-contrived conundrum is to turn of their postmodernist to embrace the failure of their search and to reveal in contemporary tourism itself. The “authentic” is then recognised as an impossible ideal and visitors, having traveled so far, take what pleasure they can from cultural mishmash they find in their destination (MacClancy, 2002: 249).



1.3.1 Staged Authenticity

It follows that local people's everyday lives are quite different from what they display when making representations to tourists (Cohen, 1993:40). It is apparent that tourists are not quite aware that what is represented is not the real way people live back in their homes. Anthropology has thus made a significant contribution towards a critical analysis of cultural representations. Despite the inauthentic representation that tourists observe, they still continue to spend lots of money in the search of culture. Furthermore, following Lewis (1990: 30), arts and culture are important tools for tourism development, and tourists will spend lots of money on culture-based entertainment, including the purchase of crafts and the attendance of dance performances.

The politics of cultural representation require a critical analysis of the social space and of how culture and beliefs are being staged and constructed. MacCannell (1973: 590) has indicated that the tourist setting operates at the “front stage” while the “back stage” is neglected. The “front stage”, according to MacCannell (1973: 590), is a meeting place between hosts and guests, or customers, while the “back stage” is where

people or members of the home team retire after making such representations. It is thus apparent that tourists learn people's lives at a certain place in an arranged and staged manner while the realities and cultural implications of the village remain unknown to tourists. For the most part, representations emerge as a result of pressures from "white culture" and tourism (Buntman, 1996: 276).

1.4 Tourism and Globalization

Globalization has a great influence on how people construct their culture and therefore, their identities. People respond to global forces in the form of representations. It is thus difficult to regard representation as a separate entity from the construction of identities. Appadurai (1991: 209) argues that the world today is so complex because of cultural flows. According to Appadurai (1991: 209), tourism has a vital role to play regarding cultural flows. What seems to be local culture can have global implications in the sense that tourists from abroad, to a larger extent, contribute to how cultural representations are made. Bramwell (2003: 583) maintains that how local people construct their identities in relation to global forces form the basis for responses to tourism.

Cultural representations, or exhibiting culture according to Karp (1991: 15) directly or indirectly represent identity. Representations are made due to a number of factors resulting from globalisation. It is thus logical to maintain that the commercialization of culture is an integral part of tourism and globalization. As Picard (1995:44) has argued, culture can also be a source of both pride and profit. Profit can thus be made when people begin to realise the significance of old abandoned lifestyles. In a relevant South African case study, Boonzaier (1996: 133) found that local Nama people in the Richtersveld use the "traditional Nama culture" as an asset in marketing. Boonzaier points out that Nama tour guides are employed at the Richtersveld National Park and "traditional huts" are built by Nama people as tourist accommodation. He observed that local Nama residents produce artifacts, which are sold to tourists. Similarly, people in Leboeng produce crafts for sale to the public and tourists, although some of the crafts are not locally produced, but bought elsewhere.

Deitch (1977:173) has demonstrated that tourism has a great impact on the arts and crafts of host societies. The exposure to tourism can to a greater extent enhance local people's expertise in the design and production of crafts. Accordingly, such creativity and initiative responding to what tourism has to offer cannot be detached from the desire to satisfy material needs.

People regard what they regard as culture as a commodity sold to the tourism market. On the other hand, tourism can have a serious negative impact on local ways of living, drowning them in the wave of new ideas and money, argued by (MacClancy, 2002: 422). MacClancy (2002: 422) stresses that the introduction of tourism may also have a positive effect, however, because local people will realise the significance of selling culture to tourists. The proliferation of tourism not only makes people develop much interest in their identity, but also in their long abandoned lifestyles. Brunner (1996: 300) observed in Ghana that tourism enhanced local people's interest in their culture and support of local festivals. He found that in Ghana festivals are organised whereby ritual performances are done and tourists are obviously attracted to such events, "the ritual and spiritual components such as pouring of libation and sacrifices at the shrines are still performed by spiritual specialists, even in places where the community-wide celebratory aspects of the festival are in decline" (Brunner, 1996: 301).

Brunner (1996: 291) accepts the fact that local people benefit from tourism through the flourishing of small-scale businesses. He continues that local people can make use of tourism by becoming tour guides while others will simply sell food and crafts while others perform to tourists. MacClancy (2002: 422-423) agrees that apart from tourism's devastating effects, people can at the same time utilise their culture to generate income. Local ways of living are thus constructed to satisfy the curiosity of local and international tourists.

1.5 Representations and the Construction of Ethnicity

Representations create an impression that those making such representations are unique. The San at Kagga Kamma, as White (1995: 17) argues, articulate their images of themselves and claim to be different from other people. Hunter-gatherer groups in

Thailand found themselves in similar situations, as found by MacClancy (2002). MacClancy argued that hunter-gatherer groups in Thailand physically moved from their homelands and entered the Thai society in a peculiar way. Hunter-gatherer groups were, according to MacClancy, pushed away by those responsible for beachside development or deforestation. In his study on the Thai hunter-gatherers, MacClancy found that they were forced to join the so-called “human zoo” for tourists to stupidly look at. According to MacClancy (2002) these hunter-gatherer groups perform certain features of hunter-gatherer lifestyles for tourists, such as tree climbing, ritual performance and pig killing while some just sell crafts. The San at Kagga Kamma are in similar situation. White (1995: 25) emphasises that the San at Kagga Kamma respond to tourism through making representations, which contradict, their western influenced lifestyles.

1.6 Representations and Power

The political scenario inevitably influences cultural representations. Representations are normally made to comply with the political requirements – that is, politics inevitably influence tourism. In her study of the Kagga Kamma San, Buntman (1996: 279) argues that the San do not seem to represent themselves, but others are instead representing them. Buntman (1996: 279) believes that this tendency of others representing the San has got both advantages and disadvantages, when they are represented as a generalised whole and collectively remain a colonised subject. The advantage of representing the San is that they will generate income, albeit very little. The disadvantage is that the San conversely remain colonised subjects and are further represented as having a collective identity (Buntman, 1996: 279).

MacClancy (2002: 421) is of the opinion that tourism is another form of imperialism due to its commonly exploitive character. He maintains that the western wealthy exploit the non-western poor. MacClancy elaborates, “...new kinds of imperialism are emerging with the tourist industry, but many other things are happening within the same time”.

If cultural representations continue to be done in order to satisfy the western wealthy’s curiosity, people will be forced to modify and construct lives in order to satisfy

tourists' curiosity. During the processes of staged authenticity, people's lived culture remains under pressure, or under another form of imperialism, in the sense that what is lived is not represented, but what is actually represented is static culture. People do not realise the significance of exposing their real daily living conditions and lifestyles.

In museums, like in tourism, the depiction of real living conditions and lifestyles are ignored in favour of the display of exotic objects. Karp (1991: 16) views them as western institutions because exotic objects are displayed and that is partly as a result of imperialism and colonialism and as a result, the history of colonial conquest can be studied through such displays. Colonialism, as pointed out by Aitchison (2000: 138), has influence on contemporary tourism and local cultures like dance performances since such performances should be done in a manner that can impress tourists, which in the process causes deviating from the original way of performing such dance. During the interaction with tourists in such staged and arranged settings, people's culture and identities remain colonised. Buntman (1996: 275) believes that the San are colonised subjects since they are used to attract tourists.

Lee (1994: 24) has picked up another issue, that representations can be subjected to serious crises because what is represented is not real, but staged authenticity of people's lives. According to Lee (1994: 24), there is nothing like real or unreal images, no genuine or untrue representations, but what is real is the power to create such representations. The political scenario does, to a larger extent determine how representations should be made. The search for reality therefore is embedded within global capitalism. It is true that tourists visit host nations with not only the aim of observing, but also of buying what they perceive as the cultures of people in the places they visit. The power of money and wealth on the part of tourists is a major factor in influencing representations. Some tourists travel with the explicit aim of buying local commodities. Wessely refers to this trend as shopping tourism since guests buy local products, which are not available and difficult to find in their home countries (Wessely, 2002: 6).

1.7 Gendered Representations

Gender is a significant dimension of cultural representations and tourism. Bank (2003: 641 – 2) argues that although women in the Eastern Cape villages are subjected to household work and associated identities, they can at the same time demonstrate creativity in dealing with poverty. By and large, women's confidence can be enhanced through their potential to earn a reasonable income in extreme circumstances (Bank, 2003: 642). The links between older women and younger ones are crucial in terms of expertise sharing because older women, as found by Bank (2003: 643), seem to possess knowledge on how to produce beads, brooms and curios destined for sale to tourists on the beachfront. It is apparent that the unity among women is necessary since information on how to produce crafts is shared. I found this argument very helpful during fieldwork in Leboeng village as the production of lampshades for instance, requires knowledge of how and where to get twigs (*lebipi*) and how to store such *lebipi* for a week for later use. *Lebipi* are used in the production of lampshades. Project members, both men and women, thus rely on the knowledge of older women. This reliance is due to the fact that older women used *lebipi* for trays (*masehlo*) and baskets while they were still young girls.

Bank (2003: 643) found that information sharing is not only done in craft production, but women also share knowledge on how to perform “traditional” dance. Women in the beadwork group that he worked with also organised traditional dance so that they could perform for tourists. This connection was also present in Leboeng, where women performed traditional dances to entertain tourists, politicians and at community functions. In 2002 they performed at the echo caves junction while at the same time beadwork and other crafts were exhibited for people, including tourists, to buy. In the Eastern Cape, Bank found that men, however, were not impressed with women's achievements (Bank, 2003: 649).

Gender has a role to play in the representation of culture and identities. This is due to the cultural knowledge women possess as Bank (2003: 641) argues, drawing on his research in the Eastern Cape. Bank (2003) found that women in the Eastern Cape have proved to themselves that they have the potential to enlarge social and cultural

networks within the community. This included the production of cultural crafts such as beadwork and basketry, primarily purchased by tourists.

Without the expert knowledge of women, crafts cannot be effectively produced. Hence, women play a major role in rural cultural tourism and this may have an impact on changing gender relations in their communities, as Bank's study shows. Long and Kindon (1992: 108) also found that women are well suited to be engaged in cultural tourism. They argue that this is not only due to the indigenous knowledge women possess, but also due to other social attributes such as their sensitivity to the needs of others and their caring attitude (Long and Kindon, 1992: 108). Women possess the traditional domestic skills, but they are disadvantaged to develop crafts production skills as a result of lack of educational or vocational qualifications (Long and Kindon, 1992: 66).

Sinclair (1992: 3) similarly argues that women tend to play a leading role in the production of handicrafts for the tourism market. Sinclair (1992: 3) found that women produce crafts by drawing on their learnt expertise, but that this does not necessarily imply that women are confined to traditional lifestyles. Some women sell cultural commodities to tourists in order to earn a living, while at the same time rejecting outdated lifestyles (Sinclair, 1992: 3).

The study of tourism is still relatively young. About years ago, Long and Kindon wrote that gender analysis in the tourism perspective is even younger (Long and Kindon, 1992: 90), although, as they argue, it is vital to have an analysis of tourism and gender in order to stimulate an understanding of the interaction between the two. Long and Kindon (1992: 90) further claim that studies that have been made regarding the impact of tourism on the Balinese culture (where they did their research) have neglected the analysis of gender implications within such cultural representations. Yet, women's equality is not promoted and women are seen as house managers (Sinclair, 1992: 96 – 7). As a result of the advent of tourism, women are compelled to make a living through the sale of crafts to tourists, which is contrary to the Balinese norm that women should be housekeepers. It is apparent that such gender bias embedded within tourism is a global phenomenon.

Tourism has been providing opportunities for local people, particularly for performers and those who sell crafts. Tourist sites and establishments offer ordinary people, and particularly women, an opportunity to sell crafts, pottery and other so-called

traditional articles to tourists. Women therefore get the opportunity to create their own jobs rather than relying on employment in such tourist establishments (Chant, 1997: 157).

Chant found that women with limited schooling have access to engage in beachfront vending, boat transport, etc. Some women have potential to sell their products directly to tourists or tourism establishments, while others are simply hawkers (Chant, 1997: 158). In fact, interaction between local people and tourists also has gender implications. This is largely due to the social and cultural constructions of the kind of work women and men should perform respectively. Chant (1997: 159) found that at tourist sites in Philippines, women dominate with regard to the selling of fruits, handicrafts and clothing, while men prefer to sell fish, ice cream and newspapers.

The sale of craft products requires some creativity. During his research in Antigua, Mexico, Little (2003: 528) found that in order to attract tourists to buy crafts, women perform dances during the process. Little further emphasises that selling handicrafts equips women with the self-confidence to engage tourists, telling them that such crafts represent their tradition. Women can, thus, present themselves as bearers of traditional culture – which is different from the tourists' culture (Little, 2003: 259).

Women often take a lead in selling various products to tourists due to, among other things, the domestic skills that women have been practicing for a long time as I have earlier indicated. Chant accepts that women do dominate home-based enterprise whereby commodities such as lampshades and jewelry are manufactured for sale to wholesalers.

Although women participate actively in the representation of culture, they are often depicted as objects. The study done by Buntman (1996) at the Kagga Kamma Game Reserve in the Western Cape shows those women were depicted as sex objects in the brochures. Such depiction is made through text and images that encourage tourists to come and encounter the real San as they are (Buntman, 1996: 275). Such images and text have undesirable gender implications since San women and children are portrayed like people in a museum, in the ethnographic display of the diorama, which justifies such displays as the real cultural and historical realities of the Bushmen (Buntman, 1996: 275).

In the brochures advertising the Kagga Kamma enterprise, men are portrayed as breadwinners as the picture shows the Bushman male hunting – aiming with bow and

arrow (Buntman, 1996: 275). In contrast, as Buntman (1996: 276) points out, there are images of bare-breasted women who are depicted as sex objects available for the male and tourist gazes. The representation in the brochure, as found by Buntman, shows a young woman sitting with articles such as, bows and arrows, who is posed to show her breasts in order for tourists to gawk and take pictures to prove that they came into contact with the real San as they “really” are. Like women, the portrayal of San males shows them in scanty clothes, contrary to what they wear in everyday life (Buntman, 1996: 275).

1.7.1 Feminist theory

In analysing gender implications within representations, we need a clear understanding of feminist theories that concern tourism and representations. Women who perform in paid labour without doing household activities jeopardize their reproductive role. This perception has for long been subject to major criticism by feminists since they argue that disparities between women and men are socially constructed (Sinclair, 1992: 6). Sinclair further argues that women are subjected to dominant attitudes of men since men control women’s access to paid labour (Sinclair, 1992: 7).

Women’s potential to contribute to paid labour has been controlled, if not impeded by male workers and employers. She writes that:

Gender norms differ between different societies and the gendering of the supply of labour varies accordingly. As a particular society is exposed to alternative ideologies and practices, definitions of gender and sexuality are modified, as are labour market divisions (Sinclair, 1992: 9).

However, recent changes in many societies, like those in South Africa, have begun to redefine the gendered division of labour. What is socially constructed as the task of women can now also be done by men, and vice versa. This trend is very prevalent in craft projects. In Leboeng, although more women are involved in the project than men, men mostly go to the mountain to fetch twigs (*lebipi*). Due to the advent of such tourism-related work, men are expected to do tasks, which were traditionally regarded as

women's tasks (such as fetching *lebipi*). The same also applies to beadwork, as men now also do beadwork, which was and to some extent is still perceived as a woman's task. Gender norms are being modified in order to face the challenges brought by economic development and tourism.

Long and Kindon (1992: 95) argue that although women and men are born free with equal rights, perceptions of women and men in a society and their roles are ideologically shaped. In many societies, men are considered as strong and active while women are viewed as passive and emotional. Such perceptions are based on social constructions so as to limit the roles of women in the society, and subsequently in the tourism industry. Chant (1992: 120) agrees with Long and Kindon that social and cultural constructions of gender are responsible for assigning women to subordinate positions in tourism establishments.

She argues that although women are actively involved in cultural representations through, among other things, craft sale, men are responsible for the decision making process – while women simply manage (Chant, 1992: 103). It is for this reason that women's roles within craft projects and families are undermined.

Women are considered to be responsible for the reproductive roles in the society and if they decide to become engaged in tourism-related income generating activities, they are inevitably still anticipated to play a leading role in the domestic realm (Chant, 1992: 127). Both women and men perceive female employment as a secondary activity because men are regarded as productive while women are assigned reproduction (Chant, 1992: 129). Chant continues that in a real sense, women are also productive given their traditional expertise as explained earlier. Marshall (2001: 174) contends that in the past, women were perceived as subject to the reproductive role. Given this, they remain marginalized in community structures and development initiatives meant for tourism related activities (Marshall, 2001: 175). Despite this adverse situation, women still play a crucial role in representations through the sale of crafts and dance performances.

1.8 Conclusion

Based on my review of the relevant literature, I developed the following argument:

Cultural tourism serves as a source of entertainment to tourists, while local people benefit by selling craft articles to tourists. People make cultural representations contrary to their real daily lives. On the other hand, tourists want to observe the lives of people exactly as they are described in historical texts, classical monographs and other old writings. People do make cultural representations, while at the same time others (particularly the museum) are representing their lives. Whether the lifestyles of people are represented by themselves or by others, the fact remains that what is represented is not real, but staged authenticity. The prevalence of staged authenticity is due to the pressure exerted by globalization.

I also argue that politics have a great influence on how cultural representations should be made. Politics in representations thus project power in representations. Power is a result of what the rich tourists would want to see. In the process of cultural representation, gender becomes a significant dimension of tourism. The analysis of gendered roles and exhibitions is inevitable in this regard.

Before commencing with the fieldwork, I consulted extensive literature on cultural representations and tourism. While I was doing fieldwork, I bore in mind the important facts raised in the literature. The methods I used when collecting the data enabled me to study what I was looking for. As a result of participant observation, the data I got from the field were extensive to the extent that I had to find more literature to back my findings. As a result, the research methods used during fieldwork were not treated as an independent entity from the contextual framework. However, a thesis needs to be broken into chapters, so the following chapter discusses my research methods in more detail.

Chapter Two

Methods

2.1 Participant Observation

My study focused on people living in Leboeng village. In order to comprehend the impact of tourism on cultural representation, it was vital to study the way in which people live in the village.

The study inevitably relied on qualitative research methods, in particular participant observation. In order to study people's lifestyles, I lived in the village so that I could have close interaction with local people. Tourism research, according to Riley (1999: 173), requires approaches of classical ethnography and emerging qualitative methods, which include personal experiences, diaries, conversations and semiotics (Riley, 1999: 173). The reason I used participant observation in this study of tourism is because host communities are at the 'back stage' while they represent their culture at the 'front stage' (MacCannell, 1973).

I was immersed with the participants in the village so that I could study their lives at close range. When an ethnographer is embedded with people, it is easier for her/him to acquire information, which cannot be acquired through formal questioning/interviews. When informants are asked questions in a formal way, they may provide a researcher with untrue answers. When a researcher lives with people in the village, a mutual trust and understanding evolves between a researcher and participants and therefore, people will actively participate in the research. Friedrichs and Ludtke (1975: 6) argue that social research, more particularly the field of cultural anthropology, has used and still uses participant observation as a primary method. Participant observation allows time to check the validity and the reliability of the data since some issues are inevitably observed more than twice. Participant observation as a research method can minimise the situation where a researcher gets wrong answers since not all participants are honest. This was certainly

the case with my research: At times I asked the participants direct questions but got responses which are quite different from their everyday lives.

In order to get insight into people's lived culture and their daily interaction with the social space, I also attended some social activities such as rituals and funerals. At funerals I not only observed the Christian spirituality, but I also saw how traditional culture is integrated in the Christian religion. I also volunteered to teach history at a local high school so that I could have an idea about the teachers' and learners' perceptions about tourism and culture in the village. I wrote brief notes on cards during the fieldwork and these cards also served as a diary. I did not take too many notes while interacting with informants. That is due to the fact that participants can at times feel uncomfortable when a researcher makes detailed notes during their presence. Overall, participant observation has got a lot to do with the researcher mixing her/himself with the participants, and subsequently the environment.

As a participant observer, in certain instances I also asked questions in an informal way. At times I did that without even realising that I was doing research, but only came to realise later that such information is vital for the study. I was also attached with the local craft project where I observed how crafts were produced. Research is craft, so while learning research, I found myself learning how people produce basketry. As a temporary member of such project, I not only observed, but also learnt the production of such crafts. As a result I learnt how the resources are used and how indigenous knowledge is commercialised. After I adapted to the village environment, I then visited the local museum "Museum of Man". At the museum I was a critical viewer of the displays.

I made use of my camera at all times. In most instances, participants were pleased to be photographed. Taking pictures is a form of social interaction and such photographs are at the later stage used for the detailed presentation of notes.

Finally, I need to say a word about the language used in the field. According to Bernard (2002: 324), "participant observation involves going out and staying out, learning a new language (or a new dialect of a language you already know), and experiencing the lives of the people you are studying as much as you can".

During my stay in Leboeng I found myself in a similar situation like the one described by Bernard (2002). Of course people in the village speak Sepedi but in a slightly different way from how I speak the same language. Sepedi spoken in Leboeng has got the influence of Sepulana (spoken in Bushbuckridge area, known as Mapulaneng) and Sepedi spoken in Sekhukhune area. They also have a different Sepedi accent to my own, and use a different way of greeting each other. I thus found myself learning to speak like them¹. As a black ethnographer, who also speaks the same language (Sepedi) with little difference regarding the dialect, I was familiar with most terms relevant for the study. I was, nevertheless, not familiar with some terms. For example, migrant labourers are locally referred as *makutuka* in Leboeng, while I call them *makarapa*.

2.2 Interviews and Informants

Interviews played a minor role in my research. During the ethnographic study I conducted unstructured interviews in a very informal way. Before fieldwork could start, I had some questions prepared for participants to answer, although data would primarily be acquired through ethnography. At times I had to informally ask about something in order to test if answers are the same with what I have observed.

Formal techniques used included a formal written essay by high school learners, whereby learners wrote about their perception about culture and tourism in the area. There were times when there were no informants on certain aspects, which I would still observe, though. Observations must be followed by clarification through conversations with people, since they have more knowledge about their environment.

Informants in this study are drawn from craft project members, people in the village and those who sell pottery and other crafts to tourists at the Strydom Tunnel. Members of the craft project were both men and women. Their ages ranged from late thirties to early sixties. Informants have been living in the village since they were born. Some informants were women who sell crafts to tourists on the road and those who

¹ In Leboeng, mother is called *mmane* while in the Sepedi dialect spoken in my home area we call mother *mma*. Maize porridge (local staple food) is called *bušwa* in Leboeng, while I call porridge *bogobe*.

perform traditional dances. Initially I had planned to interview tourists as well, but I abandoned this plan. Instead, I observed their interaction with local craft sellers. This happened after I realised that tourists were only interested in the price of crafts and in purchasing such products thereafter. This I found very interesting and I felt that no direct interviews with tourists were needed.

I lived with people in the village and also participated in craft projects. The first craft project I identified in Leboeng is Bahloki Basketry project. Therefore, the first person I got used to in Leboeng is the learder and founder of the project, Richard. During the first week in Leboeng I stayed at Richard's home while he was helping me to find a suitable place to stay for the period of my research. Richard later found a place where I could live, since he could not offer me full-time accommodation as lives at his parents' house. I rented a room at the home of Miss Mosomo, a single parent and migrant labour in the town of Sabie in Mpumalanga. Miss Mosomo's daughter, Tise and her four year-old son (Tise's son), Moses and Don (Miss Mosomo's cousins) also lived in the house. Don is a primary school learner while Tise and Moses are unemployed adults. Miss Mosomo comes home at the end of each month. The Mosomos owned a five-roomed house built out of rocks. They told me that it was not difficult to get rocks since they live next to the mountain. There is also a rock plastered room out side which I live in. Living with this family made my research easier in many instances, since they were my informants as well. They also told me about other people I could get information from. The family I lived with had nothing to do with tourism though. When I was not aware about dance performance in the village, they informed me since they knew my interests in cultural representations.

I also spent most of the time with craft sellers at the Strydom Tunnel. Teaching at the local high school on a temporary basis afforded me the opportunity to get immersed with teachers and school pupils. Leboeng is situated at the area frequented by tourists. Since I wanted to do an anthropological tourism research where there is a village nearby, I thought that it would be appropriate to work in the village. Informants for this study includes people are involved and those not involved in tourism, those who are involved in craft projects and dance performance. Before the projects, I had planned to interview dance performers, craft producers and sellers. However, as I spent more time in the

village, I randomly selected informants. I got some of the data without any prior planning. I conducted approximately thirty-nine detailed interviews. I interacted with about sixteen people regularly. Of all my informants, eighteen were involved in tourism although the number of people involved in tourism may be up to seventy if I include fifty-two dance performers in the group and in the village. Overall, local residents were involved in tourism in their capacities as dance performers, craft producers and sellers and tour guidance.

Villagers are pleased that tourists use the main road next to the village since they sell craft products. Although to a lesser extent, tourists visit the Museum of Man and the Echo Caves. Tour guide in these sites is poorly performed. Perhaps these trends are the result of to the deterioration of tourists' visits. I shall later in this dissertation explain why visits have deteriorated in these sites. However, the most preferred site visits in the area is the Strydom Tunnel. More than thirty tourists stop at the tunnel daily in order to take a look at the beautiful landscape. Tourists buy between six to ten items respectively from sellers. Some craft sellers, however, can sell not more than four items per day, depending on the tourists' preferences. The most popular purchases by tourists are pottery, although products like grass trays (*masehlo*), wooden craft and bead work are also purchased. Tourists are young and old and those who are young (in their late twenties to early forties) while the old ones are apparently the retired people. Young tourists, who are couples hardly come with children, while old tourists prefer to use buses. Tourists do not visit the village itself, except on few occasions when they visited the local high school which is situated next to the road. Tourists frequently ask craft sellers about the raw materials to produced pottery, wooden craft, grass trays and so forth. Craft sellers at the same time act as guides where tourists want to know more about the natural environment, including birds and the name of trees.

2.3 Locating informants

When I started with the fieldwork there were individuals I had already identified as informants. Due to the complexity of the research, I was referred to other people whom I had not initially planned to talk to. When I was looking for information regarding the

historical background of tourism in the area, for instance I was referred to somebody I never met before. That particular person happened to have some information about the history of tourism in the area since he once worked as a tour guide.

I met some informants through attending social activities. While I was teaching, the school was informed about the death of chief Nkoana of Leboeng. As a result I managed to attend his funeral where I got valuable additional information for the research. I wonder if I would have managed to attend the funeral service without prior having been at the school. Furthermore, everyday conversations and gossips at the school and in the village became very essential for the research project.

Informants in this research were generally willing to provide me with the data I needed and they were well aware that I was a student doing research in their village. Informants felt more comfortable participating in the study if I asked questions informally. They seemed to participate more effectively when I asked questions during normal everyday conversations. Since they got to know me, some even provided me with the data I required without being asked.



2.4 Ethical Considerations

I made it clear to participants that I am a student doing research and I never attempted to say that I was representing any institution. Nevertheless, some people in the village thought I was just working for money. That is partly because in their experience it is unusual for a research student to come and live in the village while doing research.

Maintaining the accepted standard of ethics includes the protection of participants. Protection of participants does not imply that as a researcher I have the responsibility to expose what I deem as physical, sexual, mental or any other form of abuse. Abuses and injustices caused by the past legacy of Apartheid are inevitably exposed. This is because of the need to have the historical insight of the socio-economic and political background of the area.

Those studied were given detailed information about the research and its purpose. As I lived with the people in the village for three months, some individuals gained an understanding of what social science research is all about.

For instance, Moses, aged 25 remembers that, “some year back... there was this white lady living in the village and I did not understand what she was actually doing. She has also adopted a Pedi name (Mokgadi) and I know her as Mokgadi. She was a simple person and we just regarded her as one of us since she stayed for a long time”.

It was during my stay in the village that some people started to realise that that particular person who lived in the village some years ago was doing research, since she used to take some pictures and carry a bag, like I was doing.

Complying with ethics also entails respecting traditional restrictions. As a black researcher who happens to speak the same language, with minor cultural variation, I am well aware of certain still rarely conformed to cultural restrictions.²

It is important to ensure the confidentiality of participants, as some of the issues are sensitive. Their real names will not be used in this mini-thesis. Instead, I use fictional first names. This is done in order to ensure and respect the right of participants to privacy and confidentiality. However, I know the names of participants since I was living with them, but will not reveal them

Confidentiality is needed because participants can be suspicious, as what can happen after the study has been completed. One woman co-coordinating one of the projects in the village requested me to bring along my student card or any other proof that I am a student, before they could furnish me with the data. It was during the 2004 national elections period and people were suspicious of strangers during that period. After having acquired data under such conditions, it remains essential to ensure confidentiality of participants.

² For instance, it is deemed culturally unethical to hand salt to a person. If one gives someone salt, she/he must put it down on the table or anywhere, so that the recipient then picks up the particular salt. If handed directly into the other person's hand, it is believed that hatred may develop between individuals.

2.5 The Research Experience

I started with the fieldwork in December 2003. It was during the festive season and migrant labourers (*makutuka*) were returning home. So participants were busy hosting or preparing to host *makutuka* and other visitors. During that period, my primary informants had suspended operations within projects, so my work was made a bit difficult as a result. No one was prepared to participate in the research, since in December and immediately after Christmas there are many events and activities participants are indulged in. I stayed for a week, and realised that I had to temporarily suspend the project. My finances were also exhausted so I went home to spend the Christmas holiday with my family. With funding facilitated by the University of the Western Cape's Anthropology and Sociology Department³, I resumed fieldwork in March 2004, which I carried out until May.

To start with fieldwork again, after it had been abandoned in December 2003, was not an easy task. Leboeng is a very remote rural area with few facilities, and that initially caused some loneliness. During the first few days of the research, I found it a bit difficult to get what I was looking for. At times I felt pessimistic as to whether I would get the right results. Since the study was an ethnographic one, I later got used to the village environment and as a result, I observed what I was looking for. I had some questions prepared before I could start with fieldwork. When I formally asked participants such questions, I was disappointed to get answers which were at times inconsistent with what I had observed.

As Leboeng is a big scattered village divided into sub-villages, I had to walk long distances from one section to the other. At first I felt tired but as weeks went by, I got used to walking longer distances and walking in the hills. I walked a lot so that I could study the whole village's cultural pattern.

The part of the village where I was living is not electrified, so I had to use candlelight in the evening. I found this problematic at first but I later got used to it, as I had to write notes in the evening. Means of communication can be difficult and I had to rely on radio to listen to news, when the battery had some power. Some people in the

³ Funding for fieldwork was provided by the National Research Foundation (NRF) through the project, "The Making of Indigenous Knowledge".

village use solar power, so we could charge our mobile phones. During rainy and cloudy weather, which could last for days, no solar energy could be available and that consequently meant communication break down with the outside world.

The other problem I encountered is that people in the village at times had high expectations of my work. They thought that some day I might assist them with the smooth running and management of their projects. Some jokingly said I should initiate a project so they can work under me. Some could hardly distinguish between research and project management. Since I observed, among other things, the daily despair people are in, I sometimes felt sorry for them and regretted why they should have expectations regarding my work. When I volunteered to teach at the local school, some people in the village thought I had just been appointed at the school, thus forgetting my presence as a researcher. In a way, I had multiple identities and some of these identities were merely conclusions drawn by people in the village. Some individuals mistakenly thought I was a community project facilitator, while others thought I was a teacher. To some I was a university student who was doing an internship, while to others I was simply a researcher. An ethnographer really can be the centre of attraction in a village.

I was teaching Human and Social Sciences to grade nine learners; while to those in grades eleven and twelve I was teaching History. I had no problem with the learners except that the grade nine learners were sometimes aggressive and disobedient, making noise in order to irritate me. They (grades nine) concluded that I was a teacher even though I explained explicitly that I was doing research. They were not co-operative as far as schoolwork was concerned. That temporarily gave me some headaches. I had no problem with grades eleven and twelve learners since they were very co-operative and they were impressed by my teaching skills, which I acquired through tutoring first year social science students at the University of the Western Cape. They also submitted the essay I requested them to write. Through their essays, I got an idea of the learners' perceptions about culture and tourism, necessary for this mini-thesis.

The analysis of gendered representations does not suffice without making a detailed study of gender relations in the village. As a male ethnographer coming from a gendered society I made a concerted effort to study gender relation in representations and the village from a rational and impartial point of view. This was prevalent during the

fieldwork where I was very sensitive in observing how women and men relate in the village and the roles they are respectively subjected to. As a male anthropologist who developed a much clearer comprehension of gender aspects during the data analysis period, my approach to this issue hardly touched by male researchers was to look at both sides of the story regarding gender.

2.6 Conclusion

Although the study was based on participant observation, this did not necessarily restrict me from asking unstructured open-ended questions. Some of the questions I had prepared before fieldwork were answered by merely observing. Nevertheless, it seemed necessary to ask structured questions in relation to the historical background of Leboeng, even though I left more room for informants to narrate on what I had not asked specifically. Despite the problems and constraints I encountered during the course of the research, I felt more optimistic that I would eventually get the anticipated data. In fact the problems enhanced my experience as a novice researcher.

Participant observation indeed helped me to overcome problems I encountered. As a male ethnographer embedded with people I managed to relate well with both female and male participants. Furthermore, as a participant observer I managed to get adequate information regarding the historical overview of the village, projects and tourism, which I discuss in the following chapter.

Chapter Three

Historical Overview of the Community, Projects and Tourism

3.1 Introduction

Leboeng is situated in Limpopo province, on the border with Mpumalanga province. The area is mountainous and it is situated next to the Museum of Man and the Echo Caves (two well-known local tourist sites). Beautiful mountains surround Leboeng. Based on the census conducted in 2000, the population of Leboeng was about ten thousand. The current population estimation is about eleven thousand. The main language spoken in Leboeng is Sepedi. Although there are a few people of Swazi and Tsonga origin (2% of the population), they do not speak either Swazi or Tsonga, but Sepedi. Those who are of Tsonga and Swazi origin are identified by their surnames. There are people using Tsonga surnames such as Nkhondo and Mdluli, even though they can neither speak nor understand Tsonga. The same thing happens with those who are of Swazi origin.

People depend on wood for fuel and continue to chop wood and fresh trees. In recent years the unavailability of wood in the forests has tempted villagers to trespass into the nearest farm to chop good wood. Even though some households (in some sub-villages) have been electrified, people continue to utilize wood for fuel since they either save electricity or they just cannot afford to pay for it.

During rainy summer seasons, the area is green to an extent that everyone visiting the area for the first time cannot resist appreciating the landscape. In summer the landscape looks very green and beautiful mountains supplement such beauty. Autumn days are less hot. In Leboeng summer it is very hot. It was terribly hot in December 2003 when I started with the fieldwork. As a result of being situated on the High Veld, summers are hot while winter periods are very chilly. Most of the youth related to me that the worse periods of their life times were while they were at initiation school, since young boys and girls go to initiation during winter.

The village is next to the road that links the Limpopo and Mpumalanga tourist regions. Those tourism regions are Panorama (Mpumalanga) and Ivory Route (Limpopo).

In terms of traditional authority, Queen Dinkwenyane rules the village, although there are a number of indunas in charge of sections (sub-villages). Controversy surrounding chieftaincy in Leboeng has been raging on for a number of years and this controversy, as I will elaborate later, was one of the obstacles to effective implementation of community based projects, including craft projects.

Leboeng follows a scattered settlement pattern with some sub-villages having not more than a hundred households. There are about ten sub-villages and some are divided by a tiny walking path to the extent it may be difficult for a stranger to distinguish where one ends and another begins. Homes are situated next to the mountain while the flat landscape in the middle of the village is reserved for subsistence agricultural activities. When a new settlement is erected, according to local residents, it should be done next to the mountain, without tampering with the flat land in the middle of the village. Houses include both mud huts and modern brick houses. Most modern brick houses, though, are not built according to a building plan. However, there are a few nice houses with tile roofing, owned by the middle class, who includes local business owners, teachers, nurses, police officers and migrant labourers who earn reasonable wages. The middle class are local residents who are not trapped in everyday poverty. Their houses are not only nice and of good quality, they are also well furnished. Furniture in these houses entails sofas, coal stoves, tables and chairs. Bedrooms are also nice with bedroom suits and wardrobes. Even though other sections in the village are not electrified, or rather most households do not have access to electricity; the middle class still afford to have television sets in their homes. Solar energy and generators are thus relied upon. However, the presence of huts in some middle class homes is prevalent.

3.2 Socio-political History of the village

A discussion of local politics in Leboeng forms part of part of cultural representations. In this mini thesis I made a critical discussion on cultural representations in the post-Apartheid South Africa. Therefore, a discussion of the history of local politics lays the

foundation for the present social and political dimensions and inevitably, cultural representations.

3.2.1 Local Politics

Oomen (2000: 73) found that in the 1980s in the Sekhukhune region (under which Leboeng falls) rural dwellers became active in politics by denouncing chiefs who worked with the Apartheid authorities. According to local historians, in Leboeng, too, the spirit of comradeship was rife even though political activity was not organised. During the early 1990s, most people started to be somewhat politically conscious with most people either supporting the ANC or PAC. Most comrades regarded themselves as belonging to the ANC although they were not card-carrying members. On the other hand, the wall of the local market is painted with the PAC emblem. I was told that comrades made that painting during this period of rural political consciousness. People were united in the violent campaigns against witchcraft, while others were simply forced to join this cause. People related to me that those who could be identified as witches were exposed and expelled from the village. According to people in the village, comrades also investigated corruption at the local primary school. There were accusations of the misuse of school funds although no sophisticated auditing mechanisms were used prior to such accusations. During the so-called investigations, verbal questioning in connection with expenditure was undertaken.

3.2.2 Chieftainship

Chieftainship in Leboeng plays a vital role in the politics of the village. It is imperative to have an understanding of the local governance through the queen and indunas, since cultural representations are made in such areas of jurisdiction. Although chiefs and indunas do not play a role in tourism in Leboeng, an understanding of village governance as a form of “tradition” needs to be explored.

As elsewhere in the region, chieftainship has been contested. The current Queen, Queen Dinkwenyane, was imposed upon the people of Leboeng in the early 1960s. Until

then Leboeng was under the leadership of Chief Jack Nkoana and several indunas such as Molapo, Mohlala, Moraba, Kgwedi and Letebele. The Apartheid government wanted to utilise Boomplaas (the place where Dinkwenyane was ruling). I was told by one of my informants, Molapo, who is a government official in the Department of Social Development that the land Dinkwanyane and her people were evicted from was earmarked for commercial farming. Commercial farming has been going on since Dinkwanyana and her people were forcefully removed. The Apartheid regime then promised Dinkwenyane another area where she could rule. Similarly, Oomen (2000: 72) found that in Sekhukhune, Limpopo province, the co-operative headmen were made chiefs while chiefs who did not collaborate with the Nationalist Government were not officially recognised. Dinkwenyane was thus promised the village of Leboeng, which was under the chieftaincy of Chief Jack Nkoana. One of my informants, Molapo claimed that the then government had bribed chief Nkoana to leave his position. Dinkwenyane then established the royal house at Sterkpruit “Phiring”.

In the Limpopo province’s Sekhukhune region in particular, as found by Oomen (2000: 73), popular dissatisfaction with the chiefs was due to the fact that they were regarded as collaborators of the Apartheid regime. People of Leboeng resisted the imposition of the new chief, Dinkwenyane. Their resistance was based on the grounds that Dinkwenyane was not their rightful ruler and is “*lethumasha*” (a woman who has never been at initiation school). This is still an issue until now. The Queen does not have relations, with regard to governance, with the people of Leboeng since indunas in Leboeng regard themselves as chiefs, at the same time undermining Chief Jack Nkoana of Leboeng, who is officially regarded as an induna. In fact, all the indunas in Leboeng regard themselves as Chiefs, so do the local people. In every sub village, indunas convene meetings (*kgoro*) and village courts in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Only when people need some official assistance, like the provision of land, they go to the queen for help. Generally, however, the people of Leboeng do not recognize the queen as their legitimate ruler.

Chief Jack Nkoana was the chief of Leboeng before the current Queen. He was the one who was dispossessed of the chieftaincy of Leboeng. Some people even today feel that he was robbed of the chieftaincy due to his lack of education. It is alleged that he

was made to sign (rubberstamp) a document that justified his subordination to the imposed chief Dinkwenyane. Chief S.M. Nkoana, who succeeded Chief Jack Nkoana in 1970, is officially regarded as an induna. Chief S.M. Nkoana passed away in 2004, while I was doing this research. During the funeral, one speaker from the royal house claimed that the late chief played a pivotal role in community development. Nkoana facilitated the building of the schools in the village. One school S.M. Nkoana Primary School was named after him. Very few people think that he “sold out” to the Apartheid government. In fact, lots of people are very reluctant to discuss this issue. Most of them are not aware of the controversy that encompasses chieftainship, and those who know are not willing to discuss the matter. Generally, people regard their indunas as their chiefs and, surprisingly, at the same time acknowledge that Dinkwenyane is their ruler.

Although Oomen (2000: 72) writes that officials in the homelands had an enormous amount of autonomy to the extent of controlling the payment of chiefs and the power to appoint or remove of chiefs, the Lebowa homeland government under which Leboeng fell before 1994 failed to solve the chieftaincy dispute in Leboeng. Like the Queen, the late Chief Nkoana was also on good terms with and was regularly consulted by the homeland government in connection with projects carried out in the village. In 1974, the Lebowa homeland government leader, the late Dr. C.N Phatudi was consulted to solve the raging problem of chieftaincy in the area. However, Phatudi failed to sort them out. Nelson Ramodike, the Bantustan leader who succeeded Dr. Phatudi, was also consulted on the matter and equally failed to come up with solutions regarding the chieftaincy problems. After 1994, the ANC government was also approached on the matter. To date no solution to the chieftaincy problems has been found.

The problem of imposed chiefs is prevalent throughout the province. In 1996 the Limpopo provincial government appointed the Ralushai commission of inquiry to solve this problem instigated by the Apartheid regime. The commission concluded its work in July 1998. The Limpopo provincial government took a crucial step by appointing the commission, but the former premier, Ngoako Ramatlhodi objected to the release of the commission’s report due to its political sensitivity (Oomen, 2000: 77). He even once said the findings of the commission would not be released as that might lead to bloodshed all over the province. However, Mr. Masemola, the leader of the ANC in the Sekhukhune

region, said at the funeral of the late chief Nkoana “the government... has not neglected the problem of chieftaincy in Leboeng. In... fact the government is working very hard to find the solution to the problem”. The Leboeng chieftaincy is well supported by the paramount chief of Bapedi, Chief K.K. Sekhukhune. It is apparent that the ANC was also supporting the deposed Chief Nkoana.

3.2.3 Relations between Villagers and Tourist Sites’ Owner

Since the Echo Caves and the Museum of Man are tourist sites in the area, it is essential to make a discussion about the relations between the owner of these sites and the local people. Cultural representations are made by local people and the museum (through its exhibits). Leboeng borders on the privately owned farm where the Museum of Man and the Echo caves are situated. The Echo Caves were discovered during the early 20-century. They were used for shelter and it is believed that people used to live in the caves. Marker and Brook (1970: 21) found that during the Swazi raids there was a river underground with sufficient water to be consumed by both people and livestock. When the caves were discovered, there were human bones found. The Echo Caves are regarded as a site of scientific importance due to their accumulation of human fossils based on, among others, the earliest ancestors of human kind (www.sterkfontein-caves.co.za/sterkfontein.htm). There is evidence that people cooked meals inside, since there is a hole inside the cave which was used as a smoke chimney, which has been blackened by smoke. The environment inside the cave is regarded as fragile and the locations of the Echo Caves “are notable for their beautiful limestone formations and are major tourist attractions”

(www.sterkfontein-caves.co.za/sterkfontein.htm). There are stones inside the caves and if beaten, they make a fascinating sound, as if coming from a sophisticated musical instrument. The then (pedi) Radio Lebowa station, now called Thobela FM, has recorded the sounds from the caves’ musical stones. The recorded rhythms were used in some radio programmes. Human bones found in the caves were placed in the privately-run nearby Museum of Man (www.showcaves.com/english/za/showcaves/Echo.html).

For tourism purposes, the caves have been developed with the installation of lights and accessible entrance for tourists to get inside.

However, during the period of the fieldwork, human bones were not on display at the museum of man. One of my informants Matšeke, who used to work at as a tour guide at the Echo Caves and the museum, maintains that the human bones have since been taken to a museum in Pretoria. What is in the museum today are: the portrayal of a “typical bushman” sleeping place; paintings of women wearing so-called traditional clothes; pottery paintings; a small grass-roofed mud hut; fossils; traditional articles; and other displays. I shall elaborate on the Museum of Man in more detail at a later stage.

The relationship between local people and the owner of this tourist site encompassing the Echo Caves and the museum, has been sour for a long time. Villagers have been accused by the farm and museum owner of trespassing for wood chopping (for fuel) on his farm. In most instances, women were caught and arrested by police. One elderly woman said the most painful period in her life is when she was arrested for chopping wood on the farm. The politics of conflict between the community and the farm owner worsened in 1994. The farmer accused people of trespassing and cutting his fence. People in the village told me that his livestock and an ostrich escaped from the farm and walked into the village. When the ostrich came people, mainly men and boys, chased it. It was killed and the meat was divided among them. Those who owned dogs during the killing of the ostrich got the lion’s share. Some simply possessed hunting knowledge. Villagers inevitably took some of the livestock that came to the village.

Upon the farmer’s arrival at the village, people closed the main gate entrance of the village and they started chanting revolutionary slogans and threatened to attack the farmer. The army later came to disperse the mob but those who regarded themselves as real comrades⁴ did not run away. The scenario was in one way or the other regarded as a political pursuit to ensure justice and people regarded themselves as comrades. One man told me that people in Leboeng are “cultural” they have “morality” (*ubuntu*) and they are

⁴ A comrade was the term referring to colleagues during the liberation struggle, but the term was later extended to refer villagers who mobilised themselves during witch hunting and protests in high schools and villages, although with unclear agendas. Witch hunting was very common in the mid-1990s. In some instances, the suspected witch was burnt to death, thus imitating the burning of political spies in black townships during the height of apartheid.

very friendly, but can also be very dangerous if provoked like the situation with the farmer.

3.3 Socio-economic History

3.3.1 Poverty

In Leboeng, people have been living in poverty for a long time. Most families have been dependent on migrant labour. In Leboeng labour migration (to towns such as Polokwane, Witbank, Middleburg, Pretoria and Johannesburg, among others), like in most villages in the region, is prevalent. Other people have for a long time been working on farms earning very little salaries; this was still the situation at the time of my research. Some worked and are still working as domestic servants for the local middle class who consists of teachers, nurses, business people, police officers and public servants, among others. Most families depend on pensions for senior citizens and government child care grants. In fact, old age pensions are the primary source of income for most people. As is the situation in many rural areas, teenage pregnancies are common and government child grants, although little, make some contribution. I was told that some young girls deliberately fall pregnant, anticipating getting such grants, only to be disappointed when they realize that these grants make little contribution. While I was temporarily attached to the local high school (Tšhabelang Dinoko High) four girls did not come to school on pay days of old people and unemployed mothers. Some of the girls would at least show up at the school shortly before lunch, which was accepted by the teachers, who know that many school girls are parents who should not be punished for coming late.

While there is little employment in Leboeng, a few informal activities have been going on. The local fruit market has brought some sort of relief for women who sell fruits, vegetables, bread and soup at the market. The market is situated right next to the road and motorists (including tourists) stop and buy fruit while school children buy bread and soup at lunch time, which they call the “long break”. Others sell just outside the local clinic. A fifty-something-year-old woman, Ma-Mabelana told me that she has been selling bread and vegetables at the clinic gate since 1990. These days, she is a bit worried

about the bakery that is about to operate next to the clinic. That implies that her bread will no longer be purchased. The bakery is an initiative of Lehlabile Art and Craft Project, one of the recent initiatives in the village. Project members have decided to bake bread since they generate very little income through dressmaking or selling beads and pottery. The existing local bakery generates more profit and Lehlabile project members hope that integrating bakery as one of their projects can increase income.

3.3.2 Lack of Development and Basic Services under Apartheid

During the Apartheid and Bantustan homelands era, people of Leboeng lived in absolute poverty and there was lack of such basic services as water and health care. There was no clinic in the village. Anyone who felt sick had to travel (about 100 km) to Prakteseer (a township outside the town of Burgersfort) for consultation. Leboeng is in a very remote, mountainous area and the village was always neglected in terms of infrastructure development. People used to fetch water from the borehole and the situation has not changed. People still struggle to get water and there is no electricity, except for few sub villages/sections, which have been electrified lately.

The former Lebowa Bantustan government did not make a meaningful effort to address social ills through facilitating community based development projects. In response to this, in 1984 community members established the Swaranang Development Association. The main aim of the Swaranang Development Association was to persuade government and non-governmental organizations to cater for health and welfare services, the building of schools, job creation, promotion of agriculture and art and craft projects. According to Molapo, co-founder of the Swaranang project and a community liaison officer in the national Social Development Department, during that period there was no electricity in the area, so there was also no fax facility and postal services were the only communication.

Even before the establishment of the Swaranang Development Association, in the early 1980s women came together to see how development can be pursued. Women representatives were selected from each section of Leboeng. The idea was to discuss the unavailability of basic services. As one woman told me, then they used to depend on one

borehole for the entire village. Despite those difficulties, women tried by all means at their disposal to engage the then Lebowa homeland government in development activities. In response, the Lebowa government organized workshops to educate the community about the danger of dirty water and diseases. Surprisingly, there were workshops but no provision of water. Sanitation problems and dirty water continued to be a way of life for villagers, which resulted in the outbreak of diseases, amid water and sanitation workshops.

In 1986 the community wanted to have a health facility built in the village and applied for funding from the German embassy. The embassy promised to pledge millions of rands. The German embassy then requested the community to submit a business plan before funding could be done. Furthermore, the funders would like to have the site (where the clinic had to be erected) inspected. Getting a site required the community to approach the imposed chief (Dinkwenyane) for approval and the granting of the site. However, as things were then, if anyone went to Dinkwenyane, she/he was regarded as a sellout (*mpimpi*). Therefore, the community did not approach the chief. The community instead approached the then Department of the Interior to erect a new settlement, where there would be no induna/chief, so that a clinic could be built. The department agreed but during the process the German embassy had lost patience and withdrew the funding earmarked for such projects. Only in 1996 did the Department of Health fund the establishment of the Swaranang health care centre and clinic.

One informant maintained that through community initiatives, spearheaded by women, a mobile clinic that visited the village once a week was organized. Although the village is situated in an area with many tourist attractions, community initiatives in the past never considered tourism related projects, since the situation was not conducive then.

3.3.3 Recent initiative and post-apartheid government

Despite economic and political instability in the village, some people, women in particular, had already realised the significance of participating in community development projects. The new dispensation in South Africa saw projects in Leboeng taking a new dimension. Shortly after 1994, craft and poverty alleviation projects started

to emerge in the village. Such projects included Imbalenhle Bead Work (for beadwork and dressmaking) led by Helen, Machokgweng Brick Making (for brick making and traditional dance) led by Rita, Emma and Rose, Aganang Bead Work (for beads and dressmaking), led by Susan and Bahloki basketry project (for basketry and lampshades) led by Richard. Leaders in these projects represent the entire members in meetings with government and NGOs officials and relevant stakeholders. Further, leaders, who act as chairpersons in their respective projects, represent members in training and capacity building workshops.

Contestation within projects can prevail when the morale and motivation among members is very low due lack of funding and some project members simply leave the projects. Some members are de-motivated since they think that their involvement in project is a waste of time. When there is an indication that funding is about to be secured, or there is an indication that projects are succeeding, those who have resigned start to show interest and that causes conflict as a result. The Machokgweng project is very successful since they frequently get invited to perform dance in official ceremonies. Furthermore, their brick making project is a success and their bricks are regularly purchased. The Bahloki Basketry project is successful since they always take their products to the Center for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Aganang bead work project (Aganang) is struggling and their beads are not regularly taken to CSIR. Aganang depend on the Bahloki Project since they work closely together. Lack of capacity is prevalent in the Aganang. Embalenhle project, who specialises in bead work and dress making are absolutely doing well and they also work closely with Bahloki, although they are based in the nearby village of Phiring, where the queen is stationed. The Department of Social development recently donated a big sewing machine to the Embalenhle and they are likely to succeed.

Women dominate such projects. Some women saw the new democracy as the opportunity to sell pottery and other crafts at the road at the Strydom Tunnel, also known as Lepelle (named after the Lepelle River at the tunnel). The Strydom Tunnel is about ten kilometers from Leboeng. One woman said to me, “In 1998...I decided to come at the road to sell pottery and other traditional objects to specifically tourists. Now it is easier to

sell because there are no longer attacks by racist white men. Actually, I sell crafts to tourists who happen to be white".

Some people though, preferred to make even more use of the opportunities brought by the new democracy. Instead of doing crafts individually, they decided to form a project. Bahloki Basketry was formed in 2000. The aim of this project is to produce crafts that can be sold to tourists. Bahloki Basketry has formed a co-operative with other projects in the village. Their relationship with Machokgweng Brick-making project (which is also a dance group) is particularly fruitful because almost all members in this project are women who make bricks and perform traditional dance. As a dance group, these women call themselves Phakgamang Machokgweng, although members are the same ones who make bricks. This dance group is very well organised. Seventy-five-year-old Ngoatle told me that while he was still young, women in the village used to perform *makgakgase*⁵. He said, "...they were very energetic when they dance. They did not even wear shoes, they danced bare-footed".

Emma, one of the dancers told me how she learnt the dance while she was a young girl. She was delighted to perform to tourists at the Echo Caves in 2002. On the 26 October 2002, Bahloki Basketry, together with projects they are co-operating with, were invited to the product exhibition and traditional performance during poverty alleviation celebration day. The event was organised at the road (junction) leading to the museum and the Echo caves, known locally as the Echo Caves. During this day, craft products were exhibited and dance performed.

Between 17 August and 7 September 2002, Bahloki Basketry was invited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development's 2nd National Craft Imbizo in Johannesburg. Bahloki Basketry participated in the conference through exhibiting lampshades for sale to delegates and tourists. The Craft Imbizo's objective was to have local crafts exhibited and sold to both guests and visitors. A place to display such commodities, known as "Beautiful Things" exhibition, was erected and called Ubuntu Village. The "Beautiful Things" and National Craft Imbizo was funded by the

⁵ *Makgakgase* is a pedi noun, which simply mean local dance. *Makgakgase* has been performed long time ago by people living in rural villages in the area.

Department of Arts and Culture with assistance from the Department of Trade and the Industry and Tourism Enterprise Programme

3.4 Tourism, Craft and Performance.

During the 1980s, large numbers of tourists visited this area, largely paying visits to the Museum of Man and the Echo Caves. On their way from this eastern part of the then Transvaal province they would head to the northern Transvaal. The village itself has never been an attraction to tourists in the sense that they do not come to the village to experience the way people live. However, the local high school teacher told me that in the 1980s while the village was still small, tourists used to come to the school and take pictures. The school is situated in the trees just a few meters from the main road. One teacher further told me “in 2000 German tourists visited... the school and took some good pictures to take home. They also gave children sweets”.

Leboeng is situated next to the road leading to tourist destinations in Mpumalaga and Limpopo. It is also close to the Museum of Man, the Echo Caves and Strydom Tunnel. The Strydom Tunnel is situated in the most beautiful mountains. Tourists often stop at the tunnel to observe the attractive landscape and take pictures. On top of the mountain there are waterfalls – water flowing from the top of the mountain into the Lepelle River. As one is standing at the tunnel, one can see a village at the bottom, which looks like an arial photograph.

This area was initially known as the eastern Transvaal and in early years, it was the centre of attraction for many local and international tourists. During the years of 1970s to the late 1990s, tourists, South African and foreign, used to flock in large numbers to tourist sites next to Leboeng (the Echo Caves and the Museum of Man). One of my informants, Matšeke, the former tour guide at the Echo Caves and the Museum of Man who is now a school teacher said there was a board on the road, which read, “the Echo Caves was discovered by Derrick Matšeke”. Matšeke claims that Derrick Matšeke was his grand father. Matšeke further claims that “now that sign was removed so that there had to be no impression that a black man discovered the places of cultural significance”.

For the past few years tourism in the area is no longer rife, tourists pass the village only on their way from Mpumalanga's tourism destinations to Limpopo. Matšeke says tourists are no longer interested in the Echo Caves and the Museum of Man since there is nothing interesting to be seen there, especially since the human bones were removed from the museum. The Echo Caves are also no longer of interest since the human bones have been removed from the Museum of Man. The human bones that were displayed in the museum were excavated from the Echo Caves and the museum's rock shelter. People used to live in the caves and the rock shelter (now the museum) a long time ago. After tourists had viewed human bones in the museum, they would inevitably like to visit the Echo Caves (about 400 yards from the museum). The deterioration of the museum due to the removal of human bones inevitably affected the visits to the caves since there is a strong inter-link between the museum and the caves. Another reason why tourists no longer visit the Echo Caves in large numbers is that the caves are not perceived as spectacular as compared to the Sudwala Caves in Mpumalanga (www.sabie.co.za/tour/escarpment-route.html#museum).

Visitors were anxious to come and see human bones at the museum. Some tourists could re-visit the museum to satisfy their curiosity. Although I never visited it as a school pupil, my fellow pupils and teacher used to visit the museum. At times teachers would organise to travel to the "Eastern Transvaal". The museum and the caves were very popular, but these days school visits are made to places like Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and other cities. The unpopularity of the Museum of Man and the Echo Caves are the main reason attributing to the decline of tourism. There is also lack of interest even on the part of the Mpumalanga Tourism Board. This is apparent through the absence the advertisement of the Echo Caves and the Museum of Man in the board's publications and web site. Attraction to the Museum of Man has deteriorated to such an extent that a professional tour guide is no longer employed. Every time I visited the museum during fieldwork, I could see cars passing down the main road, but none stopped.

According to Mashi, one of the craft sellers at the Strydom Tunnel, tourists used to visit the area in the past, but there was no cultural representation in the form of craft sale. She told me; "The previous government...did no create a conducive environment for the sale of crafts. In fact it was deemed illegal to sell crafts". Mashi claims that it was

not even safe to walk next to the road; otherwise white Afrikaners could throw an object at you from a moving car. After the end of Apartheid such blatant racism is no longer a threat. The new dispensation in South Africa saw the large-scale emergence of craft sale along the route from Mpumalanga to Limpopo tourist sites.

Mashi felt that the new democratic government and the presence of tourists along the road in the area benefit people like them who sell crafts at the Strydom Tunnel. Mashi is happy that during the December holidays she makes a lot of money. When holidays are over, however, little money is made.

Even though the pre-democracy period was not associated with the sale of crafts to tourists, there were people in the village that had expertise regarding craft production.

3.5 Conclusion

Despite the controversy surrounding chieftaincy in Leboeng, a result of the legacy of Apartheid, people in the village continue with their daily lives. There is virtually no resistance or opposition against Queen Dinkwenyane. The late Chief S.M. Nkoana and headmen denounced the local Queen without the support of the people. The problems are worsened by the failure of the Limpopo provincial government to release the report of the Ralushai Commission.

Although the relations between villagers and the neighbouring farmer, who is also the owner of the Echo Caves and the Museum of Man, was worse in 1994, people still do not seem to have forgotten.

However, the unbanning of political parties in 1990 opened the doors for rural dwellers to engage in violent actions such as witch-hunting, in the name of political pursuit. In that process, people regarded themselves as either belonging to the African National Congress (ANC) or the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Support for the PAC deteriorated and people now support the ANC and the Democratic Party (DA). I noticed the support of political parties by villagers during April 2004 national elections. Notwithstanding the controversy surrounding chieftainship, people in Leboeng continue with their daily lives – regarding indunas within their respective sections of Leboeng as

chiefs. While life has improved since 1994, with the establishment of a clinic and the partial upgrading of the water supply, there is still a lot of poverty in the village. In the following chapter I am going to provide a comprehensive analysis of the daily life of the people of Leboeng.



Chapter Four

Daily Life in Leboeng

4.1 Introduction

The daily lives of those who are involved in tourist-related activities and adults remaining in the village are a bit different. Those who are involved in tourist-related activities spend almost all days at the Strydom Tunnel and craft production sites. As a result, they have little time to attend social functions such as funerals and church. Furthermore, they have little time to regularly perform household activities. However, when they return home in the evening, they inevitably do what remaining adults do, like cooking, among other household chores. Some remaining adults at home, however, become involved in tourist-related activities when they are expected to go and perform dance at the Echo Caves. Overall, the lives of those involved in tourist-related activities are occupied and they earn income, thus escaping adverse conditions the remaining adults find themselves in.

The central question of this thesis concerns the effects of tourism on the way people represent their culture. Taking it further, this question entails a critical analysis of how local life styles are influenced by tourism. Furthermore, I need to discuss whether the way in which people represent culture is an accurate reflection of how they live in the village. In this chapter I am going to elaborate on the way people live in the village or the “back stage” as referred by MacCannell (1989).

The data acquired for the discussion in this chapter is the result of daily experiences and observations. In addition, I asked questions in order to test people’s opinions about their way of life.

Ethnography granted me the opportunity to study people’s lives at the closest range. Before my fieldwork in 2004, I had visited Leboeng village in September 2003 to make some preliminary observations. My first impressions of the daily life in the village were quite different to what I observed during fieldwork. I have learnt about the people of Leboeng’s daily life during fieldwork.

4.2 Houses and Domestic Life

4.2.1 Houses

Leboeng is a scattered settlement in a mountainous area. Due to the mountainous nature of the area, some people have used rocks to build their houses. Other people simply live in mud houses and grass-roofed mud huts. Some houses have been built using bricks. Most of the houses are not built according to a building plan. However, a few contemporary/urban style houses with the tile roofing are also present. In the new sub-villages or sections, however, there are few huts and mud houses. Most of the younger generation live in the new sections and they are reluctant to live in either huts or mud houses. They instead prefer contemporary houses.

4.2.2 Domestic Life



The home is where people retire after they have made cultural representations to tourists. It became clear to me that most aspects of life at home are not regarded as part and parcel of culture. During fieldwork I was thereby more particularly interested in how people live in the village compared with how their culture is represented to tourists.

As I have indicated earlier, Leboeng is a poverty-stricken area. Most men regard migration as the solution to escape poverty. More than half of the male population in Leboeng migrates to Polokwane, the capital of the Limpopo province, as well as to major towns in the Mpumalanga province such as Witbank, Middleburg and Nelspruit. Others go to Johannesburg, Pretoria and other towns in the Gauteng province. In addition, a small number of women, not more than a quarter, also migrate. Men who work in Gauteng come home during the Easter and December holidays. Those who work in Mpumalanga towns come home virtually every month end, although they may skip the return during certain months.

Women who stay behind in the village are responsible for the domestic domain. Performing domestic activity is clearly defined along gender lines. There are tasks that

are constructed as the responsibility of either a woman or a man. In her recent article entitled “*The Least Sexist Society? Perspective on Gender, Change and Violence among southern African San*”, Becker (2003: 16) argues that among the San, a more rigid division has emerged because of specific circumstances. In this section I will elaborate on how women interact with men and subsequently construct the social space on a daily basis.

Leboeng is a very quiet village. Every morning children go to school and women stay behind in the village. They actively generate means to survive through participating in projects and small businesses. As Bank (2002: 641) observed in the Eastern Cape, women who stayed behind in the village while men migrated not only looked after domestic responsibilities but also made efforts to engage in income-generating activities. Men tended to resort to migration to make a living, women however possessed potentialities to exploit local resources for their own advantage – an endeavor that is certainly a challenging one.

Some of the women who stay behind in the village have the full support of their husbands who have turned to migrant work to make a living. Such support is evident when women are encouraged by their husbands to participate in community development projects. On one occasion Bahloki organized a trainer who would train women in dressmaking. It was agreed that such training would take place in Susan’s house. A meeting was held whereby a female trainer explained how training would be carried out during the following week. In the evening when all project members had gone home, Susan’s husband, Matome who happened to be a member of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) had prepared some church tea (*mogabolo*). He then called Richard, Fana, Kgwedi and me to join him to drink *mogabolo*. As we were sitting enjoying the stimulating drink, Susan would occasionally come and take a cup of *mogabolo* and then disappear into the house. As we were sitting with Matome, he told us he appreciated the job that we were doing as this brought some relief to his unemployed wife. However, he politely warned us that we should never tamper with his wife while he is away at work in Johannesburg. It follows from my observations that domestic life is subject to gender relations. In those Leboeng families where there are a husband and a wife, the man always commands the higher authority.

4.3 Food and Clothing

The staple food in Leboeng is maize meal porridge. Side dishes served with porridge can be meat, chicken, and milk, local vegetables (like *thepe*, *telele* and *lerote*) and cabbage/spinach. Otherwise, wild vegetables are mostly consumed during rainy days in summer. In summer shortly before the start of the summer rains, people plough in their yards to plant and grow maize and vegetables. Wild vegetables just grow naturally on the fertile ploughed ground. After the period of harvest has passed, wild vegetables are hardly consumed. After harvesting people eat meat, chicken soup, eggs and milk, among other side dishes. Although most families have cattle and goats, they do not slaughter these animals unless they really need meat. A cow is only slaughtered when there is a funeral, a wedding or a big community function. People would rather kill a chicken since it can be consumed at one meal. Most families keep chickens; those who do not have chickens buy them.

During the Christmas and New Year period and the Easter holidays, special food is prepared. Rice, meat, soft drinks and salads are served on Christmas, New Year and Easter. Rice is perceived as delicious, and as a luxury unlike the staple food in Leboeng, which is maize meal porridge. People in the village drink bottled beer, ciders and wine during festive seasons. Rather than the soft drinks and manufactured alcohol consumed during the festive season and Easter, people regard locally brewed sorghum beer as part of their culture, since sorghum beer was consumed during special occasions in the past.

On welfare and pension days, those who received payments buy meat or chicken at pay points. Markets spring up at the pay point where commodities and groceries, such as chickens, meat, clothes, blankets, plates, plastic containers and medicines are sold.

Porcupines are an important part of craft production as well as of daily life in Leboeng⁶. Porcupine meat is eaten, and although to a lesser extent than in the past, hunting is still a part of the life of local people. Hunting has always been important

⁶ I will describe the significance of porcupine quills in craft production in chapter five.

among the Pedi people as Monnig (1967: 164) described. He wrote that most Pedi households preferred to have dogs for economic reasons, mainly hunting. Recently, concerns have been raised about the ecological impact of hunting. Local people, however, deny the fact that the killing of porcupines can cause environmental degradation, in the form of endangering the survival of porcupines. They maintain that there are lots of porcupines in the mountain, and very few people hunt them. One elderly man Mako, who stays alone insisted that there are lots of porcupines in the mountain and most households are situated just next to the mountains. Mako hunts porcupines since the money he receives as a welfare pension is not enough. The adults remaining in the village and those involved in tourist-related activities eat similar food.

4.4 Social functions

Women play a major role in the social life of the village through joining clubs and societies. Women who remain in the village, while many men are away on migrant labour, have for many years been vital in the reticence of social solidarity in the form of village banks (*stokvels*) and burial societies. Even though men do join burial societies, attendance and membership is mainly dominated by women. *Stokvels* are exclusively run by women.

Stokvels are a good way of banking for rural women. In a similar case in the Eastern Cape, Bank (2002: 645) found that women join clubs, which they saw as an efficient way to save money. Women also said they join clubs as a way to keep their money safe because if they left money in the house, their children might steal it (Bank, 2002: 645). In Leboeng too, I heard old parents, pensioners in particular, complaining that unemployed adult sons steal money from their old mothers⁷. Some of the money is contributed to the *stokvels* and some invested in burial societies. In the *stokvel* women come together every month and contribute a specified amount. Every time they meet,

⁷ Grown sons who are spoilt and not willing to leave the village to find work often demand money from their pensioner parents. Pensioners are forced to hide money or even tighten it on their clothes (since they prefer to retire to bed while wearing clothes).

they give all contributed money to one member whose turn it is to be paid. Another member will be paid the next month and so on. Normally, in Leboeng every month each member contributes R100-00. Such an amount is contributed when there are four to five members in that particular *stokvel*. R60-00 is contributed to a *stokvel* of about twenty-five members. The more members a *stokvel* has the lower the amount of money contributed by each member.

Apart from *stokvels*, there are a number of societies in the village, based on different activities and headed by women. First of all, there are burial societies where meetings are held monthly in order to make a financial contribution. The financial contribution made in a burial society is primarily meant to purchase a coffin when a member has a case of bereavement. Members of a burial society are normally related to each other.

All the activities associated with funerals, which are, perhaps, the most important social occasions in the village, are done by women. There is a society for baking during the funeral. When there is a funeral in the village, people who come to comfort the mourning party are supposed to be given tea and baked cookies for the whole week before the funeral. Again, this society's membership is restricted to women since they are the ones who should cook and bake. Men cannot join the baking society since they are said to be neither able to bake nor to learn how. Women get together and contribute groceries such as flour, eggs, salt, sugar, tea, and powdered milk, among other ingredients. They also make a small financial contribution in the event of the need to purchase groceries that might unexpectedly be required.

There is also a society that is responsible to collect wood for fuel during the funeral week. Members in this society are supposed to go to the mountain to chop wood. After these women have fetched wood, they each contribute R5-00, to be used to buy what might be required during the funeral. Men do not go to the mountain to fetch ordinary wood. They instead go to fetch a very huge dry tree stem. Such wood is not used for cooking, but is rather used to prepare fire at the *kgoro*, usually during winter.

There is also a society for washing clothes and doing the cleaning before, during and after the funeral. Even in the cleaning society, a R5-00 contribution is required for buying the cleaning of aids such as soaps. Society members are expected to stay with the

mourning family even after the funeral in order to clean up after the night vigil and the funeral.

When I was at the night vigil of the local chief, men just congregated at the *kgoro* in front of the huge fire. Women and very few men sat in the erected tent. When I arrived at the night vigil, I initially sat in the tent to listen to the sermons delivered by male pastors, while women sang church choruses and danced. It was very cold and my friend, Godfrey, realised when he went to the toilet that men were sitting at the *kgoro* in front of a huge fire. When he came back from the toilet, he told me that men were sitting at the fire outside the tent and we immediately joined them. Throughout the night, they smoked tobacco, drank beer and brandy and told interesting old stories since it had been a long time since some of the men had seen each other. Men would proudly say how fortunate they are to be men. Some men would proudly talk about initiation. When a minor quarrel erupted between a younger man and an older one, the latter told the former that they did not undergo initiation during the same period and that as such the younger man must show respect.

During night vigils (held daily until the funeral) women were busy trying to serve every one who came to the funeral. When the men felt hungry while sitting at the *kgoro* (not bothering to attend the night vigil in the tent), they started worrying why the women were delayed in giving them meals. In the early hours of the morning, three women came to the *kgoro* to give the men early breakfast before the funeral.

The only task required of men is to dig the grave, which really does not require much effort. About thirty men dig one grave. Men also erect the tent and slaughter the cow to be eaten by the mourners. Men do these tasks in huge numbers and spend most of the time sitting – since their tasks are not continuous. Locally, a funeral is respected and relatives, friends and migrant labourers (*makutuka*) travel from far to attend such funeral.

Men do virtually nothing, while women are involved in hard labour for the whole week. Nevertheless, women are proud to perform tasks like cooking and fetching wood, and these tasks are “culturally” accepted in Leboeng as being women’s roles. Local women claim that they were taught at initiation school how to become real women by performing hard domestic tasks. In their homes women and girls are the ones who must collect wood for fuel and the same applies in a club or society.

It is apparent that the contribution made by women is more than that made by men, hence most women are unemployed. Notwithstanding being unemployed, women have the astonishing potentialities to maintain the village life through contributing to village clubs and bringing up children. However, women certainly do not complain about the demanding responsibilities expected of them by the society. Like the ones remaining in the village, adults who are involved in tourist-related activities are also involved in clubs and they inevitably attend funerals and perform tasks expected from all women.

4.5 Agricultural Activities

In Leboeng, people have built their homes next to the mountain. The flat landscape right in the middle of the village is reserved for subsistence agriculture. During the period of the fieldwork, people did not cultivate the fields since they did not expect any rain. They instead ploughed in their back yards to grow vegetables and maize. There were better rains in Leboeng than the locals had expected and they regretted not ploughing the big fields in the middle of the village. They regret that harvesting took place only in their backyard gardens, meaning that harvest would have been much larger, had people considered ploughing in the main fields. Nevertheless, those who ploughed in their back yards harvested. While in Leboeng, I ate lots of maize, until I suffered constipation due to eating too much of it.

The ownership of livestock is much appreciated and people own both cattle and goats. During the recent drought in Limpopo province, Livestock in Leboeng was not affected because the population of Leboeng is so small (ten thousands according to 2000 census), as is the number of livestock they keep. A very few people own donkeys. Those who own donkeys use them to plough, although a tractor is also used. Mosomo is one of few people who own the tractor in the village. People in Leboeng hire someone with a tractor to plough their fields. R300-00 is the cost to plough in the big field, while in the back yard it costs R100-00.

4.6 Leisure Time

Leboeng is a remote area without amenities. For relaxation, people resort to alcohol and marijuana. Most young men spent their leisure time watching football matches on television. Due to the unavailability of electricity in most households, however, television is watched at the local shop.

Unlike the remaining adults in the village, those who are involved in tourist-related activities hardly have time for leisure. They sacrifice attendance of parties and celebrations since they must generate income.

4.6.1 Stimulants

Drinking alcohol is regarded as a form of relaxation. Although bottled beer is available in shops and bottle stores, locally brewed sorghum beer is mostly consumed. The unavailability of recreational facilities is the main reason why people resort to alcohol use. Nevertheless, not all people drink alcohol. Some people prefer the church as a form of leisure. More than half of the population are members of the Zion Christian Church and they prefer going to church virtually on a daily basis, where they drink the “church tea” (*mogabolo*). Others prefer to drink *mogabolo* in their homes. *Mogabolo* is a mixture of strong coffee (FG/Trekker) and tea bought at the church headquarters in Moria, outside Polokwane. *Mogabolo* is a stimulant and can therefore be regarded as a drug. Even those who are not church members drink the church tea, due to its stimulant effect.

Marijuana is smoked by most people, mainly young and older males. Some people cultivate marijuana either in their back yard gardens or in the mountains, where it is not accessible by vehicle (to avoid detection by the police).

4.6.2 Dance

Dance forms part of life in Leboeng. Women and teenage girls perform local dances during village functions⁸, while men sit and consume alcohol in the shade. Nevertheless,

⁸ See next section

the majority of people, mainly the youth, regard “traditional” dance as outdated. They would instead prefer to go and dance at the local informal bars during drinking sprees. Most young people like the South African Kwaito music and the only time they dance is when they are drinking together. Efforts have been made by the local high school to have school children perform dances, both traditional and modern ones. The school annually organises a “cultural” day where performance such as “traditional” dance, pantsula dance, drum majorettes, dramas and poems are performed.

4.7 Initiation

Both male and female initiation form an important part of the life of the people of Leboeng. Monnig (1967) found initiation to be a crucial part of the Pedi ways of life. A few days after being circumcised, boys are instructed to remain in the lodge and they are only allowed to get out after their wounds have healed (Monnig, 1967: 118). People regard it as an important aspect of their lives and as a precaution against sexually transmitted diseases. Initiation is one of the few aspects of people’s actual lives that are locally regarded as culture, and that are also present in representations. For example, some of the exhibitions in the Museum of Man include a cast of a male initiate dressed in grass designed dress (*hloka*), female initiation is, however, not represented.

Initiation is conducted in June, so during fieldwork (March – May) I relied on informants’ information. The initiation period is eight weeks. Elderly local people told me that in the past they spent a year at initiation. There are differences in the place that initiation has in the lives of males and females. Female initiates are allowed to occasionally visit their homes, while male initiates can only return home after the initiation has been completed. Female initiation is not carried out in the bush, but rather a place is identified within the village where female initiation will be carried out. The initiation period for women is during winter, between May and early July and in December. Some young men related to me (who has never been to initiation) how painful it was when circumcision was performed on them. A very sharp knife is used in doing the horrible surgery and painkillers are not used. I heard that only one knife is used to operate on all the young men and knives with blood are only cleaned with water. There are

obvious dangers regarding the transmission of diseases, including HIV/AIDS. The foreskins skins removed during the circumcision operation are cooked and later given to all the initiates to eat. Although as a male myself, it might have been easier for me to learn about male circumcision. I came to understand that men seem to be proud of the fact that they have been to the initiation school unlike women who do not talk about it.

4.8 Witchcraft and Healing

Stories of witchcraft almost form part of people's daily conversations. After I watched soccer on television at a local shop, I heard some boys relating stories of witchcraft. People believe that witchcraft exists. At Tshabelang Dinoko High School where I taught, I heard teachers say that witchcraft is also used to bring fortune. Although the 1990s saw violent campaigns against witchcraft, people in Leboeng are nowadays no longer interested in organising such campaigns. Accusations and suspicions of witchcraft, nevertheless, are still prevalent.

People use both traditional and modern medicines. The local clinic offers health services to people, although most prefer traditional medicines. There are certain sicknesses that people believe cannot be treated through modern medicines. People resort to traditional healers to treat sexually transmitted diseases, madness and other diseases that are believed to be the result of witchcraft. According to local people, witchcraft related disease such as *sefolane* is only be treated by a sangoma. It is believed that if a *sefolane* disease patient is injected, she/he will certainly die.

4.9 Conclusion

Leboeng village as the "back stage" was the right place for me to study daily life. My interest in living in the village not only enhanced my comprehension of day-to-day social dynamics, but also enabled me to make a comprehensive study of how people live, contrary to how they make cultural representations. I learnt that people do not regard their daily life as part of their culture. In the following chapter I make a detailed analysis

of cultural representations. I will start with a discussion of the local understanding of culture.



Chapter Five

Cultural Representation

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to analyse how people in Leboeng represent culture to tourists. Representations are made through exhibitions at the local museum (the Museum of Man), through the sale of crafts and through dance performances. In this context I shall also discuss natural resources that are used in craft production and the representations locals make by selling crafts to tourists who pass along the road next to the village. This will be complemented with an analysis of the people's perceptions of culture and tourism.

An ethnographer is, as such, well positioned to critically study and analyse social life. Rapport and Overing (2000: 97) write that “what we do find can be much more challenging, and, as one antidote to the treatment of culture through the lens of representational theories of meaning and other grand theory, many anthropologists today are focusing upon the dialogics and poetics of everyday behaviour”. Rapport and Overing's assertion challenges the way society's interpretation of culture fails to take into consideration people's everyday lives. The way people understand and interpret culture when being asked what culture means is quite different from the way they live in the village. Basically people represent a specific understanding of culture. Therefore, in this section I am looking at the people's understanding of culture and how they make representation.

5.2 Local Understanding of Culture

During fieldwork, my primary aim was to study people's everyday lives – which laid a solid foundation for the anthropological critique of representations I am presenting in this

mini thesis. Staying in the village, I realised that people articulated culture in ways that omitted their daily conditions.

In Sepedi, culture is called *setšo*. I had many discussions with local people about what they see as culture. The first person, with whom I discussed this, was Fana. Fana is unemployed and hopes to get some income through the production of crafts. He was a migrant labourer in Pretoria and came back home after he fell sick. He believes that it was a call from his ancestors. When he recovered, after undergoing treatment by a healer (*sangoma/ngaka*), he got trained to become a traditional healer (*ngaka* or *sangoma*). He claims that he is good in curing sick children, although he does not practice full time. Fana maintains that, at 42, he is too young to practice as a healer, but hopes to do so when he is over 60 since at that age he might not be tempted to do immoral acts. According to Fana, there are a lot of restrictions one has to adhere to in order to be a good traditional healer (*ngaka*), which younger people cannot always adhere to. Fana believes that people of Leboeng adhere to culture (*setšo*) since they send their children to initiation school. He consults traditional healers (*dingaka*) in case he does not know how to deal with particular sickness.

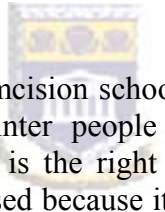
A grade 12 high school learner, Kgwadi supported Fana's statements that Leboeng residents support culture when he said, "in Leboeng people send their children to initiation school so that they can become real men. In case we get sick we consult *dingaka* for a better cure and we also believe in ancestors". Nevertheless, Kgwadi is of the opinion that culture is gradually deteriorating due to the abandonment of certain norms that make culture authentic – like the absence of secrecy around initiation and circumcision. It is considered culturally unacceptable for a person who was never at initiation school to know what happens there. However, Kgwadi did not hesitate to tell me who did not go to initiation how painful it was when he was circumcised with a sharp knife with no painkillers to reduce the terrible pain. Kgwadi believes that it is for that reason that culture has become disrespected by society, including himself.

While I was teaching at Tšhabelang Dinoko High School, I got the opportunity to ask some learners about their perceptions regarding tourism and culture. All students excluded their daily way of living from their articulation of culture, as did the entire community. Most see cultural artefacts as confined to the local museum; others simply

told me about the beautiful nature. People include nature when asked about culture because tourists are perceived as interested in culture and nature, thus people also regard nature as a part of culture. Another grade twelve male learner, Benie, expressed this clearly. He said: “Leboeng is surrounded by cultural things like, mountains, the echo caves and rivers. Tourists from overseas come visit our area and visit the museum to learn about our culture. My area hosts tourists from Japan, America, and Australia etc”.

Other high school students expressed similar views. It seems very clear that to youngsters like Benie, what is appreciated by tourists is culture. Some believe that nature can be part of their culture; others do not, but they all regard culture as a static entity. This is evident in their regarding only surviving practices from the past, such as initiation schools, as culture, and thus neglect evolving lifestyles. Obviously, people are not aware that lifestyles have always been developing over time, even those that are today seen as “old” and as culture.

Eighteen-year-old Collen (also in high school) said:



In our village culture is circumcision school, the Pedi language and *makgakgase* (dance). Normally during winter people in the village sent young boys to initiation school because that is the right time for circumcision. Most boys in Leboeng want to get circumcised because it is our culture. In our culture if one is not circumcised he is regarded as *lešoboro*⁹. No one is forced to go to initiation school, but it is voluntary. Our culture is also drawings and paintings made on traditional clothes and beads are part of our culture.

Apparently, people are mostly interested in aspects of culture that directly and indirectly affect their lives in practical terms. Most people, particularly those doing crafts, beadwork and other such crafts, are clearly interested in representing culture in the first place because of the monetary value attached to it. As a woman, and a mother of three children, 33-year-old Susan maintains that she cannot rely on her husband's insufficient salary. She instead decided to join other women in the village in doing beadwork and

⁹ An uncircumcised boy is called *lešoboro* in the Sepedi language. Although the term is not translatable in English, it is a derogatory term. A man who is *lešoboro* is not respected and he is given the status of a boy. In Leboeng virtually every man has been to initiation.

dressmaking. The way she understands culture is in relation with the job she does,

For now...we take our beads to the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for sale to the tourism industry and we sell some of them at the Strydom Tunnel. We then give someone who regularly sells her stuff at the tunnel to sell beads for us. I also like making “traditional” clothes. I did not know much about traditional attire and beads before, I just learnt from the project.

Hence, Susan learned her supposed “traditional” culture through a form of modern apprenticeship for commercial use.

For many, culture is understood within the context of articles produced for the tourist market such as pottery, beads and basketry. Like Susan, twenty-year-old Chris, a high school learner, believes that “...culture is something that South Africans rely on. People benefit from culture; tourists from abroad come and buy African culture such as clay pots, beads and anything related to African culture”.



5.3 Museum of Man

One of the significant places where cultural representations are made in the Leboeng area is at the Museum of Man. By and large, as argued by Lavine and Karp (1991: 1), every museum’s intention is to draw certain assumptions about the lives of people represented through exhibits. I shall later go into the details of the displays, but first I want to explain the overall set-up of the museum.

The Museum of Man is located to the West of Leboeng – about fifteen kilometers outside the village when using the main road. The museum is about 400 yards from the Echo Caves. Louw (1969: 39) found that the shelter (now known as the Museum of Man) was used as a tobacco barn since a layer of tobacco debris and animal droppings covered the floor. However, the museum is very close to the village when walking on foot over the mountain.

The Museum of Man was established in the early 1970s after archaeological research that was carried out in the late 1960s. It was then known as the Bushman Rock Shelter. Archaeological and paleontological artifacts are depicted in the Museum of Man

(www.sabie.co.za/tour/escarpment-route.html#museum). The museum used to exhibit human bones and skulls that were excavated from the Echo Caves. That is why the museum was named the “Museum of Man”, because of the exhibits of human remains. Human skulls and bones, which made the Museum of Man popular, were taken to the museum in Pretoria in 1994. Louw (1969: 39) wrote that Middle Stone Age implements were found in the shelter. During the fieldwork period there were no skulls and bones at the Museum of Man.

As one enters the gate, from the Western side of the museum, there is a cast of a San man outside the museum building. When I first visited the museum, I saw a woman outside the museum removing grass, since it was during the rainy season. I then presumed that the particular woman, Johanna, was just an employee responsible for cheap manual labour. She looked at me with an amazed facial expression since she did not expect a visitor to come on foot. After we exchanged greetings, I introduced myself and explained that I am a student studying tourism and culture. I asked Johanna, an unqualified tour guide, if there was anyone inside the museum who can help me, but she told me that she is responsible, contrary to the task she has been doing outside the building. I did not expect a person doing manual labour to also work as a tour guide. Yet, there is no professional tour guide at the Museum of Man.

I then explained to Johanna that I would like to have a look inside. Johanna asked if I was doing research, since researchers used to visit the Museum of Man. She said I did not have to pay the R30.00 entrance fee, considering that I was a researcher, not a tourist. She immediately asked to be excused to continue cutting the grass outside the premises – and in the meantime I looked around alone. I then made my observations, while taking pictures and writing notes.

The Museum of Man is located on the mountain at a rock shelter (*leriba*). Before the establishment of the museum in the early 1970s, the place was only known as the Bushman Rock Shelter. Local people refer to the Museum of Man as *leribeng*, meaning “at a rock shelter”. A lot of people in Leboeng are not even aware of the name, “Museum of Man”. Well-crafted rocks have been used in building the museum, especially on the walls facing North and South. MacCannell (1992: 82) has written that over-decoration in the ‘front region’ is prevalent. Although MacCannell is not referring to the museum set-

up, the architectural set-up of the Museum of Man, among others, can make appeal to visitors.

The Eastern side of the museum faces the mountain. Therefore the portion of the eastern side of the museum building is not separated from the mountain rocks, and the wall was well crafted. Grass was used to roof the building. There are lots of baboons on the mountain. On my way to the museum, baboons used to shout at me, since I had to walk past the mountain.

Next to the main door into the museum is a sign board that reads, “Welcome”. On the western side of the museum where it faces the entrance, only the lower part of the wall is made of rock, and canes have thereafter been used to form the upper part of the wall leading to the roof. However, there is some space between the roof and the canes – to an extent that one can easily see the sky outside. Some part of the building is open air, which makes it a bit difficult to decide whether the Museum of Man is an open-air museum or not. On the side that faces the mountain and the northern side the roof is not detached from the wall and rocks form the entire wall.

There is also the depiction of the San culture, which has nothing to do with the lifestyles of local people. As one enters the museum, the first thing that can be seen is the display of the bushman sleeping-place. The depiction of the bushman sleeping-place is due to the belief that bushmen might have inhabited the shelter before. According to Louw (1969: 47), since the Middle Stone Age, the Bushman Rock Shelter has been inhabited. Next to the exhibition of the “bushman bedroom” there is a note which reads “Bushman bedroom”. The “bushman bedroom” is shown in the form of a shallow hole (about two meters wide with sand inside).

Only some of the exhibits have minimal written explanations, such as “Pedi woman” and “Zulu woman”. Otherwise there are no captions on most displays in the museum and all that tourists can do is take pictures and make assumptions about the lifestyles of the people represented in the displays. As one moves away from the “bushman bedroom”, there is a display of rock fossils. Next to the “bushman bedroom” and fossils is a broken wood container and clay pot put on wood table.

Most of the exhibits were bought from Zimbabweans. Most Zimbabweans who are in Limpopo province are skilled regarding the production of woodcraft and pottery.

Exhibits in the museum are arranged in such a way as to emphasise how they are related to each other. The cast of an initiate who is about to graduate (*mogwera*), a mud hut and the black three-footed pot are put next to each other – since they supposedly represent household way of life. People in the village told me that a wood container used to crush maize, a huge thick stick, calabash, twigs tray, grass mat, maize grinding stones and a wood tray are exhibited next to each other.

There is the exhibition of women (as I came to call it), in the form of about eight painted pictures that show women dressed in so-called traditional attire. The pictures hang next to each other on the wall and portray the “traditional” attire which women presumably wear. The pictures are said to be of Pedi, Venda, Xhosa, Swazi, Zulu, Sotho, Tswana and Ndebele women respectively. The exhibition of the Zulu woman shows her wearing what, in my knowledge, I know as the attire worn by Venda women. The painted picture of the Pedi woman is hanging on the wall with the other paintings. The Pedi painting shows two Pedi women, one of them has covered her head and neck with a cloth. I have seen Muslim women do this, but never a Pedi woman. However, her face is not covered.

An old voortreker wagon is placed in a tiny cane kraal. That also has nothing to do with local way of living, as I shall explain disparities between the wagon and local people’s mode of transport. There is also a painting of a woman carrying water on her head, and she is shown entering the typical Pedi yard (*moša/lapa*¹⁰). Three pictures of pottery hang on three poles next to each other. On the cane wall that faces the road, there are articles hanging which include trays made out of grass, wood masks and the exhibits of Zulu pottery. For the purpose of my study, I found it important to study museum exhibits that are supposed to represent the culture of people. Some exhibits look very old and I assume that they were excavated while others were made for the purpose of the exhibition.

There is a grinding stone (*lwala*) that is used to grind maize that is already crushed. *Lwala* consists of one big flat and wide stone and one small stone to accompany it. A huge wood container (*motshe*¹¹) is also displayed. Maize inside *motshe* is crushed by

¹⁰ *Lapa* also refers to a home or a house while *moša* alone means tiny wall surrounding the house.

¹¹ *Motshe* is used to crush maize, by beating maize in a huge wooden container (*lehudu*).

being beaten with a large straight wooden pestle. Maize inside the wood container (*motshe*) must be beaten repeatedly until all the maize is crushed and ready to grind.

Next to the grinding stone is a tray made out of grass (*lesehlo*)¹². Other grass trays (*masehlo*) are also exhibited on the wall on the western side. The tray is round and wide, and is used to clean crushed maize before it can be ground. Next to these articles there is a broken clay pot, a calabash (*sego*) and a grass mat (*legogo/thobo*). A wooden tray is also on display.

In order to emphasise that the displays are genuine, a tiny model of a mud hut is built inside the museum. On the ground next to the door there is a grass mat. Outside the hut there is the exhibition of a black three-footed pot on a fake fireplace. The pot is not on fire, but some wood has been put underneath the pot – to make it look as if the pot is on the fire place.

There is also a display of men in the form of casts. They are shown sitting at the men's fire/meeting place (*kgoro*), even though there is no burning fire. The men on exhibition are wearing animal skin (covering only their private parts). Other casts of men are shown beating a drum (*moropa*), made out of wood and animal skin. The third cast on exhibition shows a man drinking beer using a clay pot (*pitja*), although nowadays, at least, a calabash is used to drink sorghum traditional beer.

There is also a display of a male initiate (*mogwera*)¹³. The initiate is shown holding a stick and wearing a grass dress and hat. The hat covers his entire face while the grass dress also covers the entire body. That kind of attire is called *hloka*. According to Matšeke, the exhibited *hloka* was found in the Echo Caves since the caves were used as initiation site.

Few tourists who come to the Museum of Man take pictures of the displays. That is staged authenticity because tourists do not get to know the real process of initiation. After all, as I will explain with respect to initiation, there is a lot of secrecy regarding initiation, especially to those people who have never been to initiation school. Despite the secrecy around circumcision much has been written about what happen in initiation schools.

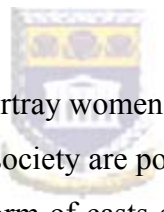
¹² Plural: *Masehlo*

¹³ *Mogwera* is a male initiate who is under-going the second phase of initiation.

It is very unlikely, however, that tourists would be welcomed to an initiation school, although there are no restrictions with regard to attendance of initiation graduation ceremonies. As tourists do not visit the village, it is unlikely for them to observe the initiation graduation in the village. MacCannell (1989: 93) argues that audiences do not have access to “back stage” and it is for that reason that reality and activities that might discredit the performance are concealed.

As I have explained earlier, there is little guidance at the Museum of Man. Tourists, thus, get little understanding about the lives of local people, particularly those in Leboeng. Since tourists observe the “cultures” of local people in the museum, they miss the opportunity to come and observe real life situations, including, among other things, initiation graduation ceremonies. The village is thus what MacCannell (1973) calls the “back stage”.

5.3.1 Gendered Exhibitions



Exhibitions in the Museum of Man portray women and men differently. This is evident in the way male and female roles in the society are portrayed through exhibits. The Museum of Man's exhibitions of men in the form of casts does, to some extent, reflect the actual life of village men. The exhibit of casts of men, sitting at men's meeting place (*kgoro*), creates an impression that men are responsible in deciding social matters since they always sit at such meetings to discuss social issues. The casts of men sitting at *kgoro* are shown wearing animal skin, whereas in real life, local men never put on this type of clothing.

In Leboeng the men's meeting place (*kgoro*) is a significant place where men demonstrate their masculinities through dominating discussions and decisions. According to one classical anthropologist of the Pedi, Monnig (1967: 218), *kgoro* in Pedi society function as both the social and political unit where jural activities are performed within a group. Monnig further argues that when rites and ceremonies are performed, *kgoro* can operate as a religious unit.

The exhibit shows men sitting at *kgoro* and, among other things, beating drums made out of wood and animal skin. Therefore the impression got by tourists contradicts

with the true life in the village. Men in Leboeng do indeed sit at the *kgoro* on certain occasions. When there are issues that need to be discussed by the community, a meeting (*kgoro*) is organised where both men and women attend. During such gathering, men tend to dominate the discussions while one or two women will brave the intimidating atmosphere by joining the deliberations. Men can however also sit at *kgoro* without discussing anything significant. That scenario is prevalent when there are functions or funerals where men will sit around the fire at *kgoro*. It is in this instance where it is deemed unethical for women to join men.

However, the depiction of men beating drums, presents a fiction. In real life, women in Leboeng dance and play drums. The only situation where I even observed the participation in music and dance by a male is the dance group (Phakgamang Machokgweng) that performs for tourists. In that particular group, one man, 60-year-old Molo participates by beating a drum. In fact, there should be casts depicting women beating such drums. Casts are the most visible exhibits in the museum but there are only casts of men.

It has been argued, for some cases, that exhibitions or other representations of the “other” have no resemblance to women’s contemporary lives, but rather depict women as belonging to the past. In her study on the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve San, Buntman (1996) found that women and children in the Kagga Kamma brochure are shown as living in the past. Buntman’s argument is absolutely relevant to the Museum of Man’s case in the sense that women are represented as the custodians of old fashioned clothing – which is regarded as “traditional” attire. The only exhibit that shows a woman with a “traditional” article is the painting of the woman carrying water in a clay pot. The kind of life women are portrayed as living is not contemporary and it is no reflection of their (women) daily interaction with the social space.

Unlike men, women are only exhibited in the museum through paintings. Even though women are the ones who possess knowledge and skill regarding the production of grass mats (*magogo*), baskets, grass containers (*diroto*), grass trays (*masehlo*) and other articles, credit is not given to them in the exhibition of such articles, and their involvement in the production of these articles is also not shown. However *hloka* (male

initiates' attire) drums and clay pots (to drink beer) are displayed together with "embodied" men in the form of casts.

As I have shown above, the male exhibits bear some resemblance to contemporary reality in Leboeng. In contrast, women exclusively are depicted as living in the past. There are some paradoxes with regard to the message that is conveyed through exhibits. One of the exhibits shows a woman carrying water (in a clay pot) on her head. The aim of the exhibits is to show the significance of a woman in the home, rather than showing the potentialities women can possess in the production of pottery and other handy crafts. The conclusion one can draw after viewing the exhibit is that women only do domestic activities like preparing meals and fetching water. This is emphasised by the background of that picture, which shows three huts. The inclusion of huts in the picture is to emphasise how significant a home is to a woman, while men discuss social issues at a *kgoro*, at the back of the main houses.

Men are exhibited in the form of casts as I have explained above. One cast is of an initiate (*mogwera*) wearing a hat and dress (*hloka*) made out of thick grass, which reflects real initiates' dress, which are used even today. The exhibition of female initiates is not present in the museum at all. Tourists who visit the Museum of Man may be under the impression that female initiation is not practiced since there is no such exhibition. Rather, women are exhibited in the form of "traditional" attire – which does not in any way represent the way women dress in the village today. This concurs with Buntman's findings at Kagga Kamma that the exhibition of women's traditional way of dress is done for the tourist gaze.

5.4 Crafts Production

In this section I am going to give a critical analysis of craft production projects in Leboeng. Community members decided to make use of the tourism in their area by forming the Bahloki Basketry. The Bahloki basketry project specialises in the production of lampshade basketry earmarked for sale in the tourism industry.¹⁴ The Bahloki Basketry

¹⁴ When translated into English *bahloki* means peasants.

project is based in the Makgalane sub-village of Leboeng, just next to the Echo Caves and the Museum of Man. The Bahloki basketry project was initiated in 2001 after community members realised the importance of creating employment opportunities. They decided to make products they regarded as “traditional” in order to target the tourist market. The Bahloki basketry project has eight members, and is working in close partnership with other community projects in the village that specialise in beadwork, dressmaking (for contemporary and “traditional” attire) and traditional dance.

The Bahloki basketry project’s initial objective was to produce wooden plates (*diroto*) and trays made out of grass (*masehlo*). Project members later decided to embark on lampshade production, which has become their primary field of work. Lampshade production became the primary field of work because of its commercial success. CSIR assists the project regarding the marketing of the lampshades. CSIR has a site where craft products are sold to visitors, including tourists. Members of the project produce lampshades, using indigenous grass and other plant material, which is woven around a metal frame. The main initiator of the project was Richard, a thirty-eight year old man. Having been unemployed for some time, Richard decided to persuade people in the village to form the Bahloki basketry project. Richard continues to be central to the project’s success as he holds a Matric certificate, communicates in English, and has enough confidence to participate actively in capacity building workshops. Although Richard had never worked in craft production before, he had some relevant experience as a technical college dropout. Basketry has always been practiced in the village, especially by older people. Younger ones have never practiced it, except through working in projects.

Other members of the project include Kgapane, Kgadi and Florence, who I will introduce before giving more details as to how the project operates. Kgapane decided to join the Bahloki basketry project after he got retrenched from his job in 1998. While unemployed, Kgapane learnt how to make woodcrafts such as wooden plates and trays, wooden key holders and wooden chairs. So even though his earnings are not regular from the project, he can still get extra money by selling woodcrafts. Kgapane has a family and depends on making crafts. He told me that the money he is getting is not enough though. He cannot even afford to send his twenty-four-year-old daughter for tertiary studies.

Kgadi is a woman in her middle thirties who got married at a very early age. She has four children; her eldest is in Matric. As an unemployed mother and wife, Kgadi thinks joining the project enabled her to earn a living to contribute to family earnings. Kgadi also earns some income from selling bread from her home tuck shop (locally called *spaza*). However, due to lack of business skills, she is unable to make her home-based business succeed. Kgadi learnt the production of crafts and of lampshades in particular, in the project. She had no craft skills before joining the Bahloki basketry project.

Florence, a mother and grandmother, says that she has passion for craft production that is not motivated by material aims whatsoever. Unlike other members, Florence does not desperately need to get a regular income from the project since both her husband and herself receive regular old age pension payments. Like Kgadi, Florence runs a home-based tuck shop where she sells bread, loose cigarettes and milk. There is a for demand for milk at Florence's tuck shop as lots of people in the village are members of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) and church members regularly consume ZCC church tea (*mogabolo*) regarded as the Holy Communion¹⁵.

The Bahloki basketry project gets massive support from the Center for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). CSIR is an NGO that conducts high level research and technological innovation. CSIR's main objective is to alleviate poverty through development research and facilitating capacity building by funding rural organisation like the Bahloki basketry project in Leboeng (CSIR: 2003). It was the CSIR suggested that community members in Leboeng should produce lampshades. They reasoned that in this case local natural resources can be used while at the same time using non-traditional techniques (and resources) in producing lampshades. The CSIR offered project members training in marketing and on how to make lampshades. These days, after lampshades are

¹⁵ In Sepedi, tea is referred as *tee*, while special ZCC tea is called *mogabolo*. *Mogabolo* is made out of a mixture of strong coffee, tea and coarse salt, all bought at the church headquarters in Moria outside Polokwane in the Limpopo province. Like coffee, *mogabolo* is a stimulant. Lots of milk (about a pint) is added to three liters of *mogabolo* to make it drinkable. Another natural stimulant consumed locally is "mountain tea", otherwise locally called *tee ya thaba*, meaning mountain tea. *Thaba* is mountain while *tee* means tea. Just *mogabolo*, locals are adamantly convinced that mountain tea not only cleans one's blood, but also enhances sex life among males, thereby curing male impotence. Other locals drink mountain tea as a precaution against diseases such as high blood pressure and heart attack.

produced, they are sent to the CSIR in Pretoria for sale to potential customers. The support of the CSIR is welcomed by the project members.

The Bahloki basketry project is a struggling project, with very little management capacity. The members work in the project in order to survive at a basic level. At times it can take up to two months or more before project members get paid, and their payment is not guaranteed. Once they send the lampshades to CSIR, enough profit must first be made before payments can be deemed appropriate.

For Fana,

...the invention of our way of living (*setšo*) can be sold as a result of our knowledge of the natural resources that are needed for the production of crafts. Resources that were used during the olden days are now used differently. We got training from the CSIR on how mix African and European culture through craft, lampshades in particular. I am not saying we are abandoning our culture (*setšo*).

There is huge competition in the craft industry and therefore products must demonstrate creativity in the production. The production of lamp shades, bead work, woodcraft and other handicraft obviously must satisfy potential customers and their way of living. Whittaker (1999: 37) has pointed out that, for tourism to be effectively marketed and promoted, it should inevitably be shaped to satisfy Western tourist taste.

The lampshades produced in Leboeng are aimed at satisfying the Western taste for “African” things. When making lampshades, some beads and porcupine quills are added for decoration. On the other hand, globes and wires are installed unto the lampshades to make lights.

Fana said to me, “Lampshades are quick to produce and more money is generated as a result. Initially we had planned to make traditional meal plates (*diroto*) and traditional trays (*masehlo*) and other cultural articles, but we eventually abandoned the idea and considered lampshades as our primary products”. While Fana was talking about “cultural” products they had initially planned to make, I was thinking of the kind of modern plastic and zinc dishes he uses at his home. Traditional artifacts are absolutely not used in every day life. There is no single home in the village where lampshades are used.

The Bahloki basketry project thus attracted people to join, not with the aim of preserving or promoting the local way of living, but based on a variety of reasons – the primary one being to earn a living. Kgadi said:

I have not joined the project to promote culture, but for survival since there are no jobs. My husband is a migrant worker and we have kids and he does not earn much, so I decided to join the project. Even here in the craft project we had expected to get a reasonable income, but we keep on hoping and the project leader keeps telling us that we are still building the project. We earn very irregularly. I was last paid three months ago.

Clearly, the project is regarded as far from perfect. "...you must form a project so that we can work under you" Kgadi said to me jokingly.

Project members do not get paid as had imagined. However, not all seem to be as de-motivated as Kgadi, who had very high expectations during the launch of the project.

Some women among those who appear de-motivated maintain that if jobs were available locally, they would prefer regular employment, but in the meantime they still work in the craft project on a part-time basis. Those are some of the thoughts that come to women's minds when the going gets tough in the project – that is during the periods of little income generation and if CSIR does not need products at that time.

The women work in an open space under a huge tree, which provides some shade. Production is not only carried out under this particular tree, but the final production of the lampshades is done there. When lampshade frames are made, some welding, and hence access to electricity is required. As a result, this aspect of the work cannot be done under the tree. Instead, the welding of the frames is done at the local shop where there is electricity and the frames are later taken to the open space at the tree for the final production process. The initial production of the frames for the lampshades is the responsibility of men – particularly when welding is required to make nice frames for the lampshades. Apart from the twigs to be added onto the frame to make a complete lampshade, a brown rope is also used and it is during this stage that both men and women actually work together.

Overall, before lampshade frames are made, a thick wire roll is cut into many pieces for welding. Richard explained: "Lampshades should be straight and nice, that is

done to ensure that we make nice lampshades since there is a lot of competition out there. Tourists make comparison when they buy – they want nice things”.

Some knowledge on how to use local natural resources enables mostly women to use twigs (*lebipi*), which used to be widely used for different purposes. Florence says, “In the olden days *lebipi* were used to do trays (*masehlo*), baskets and “traditional” plates (*diroto*). Therefore, I know how to store *lebipi* for usage after a longer period (approximately for a week to two)”. Apparently, Florence enjoys making lampshades. She maintains that she has a passion for domestic activities. She wishes it were still during the days of the usage of locally produced plates, pots and other kitchen commodities, although she does not use them anymore. However, she maintains that she serves food to her husband on a wooden plate.

Florence’s is a good example of the busy lives of the women members of the project. Apart from working in the project, Florence must ensure that she cooks for the family and takes her grand daughter to a “shack” pre-school beside the nearby mountain. At about midday, Florence would start to panic since she must be home then so that her granddaughter will find her at home. She would then make the final lampshade for the day very quickly in order to rush home thereafter. Since the production of lampshades is made at an open space next to the bore hole, Florence and other women would ask to be excused in order to fetch water, and later come back to the tree under which production takes place.

According to Florence, people in the Leboeng area in the past, used twigs (*lebipi*) to make baskets, containers (*diroto*), trays (*maselo*) and huge maize containers (*Deshego*). *Deshego* (huge maize containers) were used for storing maize underground for usage during famine” Richard, Florence, Kgadi, and the rest of the project members decided to embark on production of lampshades. They do so because they believe the beauty of twigs (*lebipi*) and beads (*pheta*) embedded with wire and globes (for lampshades) will fascinate tourists.

The twigs (*lebipi*) are very hard and baskets or any commodity made out of this natural resource last forever. Members of the project go to the mountains to fetch *lebipi*¹⁶.

¹⁶ Other kinds of local vegetables include *thepe*, *lerote* and *telele*. This indigenous vegetables only become available during rainy seasons, while *lebipi* is always there.

Jowi said fetching natural resources is not as easy as selling such products to the tourism industry because it is risky to go to the mountains since there is very huge grass and one can be bitten by a snake. However, Jowi claims that they have knowledge of walking in the mountains since they always fetch wood for fuel. But in “The Ox” (a village +_ 40 kilometers from Leboeng) there are twigs on an open veld, not in the mountains. Therefore, they need to arrange transport to go and fetch *lebipi* in a large quantity.

Thick grass (*hloka*) is also used in the production of lampshades. Before it can be used, *hloka* must be boiled. Knowledge on how to use *hloka* is essential. This thick grass is also used to design the dress and hat of male initiates (*bagwera*) who are in the final phase of initiation¹⁷.

As I have already discussed above, not only natural resources are used in the production of lampshades, as project members were advised by a facilitator during training to mix “traditional” and “western” resources so that their products would be considered beautiful by the tourist market. Wire and beadwork are being used to decorate the lampshades.

The elaborate production process shows that at times it requires a great deal of creativity to produce “African” art, which is admired by tourists and at times regarded as elegant.

5.5 Sale of Crafts

Women in Leboeng play an important role in cultural representations as they are active in the local economy and in community politics.

Some women are involved in income generating activities. An important arena is the roadside sale of crafts, which is a female domain. At the Strydom Tunnel, women from Leboeng and the villages next to the tunnel (Tsuenyane and Strydom Tunnel village) are there on a daily basis selling crafts to tourists passing through the tunnel.

¹⁷ After male initiates have spent more than two months in the mountain, they come and camp in the village. They are now called *bagwera* and the process is called *bogwera*. Secrecy about initiation school is thus limited at that stage. After a couple of days, they then graduate and are released to go to their respective homes.

Most sellers are mature women. If one woman cannot afford to go to the tunnel, she sends her daughter or any other close female family member to go and sell on her behalf. Bank (2002: 643) observed similarly, in the Eastern Cape, that daughters and close friends or relatives could be asked to sell beads, brooms and curios on women's behalf when they could not afford to travel and sell at that point in time. In Leboeng, when women who regularly sell crafts at the Strydom tunnel cannot go to sell during weekends or on days when they have to perform other social responsibilities, they send either daughters or female relatives. Sons, however, are never sent to sell crafts on behalf of their mothers.

Twenty-year-old Mmola also helps her mother in selling pottery, woodcrafts, ornaments and other crafts at the tunnel. She helps her mother on a full time basis since she dropped her schooling due to pregnancy. She takes her baby along to the tunnel so that she can breast feed him while she is running the business.

Some of the craft sellers are doing well, such as Mashu who has been coming to the tunnel to sell crafts to tourists since 1988. Mashu values tourists as very important in her life. She not only sells crafts, but is also an active member of the "traditional" dance group. Even though she claims that she is not currently making enough money, Mashu has got two helpers. While she polishes pottery, her two helpers attend to tourists who show an interest in the displayed products. As a wife and mother of three children, Mashu feels that her husband's earnings are not enough to support the family.

Mashu has busy days at the tunnel where she sells lots of pottery, ornaments and other articles. She sells lots of clay pots and she told me that she could not handle the job alone. Besides when she knocks off in the evening, she cannot manage to take the pottery to the hiding place in the caves by herself. Therefore, she has a female helper, Joyce, who assists her. Joyce has not been at school and cannot speak English either. When Mashu is too busy polishing pottery, Joyce, with the baby on her back, attends to any potential customers who view their articles. Although Joyce cannot communicate in English, she explicitly explains how much each article costs. Due to her inability to speak English, she is not effective in the sense that she can't convince hesitant tourists to buy pottery. During the process, Joyce looks at tourists with a gaze that tends to beg them to buy. If tourists do not buy at that point in time, Joyce would helplessly watch them as they move

to the articles sold by other women like Mavis, as tourists prefer to look carefully at all articles before they actually buy. In the Philippines, Chant (1992: 157) has observed that on most beaches in Boracay some women who are either illiterate, or who have limited education, had access and the ability to interact with tourists through the sale of crafts.

It appears that selling crafts is locally regarded as a woman's job. I asked another seller why there were very few men¹⁸ who sell crafts at the tunnel. She simply replied by saying that men are supposed to go and work in Johannesburg. I then got the impression that there are activities that should be done by women and men respectively. In the view of Leboeng residents Women are regarded as the ones who are supposed to sell crafts. Even at the local fruit and vegetable market, there is not a single man selling there because the task of selling has traditionally being regarded as a women's task.

5.6 Dance and Performance

With all the paradoxes and contradictions embedded within cultural representation, people of Leboeng have represented their culture to tourists in many forms. Apart from the production and sale of crafts, dance performances are an important area of cultural representation. In the following section I shall discuss dance and cultural representation.

In October 2002, the Department of Arts and Culture in conjunction with the Independent Development Trust (IDT) organised a product exhibition day at the shops next to the Museum of Man. All projects that co-operated with Bahloki basketry project, as well as members of the community, were invited. During that day, traditional dances (*makgakgase*) were performed, and crafts that included beads, lampshades and other articles were exhibited. The tendency to mix the sale of local commodities and dance performance is prevalent beyond Leboeng, and South Africa in general. In his study of Maya women (South America), Little (2004: 528) found that street vendors sold handicraft to tourists, while at the same time doing performances.

¹⁸ During fieldwork at the tunnel I saw two male craft sellers.

Public dance performances are not only done for tourists. In March 2004, during the national election ANC rally in Nelspruit the Phakgamang Machokgweng dance group of Leboeng were invited to perform. The group consists of thirty members. They also manufacture bricks and everyday after making bricks, they have rehearsals. The group is predominately female, with only one male member by the name of Molo. Molo does not dance; his task is to beat a big drum. The big drum is beaten while two other drums (small and medium) are simultaneously beaten by two women. They perform only when invited to specific events, but they have rehearsals every evening. An instructor (*mohlahli*) within the group directs the performances.

When rehearsing, dance group members wear “*hlwahlwadi*”. *Hlwahlwadi* is worn on the ankles in order to make a fascinating sound while dancing. It is usually made out of the hard plastic of milk containers, which is cut and sewn to make small round plastic rattles filled with stones.

Members of the group dance very fast. Most songs have meaning like, *pula yana* (it’s raining) and *mma re gopotse gae bopedi* (mother, we miss home Pediland). *Pula ya na* is usually sung during rainy days. In fact, their songs have meaning. I remember the day when I visited the group while they were rehearsing. It was a cloudy day with some sporadic drizzling. When they performed *pula ya na*, it was about to rain and I therefore hesitated to leave. One group member lent me her umbrella.

It appears that the dance performances draw on some older local forms, but that there have also been changes. People who dance in the village without an outside audience use the same drums as those of the Phakgamang Machokgweng dance group. The drums used in the village are well maintained; otherwise animal skin is always available to replace the one on the drum. Women who perform to guests (dance group) ask the ones in the village for cattle skin. Seventy-five-year-old Maja told me that, “...in the past they danced barefooted and they put original *hlwahlwadi* around their ankles. The original *hlwahlwadi* were not made out of plastics”.

According to Rose, “...there are few changes made on how to dance compared to dance in the village. We do not dance exactly like traditional performers in the village. For traditional dance in the village, rehearsals are hardly done”.

I shall discuss the disparities between “back stage” and “front stage” dances in more detail in the following chapter.

5.7 Cultural Representations

5.7.1 Global Events

Although there are many factors influencing the way representations are made, Bramwell (2003: 583) argues that people respond to tourism by constructing their identities in relation to global forces.

An example of this was when in September 2002 the Bahloki basketry project was invited to participate in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg. Bahloki participated in the second National Craft Imbizo at the Ubuntu Wanderers Club during the summit. Craft projects throughout the country were invited to come and make displays of the beauty and elegance of their crafts. A huge tent was erected, which was called the “ubuntu village”. Bahloki basketry project brought lampshades along for display and sale to delegates and visitors (who included tourists from abroad).

Exhibitions in the “ubuntu village” were referred as the “Beautiful Things Exhibition”. The National Department of Arts and Craft funded the Beautiful Things Exhibition and the National Craft Imbizo with the assistance of the Department of Trade and Industry and Tourism Enterprise Programme. The WSSD made a positive impact on the Bahloki basketry project since lampshades were sold. Exhibitions in the “ubuntu village” impact identity constructions in the sense that craft products exhibited represent the “African” way of life and therefore, the “African” identity.

5.7.2 Roadside Craft Sale

As I discussed above, the Strydom Tunnel is one significant site for local people who try to make a living from representing culture to tourists. Villagers come here on a daily basis to sell craft products (pottery, wooden products, grass trays and ornaments, among

other things) to tourists. Most of these clay pots were not made in the village, but bought from Zimbabweans who bring crafts from Zimbabwe. One of the sellers told me details

about the sale of those imported crafts at the roadside. Mashi told me that:

We buy these clay pots, in their different sizes, from Zimbabweans who come and sell them to us at a very reasonable price. We then sell this pottery to tourists who stop here to view the beautiful mountain and buy our products. Some tourists ask us where we get our products, and we simply tell them that we make them ourselves. We don't tell them that we get them from Zimbabweans. Otherwise they won't buy from us, but will go to Zimbabwe and buy there. Locals buy foreign made items and sell them, pretending they are local.

Ways of life are thus represented as something that can be consumed and as a result, as argued by Robinson (1999: 11), authenticity is lost to the superficial. Tourists are motivated by the desire to get authentic experiences (Buntman, 1996: 273). In other words: Tourists who buy “cultural” products from locals are doing so with the desire get authentic “African” products.

Tourists buy crafts sold by local people so that they will have proof of having been to a place when they go back home. When tourists visit, they are interested in the local way of living and perceive crafts as representing the way the locals live. When tourists buy pottery and other traditional artifacts locally, they think they are taking the local way of life with them. Although some tourists are inquisitive about how crafts were produced, most do not bother to enquire. When I was observing the interaction between tourists and local people, I could see that many tourists just made a comparison of the products so that they could determine which ones to purchase.

Craft sellers and people perceive most tourists and the motorists who stop and buy crafts as rich people. The sale of crafts plays an important role in the interaction between the rich and the poor. This interaction is prevalent through the communication between women craft sellers and tourists. In most instances the language that is used during such interactions is purely in monetary terms – that is the seller and the tourist only talk about the prices of the product. First the tourists will admiringly look at the product, pottery in particular, and the women who sell will immediately tell the tourist how much the

specific product costs. In Leboeng, tourists are perceived by locals as good people if they buy lots of objects, as was also observed by van Beek in West Africa (2003; 274).

Although van Beek (2003: 274) further argues that tourists are seen by locals as interested in their culture, I found that most tourists are only interested in the price of “cultural” products and do not bother to question if such products represent peoples’ lives. I thus assumed that tourists presumed that all articles are “cultural” and were produced locally. I tried to talk to some tourists, in order to get a feeling of their perceptions of culture as represented through pottery and other articles, but this didn’t get me far. The tourists were only interested in the prices of products.

There is a strong link between representations and modernisation. People seek modern ways of constructing their way of living in the modern competitive tourism market. As I have described earlier on, industrial manufactured resources, like shoe polish, are used on articles that supposedly represent “traditional” ways of life. MacCannell (1989: 91 – 92) is of the opinion that “in modern settings society is established through cultural representations of reality at a level above that of interpersonal relations”.

The representation of foreign produced crafts as local products is evidence of this. However, even though most cultural commodities, pottery in particular, sold at the roadside are foreign imports, some like clay birds, grass trays (*masehlo*) and woodwork also reflect the role and the importance of local knowledge. Some of the products sold there represent the creative work of people in the village.

5.7.3 Photography

Tourists like to take pictures of what interests them. Tourists take pictures of the natural landscape, and inevitably, of the local people. Local people, however, are not always happy when tourists take their pictures. However, if that happens while they perform, most locals do not complain. When women from the village perform traditional dances, the audience, including tourists takes pictures in the meantime. During the poverty celebration day, the Leboeng dance group, Phakgamang Machokgweng performed traditional dance (*makgakgase*). During the event tourists were also present. Rita

maintains that, “they seemed to enjoy themselves...but it was like they were interesting in taking good pictures and they were pleased”.

According to Rose, “some tourists came and took some pictures. Those tourists were very few since they leave after taking pictures. I really enjoyed the day since I also performed traditional dance”.

Rose apparently does not have a problem with having her picture taken during a performance. I had the same experience. Women performers were actually pleased when I took photographs of them while they were performing. When I visited the Strydom tunnel for the first time in March 2004, I took some pictures upon request, since it was my first interaction with the women craft sellers. One woman in her late fifties initially refused to be photographed, but later agreed when I explained that I was a student and showed her my student card. She said “...tourists have the tendency to photograph us without our consent. After all, I do not like tourists photographing us, since we might be exposed to the whole world. After they take our photographs, they will use them for the postal stamps. After all, they make money out of our pictures”. Bruner (1996: 299), in his research in Ghana, also found that locals object to be photographed without permission. In Ghana, locals complain that tourists make huge profit out of photographs, while they (locals) will not benefit thereafter (Bruner, 1996: 299). These issues were also brought up in Leboeng, but most people here did not seem to mind too much.

5.8 Conclusion

Based on my fieldwork, I argue that representations through exhibits in the Museum of Man portray the lives of people as static. Although people make representations about themselves, representations are also institutionalised. The institutionalisation of representations is primarily apparent in the way museums make exhibitions, without the participation of those people whose culture is represented.

Even more efforts were made to make some exhibits look “real”¹⁹; they are represented in a staged environment. Although the Museum of Man represents local culture contrary to people’s way of life, the local people themselves continue to present “cultural” constructions based on an understanding of culture that is different from the way they live. Amazingly, every one in Leboeng perceives old ways of living as the culture to be represented in the contemporary era. Even though people represent their culture, it is apparent that their understanding of culture is confined to the old traditions; perhaps this is because of what tourists want to see. The invention of culture is here the result of the desire to satisfy tourists’ curiosity.

In the next chapter I show that women take an active role in representations through the sale of crafts and performances. Performances are perceived, to some extent, as pivotal in attracting tourists to buy local commodities. Overall, the next chapter serves to present a comparison between “daily life” and “cultural representation”.



¹⁹ The cast of a male initiate shows him in real *hloka*, so visitors to the museum view real initiate dress in an arranged and staged setting. A very small hut (about the height of two meters) built in the museum is just one of the examples of how much effort is made to make the unreal look real.

Chapter Six

Comparison between Daily Life and Cultural Representation

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I make a comparison between daily life in Leboeng and cultural representation. I start the discussion by looking at the relationship between museum exhibits and how people in Leboeng live. The exhibits under consideration include the “bushman bedroom”, casts, pictures and articles such as the pestle (*lehudu*) and grass trays (*masehlo*), among others. Although in chapter four I made a detailed discussion about the type of houses in Leboeng, I find it unavoidable in this chapter to make a brief discussion about houses in the village in comparison with the exhibited mud hut and its associated cooking area in the local museum.

I expand the discussion by looking at the link between representations through dance performances for tourists and other outsiders in the village. Finally, I provide a comparison of representation through the production and sale of artefacts like pottery, lampshades, wood products and ornaments, and examine to what extent people in the village actually use these commodities.

6.2 Discussion

The Museum of Man claims to depict the way of life of the Pedi, yet an exhibition of the bushman culture is made through the exhibition of the bushman sleeping place/bedroom. Obviously, an exhibition of a Pedi bedroom would be appropriate in this regard.

The Pedi people in Leboeng live in both mud and brick houses with furnished bedrooms. Decorations in the bedrooms consist of ornaments and pictures hung on the walls. Although most people in the village are poor, a bedroom is seen as an ideal place

that needs to be well furnished. People who have regular income make a point of ensuring that their sleeping place has got store-bought double beds.

The museum also depicts how the Pedi allegedly dress. Although there are pictures of the attire of Zulu, Ndebele, and Xhosa women, among others, my primary interest is on how the Pedi women's attire is portrayed. In the museum there is, among others, a picture showing a woman wearing a cloth that covers her neck and head. Furthermore, the museum depicts Pedi men, in the form of casts, wearing animal skin covering their private parts. In Leboeng, people neither put on animal skin nor cover their heads and necks. Instead, the Leboeng residents put on trousers, jeans, T-shirts, shirts and other Western clothes. Furthermore, people wear shoes, contrary to the bare-footed on display.

A cast of a male initiate is exhibited wearing attire made of grass (*hloka*). The absence of a note on the exhibit may give some visitors of the museum the impression that *hloka* form part of local people's dress code. Only visitors who receive an explanation about the male initiate exhibit will be aware of the implications of such an exhibit. Nevertheless, male initiates in Leboeng wear the same *hloka* as exhibited, when they are about to graduate. When I showed males in the village the picture of the cast of a male initiate, they did confirm that it (*hloka*) is the same as the one worn by male initiates in the village.

A Voortrekker wagon is also on exhibition in the museum. Although few people in Leboeng own donkey carts, such an exhibition would make some sense. The presence of the Voortrekker wagon however, does not resemble the local mode of transport at all. Many people walk on foot when travelling to the nearest sections/sub-villages, those who own cars, however, drive to wherever they would like to travel. Those who travel on foot may ask for a lift when the car approaches down the road. When going to town (either to Ohrigstad or Burgersford) people use taxis and lifts, but the bus is much preferred due to its convenience and its reasonable fares. The bus is convenient in the sense that it travels to all sections collecting people, while a taxi can only be boarded at the main road about four or five kilometers from the Makgalane section where I was living. I preferred the bus when going to the Museum of Man and to town for shopping. At times I used a taxi or hitched a lift.

The Museum of Man exhibits articles such as wooden and grass trays (*masehlo*). People in the village hang these products on the wall for decoration, but don't use them in their everyday practices. A maize grinding stone (*lwala*), a big wood container for crushing maize (*motshe*) and a pestle (*lehudu*) are also present in the museum. These exhibits give the impression that local people produce maize for themselves. In reality, however, people in Leboeng buy maize meal in the local shop.

A tiny mud hut built inside the museum differs from the kind of houses people live in. Although there are huts in the village, they are mainly used as kitchens. Huts that serve as a bedroom are not as small as the one on show in the Museum of Man. People in the village live in bigger huts, or brick houses (some with tile roofing). Some people prefer to use rocks when building their houses, since rocks can be easily fetched from the nearby mountain. In the Museum of Man, a black three-footed pot on the fire is on display just outside the tiny mud hut. When preparing meals, people in the village do use this type of pot. However, people do not prepare their meals outside the house, but in the hut that is exhibited as a bedroom in the museum.

As I have indicated earlier, the Bahloki basketry project specialises in the production of lampshades. People in the village neither buy nor use lampshades in their daily lives. None of the members of the Bahloki basketry project use lampshades themselves. At night, people in the village use candle and paraffin lights. Candlelight is however mostly preferred. Not even those people living in the electrified sections/sub-villages purchase lampshades from the Bahloki basketry project.

Local dance performances (*makgakgase*) for tourists are never done in the same way as dances in the village. As found by MacCannell (1989: 99), what is shown to tourists is a "back stage". In the village, the dance is performed differently from what is done for tourists. In the village women dance very slowly and there are no rehearsals before a performance. Also, drums that are used by dance groups, both in the village and for representations, are different from the ones displayed in the Museum of Man. An exhibition of casts of men shows them drinking local beer and playing drums made of wood and obviously skin. Drums for the dance group in the village and for representations, however, are made out of a tin and animal skin. In the contemporary era it is perceived as convenient to use a tin in producing a drum. Dance performance is

presented as a way of life that was practiced in the past as well as in the present. However, Sharp and Boonzaier (1994: 407) argue that there is a paradox underlying the assertion of the continuity of the past.

6.3 Conclusion

There is a great difference between daily life in Leboeng and cultural representation. The failure by the local museum to involve local people in making exhibitions is one of the reasons that the exhibitions do not resemble people's day to day lives. However, people in Leboeng are also responsible for the perpetuation of "fake" representations. This tendency of faking authenticity is first and foremost influenced by the material needs of local people. People sell craft products that are highly in demand by tourists and it might therefore seem difficult for them to represent their daily life, since tourists have assumptions about people's culture. People as a result sell products that are regarded as "cultural" and the local museum does likewise by displaying calabashes, pottery and "traditional" attire inter alia.



Chapter seven

Conclusion

Cultural tourism is a vehicle for economic growth. Cultural representations are made in order to make the cultural tourism sector a more vibrant one. Given this argument, research in cultural tourism should take a critical stance in the analysis of cultural representations. An understanding of the meaning of culture is necessary to analyse the comparison of daily life with cultural representations. Observing the daily lives of host communities creates a conducive environment for realising and understanding the gaps between tourists' experiences and the daily realities of the host communities.

During my research I found that host communities represent their lives as imagined by tourists and do not represent their daily lives as they live them. Perhaps people's ordinary lives are not what tourists like to see, but the imagined past is no longer prevalent in the contemporary era. The representation of imagined lives is further perpetuated by the imagined presumptions tourists hold about host communities' lifestyles.

Through cultural representations, impressions are created that host communities are still living in the past. Cultural representations are made through museum exhibitions, dance performance or the sale of pottery, lampshades, woodcrafts and other craft products. The production and sale of crafts is part and parcel of "cultural" commodification. Through all these factors, an impression is created that local people live the same way as is represented. The imagined way of living, which is associated with the way of life prior to the advent of modernity, is represented contrary to the real situation in the village. This concurs with Boonzaier (1996: 136) who thinks that performance to tourists is done as they (tourists) expect to be drawn into exotic experiences. Tourists imagine how people live as described in historical texts.

As an emerging researcher I find it pivotal to stimulate the debate concerning the logic behind cultural representations. It was through ethnography that I understood the local way of living better. The local understanding of culture made me realise that it is

not only tourism establishments that fall victim to “cultural” misinterpretation. Even host communities themselves regard obsolete lifestyles as part and parcel of their culture. These trends thus perpetuate incomplete representations where hosts are subjected to power of the rich and curious guests, as was found by MacClancy (2002: 421). Unequal power relations in representations are inevitable but I argue that such power is not coercive. The influence of tourists’ expectations is in itself the power capable of diverting the locals’ comprehension of their own lives in order to satisfy the guests’ expectations.

Even though I have done this research in a very remote and poor area, I found that people in this remote village are certainly engaged in global events as hosts. The globalization of local commodities takes place when locals sell crafts to local and foreign tourists. Some of the commodities are not even locally produced, but are bought from craft people from other villages, some as far afield as Zimbabwe.

I would further argue that a form of “regionalization” takes place since locals buy from Zimbabweans. It is apparent that the tourism in South Africa not only benefits locals, but also some sections of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Economic ties that are forged between locals and Zimbabweans not only bring material benefits to locals, they also involve faked authenticity. I found that locals stage authenticity in their encounter with guests, by giving the impression that they produce the pottery they buy from Zimbabweans.

Cultural representations through gendered exhibitions create the impression that the lives of locals are gendered in very specific ways. Exhibitions in the Museum of Man portray women as confined to the domestic situation.

Most men in the village are migrant labourers and are therefore away from the village most of the time. The women who stay behind in the village thus find themselves doing more than just domestic tasks. Women in the village, however, make the effort to escape daily poverty by selling fruits and crafts and by participating in community projects. Hence, the depiction of women of confined to the domestic sphere, is yet another form of mis-representation.

Answering the research question posed by this thesis thus required an ethnographic study whereby I was embedded with the people in the village. I was embedded with people in order to be exposed to scenes at the “back stage”. The village or

the “back stage” is where people retire after they are finished making cultural representations at the “front regions”. It is through ethnography that I realised that living with participants at close range afforded me the opportunity to learn the lives of people, which are not represented.

I need to emphasise again that people’s real lives are not commonly represented. Furthermore, living in Leboeng for an extended period made me realise that people, with the exception of craft sellers and producers, do not feel that they are part of the tourism process. Many villagers have never visited the local museum and it is along those lines that people are not part and parcel of the mainstream tourism development.

Much has been written about cultural representations and staged authenticity. It was the objective of this thesis to make a contribution to the research and comprehension of cultural representations. Although this dissertation is written from an anthropological perspective, the research will actually be essential to all social science researchers who have an interest in cultural representations and tourism.

As social scientists, we have the duty to act decisively on behalf of the unheard voices and expressions of the marginalised masses. This objective can only be attained through making a critical analysis in the writing and documenting of facts emanating from daily lives as distinct from cultural representations. This is, perhaps, the special contribution that ethnography can make to tourism studies.

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Appendix 1

Photographs



Dance group from Leboeng, Phakgamang Machokgweng, performing at the Echo Caves. Richard of Bahloki Basketry project (right, standing) is facilitating the session.



Women and girls perform during a ritual ceremony.



Women dance group (Phakgamang Machokgweng) performing traditional dance.



Mashi, a craft seller at the Strydom Tunnel attends to tourists.



Casts of men (sitting at the *kgoro*) displayed in the Museum of Man.



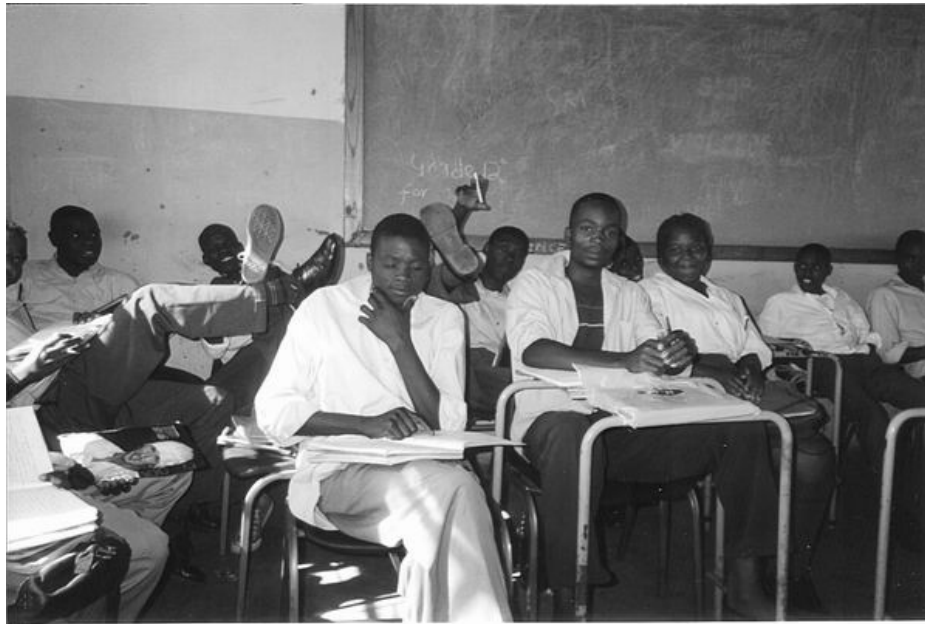
Wood container (*lehudu*), pestle (*motshe*), grinding stones (*lwala*), grass tray (*lesehlo*), broken clay pot (*pitša*), calabash (*sego*) and pictures of pottery (far right) are displayed in the Museum of Man.



Lampshades



Members of Bahloki Basketry project pose for a photograph



Grade 11 learners at Tšhabelang Dinoko High School. Below, Maths teacher poses for a picture with a tiny clay pot in his hand.

