Community Participation in Ecotourism Projects in the Western Cape
Province, South Africa: A discourse or a marketing strategy

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**List of Acronyms**

| | |
|---|---|
| DEAT | Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism |
| LED | Local Economic Development |
| WTO | World Tourism Organisations |
| GDP | Growth Domestic Product |
| PERO | Provincial Economic Review Outlook |
| GDPR | Growth Domestic Product Regional |
| TDF | Tourism Development Framework |
| QLFS | Quarterly Labour Force Survey |
| DEDT | Department of Economic Development and Tourism |
| CBO | Community Based Organisations |
| CCR | Cape Care Route |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| SMME | Small Medium Enterprises |
| WCBR | West Coast Biosphere Reserve |
| PGWC | Provincial Government of the Western Cape |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| WTTC | World Trade and Tourism Council |
| LDF | Local Development Forums |

*Abstract*

This research paper contends that tourism-led development should be cognisant of local peoples' own measures for change. The study argues that local peoples' aspirations for welfare should be based on the substantial, social, cultural and economic aspects of their livings. The basis of any meaningful alternative tourism development should support and strengthen the existing endogenous resources within communities. It also should encourage interface between tradition and modernity- endogenous and exogenous approaches. Thus, this research paper positioned in the broader theory of Local Development (LD), seeks to situate both endogenous and exogenous approaches as complementary tools to promote competitiveness of the two cases, Cape Care Route in Cape Metropole and West Coast Biosphere Reserve Trails in West Coast Region. This research acknowledges that, local participation in tourism is not always good as hypothesised in literature. Despite that, ways to enhance integration of communities for greater local ecotourism development and nature conservation are theorised as a possible solution for sustainability of ecotourism projects.

### Relevance to Development Studies

Related studies and debates agree that there is inadequate evidence showing tourism as a mechanism in which local economies are stimulated and benefits shared with local communities. In this sense, it can be argued that ecotourism remains an academic discourse, not a practice. In the face of that, this research paper is an attempt to unmask the eco-imperialist and eco-colonialist character of ecotourism development. To address the gap between rhetoric and practice, the study draws on experiences of ecotourism development in the Western Cape Province. This is done so as to increase an understanding of challenges facing the tourism sector in the Western Cape Province at large.

**Keywords:** Local Economic Development; community participation, ecotourism, empowerment, endogenous, exogenous and embeddedness

# Chapter 1:  Introduction

Despite the current promising economic prospects sweeping through in the global political economy. Tourism continues to be criticised for being an exclusive sector seized by local elites. Observably, high levels of inequalities and uneven distribution of economic benefits in the tourism sector in South Africa, can be ascribed to its exclusiveness and historical character (Rogerson, 2006). Much more problematic is the loss of specific attention to ecotourism in a generalised and aggregate treatment of the discourse of tourism. This is in the face of ecotourism promoters hypothesising that ecotourism could improve local economies. As a result in the 1980s, researchers and NGOs started calling for 'eco-sensitive' alternative tourism development over mass tourism.

At this point, ecotourism emerged as a facet of tourism branded as covering a broad range of issues, such as; social, environmental and economic concerns (Fennell, 2007). Ecotourism emerged and was marketed as an alternative tourism strategy that recognises and values local natural assets as opposed to exploitative mass-tourism development strategy. However, despite a number of intellectually and scholastically engaging debates around this concept, there has not been a consensus-based definition of what ecotourism is. It promised to consider community participation as a vital aspect during design and implementation of local development process (Scheyvens, 2002). Diamantis calls the evolution of ecotourism "a direct result of acknowledging  world response on global ecological practices" (Diamantis, 1999:93).

Khatib's definition of ecotourism emphasises a responsible visit to natural areas, where both environmental conservation and the well-being of local people is a priority (Khatib, 2000:168, cited in Chifon, 2010:13). Other ecotourism promoters brand it as a form of tourism development that is able to localize economic growth, protects natural resources and promote local culture. Saxena claims that "ecotourism is an activity embedded on and sustained by social networks that clearly links local actors for the purpose of jointly promoting and maintaining the economic, social, cultural, and human resources of the localities in which they occur" (Saxena, 2008:234). Scholars like Murphy lament that any tourism development and planning that does not recognise existing local assets, competences and goals, such development is doomed to fail to meet its intended goals (Murphy, 1985). Therefore, the debate on embbededness, endogenous and exogenous development approaches, and their role as drivers of territorial competitiveness and the importance of integrating local actors in development of community based ecotourism becomes relevant.

However, in tourism related economic benefits for communities living in or nearby touristic destinations, there is insufficient evidence in the literature to show that benefits accrued actually remain

behind in those localities visited. Tourism has been blamed for its negative effects on natural resources such as forests and ecosystems. These shortcomings have led to "racial segregation of the means of ownership, with whites being in control of the mainstream economy more than any other race in the Western Cape" (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The 2009, Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS confirms that "because of history and dual economy, poverty and unemployment remains structurally inter-linked in South Africa, in particular in the Western Cape Province" (cited in Statistics South Africa, 2011).

Contrary, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT) 2011 Report identified tourism as one of strategic sectors for provincial growth and development. The report further postulates that tourism sector is one of the leading and thriving industries in the Western Cape Province, with an estimated contribution of 3.3 per cent to the Provincial GDPR (DEDT, 2011:104). Tourism advocates reckon that it is a feasible strategy to eliminate ecological and socio-economic challenges confronting developing, through its ability to diversify economies countries (Rogerson and Visser, 2004:3). Cattarinich qualifies the above claim by describing tourism as an industry that offers diversified activities such as lodging, transportation, food, guided tours and other services to domestic and international tourists (Cattarinich, 2001:3, cited in Chifon, 2010:12). According to Sofield et al. (2004:2) "tourism contributes 11 per cent to the World's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbs approximately two hundred million of the workforce"(*ibid*:2).

This research sets out to examine participation of poor, disadvantaged and rural communities in ecotourism-led development projects in the Western Cape Province, South Africa. Development theorists commonly agree that community participation is a key step to the success of community-based development projects. This research postulates that local participation in ecotourism development is one way of changing perceptions, creating a sense of ownership and citizen cooperation. For ecotourism to be locally embedded, it has to be situated in Local Development (LD) processes. LD is perceived in this study, as a credible and viable local driven development process, which increases community participation and maximises the local resources utilisation such as, endogenous and networks to meet exogenous demands.

Furthermore, this research contends that ecotourism tourism-led development should be based on local peoples own criteria for change (Compas, 2011). This process should reflect the will of local people, their imagined change and their material, social and spiritual aspirations (*ibid*).The study is positioned in the broader debate of LD and seeks to situate both endogenous and exogenous approaches as complementary tools to promote regional competitiveness. The research draws its theoretical argument from Local Economic Development (LED) scholarship, in order to explain how ecotourism through local development could stimulate local economies. For instance, Enzama points out that LED theory covers "all economic activities at lo-

cal level and/or with any impact on the localities" (Enzama, 2008:9). According to Meyer-Stamer (2003:1, cited in Enzama, 2008) "local governments and communities are concerned with promotion of LED because the 'problems and challenges' of unemployment and poverty are most urgently felt at local levels". To this end, it is important to question whether ecotourism has any positive consequences for local development? And also ask what are independent and dependent variables that trigger such outcomes?

In light of these questions, this research paper, positions LD[1] as a baseline strategy in which ecotourism is based as an alternative development approach to improve and upgrade communities adjacent to nature–based tourism destinations in the Western Cape Province. The following question/s guides this research paper:

1. To what extent does community participation in ecotourism stimulate local economic development, and create employment opportunities to benefit local people, in the Western Cape Province?

*The sub-questions are:*
1.1 Who are the stakeholders involve in the ecotourism projects and what are their roles?
1.2 What are the limitations to local participation in the ecotourism projects in the Western Cape Province?
1.3 In what ways does ecotourism affects socio-cultural, economic and environmental aspects of host communities?

## 1.1 The history of protected areas and tourism development in South Africa

This section provides a context in which ecotourism or nature-based tourism emerged in South Africa. As Masuku Van Damme and Meskell (2009:70) remarks, "protected areas begun in the late 1890s, with the establishment of Hluhlulwe-Mfolozi Park without any legislative framework or national parks status". According to Carruthers (2003a) "the apartheid government had no criteria to establish national Parks".

Subsequently to 1890s, Kruger National Park was established, later in 1988 (Cock and Fig, 2002[2], cited in Masuku Van Damme and Meskell 2009:70) and shortly granted South African National Park status under the Union's legislation in 1926. Thus, Kruger National Parks was made a first South African park with national Status. In 1998, Kruger National Park centenary celebrations, Nelson Mandela asserted that:

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[1] LD as used throughout the research interchangeable with LED to provide a broader context for ecotourism development practice.
[2] Cock and Fig (2002, cited in Masuku Van Damme and Meskell, 2009) present paradigm shift from colonial to community based conservation.

"We must remember the great sacrifices made by rural black people who had to surrender their land to make way for the establishment of the Park. For the best part of the life of this conservation area, successive generations of black people were denied access to their natural heritage- only being suffered to come in to provide poorly rewarded labour" (Mandela, 1998, cited in Masuku Van Damme and Meskell, 2009:69)[3].

Similarly, Ntsholo (2012:5, citing Masuku Van Damme and Meskell, 2009) echoes Mandela's sentiments that "the creation of these parks entailed forceful removals of indigenous communities from their ancestral land, as was the case with the removal of the Makuleke community in Kruger". He contends that "it was under the Union that national and provincial agencies were instigated, and legal tools for their governance established" (Ntsholo, 2012:5). The land displacements for establishment of protected areas were the cause of relational breakdown between conservationists and indigenous communities (Hall-Martin et al., 2003).

Therefore, this is the context in which ecotourism discourse in South Africa should be critically explore and analysed. Thus, this research paper using Frank Gunder's words to argue that "we cannot hope to formulate adequate development theory and policy for the majority of the world's population who suffer from underdevelopment without first learning how their past economic and social history gave rise to their present underdevelopment" (Frank, 1966:17). Certainly, ecotourism development in South Africa cannot be examined in isolation from the history of protected areas. The existing unequal power- relations amongst participating actors in ecotourism-led activities, lack of access to or ownership of land by poor people living in or adjacent to protected natural areas. These are all consequences of exclusive colonial laws of apartheid.

## 1.2    An overview of the Western Cape Province

The Western Cape Province is situated in South-Western South Africa. Its estimated population is 5,822,734 (Statistics South Africa, 2011)[4]. It consists of six regions; Cape Metropole, West Coast, Central Karoo, Garden Eden, Cape Winelands and Overberg. The Western Cape Province is the fourth most populated province of South Africa, after Eastern Cape Province (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The capital City of the Western Cape Province is Cape Town. Figure 1 below shows the map of the province with all six regions.

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[3] A speech made by Dr Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela during commemorating the centenary of the Kruger National Park, Skukuza March 1998).

[4] The Western Cape Provincial Population: Census 2011. www.statssa.gov.za

**Figure 1: The map of the Western Cape Province**



Sources: Quantec (2013); Western Cape Provincial Treasury (2012)

Tourism in the Western Cape Province has been allegedly being a booming sector. The natural beauty, eminent hospitality, cultural diversity, good wine and cuisine make the province one of global tourist attractions. In 2005, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) identified tourism, agriculture and fishing as one of 13 top-priority sectors with a potential for provincial economic growth and development. According to Provincial Economic Outlook Review (PERO)[5], "tourism is a dynamic and diverse sector that influences an array of incidental industries such catering and accommodation, cultural centres, craft-makers including all forms of transportation" (PERO, 2012). Tourism contribution to Western Cape GDP-R is estimated at 3.3 per cent (DEADT, 2011: 104), with estimated direct contribution of 4.5 per cent to employment in the region. It is estimated that during 2010 World Cup, the City of Cape Town alone attracted over R1.5 million international tourists.

Despite these impressive GDP numbers, PERO (2012) indicates that the principal challenge facing the Western Cape Province is to alleviate poverty, improve welfare and grow the economy whilst creating jobs through appropriate policy initiatives. In terms of legislative framework, the White Paper on Sustainable Tourism Development and Promotion[6] in the Western Cape Province (2001, cited in DEAT, 2001) commits "to provide social equity and environmental integrity". It points out that "through social equity tourism will benefit the population at large, and efforts will be made to encourage the participation of all marginalised and disadvantaged groups, promotion of all cultures inherent in the province" (*ibid*). Social equity and community participation are postulated as a plan to reduce harmful impacts of tourism. The White paper also promises to protect the environment through tourism, and to promote industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural sectors (*ibid*). Moreover, municipalities have a mandate to lead, man-

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[5] The Provincial Outlook Review (PERO) (2012) analyses the performance of the provincial economy within Provincial Treasury. PERO is not reflected in the references
[6] The White Paper on Sustainable Tourism Development can be accessed at: www.westerncape.gov.za

age, plan for development and marketing of the tourism sector, through LED process (South African constitution, Act 108 of 1996). Subsequently, Responsible Tourism (RT) Policy and Action Plan was adopted (DEAT, 2002), with an aim to facilitate the municipal-wide adoption and implementation of RT actions and to serve as a decision-making point of reference for all divisions within the municipality and external stakeholders.

In 2008, the Tourism Development Framework (TDF)[7] was established. Similarly as ecotourism, TDF reinforces the notion of sustainable environmental practices, respect for cultural values and sustainable livelihoods. Through these legislations, government encourages the tourism sector to be environmentally, and culturally sensitive. Government deems social and economic equity as a goal to local participation tourism development. However, the practice of tourism in municipalities whether it complements or contradicts these legal frameworks, is a subject that is beyond the scope of this research paper.

## 1.3    Data Collection

This research investigates community participation in ecotourism development projects through comparative case study between two regions in the Western Cape Province, South Africa, Cape Care Route (CCR) in Cape Metropole and West Coast Biosphere Reserve Trail (WCBR) in West Coast Region. Despite the contrasting economic growth in both regions, the drivers of economic growth are similar; fishing, tourism and agriculture. The basis of the study comparison rests on competitive advantage of natural resources (endogeneity) that both regions have. Therefore, the two cases were selected based on their geographical contrast (rural and urban). These two regions are different, yet they are pursuing the same development approach, ecotourism, and this is of methodological interest.

Concerning methodology, Cresswell (1994, cited in Majija, 2009:51) points out that methodology is the research strategy or methods of collating data. Towards achieving study objectives, relevant methodologies were employed. This study relied much on desktop research for data collection purposes. Two forms of data collection were used, primary and secondary data collection. Regarding primary data, purposive interviews were conducted telephonically (Skype) with key actors in tourism projects, such as tour guides, local entrepreneurs, residents, officials, employers.

Furthermore, the purposive sample was chosen as a relevant method since the author relied much on referrals and also from my know-how of the study areas. Respondents were selected based on their knowledge and involvement in the tourism industry. Eight interviews were conducted via Skype and electronic mail respectively, with

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[7] The City of Cape Town Tourism Development Framework can be accessed at: ww.capetown.gov.za.

five respondents preferring to communicate via emails and three availed themselves to Skype. However, the quality of Skype interviews was affected due to network and audio problems in more rural areas. Interviews also abetted to clarity literature gaps. For secondary data, relevant literature examining theories, debates and discourses on eco-tourism development was reviewed to gather supporting evidences.

Several sources were used, such as websites of tourism institutions to access cases, books, articles and journals, government reports, and research papers. All these methods came in beneficial in the process of making rigorous analysis during the process of the study. In both cases, the respondents willingly availed themselves to be interviewed. Regarding the limitations of the study, the choice of methodology made it difficult to get first-hand information. During interviews, some respondents just rushed through the questions with no time to divulge details in so far as finances are concerned. Due to the fear of victimisation some respondents requested their names not to be mentioned in the study. Also, no tourists were interviewed, since due to time constraints there was no time to conduct field work.

Albeit, through the study of cases feed backs on various websites of tourism institutions were observed and taken into consideration during the analysis. This research paper attempts to close the gaps in the literature identified during literature review. Above all, it seeks to increase an understanding of the challenges faces tourism sector in the Western Cape Province at large. In this regard, the analysis and findings of cases presented in Chapter 3, 4 and 5 respectively are based on the limited information received from both projects; CCR and from West Coast Biosphere Trails projects.

## 1.4    Organisation of the Study

The study contains six chapters. Chapter 1 presents the introduction of the study, objectives and research questions. Chapter 2 presents a theoretical, conceptual and analytical framework and provides a background to ecotourism development as perceived in LED theory. The concepts such as embeddednes, endogenous & exogenous, and empowerment & community participation in ecotourism are discussed succinctly.

Chapter 3 presents the two cases, analysis, identification of actors, institutions involve and power relations. Chapter 4 discusses the limitations to community participation. Chapter 5 presents the main research findings; (i) inputs and (ii) the impact or outcomes; however an analysis will be given of both findings. And, Chapter 6 presents the discussion, research conclusion, recommendations and reflections for future research consideration.

# Chapter 2   Theoretical, Analytical and Conceptual Frameworks

## 2.1   An expression of Ecotourism Development through Local Development Lenses

Ecotourism development has suffered from a definitional void throughout the literature. Its definition has been based on different perspectives and approaches. Proponents of ecotourism defines it as "a purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and the natural history of the environment; taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem; producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of the natural resources beneficial to the local people" (Wood et al., 1991:75, cited in Ross and Wall, 1999:124). The problem with this definition is that, it creates a generic assumption that preservation of both cultural and the natural resources will inevitably benefit local people.

The same assumption is made, in the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa. It brands ecotourism "as  an environmentally and social responsible travel to natural or near natural areas that promote conservation, with low visitor impacts and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people" (cited in DEAT, 1996:3). This definition implies that, the main objective of ecotourism is to arrest clashes emanating from resource abuse and resource preservation. In the same analytical vein, (Pedersen, 1991) perceives ecotourism as sustainable development discourse, which uses existing natural resources and preserve them for generations.

However, the lack of agreement regarding ecotourism uniqueness from other forms of tourism has opened flood gates of criticism from its different critics. Ecotourism critics like Ross and Wall (1999) have criticised ecotourism as a marketing strategy that seeks to promote and preserve elitism. Due to elasticity of the concept and definitional divergences, some scholars define it using different analytical lenses, e.g. as ecological strategy, or an income generation strategy, or as part of sustainable development campaign to protect and preserve environment. Equally, Cater and Lowman (1994) echoes the above when arguing that, the promotion of ecotourism despite its uncertain definition makes it more an advertising stunt to generate income and place the privileged on an unfair advantage.

Nonetheless, the indicators to measure the sustainability and "eco-ness" of ecotourism as an alternative development should be based on its ability to involve poor communities in decision-making, an increased local ownership and fair sharing of economic benefits, creation of employment opportunities and protection of environment. Therefore, through local development as baseline strategy for tourism

development in municipalities, all actors should cooperate for the betterment of local people and stimulate local economic growth to improve local peoples welfare. In relation to the broader LD debates, Zaaier and Sara (1993:129) describes the theory of LED as "a process in which local governments and/or community-based groups manage their existing resources and enter into partnership arrangements with the private sector, or with each other, to create new jobs and stimulate economic activity in an economic area"(also see Rodríguez-Pose and Tijmstra, 2005). Thus, for its sustainability and effectiveness, ecotourism development should form integral part of the broader participatory process of local governments, that drives the LED strategy.

Same applies to the practice of ecotourism on a regional context, LED would help particularly on identifying "actors involve, institutions, and shaping the processes of local regional growth as these exist and take place within a particular defined territory" (Gomez and Helmsing, 2008). It is against this backdrop that, Blackely (1989:23) applauses the LED for its ability to maintain the balance between "internal impacts and players, whilst remaining competitive to other localities". However, in pursuance of ecotourism development to stimulate local economies, actors are to be mindful of the global powers and their neoliberal policies, since they increases regularity and the power of exogenously driven changes, thereby, decreasing the ability of local regional groups to resist and/ or to act endogenously (Gomez and Helmsing, 2008). The following section seeks to understand how ecotourism becomes an alternative from mass-tourism development.

## 2.2    Ecotourism: An Alternative or Mass-Tourism Upgrade?

In relation to the concept of ecotourism, this section provides an analytical discussion on whether ecotourism is an alternative development or just an extension of mass tourism. Furthermore, this section articulates the importance of building reciprocal nexus between endogenous and exogenous development approaches in pursuance of ecotourism. As da Fonseca (2008:9) subtle argues, neither endogenous or exogenous assets alone are sufficient to achieve inclusive tourism development, thus, a hybrid approach is proposed. The hybrid approach as theorised in this study will help to promote recognition of internal resources to mitigate external inputs. Furthermore, supporting concepts such as empowerment, community participation and embeddeness are discussed under section 2.2.2 to explain causalities and divergences of ecotourism discourse. To dissect ecotourism's theoretical groundings, this research adapted the analytical framework of ecotourism proposed by Ross and Wall (1999:124) in [Figure 2].

Regarding to ecotourism as an alternative development, Ross and Wall analytical framework illustrates ecotourism, as a discourse packaged as an alternative from mass tourism development. As explained earlier on, ecotourism (by definition) is marketed as a locally embedded tourism development. It is premised on three convictions; namely: ecotourism as a strategy to promote community participation;

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to generation income and protect the environment. According to Ross and Walls' analysis, the overall assumption of ecotourism practice, departs from the causalities between sustainable natural resources (rural, cultural, scenic, heritage, mountains, rivers, lakes and history) and local development (Infrastructural growth; technology; Finance & Empowerment) as both outcomes of a good practice of ecotourism. The framework further, portrays ecotourism as a form of tourism-led development that preserves locally-based natural areas. By using existing natural attractiveness of a locality (endogeneity) to generate income, in order to meet external (exogenous) challenges.  This results on a local market-driven tourism development – an inside-out approach, which promotes local entrepreneurship, acknowledges local people's abilities and promotes an inclusive economic and infrastructural growth to support development activities.

**Figure 2. Analytical Framework of Ecotourism**
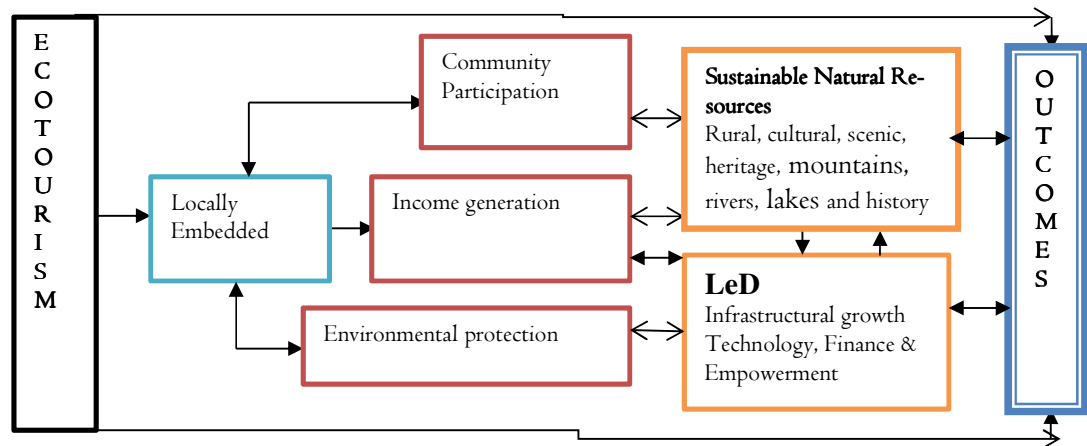


**Source:** Own elaboration based on  Ross and Wall (1999:124)
'Ecotourism: towards congruence between theory and practice'

Ecotourism as an alternative form of tourism-led development relies on, nature and culture-based tourism activities (Weaver, 2001; Fennell, 2003) as compared to "mass tourism".  Viljoen and Tlabela describe ecotourism as "a tourism that focuses on natural areas and underdeveloped parts of the world" (Viljoen and Tlabela, 2006). As per ecotourism definition, LED strategy is conceived as a driver of ecotourism activities, because local resources have a strong potential of providing economic linkages across sectors. An ecotourism-integrated local development can lead to economic viability for the poor localities adjacent to protected areas, if implemented with/by the affected people. A substantial development spin-offs through associations, synergies and local participation can be experienced (Saxena, 2008:234). Thus, a balance on the management of the interactions between these aspects is needed to lead to a sustainable ecotourism-led local development, with a responsibility to protect local culture, cognisant of the environmental impact, and supportive of the local economies. This balance requires hybrid interaction of resources in LED processes(Sofield, 2003). Tourism "should empower local communities and thereby eliminating reliance on government, external agencies and facilitate social-entrepreneurial behaviour" (Sofield, 2003).

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Despite the assumption that ecotourism is locally embedded, South African, Western Cape Province in particular, tourism driven development has been seen as a key strategy for achieving sustainable LED. Different authors have praised tourism sector for its social linkages that creates employment opportunities and economic growth, thus, resulting to elimination of poverty incidences (Ramukumba, 2012). Saxena and IIbery, aptly describes tourism social linkages as "embedded on local networks, however, the degree of their geographical reach and complexity may vary" (Saxena and IIbery, 2008). For this paper, the term embeddedness highlight the territorial setting in which social formations takes place in LED driven tourism. For the purpose of this study, embeddedness is defined as:

> "those resources or activities that are connected to a locality, also considers established relations within a specific socio-cultural local contexts, and the unique sociocultural characteristics and identities that are embedded in place; they help to facilitate and strengthen relations and network formations" (Hinrichs, 2000; Murdoch, 2000)

Therefore, this research paper argues that, for the goal of community participation to be achieved, ecotourism-led development should be rooted on social networks. Not only rooted, but also recognise, adapt and respect the dynamic socio-cultural context of localities, without seeking to alter them.

### 2.2.1 Endogenous and Exogenous Development Approaches

In light of the above discussion, this research paper situates endogenous and exogenous approach on tourism-driven local economic development as being physical, natural, financial, technology, social and human capital assets, structures and processes (Chambers and Conway 1992). The conventional discourse on economic development of rural areas has been dominated by modernization development theories. In this section the concept of endogenous and exogenous development approaches is studied in the context of selected contributions from LED theory concerning tourism-driven development.

A specific consideration will be paid to the role of ecotourism in the overall discourse of tourism-driven development. The advocates of endogenous development approach, postulate it to be the contrast of the exogenous development. Van der Ploeg and Van Dijk (1995), Ray (1999) and Murdoch (2000) in their respective papers argues that the locality in which the development is taking place, community members are encouraged to take full responsibility for the design and execution of development strategies. Nemes (2005) and Roberts (2002) notes that in endogenous approach, territorial rather than a sectorial focus is used. Its proponents believe that maximum usage of local resources to comprehend global challenges is vital to the success of local development. Also, Vázquez-Barquero (2006) theorises that "endogenous model leads to an integrated model of rural development, combining the best of both worlds (internal and external)". Endoge-

nous development has been heralded for promoting community partic-ipatory approaches as critical principles of practice. And, it perceives community participation in rural development as both an instrument (for capacity building) and a goal in itself, by encouraging participation of the local inhabitants (Murdoch, 2000; Lowe et al., 1998). Maleki suggests that for a locality to develop and market its tourism-led prod-uct, whether it is a special natural, historic or cultural attraction or an urban or rural destination can take advantage of its existing natural his-toric and cultural attractions to attract revenue from visitors (Maleki, 1997, cited in Sangkakorn and Suwannarat, 2013??:4). However, this debate fails to bring to the fore the exploitative character of tourism-driven development, its negative impact on cultural sustainability and local natural resources.

Therefore, this research paper suggests that ecotourism devel-opment must be locally embedded, local people should be the actors in driving and managing its activities. Such an approach will help to sal-vage local uniqueness of environment and cultural resources from un-fair market-driven tourism development.  Hence, it is important that endogenous resources be arranged to maintain maximum benefits in a locality, hearten community involvement in decision-making processes, and help local players to modify exogenous chances to meet their own desires (Saxena, 2008). In contrary, the popular criticism of exogenous development approach is attributed to its 'modernist' approach to rural development. It views rural development as reliant on the metropolitan economy and attributes the problems faced by rural spaces to the dis-tance to metropolitan spaces. Similarly, Terluin and Post blame the over-reliance on government support, which is created through the use of incentives to stimulate the location of exogenous sectors in rural re-gions (Terluin and Post, 2000).This model is also blamed of its univer-sal way to measure economic success which ignores the context of the location and its culture (Nemes, 2005). This led to its severe criticism for promoting dependency on subsidies and external policy decisions (Lowe et al. 1999).

Another counter-criticism of the exogenous development arises from its "dependency on large-scale firms operating in single sectors and implies the marginalisation of small-scale, local firms operating in diverse markets" (Terluin and Post, 2000). And, the dominant role of government and external firms results in development which does not always respect local values (Murdoch, 2000). It can even erase cultural values, described as destructive development (Lowe et al., 1998). In conclusion, the reliance on exogenous large scale firms often leads to export of benefits accrued from development activities outside the re-gion (Van der Ploeg, 1999). This research paper situates ecotourism discourse within the lenses of endogenous development approaches and mass-tourism within exogenous development approaches. Howev-er, for effective practice of ecotourism vertical and horizontal interac-tions should be considered.

### 2.2.2 Community Participation: A Contested Concept

Community participation as a concept is a contestable terrain in development discourse. It is also a delicate concept with different definitions and meanings to different people. Some use the concept as a mechanism to attain both material and moral needs. These different meanings and perspectives led McIntosh and Goeldner (1986, cited in Timothy, 1999) to suggest that "community participation in tourism should be observed from at least two perspectives; as a way to gain control over the decision-making process and as a way of sharing tourism benefits"[8]. Tosun agrees that the term "community participation must be explained by approaching it from different perspectives" (Tosun, 1999). Cohen and Uphof (1997) refer to "participation in the context of rural development as a way to include people's involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programs, their sharing in the benefits of the development programs and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programs".

Relating to participation as 'input' and empowerment as an 'outcome'. Timothy (1999) frames participation as "inclusion of local people in decision-making processes, empowering them to determine their hopes and concerns about tourism". However, some authors argues that the latter must be "measured by increasing local incomes, employment, and education of locals, etc." (Brohman, 1996; Pearce, Moscardo and Ross, 1996). For relevance to the research questions and objectives, this research paper adopts at least two proposed perspectives as suggested by McIntosh and Goeldner above; which are: a way to gain control over decision-making and benefit sharing.

The study argues that ecotourism development to be effective, local people should be involved in the management, decision-making processes and equal sharing of accumulated benefits. In light of the above, the relationship between community participation and empowerment should be encouraged at all time. Proponents of participation describe it as a way in which the poor and marginalised capacities are increased. For participation to be achieved it requires a "development of social contract for interactions and mutual behaviour between locals and tourists, creation of opportunities for visitors to interact with locals in an unstructured and spontaneous environment" (DEAT, 2002).

Contrary to the optimistic approaches, Botes and van Rensburg cautions against ignoring limitations and rhetoric encompassing the word participation in the development discourse(Botes and van Rensburg, 2000:42). They argue that "problems that hampers participation varies from institutional to socio-cultural" (*Ibid*: 42). Some are more technical and others are logistical. These limitations can also be external or internal; external obstacles obstructs genuine community participation to take place, whilst the internal ones refers to inside conflicts of

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[8] Also see (http://www.cogta.gov.za

interests, be it by local elites or gate keepers"( Botes and van Rensburg, 2000:42). In the midst to these challenges Allen and Brennan assert that, "it is in the onus of the actors to enhance participation of host communities in tourism-led activities to maximizes their benefits from tourism economic spin-offs" (Allen and Brennan, 2004:9). To enhance community participation in ecotourism activities requires a new approach as oppose to the mainstream tourism development practice.

This approach should be driven by principles of equity, local ownership, participation, environmental sustainability as well as improving physical well-being. As articulated in Mowfort and Munt (1998) "local people should be included in any tourism development activities happening in their localities". And their participation in development projects should come in different forms, levels and degrees i.e. passive, consultative, active, material, functional and interactive participation etc. Typology of group participation in community projects is acutely summarised in Agarwal (2001:1624). Below see [Table 1].

Table 1. Typologies of Participation

| Form and level of participation | Characteristic or features |
| --- | --- |
| Nominal participation | Subscribing to a group |
| Passive participation | Being informed of decisions without adding voice on it. |
| Consultative | Opinion search "by the way process" for ratification of decisions taken. |
| Activity-specific participation | Given a specific responsibility or tasks to play |
| Active | Having a direct opinion on matters concerning your development |
| Interactive (empowering) participation | Having a voice or influence in the group decisions. |

Source: Own elaboration based on Agarwal (2001:1624) Typology of group participation in community projects

For the purpose of this research paper, two key types of indicators are adopted; active and interactive participation. These typologies are used in this paper as indicators to measure the level and degree of community participation in ecotourism development, its outcomes and impact on social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. Furthermore, the research aims to explain the strong connection between empowerment, community participation in decision-making processes and ownership. According to Agarwal (2001)"to achieve effective participation in development projects requires a shift from the bottom to the top levels, which is defined not by how a group is established but by the extent of people's effectiveness". This shift in the practice of ecotourism development would help to encourage interactive, active and nominal participation, where voices of community members are heard, thus resulting to elimination of passive, consultative and other ineffective forms of participation. Pretty concurs that "citizen's participation is central in the success of local development projects; hence, their voice should be integrated in policies of local NGOs and governments"(Pretty, 1995). This research paper posits

that, effective community participation in ecotourism-led development projects will eventually lead to environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability of localities.  Therefore, community participation in ecotourism-led activities "should be measured according to the number of local jobs created, and the degree of local participation in decision-making and ownership of resources" (Saxena, 2008). Furthermore the study argues that effective community participation in development; planning and implementation requires strong empowerment, to assist locals to better manage local resources and engage with other actors effectively. In concluding, the section below discusses empowerment as means to effective community participation and attainment of ownership and management of resources.

### 2.2.3 Empowerment as "means" or an "end"?

According to Lyons et al. (2001) empowerment as a concept has been obscurely defined in the literature. There are different schools of thought defining empowerment ([9]Luttell and Quiroz et al., 2009:5). These schools succinctly discusses empowerment "both as a process and an outcome, others have embraced only the instrumentalist view of empowerment, whilst others focusing more narrowly on importance of process" (*ibid: 5*). Other scholars have questioned the manner in which participation has been coined as empowering without paying attention to results. Clearly, just like participation, empowerment means many things to many people. Hence, Lyons et al. (2001:1234, citing Somerville, 1998:233) suggest that empowerment should be conceptualised as "any process by which people's control (collective or individual) over their lives is increased".  Similarly, Rowlands (1997:9) relates to "empowerment as changing power-gaining, expending, diminishing and losing". He remarks that "power is a phenomenal component of any interpretation of empowerment" (Rowlands, 1997).

Korten also defines empowerment in terms of control over resources (Korten, 1987, cited in Wils, 2001). These views on empowerment are in sync with indicators of this study for both empowerment and participation. As theorised in this research paper, when poor people are empowered, their level and degree of participation increases, leading to greater control over their lives and local resources. Scholars like Schneider (1999, cited in Wils, 2001:7) agrees that through empowerment poor people are able to escape poverty. In contextualising participation as "input" and empowerment as "outcome", Wils (2001:7, citing Friedman, 1992; Galjart, 1987; Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994) notes that "empowerment involves participation in decision-making on matters important to those who are subjects of empowerment. Despite the 'beautification' of empowerment as either process or outcome, Wils (2001:8) strongly cautions that "though empowerment is often linked to social, economic or cultural dimensions, it is a political strategy and process". To sum up, Luttell and Quiroz et al. (2009:1) provide (4) various dimensions of empowerment; i.e. economic empowerment, human and social empowerment, political empowerment and cultural empowerment. These dimensions reveal the nature of unequal power

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[9] Cecilia Lutterell, and Sitna Quiroz, with Claire Scrutton and Kate Bird (2009) paper on Empowerment can be accessed at <u>www.odi.org.uk</u>

relations in the ecotourism discourse as both consequences of disempowerment and limitation to participation. Below see [Table 2] for explanation.

**Table 2. Various Dimensions of Empowerment**

| Economic empowerment | Seeks to ensure that people have skills, capabilities and access to assets and resources. |
|---|---|
| Human and social empowerment | Views empowerment as a multidimensional social process (Cheung et al. 2005:355). This process is assumed to be fostering power in people to use it in their own life and communities (citing Page and Czuba 1999) |
| Political empowerment | Capacity to analyse, organise and mobilise for collective change. (citing Piron and Watkins 2004). |
| Cultural empowerment | Focuses on recreating cultural symbolic practices (citing Stromquist 1993) |

**Source:** adapted from Cecilia Lutterell, and Sitna Quiroz, with Claire Scrutton and Kate Bird (2009). Can also be accessed on www.odi.org.uk

All these four dimensions as explained in the table presume that localities would have more freedom of choice and action over their lives and development (Sen, 1990). The Tourism Development Framework (TDF) of the Western Cape Province, shares the same sentiments that "for tourism sector to succeed and contribute to the livelihoods of poor people, appropriate strategies are required for training and skills-building and economic empowerment of individuals and small businesses" (TDF, 2004). On another hand, the same dimensions also reveal how political, cultural, economic and social disempowerment in ecotourism discourse, can lead to a misery towards local people. These dimensions can lead to poor people left with no access to resources and any power or control over development projects taking place in or adjacent to their localities. The empowerment typology below [Table 3] provides insights on distinctions between different degrees of empowerment, with a particular emphasis on the importance of local control over decisions and resources that determine development of localities. Longwe (1991, cited in Luttell and Quiroz et al., 2009) stretches the empowerment debate beyond the four dimensions of positivism and normative approach.

**Table 3. Typology of Empowerment**

| The Degree | Description meaning |
|---|---|
| The Welfare Degree | Passiveness of recipients |
| The access Degree | Equal access to land |
| Awareness raising Degree | Structural discrimination is address |
| The participation and mobilization | Equal right on decision-making |
| The control degree | Individuals decisions are recognised |

Source: Adapted from Longwe (1991) typology of empowerment

In the context of ecotourism-led development project, Longwe's typology suggests that, even though basic needs are met, the welfare degree

promotes passive community participation, which is against the spirit of empowerment (Agarwal, 2001). This typology further perceives community awareness as an effective tool to address structural and institutional impediments in the ecotourism development discourse, thus resulting to equal rights on decision-making, access to land and resources. However, the highlight of successful community empowerment is defined through the control degree as an indicator, where agents and groups make decisions that are fully recognised in the super-power ecotourism structure.

Regarding the debate on empowerment as both "outcome" and "process" Berner and Philips (2005:26) frame it "as improving the capacity of the poor to negotiate". Narayan shares the same sentiments that "empowerment increases people's freedoms and actions in varying contexts, it provides the poor with access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability and local organizational capacity" (Narayan/World Bank, 2002:18). The analytical framework below explains participation as and "input" to achieve empowerment "output/outcomes" as envisaged by (Chambers, 1995; Rowlands, 1997; Wills, 2001) and is extensively discussed in the preceding section.

**Figure 3. Analytical Framework of Participation**

**Source:** Own elaboration based on Tosun (2000); Chambers (1995); Rowlands (1997) and Wills (2001).

The above analytical framework describes the causalities between community participation as an 'input' and empowerment as an 'output/outcomes'. Generally, participation is presumed to be a mechanism through which sustainable ecotourism practice could be achieved. The framework also concedes that community participation faces some limitations such as structural barriers, local access to information and operations. These limitations are extensively discussed in Chapter 4. However, the study is premised from the assumption that when community is empowered, that result to peo-

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ple have power over their natural resources, and decisions pertaining to the development of their localities. And ultimately their access to land and markets increases. This power comes from within, meaning there are enough internal capacities due to empowerment process. It is these internal capacities that help communities to facilitate access to development, using their own endogenous resources to meet exogenous development challenges.

This practice is envisaged to be helpful to improve local infrastructural capacity, income growth, technology, strong environmental awareness and sustainable ways to conserve local natural resources. Advocates of community participation argue that, "local ownership and collective agency in how to utilize resources in pursuit of LED strategies serves to maximize the retention of economic benefits within an area" (Ray, 1999). Cawley and Gillmor (2008) qualify the above argument by pointing out that, "external ownership of resources and external driven decision-making removes control from the local people, therefore, for tourism to be integrated and sustainable sound, it should be harmonized to existing local institutions and rewarding to locality economic decline".

Having explored the above theoretical arguments on participation, its limitations and typologies. This research places emphasise on the importance of participation in development discourse as a machinery to enhance local ownership and unbiased access to local resources. The study departs from the argued theories of community participation above all to build on causalities and mutualities between empowerment as 'means or an end'. The aim is to encourage complementarities between the two concepts to obviate unhealthy competitive approaches.

The study hypothesises that, if the capacity of local people is increased, that results to better management and implementation of local ecotourism development projects. And that will ultimately lead to implementation of programmes that are responsive to their local needs. The next chapter presents and analyses two different cases of ecotourism projects taking place in the Western Cape Province. Following the presentation of cases, the chapter further discuss participating actors, institutions and their roles in the implementation of ecotourism development.

# Chapter 3  The Study Areas

### 3.1    Cape Care Route case

Cape Care Route (CCR) is one example of ecotourism-driven LD initiatives in the Western Cape Province [Figure1] It is a partnership between City of Cape Town Tourism Department, private sector and communities. The initiative uses complementarity of approaches to facilitate local development and it situates local tourism and environmental management in the forefront as drivers of ecotourism development. CCR runs plus/minus 25 projects in different poor communities in Cape Town. These projects offer a variety of tourist attractions, such as; scenery, accommodation, Bed and Breakfast , shuttles services etc. (SouthAfrica.com, 2013)[10]. Through projects like Abalimi Bezekhaya and Oude Molen eco-Village, CCR aims at promoting sustainable development [Figure 5 and 6] whilst also offering domestic and international tourists an experience of local culture.

**Figure 4. Abalimi Bezekhaya**                **Figure 5. Oude Molen Eco-Village**



Oude Molen promotes sustainable eco-village to encourage respect for people, nature and diversity. Also aims at establishing an economical sustainable micro-enterprise eco-village that demonstrates the collaboration between government, community and business. These three actors work together to stimulate job creation, environmental education, arts, cultural interaction and micro-enterprise development, and to demonstrate eco-friendly energy and technology (Capetown Travel, 2013).

Furthermore, tourists get to experience the creativity and innovation offered by the poor communities. Perhaps, tourists get to see how people from underprivileged townships cultivate their own food, build their own homes, and make crafts from recycled rubbish. Amongst others, the following places are visited; Victoria Mxenge[11] Lilies for Peace Project, and named after one of the ANC freedom fighters in South Africa (source: sa-venues.com, 2013). In Victoria Mxenge, there is a Housing project driven by local women, supported by Abalimi Bezekhaya and Homeless People's Federation. This project is part

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[10] The CCR data was accessed through the Website: www.SouthAfrica.com on September 2013. For pictures (see www.abalimi.org.za; www.capetown.travel and www.riverlodge.co.za)

[11] More data was sourced from the site: http://www.sa-venues.com/attractionswc/cape-care-route.htm.

of Philippi Triangle, a leading example of people-driven poverty alleviation programmes in Cape Town and an initiative perceived to be promoting local economic development. Through Lwandle Migrant Labor Museum visitors are told about the history and suffering caused by apartheid system to black people. Tourists also visit single sex hostels in Langa [Figure 7] which are also consequences of systematic and exclusive laws of apartheid government against Blacks.

**Figure 6. Informal Settlement**          **Figure 7. Single Sex Hostel**

Another touristic attraction is Khayelitsha Craft Market, located at St Michael's and All Angels Anglican Church. A the market, tourists buy locally-made crafts [Figure 9], souvenirs and traditional African fare, handmade curios, pottery, beadwork, baskets and fabric paintings. This market aims to alleviate poverty in the area[12]. Despite poverty resistance and high levels of unemployment, there is a general assumption that local tourism initiatives had stimulated local economies. Tourist activities in Khayelitsha include but are not limited; a stop to see, a local artist who uses cement to create baboon sculptures, or the Look-Out Hill [Figure 8] which houses an Arts and Science Centre, and a local restaurant. Look-out Point has a highest dune for a 360-degree view of False Bay, the Hottentots Holland mountain range, Helderberg and Groot Drakenstein (Cape Town Travel, 2013).

**Figure 8. Look Out Hill**          **Figure 9 Craft Market**

Source: www.capetown.travel          Source: www.capetown.travel

The underlying assumption with these projects is that, to achieve sustainable local economic development in a practical way, the competitiveness of

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[12] Also see: www.capetown.travel/activities/entry/khayelitsha_craft_market

local natural resources should be maximised to meet international tourists needs whilst at the same time empowering participating communities. Thus, projects such as the Edith Stephens Wetland Park are provided as an example of how co-operation between government, business and communities is serving to protect and promote the rich biodiversity of Cape Town. Cape Peninsula National Park shows how alien vegetation was cleared to reduce water consumption and encourage indigenous plant-life to flourish (South Africa.com, 2013).

## 3.2    Cape West Coast Biosphere Reserve (CWCBR) Trails Project

It is located in the West Coast Region, a predominantly Afrikaans speaking region. Within CWCBR, there is West Coast National Park with its wonderful ecotourism attractions, such as; West Coast Fossil Park. Adjacent to the CWCBR and National Park, there is a mixture of African and coloured communities such as Atlantis, Mamre, Pella, Du Noon Informal Settlement [Figure 10] and others, with more depressing socio-economic conditions. Amidst these projects, living conditions in these communities have not improved much. Unemployment levels within the CWCBR localities ranges from 3% in the "rural" areas to 54% in Du Noon, with an average of 13% in 2001 (Cape Biosphere, 2013).

**Figure 10. Du Noon Informal Settlement**



*Source:* courtesy of westcapenews.com

The regional unemployment rate is gender-based; with females being higher, at 18.6 per cent compared to 13.2 per cent of males. Likewise, unemployment is also racially segregated; Africans being the highest at 25.8 per cent, followed by the Coloured group (17%), Indian/Asians (8%), and Whites at 4.4 per cent (PGWC, 2011)[13]. The region was traditionally farming and fishing village before it became tourism attraction. Also Agriculture is the leading sector of employment; hunting, forestry and finishing are absorbing 27.0 per cent of the District's workforce (PGWC, 2007). Since 2011, the regional labour concentration was around Agriculture; hunting; forestry and fishing was estimated at 27.9%. In the Agricultural sector; hunting; forestry and fishing -15.0% were amongst the largest sectors contributing to GDP-R in 2010 (PGWC, 2011). In 2002, CWCBR was established as Non-Profit organization.

With funding received from the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA), the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) and the

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[13] Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC): Treasury Department (2007 and 11).

Dutch Embassy in SA, Trails' [Figure 11] aim was both to enhance sustainable communities and networks of locally owned tourism routes initiatives in the region. Also, the project aimed to create linkages between endogenous and exogenous resources. Trails were branded as a way to grow local economies by supporting emerging local tourism initiatives and hospitality services and sustaining the livelihoods of newly employed guides, caterers and drivers (Cape Biosphere, 2013[14]).Thus far, the economic impact of Trails is estimated to be R21 million over five years (Cape Biosphere, 2013).This income is ascribed to Trails' ability to capitalize on the competitive advantage of the regional natural resources. However, no indicators were provided to measure the economic impact to the livelihood of the poor. (Cape Biosphere, 2013).

**Figure 11. Trail Project**



Source: courtesy of ecotourism Biosphere Trail projects

!Khwa ttu cultural tourism-led project is located within CWCBR. It offers tourists with exposure to the life of the first indigenous people of southern Africa, the Khoi San. It also teach tourists about Sans history, traditional knowledge, skills, languages, customs and current affairs. The place also offers tourists with cultural dishes served in a restaurant, San-produced craft items [Figure 13], guest houses, bush camps [Figure 12] and bush cottages that provide an appealing accommodation.

**Figure 12. Bush Camp**          **Figure 13. Craft Work**



Source: courtesy of the !Khwattu Cultural Project

The San craftsmen have an attractive outlet inside to market and sell their products to visiting tourists. !Khwa ttu – development methodology as-

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[14] Data and pictures of Biosphere reserves projects were sourced from (www.capebiospheretrails.co.za) and (http://www.khwattu.org and westcapenews.com).

sumes that, San-owned businesses and initiatives are crucial to empower San communities to alleviate the severe poverty that faces them in their daily lives.

!Khwa ttu is also an accredited Nature and Cultural Site with Guide Skills Programme that seeks to provide young San women and men with skills to become registered Nature Site Guides and Cultural Site Guides (Cape Biosphere, 2013). Their Training Department offers workshops in Rock Art, First Aid, HIV & AIDS, sustainable tourism and Intellectual Property Rights. CWCBR also facilitates environmental education targeting schools in the surrounding communities (Cape Biosphere, 2013). Despite all that has been mentioned in this case, the socio-economic status of poor communities living adjacent to these ecotourism-led projects has not changed. These communities suffer from poverty and survive with sharp household inequalities. For instance; in West Coast as a whole unemployment is estimated to be 12.6% on average. Cases of migrant job seekers to the Vredenburg-Saldanha economic zone and had been witnessed. As of May 2012 the Biosphere website indicated a sharp variance on unemployment levels, with unemployment of Africans reported to be at 26% and that of whites at 4% (Cape Biosphere, 2013).

### 3.3    Key Actors and their role in ecotourism

As Bjork points out, there are different views and perceptions about actors involved in ecotourism development (Bjork, 2000). Tourism researchers have pointed out four popular actors involved in the facilitation of ecotourism. These are; the tourists, the tourism sector, government and local people (host communities). Although these actors hold different interests, 'a win-win' strategy might be necessary in undertaking ecotourism activities. Such 'trade-offs' encourage a focus on addressing environmental sustainability (Hunter, 1995), and stress the importance of local education (Ceballos-LascuraÂin, 1993a).

The criteria used to assess the role played by actors rests on their degree and level of involvement in the decision-making. For a comprehensive analysis, this research presents a synchronized group of actors identified in both cases. The figure below shows the levels and roles in which actors are integrated in these projects. It categorises the actors into two; internal and external. Internal actors in this research means endogenous actors and external refer to exogenous actors. In the frame below, all actors on the right side are external and the ones on the left are internal.

**Table 4 . Actors in Ecotourism Development**



Source: Own elaboration.

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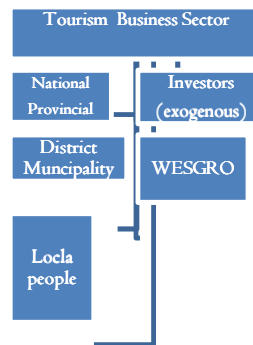
Both projects are privately managed with a "controlled" participation of locals. As observed from the cases, amongst all four key actors, private sector plays a leading role. Ashley cautions against this practice that "in a private sector-led tourism development, benefits derived by communities are received by accident than design" (Ashley, 1998). This is because of the "philanthropically minded private tourism business or NGOs planning" (Ashely,1998) One respondent echoed Ashley's sentiments that:

> "Companies with sole ownership have an income advantage than those whom are run as cooperatives. They benefit a lot from local economies created through these tourism initiatives. Some companies are one man bands who obviously get all the income; others are like us, where I act as a mentor to the company" (personal communication, August 2013)[15].

Considering the vertical nexus of these actors in the frame, the statement above is not surprising. On top of the frame is an externally embedded Tourism Business Sector (TBS), which holds more coordinating powers. TBS can either be regional or international base institutions with more interests on economic outcomes of tourism, same as investors. Investors represents the flow of exogenous resources, they provide financial capital to regions and local institutions to coordinate ecotourism projects. This gives them power over decision-making processes and agenda setting. This is what (Arnsteins, 1969) refers to as "manipulative participation".

Tourism agencies like Western Cape Destination, Marketing, Investment and Trade Promotion Agency (WESGRO) and Tourism South Africa are responsible for branding and marketing of local destinations since most of these protected areas and game reserves are privately owned. The role of government is to provide policy direction. Through IDPs & LED processes, municipalities are able to promote these nature based ecotourism initiatives as mechanisms through which local and regional economies could be stimulated. NGOs in both cases, supposing they contribute through community empowerment, lobby and advocate for environmental protection and sustainable land use management policies. In conclusion, the current management of natural resources in both cases defines the nature of relations between the participating actors. Sadly, community is the most marginalised actor in the frame, despite, it's local embeddedness. Needless to say, the frame shows how resources and institutional bureaucracy can be used to gain power over marginalised people in the development discourse. It is to be noted that, the above frame is an abridged version of a multifaceted stakeholder relations observed in these cases.

### 3.3.1  *Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Development Associations (DAs)*

Institutions/Associations in this paper are used interchangeable with reference to Local Development Forums (LDFs); Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and DAs, as identified in the cases. Arguably, these institutions are established to be pathfinders of local development processes. However, different scholars have criticised them as

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[15] Interviews via Skype and emails were conducted with different actors in tourism ventures in the Western Cape Province.

breeding grounds for power struggles and pre-conceived ideas (Cater, 2006). Proponents of agency have questioned the focus on development of local associations, suggesting that such associations become dominated by more affluent and more powerful actors of society. Thus, perpetuating existing power relations and limiting capabilities of the poor (Luttell and Quiroz et al., 2009, citing Alsop and Norton, 2004; Mosse, 2005). In the same way, Giddens (1984, cited in da Finseca, 2008) criticises institutions for their tendency "to reproduce themselves over time/space".

In support of institutions, (Gomez, 2008; Scott, 2001, cited in da Finseca, 2008:22) argues that "institutions are the making of agents". Nonetheless, this research views these institutions as instruments that are dependable from power for their effectiveness (Gomez, 2008:27; Hodgson, 2006, cited in da Finseca, 2008:22). In both cases, the study discovered that powerful actors have 'power over' and 'power to' decide on development process. Therefore, these NGOs/CSOs limit agency an agency of local communities to participate in ecotourism projects. During interviews, two contrasting views on the importance of development associations in local development were raised. A local entrepreneur respondent from Khayelitsha praised the role of institutions, particularly NGOs that:

"They play an essential role in enforcing civil accountability, expanding local networks and, thus, helps localities to mobilize both internal and external resources to avoid external exploitation" (personal communication, August 2013)[16].

On contrary, a tour guide questioned the role of institutions:

"As overlapping with the of government, resulting to confusion. NGOs are selective in their approach, some only advocate for environmental protection, overlooking the plight of local people and poverty" (personal communication, August 2013).

Despite these conflicting views about NGOs, the study noted that in some localities these associations were operating effectively. However, the strongest complaint against them has been their approach towards development, which includes the question of representation and their accountability lines. In West Coast rural areas, some forums are alleged to be acting as gatekeepers and limiting space for participation. For local development to be seamless, locals must have control over the type and nature of development they want in their communities.

### 3.3.2 Power Relations amongst Actors

Gaventa (2003) claims that power is hidden, it focuses on controls over decision-making - how powerful people and institutions holds influence over development processes. Some use power as an instrument for path creation, whereas, others use it as an object to limit agency. Power as discussed earlier

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[16] Interviews were conducted with local respondents to establish whether institutions in tourism development, were path creators or limiting local participation. Names of the respondents are withheld as per their wish.

on, cannot be divorced from institutionalism. The form of power as noted in the cases disempowers and marginalises poor communities. Contrary to Wils notion that "empowerment is a critical element of power – the power of the people to decide, to choose from alternatives, and to influence behaviour – on matters important to them (Wils, 2001:7). Some institutions are by extension means of power spaces. Giddens (1984:283 cited in da Finseca, 2008:23) refers to "power struggles as disputes for control over social systems". The extent of unequal power relations between actors in both projects can be better explained through Rowlands (1997), four categories of power, namely; *Power over* (as ability to influence and coerce); *Power to* (organise and change existing hierarchies/institutions); *Power with* (power from collective action) and *Power within* (power from individual awareness). Although roles are clearly defined in a structure, power relations amongst actors determine decision-makers as far as planning and management of ecotourism activities. In both cases, actors and institutions such as marketing agencies and investors, due to their financial power they have a certain degree of control and power over agenda setting. Power gives them ownership compared to other actors. For example, one respondent pointed out that:

> "In some communities tour guides are local people since they have an advantage of community know-how. The problem is that locals remain not owners of these SMMEs initiatives. They are just employed on temporary basis for they know the community better than the company owners who may be an external person" (personal communication, August 2013)[17].

Theoretically, the above statement is in line with what Gaventa (2003) describes as 'invited' spaces for participation, where external agencies uses local participation to increase their legitimacy. No real local or long term economic opportunities are created by these initiatives. It is a further entrenching dependency of less privileged locals to external actors. In addressing the addressing the issue around influence of private businesses, another respondent said:

> "Big companies have infrastructural capacity i.e. big shuttles to carry tourists in bulk, own chain hotels for accommodation whilst emerging local tourism entrepreneurs have lesser infrastructural capacity to accommodate big numbers. They have the infrastructure to attract tourists in bulk and probable give back the least percentage to the community. Tourists like them as they feel more secure" (personal communication August 2013).

Clearly, the respondent was referring to external companies. Despite these power relations, Bahaire and Elliott-White (1999) appeal for "balance of power amongst actors in the planning and management of tourism". Currently in both cases, planning resembles the existing power relations and the character of institutions (space and places where power is exercised); where some groups/individuals have more power than others. The study concludes that, present power relations are the consequences of untransformed institutions governing protected areas in the Western Cape.

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[17] Respondents complaining about uneven levels of ownership, resulting to locally-owned companies having to compete against bigger companies with sound infrastructural capacity.

# Chapter 4      The degree of community participation in ecotourism: Theory and limitations

The main focus of this chapter is to identify limits to community participation in the ecotourism projects. It pays a specific attention on three areas; access to services; locals participating as recipients or actors and their level of participation in the agenda setting and decision-making.

## 4.1    Limitations to community participation

In relation to community participation Berner argues that "mobilizing local knowledge, capacity and harnessing self-help potential are the central elements of sustainable livelihoods and right based approach" (Berner, 2010:13). Berner's conceptualisation of participation is premised on the notion of empowerment and recognition of local endogenous resources. Kretzmann and McKnight puts more emphasis on the role that "formal and informal associations, networks play to connect locality initiatives to external windows of opportunity" (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993, cited in Majija, 2009). In spite of this romanticisation of community participation and its cosmetic definitions; Tosun (2000) remarks that the practice of community participation in development processes has always been disappointing. The notion of "citizens power" (Arnstein, 1971:70-71) and "interactive participation and self-mobilisation" (Pretty, 1995 and Tosun, 2006) has been faced by a number of limitations.

Relative to the cases studied, a plethora of limitations to community participation were observed. These limitations were either structural, operational or cultural. Of course, these limitations cannot be treated in isolation from the broader debate of power and institutionalism in the development practice. In the face of these limitations, the study concedes that to some extent ecotourism activities have helped locals with some income reliefs. Through incidental industries, skilled, semi-skilled and seasonal jobs were created in the small scale enterprises that are benefiting locals. However, due to the dependent nature of tourism to external agencies, such jobs do not change the conditions of locals. This observation is extensively discussed in Chapter 5. The limitations observed are as follows:

### 4.1.1 Structural limitations

According to Tosun (2000), these are "structural barriers such as; power, institutions, legislative and economic system that hinders the practice of community participation in tourism development". Berner agrees that through these structural barriers "radical and controversial participatory approaches have been incorporated into mainstream community development practice" (Berner, 2010:13 citing Taylor, 2001). Therefore, these structural walls limit community self-mobilization and power to determine their fate.

*Power and institutions* – as discussed earlier on, institutions can be either pro-developmental or counter developmental. They can serve as spaces where victimisation based on knowledge, capacity and access to information takes

place. As observed in the cases, planning and development phases of ecotourism activities have been a responsibility of few local elites and external technocrats. They use their know-how of the tourism industry to predict the development needs of the society. Tosun (2000) associates this to the attitude of professionals and development planners which tends to exclude local people from development planning processes. He notes that "professionals claim that planning and development efforts are value-free' or politically neutral exercises"(*ibid*, 2000). This is a situation in both cases, the external agencies assisted by few local elites have more power over tourism planning and development. This is due to the fact that they have an advantage of human, financial and infrastructural capacity. The marketing and branding of tourism activities is externally controlled.

*Economic system and laws* - In the history of South Africa, there is a clear correlation between laws and economic inequalities. This becomes more clearer when one looks at how laws have assisted in creation of exclusive economic system that benefited the few. This is evident in the practice of ecotourism in protected areas. For example, laws such as; Group Areas Act; Land Act 1913 etc. during apartheid helped White supremacy to displace majority of Africans from their own land. Thus, it led to unequal access and uneven land ownership in South Africa, especially in the West Coast region. Statistics South Africa (2011) indicates that "ownership is racially segregated, whites being in control of the main-stream economy more than any other race in the Western Cape". Koch (1994) research confirms that "when communities do not have ownership over the natural resources and land, when land is owned by outsiders, locals are limited by the owners". The same structural limitation prompted Rogerson and Scheyvens to label tourism as an "excludable sector for coloniser's driven by coloniser's" (Rogerson, 2004 and Scheyvens,1999). This is because the benefits derived from ecotourism activities structurally excludes the poor majority.

### 4.1.2 Operational limitation

Almost in both cases, the operational nature of ecotourism resembles what Botes and Rensburg called a "paternalistic role of development practitioners, prescriptive role of the state, excessive pressure on immediate results and strong emphasis on product and less on the process" (Botes and Rensburg, 2000). In the context of South Africa, the Western Cape Province to be exact, the structure of the economy determines development operation or practice. According to one respondent:

> "Large tourism companies employ individuals who stay in Langa to do the tours. Those companies obviously keep all the profits and the benefit back to the communities is small" (personal communication, August 2013).

Clearly, given the earlier explanation on laws and economic structure, needless to say the benefits in the tourism industry are "paternalistic" in nature. This is what Tosun (2000) calls "monopolisation of tourism development administration to benefit few elites". The tourism marketing agency is externally centralized and urban-based. Therefore, this results to townships or rural local-

ities depending on urban areas for marketing and supply of tourist's opportunities. This means locals have less or no control over ecotourism development initiatives in their respective regions. It is through this monopolistic approach that external businesses gain power to determine the level and degree of local participation in these tourism activities. The practice has opened flood gates for "bigger companies to' front' with local people" according to another interview respondent.

Beyond unequal benefits, this operational set-up has made local resources vulnerable to external exploitation. The harmonisation of local tourism into ecotourism industry in the Western Cape is another limitation observed. "The lack of co-ordination and cohesion within the highly fragmented tourism industry is a well-known problem' to tourism professionals" (Jamal and Getz, 1995:186, cited in Tosun, 2000). This limitation has led to lack of a clear synergized 'policy' approaches that connect informal local tourism activities to broader formal tourism market. Consequently, it results to poor management of local opportunities and unequal distribution of tourism businesses. One respondent remarked that:

> "Communities like Langa, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu and Khayamandi that have active local community development Forums, CSOs, Bed and Breakfast associations, local guides, shuttle services, and craft- makers working with environmental centers and cultural groupings. These associations help to mobilize local resources, to build networks amongst local and external tourism-led developments initiatives" (personal communication, September 2013).

Contrary, the study observed another problem that, leaders of these forums and associations are elites and local politicians who tend to play a 'middle-men' game. They get businesses and sell them to local people. Some politicians give tourism business to locals in exchange of political power and loyalty. In De Wit and Berner's words this limitation is called "progressive patronage" (De Wit and Berner, 2009:931). Furthermore, limitation to community participation in ecotourism benefits can also be attributed to social factors like safety of communities. Another operational limitation noted is that, the very marginalized and poor communities are incapable to lure investments to support their local amenities.

### 4.1.3  Historical limitation

In the context of South Africa, history is a serious contributing factor to community participation limitations. As discussed earlier on, the history of nature reserves gave birth to land inequalities, which consequently brought widespread poverty and underdevelopment to black majority. This system limited black majority access or ownership to land, thus, they remain excluded on the ecosystem and biodiversity management discourse.  In explaining this shortcoming (Ntsholo, 2012) neatly summarised it as follows:

> *"There is little argument that the livelihoods of the majority of the global population are directly linked to the exploitation of natural resources. This relationship between*

*livelihoods and natural ecosystems becomes more acute in the underdeveloped parts of the world where people's daily livelihood activities entail an exploitative relationship with nature in one way or the other. Traditionally, more so in a typical African community, people were indivisible from the natural system around them, they defined themselves with the firm understanding that they were an important part of a bigger ecosystem. Then enter colonialism and western invasion of the continent, which later manifested itself through the alienation of Africans from their land; the perception of the human-nature relationship got transformed"* (2012).

The historical and structural limitations concomitantly disempowers poor communities in the rural regions. They by extension are product of a brutal past, which perpetuates the current limitations as far as community participation is concerned in tourism. In the predominantly African communities, despite their culture and history of pain and poverty, there is a lack of infrastructure to respond to tourism demands. In other localities, there are less or no natural resources at all matching the expectations of tourists. In conclusion, it is also important to note that participation is a voluntary choice, so other communities see no value in spending their time in meetings. Also the nature of employment (shifts) in rural localities deters community participation. Locals have limited time to attend meetings since they work night/day shifts in their temporary jobs, especially in the West Coast region.

# Chapter 5 Research findings

This chapter reflects on the study findings. Literature is reviewed to strengthen these findings. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the outcomes of the two ecotourism cases studied. It delves on the impact of ecotourism on economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions as its unity of analysis.

## 5.1    Economic Impact

### 5.1.1  Entrepreneurship

The study observed that the economic impact of ecotourism activities in the majority of localities where CCR operates is less than encouraging, but yet living incomes for poor families have been created. However, the accrued economic benefits by host communities from these projects are at a low scale compared to those scooped by external companies. This is due to the fact that, SMMEs are externally owned and dependent, yet locally operating. The statement below explains what the tour guides offer to the residents of Joe Slovo Informal Settlement in Langa when bringing tourists.

> "Guides generally pay the community different fees required. We also pay for the traditional beer tasting that we offer in the shanty town (squatter camp) in accordance with fees they charge" (personal communication, September 2013)

It is because of this operational fault and minimal impact to the poor that led to Cater lambasting ecotourism as an "excludable product and elitist construct" (Cater, 2006:29). The practice of ecotourism in this community has proved to be exclusive business controlled by elites whilst defined and marketed in paper as an alternative development to salvage poor from poverty.  Poor people are treated as recipients than partners in the main-stream economy. In the Biosphere for instance, the study observed a complete dependency of rural tourism business sector on the urban developed tourism business sector.

Rural development researchers have related to this dependency of rural economies on urban economies, as a matter of the strength of rural endogeniety and access to exogenous resources. However, Cater (2006) goes beyond addressing local endogeneity, to strategic positioning of the site as a tourist attraction.  The distance between urban Cape Town and rural West Coast region is a factor not to be ignored as far as integrated infrastructural development is concerned.

This geographical challenge affects emerging local entrepreneurs in accessing commercial tourists businesses. Also, this dependency contradicts and undermines Tourism Development Framework (TDF) assertions that "for tourism development to be economically sustainable, it should diversify opportunities, provide jobs and facilitate access to productive resources and product development should be based on market requirements and trends" (TDF, 2004). Furthermore, the study learnt that the snail pace of land reform process was impacting negatively on economic transformation through rural develop-

ment agenda. In the sense that, locals have no power over land development and no control over natural resources, since these protected areas are privately owned.

One respondent from the Municipality alluded to the fact that:

> "Tourism does not make much revenue for the Municipality because most of these enterprises are privately owned. Few of these ecotourism sites are owned by the municipality" (personal communication, September 2013).

This mirrors the nature and the practice of ecotourism. Where, an economic rewarding ecotourism-led business takes place in private spaces such as; Game Lodges and Nature Reserves. Which makes it more exclusive, expensive and an inaccessible business enterprise for the poor. In describing the effects of a privately owned ecotourism business practice, Cohen aptly argues that "undiscovered and untouched tourism sites became difficult to find, their scarcity means that they constitute a 'new economic resource' and unspoiled sites harbouring particularly valuable natural or cultural attractions happened to become the most expensive" (Cohen, 2002:272-273, cited in Cater, 2006:29).

Another observation is that localities like Langa, Gugulethu, Khayelitsha with political history, historic monuments and rich cultural attractions their infrastructural capacity have improved. Accordingly, that at least gives them competitive advantage to utilize their cultural, historical endogeniety, and political networks to attract exogenous resources. However, this complementarity in ecotourism development practice varies from locality to locality. The study also observed the use of "political power" to allocate business opportunities as a problem to be considered. The Western Cape Province since 2005 has become a political battle ground between thee ruling party (ANC) and national opposition (DA). This has led to some disparities in terms of resource allocation and service delivery in general, where resources are allocated based on colour and political allegiance. This problem has also manifested itself on the allocation of tourism business opportunities.

### 5.1.2 Employment and poverty

A respondent from the Biosphere and a municipal official shared the same sentiments that, the impact of tourism in the local economy has not been encouraging in the region. Due to rural character of the region, tourism has created an array of skilled; unskilled, seasonal and fewer permanent employment opportunities for the community residents. The statement below alludes on that regard:

> "Each establishment employs people who cook, cleaners, front desk staff, gardeners, maintenance staff and others. During events, such as wine festivals etc., range of temporary jobs is created" (personal communication, September 2013).

In relation to the statement above, the study found out that tourism in rural localities creates an opportunity to diversify local economies. Residents

do not only depend on the money earned from the formal sectors. These jobs have resulted in an increased household income for many local people. On the nature of employment opportunities, one respondent praised tourism by saying that:

> "Tourism is one for the major employment sector within the region with lots of hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, camp sites. Jobs are diversified in the industry" (personal communication, September 2013).

Although tourism supporters perceive it as a source of employment, the fact is, the nature of jobs created through it do not change the economic status of local people. Tourism only helps them earn living income for the period employed. For instance, locals working in the establishments mentioned in the above statement cannot make long term financial decisions. In conclusion, to improve these conditions a consideration of vertical and horizontal approach in ecotourism practice is required. Linkages between ecotourism businesses and local supporting industries should be cemented to create more descent employment opportunities for local people. This call for a balanced approach is in sync with Stem et al. (2003) assessment that "where tourism has been economically viable, such communities have largely abandoned the environmental sensitive practices". So, a complementarity approach in practice is necessary to preserve both environment, thereby creating sustainable local businesses and employment opportunities.

## 5.2 **Environmental Impact**

Environmental protection and management is one of core principles of ecotourism-led development. In relation to environmental focus, Wall notes that "in an attempt to meet the needs of tourists and preserve the environment, traditional resource uses and users have been eliminated, thereby depriving local people of their livelihood" (Wall,1997:489). Furthermore, the literature posits that ecotourism is an alternative strategy from mass-tourism development, through which sustainable development would be achieved. However, not much is said about the trade-offs required to meet all the 'moral' principles specified in ecotourism definitions. Hence, the suggested balance between profit making and nature conservation.

This is what Steiner and Rihoy (1995, cited in Ashley and Roe,1998) refers to "as commons without the tragedy". Out of three ecotourism principles discussed in [Figure 2]. Environmental management and income generation has received a considerable attention from ecotourism proponents. That has left community participation becoming a selling point or a marketing and branding strategy for local by-in. The study has also observed isolated instances where through environmental management practices, locals have earned living incomes. A case in point is, Toga Environmental Centre in Lange. Here locals use recycled products to make craft products and sell them to tourists to earn living income. On this dual-practice, one local respondent reflected that:

> "These environmental projects provide tourists with an opportunity to visit environmental conservation centers such as Toga, in Lange. Where locals use recycled material to make craft and

sell it for leaving income"(personal communication, September 2013).

Another interesting finding in pursuit of dual 'environ-economic' approach is the Oude Molène Eco Village [Figure 5]. It advocates for sustainable development whilst also providing accommodation and other tourists activities like horse-riding.  Here we witness a complementarity of two activities, a business venture and environmental project. Although, the disclosure of ownership was not made, but it came clearly that at a small scale it provides employment opportunities, resulting to poverty alleviation on the adjacent communities. In the case of Biosphere, an impression is created that the CWCBR with some small scale initiatives driven by !Khwa-ttu is environmentally conscious.

This research noted through the case study that:
> "The environmental education is sets out to increase knowledge and awareness on environmental management. It exposes people of all backgrounds to environmental challenges, and provides a social platform to discuss a better way forward. CWCBR is committed to environmental education and has placed a strong focus on schools, especially in the surrounding communities" (Cape Biosphere 2013).

This is an encouraging indication of local participation, considering the history of rural region and biodiversity discourse. Where the practice of latter has resulted to humans being detached from nature (Wall, 1997:485). In this case, environmental education is not only aimed at visiting tourists but also at empowering locals about environmental management.

## 5.3   Cultural Impact

In respect to culture, the study observed a positive assumption about tourism development in the projects studied. Some locals praised the role of ecotourism in maintaining and retaining local tradition and cultural initiatives. Both projects, prioritises the promotion of township and cultural tourism destinations. Likewise, at the Biosphere !Khwa-ttu cultural projects through San guided tours continue to retell tourists about culture; heritage and traditions of San people [Figure12]. Hesitantly Binns and Nel contend that "there is less evidence found of the significant number of successful applications of local tourism initiatives that received LED funding to construct cultural centers and community craft market"(Binns and Nel, 2002).

For instance, the Craft market outlet [Figure13] where San-men sells handmade products is inside privately owned space. Unlike the Khayelitsha Craft Market which is under the auspices of a local church. Cultural tourism have always been studied in an economic perspective without exploring much of the compromise. On cultural compromise Wall (1997:487) alleges that "culture has not been well addressed in the literature on sustainable development".  He contends that "focus has been on tensions and compromises between economic development and environmental quality"(*ibid*:487). Tourism has been criticized for its cultural interference. To support this Cater points out that "the crucial issue with Western envisaged ecotourism is that it fails to recognize, or downplays, the fundamentally divergent values and interest between the promoters and targets of ecotourism" (Cater, 2006:32).

In locating the dilemma between culture and ecology (Vivanco, 2002 cited in Cater, 2006: 32) blames ecotourism for 'universalistic and self-serving vision' – it tends to ignore the multiplicity of nature's created by different societies. Cater (2006) further stresses that "indigenous communities may have a real problem with the effective commodification of nature through ecotourism". One respondent agrees with Cater's assumption that:

> "The help by tourism to market local initiatives and traditional culture comes with a cost of commodification and adaptation to the new modern demands of economic systems not necessary the upliftment of poor people's lives"(personal communication, September 2013).

This comes with the growing assumption that tourism is an alternative development to boost local and regional economies. This is a result of a strange situation, where culture and ecology are imagined as instruments to improve local people's lives without questioning the context. Regrettably, this so-called "change" process has been infiltrated by Western dominant knowledge which dictates the terms of change and commercialising local culture. The case in point here is the Khoi San people in the Biosphere, where after their hurting history of land expropriation, their culture has now became a commodity to benefit their colonisers. As a continuation of eco-imperialist practice, another classical example of exploitation of history of marginalised people is found in the case of CCR. Wherein the history of migrant labours residing in single sex hostels has now been commercialised through walk-in tourists. One respondent soberly contended that:

> "Tourist visits to these Migrant Labour Hostels does not change their condition, neither do they benefit from the visit. And people who benefit out of these Hotels walk-in tours are tour guides and tourists" (personal communication, September 2013).

The question to be interrogated is, how else do hostel residents benefit out of these tourist visits, besides posing for cameras? In response to this question, Cohen draws notes that "benefits accruing to the local community, even if significant relative to the source so income usually constitute only a fraction of the profits generated by the enterprises" (Cohen, 2002:273). Another respondent narrated how locals are benefiting from these walk-in tourist visits in Langa, he explained that:

> "The visits to local traditional herbalists are usually paid by the guide, and if we enter into a house so the clients can see how other people live. An honorarium fee is paid to the owners of the house."(personal communication, September 2013).

The above statement poses a danger in relation to preservation of indigenous knowledge and traditions. It opens flood-gates for commercialisation and exploitation of traditional knowledge disguised as ecotourism practices. And it exposes the sacred local traditions to external agencies for economic value with no change to the hosts' conditions. This is more like taking ad-

vantage of poor people's situation. Hall (1994); Mowforth and Munt (2003) (cited in Cater, 2006) refers to this practice of ecotourism as "eco-imperialistic or eco-colonialist". Because it does not end on exploitation of natural resources, it also extends to 'coloniality of knowledge and culture'.

## 5.4    Social Impact

There is no doubt that ecotourism has brought some social benefits for communities in the regions studied. However, the degree of accumulation differs according to the nature of social challenges the community faces. Tourism exponents "envisions that communities will benefit through its implementation" (Cater, 2006). However, it turns out that few benefitted and others not, due to lack of relevant skills and capital to initiate or expand their businesses" (*ibid*, 2006). Tourism brings pressure to visited communities, locals are to cope with social dynamics. Furthermore, since the visitors hosted by these poor communities are external people, that as well complicates social relations even more.

The language barrier becomes a limitation to achieve community participation. This resuscitates an old debate in South Africa, where English is viewed as 'language of economy' associated with 'civility and modernity' whilst indigenous languages are perceived to be 'primitive' and a reflection of backwardness.  Against this backdrop, Duffy (2002:156, cited in Cater, 2006) argues that "like any other neoliberal policies, ecotourism creates serious social-economic problems in communities". One of the remarkably socio-economic problems surrounding ecotourism practice is the worsening social conditions between two groups of people in one community- the 'haves' and the 'have not's'. According to Entus (2002) this is testament of "locally embedded divisions of power – resulting to subsequent emergence of business elites representing a small fraction of the local community".

Unequivocally, this scenario mirrors the practice of Black Economic Empowerment [BEE] in South Africa. Where an island of wealth has been created within or adjacent to a sea of poverty.  On a positive note, the study observed that, to some extent the Biosphere Reserve Trail project has managed to capitalise on its natural and cultural endogeneity to create jobs. This initiative is estimated to have created at least 65 per cent of employment. The numbers exclude indirect employment, which amounts to further 150 job (minimum) opportunities created through stimulation of local tourism enterprises and development of regional tourism routes (Cape Biosphere, 2013). Nowever, it has to be mentioned that, these jobs are scattered through all sectors i.e. restaurant, wine estates, farming, arts and cultural centers; National Park etc. Quite often than not, community participation in these opportunities is frequently restrained to low-skilled, low paying and seasonal employment. On social benefits, it should also be noted that benefits come with social effects. Social instability is one of them, triggered by the movement of residents from one region to another in search of job opportunities. Consequently, residents of hosting regions are to embrace and adapt to unexpected social changes and cultural shock. Many tourism researchers believe that these social and cultural instabilities are the cause of xenophobic attacks, prostitution and increasing crime in touristic sites. Furthermore, these changes require hosting communi-

ties to embark on dynamic processes of constructing new socio-cultural structures.

Reflecting on social instabilities Vivanco appropriately states that "ecotourism is a process cast in a world where relationships of power are characterized by marked centre-periphery dominance" (Vivanco, 2002 cited in Cater, 2006). In the context of the study, this explanation reflects rural and urban divided economic power relations in the Western Cape Province. Vicanco's narration resonates with the observation of the study that, tourism is a pre-conceived local economic order packaged and sold as a solution to boost the perceived collapsing local economies. The study also noted unequal standards of living in many localities. For example, where walk-in tourist's activities are active such localities have a comparative advantage of earning incomes to improve their standard of leaving. Whilst inland areas through partnerships between local government and other stakeholders depends on projects such as cleaning and maintaining Wetlands.

Therefore, residents adjacent to these environmental management project; e.g. Philippi, Samora, and entire Cape Flats zone generally benefit from the short and long term employment opportunities created. Conversely, West Coast region has a massive competitiveness advantage of local natural resources. Even though the problem is that poor communities do not have power over development processes taking place in or adjacent to their respective areas. This, resulting to community participating in ecotourism activities in this region being a deferred dream.

The CWCBR website confirms the above claim by saying "West Coast region is a place of great beauty, but also extreme poverty". To improve the current condition, according to CWCBR various community empowerment agreements had been signed with the Department of Agriculture; Global Environment Fund and Afrisam, different projects were piloted in disadvantaged communities (Cape Biosphere, 2013). The study generally contends that, the practice of ecotourism needs to be inclusive. To avoid social damages the host communities should be included since the implementation directly affects their standard of living, through escalating food prices, social, cultural adaptation and other social ills mentioned earlier on.

# Chapter 6 Discussion and Conclusion

## 6.1    Discussion

The central question discussed in this research paper is, to what extent does community participation in ecotourism stimulate local economic development and create employment opportunities benefiting local people?  To answer this research question the following concepts were discussed throughout Chapter Two, namely; embeddednes, endogenous, exogenous, community participation and empowerment.

The intention was to explore their role in improving community participation in ecotourism development. This chapter presents a brief discussion of the preceding chapters, followed by conclusions. Further, to spark debate on the inclusive ecotourism definition. The study will conclude by recommending a typology of ecotourism and a working definition.

The emergence of ecotourism masquerading as an alternative tourism development must be viewed and analysed within the broader local development context. Its broadness and the multiplicity of its meaning result in a complex debate that makes it even harder to discern rhetoric and marketing from the real alternative development approach. For example, some definitional aspects of ecotourism resemble an extension of sustainable development ideological rhetoric. As Wall (1997) subtle concluded, ecotourism definitional void complicates the already complicated debate on environmental management.

Furthermore, the domination of ecotourism reflects the global hegemony of neoliberal development agenda imposed as 'one size-fits-all' solution for developing countries' problems. It reinforces global ideological framework to sustain capitalist economic system to rip-off developing countries' natural resources (Cater, 2006). Thus, in the tourism sector supranational institutions pushes for a universal tourism development template to all developing countries. In view of this, Hall appeals for an "examination of the role of supranational organisations such as World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in enhancing the power and privileges of local elites in developing countries" (Hall, 2005, cited in Cater, 2006:25).

In essence these eco-institutions with their Western-centric constructed knowledge exist to maximise growth through imposed economic systems. As discussed on the preceding chapters 4 and 5 respectively, the existing power relations in ecotourism give rise to a situation where Western constructed ideologies concerning tourism are overriding traditional knowledge's. To expedite community participation, ecotourism development should find context within the broader epistemological and ontological debates on development. This could help to increase local peoples' individual and institutional capacities to produce and manage resources (Korten, 1987). Berner echoes Koterns' sentiments that "empowerment enables poor communities to overcome unequal distribution of resources and government neglect" (Berner, 2010:13). This argument is based on the assumption that, if the existing local capacities are recognised and strengthened, development process would run seamlessly. Laynam

agrees that community participation in development discourse empowers those on the margins and it is central in alleviating poverty (Laynam, 2006). He further contends that "when poor get empowered they no longer see themselves as a problem" (Laynam, 2006, also see Wills, 2001). Needless to say, the implementation of any form of ecotourism development should adapt to local cultural, economic and social contexts.

At present, the outcomes of the implementation of ecotourism initiatives in the Western Cape Province have been very disappointing to say the least. The lopsided economic benefits confirm the lack of local inclusion. In relation to the study findings, projects like Langa Environmental Centre remains distinctive methods that effectively utilised endogenous resources in a complementary approach to meet local needs. For example, the Tsoga project that started as an environmental centre expanded and offered training to community members, to do craft work using recycled products. This has created some living income for the participating families. Of course, this is at a very small scale of economic empowerment. At a bigger scale, the study generally found out that tourism comes as a tailor-made economic directive with an assumption to improve local economies. This imposition creates several socio-cultural problems for host communities as discussed in Chapter 5. When the scale of economic benefits is uneven, tension arises in communities. Such occurrences, signals a general disregard of community participation in the planning and implementation of the order of development.

*Economies*: In both cases, the study observed that tourism activities are massive, but with less encouraging benefits for the participating communities. A whole lot of living incomes have been created through incidental industries facilitated by tourism. The main issue though is still with the deep economic disparities that are created in localities through tourism development. In the literature, the nature of economies created through ecotourism has been critically analysed. For instance, the fact that financial benefits derived in tourism development are lower than anticipated. In Ashley and Roe's view, this shortcoming is caused by the fact that "locals lack the required skills and capital to make best use of their resources" (Ashley and Roe, 1998:12).

During case analysis, the study observed that, local incapacity leads to internal elites and external investors taking advantage of local resources and exploiting them for their own benefits. These local elites with an advantage of education and language, they have assumed power over others and are now better capable of clinching business deals with outsiders. It also came clear in both cases that ecotourism-led development varies from community to community, pending on the strength of local endogeneity, infrastructural capacity to complement the need and access to external resources i.e. investors. These economic disparities in tourism opportunities perpetuates social tensions within communities; resulting to xenophobic attacks. Moreover, the contention is further caused by the fact that localities with government officials, infrastructure, political history and natural resources have more direct access to external resources. Their local capacity has improved and that leads to them receiving more tourist businesses than those with less tourism attractions. However, access to resources does not translate to control over such resources or tourism development projects. Even though these communities earn living income

from tourism activities, they still lack control or power over development processes taking place in their respective localities, no direct participation in decision-making processes. This is because; the exclusive nature of tourism in the Western Cape has generally created a socio-economic class in communities. To resolve this problem, Vivanco argues that those in power need to 'confront these structural inequalities' that characterise ecotourism practice (Vicanco, 2002:26).

Furth more, this study agrees with Wall's hypothesis that community empowerment is key to promote local participation and encourage fair share of local benefits in ecotourism (Walls, 1997:489). The current practice of ecotourism development, has led poor communities vulnerable to modern socio-economic systems. The current situation forces localities to make trade-offs between traditional values over modern systems. This has derailed the advancement of SMMEs ownership by the poor communities living adjacent to these protected areas.

Furthermore, the study concludes that community participation in ecotourism planning and development is generally low in all marginalised localities in the regions studied. This is due to the fact that, the existing economic opportunities in tourism industry create dependency of local initiatives to external brokers. For instance rural small regions like West Coast are vastly dependent from Cape Town for the supply of tourism business opportunities and marketing. In general the economic benefits in ecotourism are narrowly distributed and dependable on mercies of the powerful external institutions.

In relation to *cultural impact*, tourism has been marketed as a vehicle through which culture could be preserved. Some locals, without questioning the implications of this notion wholeheartedly accepted that tourism helps to maintain and market local culture and traditions internally and externally. Cater (2006: 31) cautions against this belief, by pointing out that "outsiders view of traditional lifestyles may also be viewed as patronising". Fundamentally, Cater's arguments capture the Khoi San's patronising situation very well. Khoi San through CWCBR are now subjects of development consultants, who through Western constructed lenses of ecotourism romanticises the life style of indigenous people in the West Coast region.

Against this practice, Corbridge succinctly contends that "this approach ignores local people's aspirations for higher living standards ground on clear understanding of costs and benefits of development"(Corbridge, 1995, cited in Cater, 2006: 31). Furthermore, it is undeniable that there are also severe costs to host communities than to the visitors. The practice of cultural tourism as a facet of ecotourism has led to commodification and commercialisation of local culture and traditions with less or no economic value to the hosts communities.

On *social impact*: There is a general feeling that there are social benefits accrued through ecotourism-led development initiatives. In both cases, it is evident that social benefits are strictly dependent on the available natural resources in or adjacent to that locality. For instance, localities living in or adjacent to farms, industries, fishing, fauna, scenic landscapes are better benefiting in seasonal jobs than localities with only cultural and historical tourism. This is because opportunities are diverse and such communities have comparative ad-

vantage of attracting more tourists than the other. All the same, CWCBR case provides very insightful information. The study found it problematic that disadvantaged communities competes for the same tourism opportunities with developed communities. Just like economic benefits, social benefits come with consequences such as land commodification, increase in crime and high costs of living. Albeit, tourism is embeddedness in other sectors at CWCBR, it is disheartening to note that poor communities in the region do not enjoy the economic benefits made out of these natural resources. Even their social status has not improved dramatically. To obviate this problem, the implementation of ecotourism development should complement a range of community livelihoods options available rather than replacing them (also see Scheyvens, 2002:242). Therefore complementarity of approaches as far as the facilitation of ecotourism projects and with a strong local inclusion is vital.

On *environmental protection and management*: the study concludes that the practice of environmental management in these regions is more policing than being an inclusive responsibility of all. The practice of ecotourism is disguised as development strategy to boast local economies. Its original intentions and interests should be questioned. Bandon and Margoluis cautioned against the blanket endorsement of ecotourism by local people as the only alternative development from mass-tourism (Bandon and Margoluis, 1996, cited in Cater, 2006:31). The study concludes that ecotourism is a tool for expropriation of nature and culture. Its current practice views poor communities as targets to be developed and local land as commercial resources to be sold on global markets(Ascanio, 2002, cited in Cater 2006:34). This universalistic economic approach brings market competition, land appropriation and view people as consumer products (*ibid*: 34).

The study further concludes that ecotourism practice in both regions reflected imposition of a new but a familiar development threat on indigenous communities. This claim is qualified by Pera and McLaren argument that "ecotourism defines nature as a product to be bought and sold on the global marketplace" (Pera and McLaren, 1999). Furthermore, this argument describes the discourse of ecotourism in the Western Cape Province where human beings, African's to be specific have been deliberately separated from nature.

To qualify this historic oversight, the Khoi Sans' were the first indigenous people in South Africa. San's had a special relationship with the land and ecosystem until the imposed systemic exploitation and exclusion, through land displacements. There is no academic evidence of them relating to land as a possession, nor as a commodity even in the allegedly benign context of ecotourism (Hinch, 2001, cited in Cater, 2006:34). This was centuries before the campaign of Western fictitious sustainable development agenda. The practice of ecotourism in this context undermines the history of South Africa, the struggle that indigenous people went through.

Above all, the practice subverts the existing local traditions, community integrity and economic self-reliance. The study further concludes that, the current practice of ecotourism has failed to maintain a balance between environmental protection and profit making. This problem is due to the fact that, ecotourism has been accepted by its proponents without challenging its 'econess'.

To resolve this, as narrated in both cases, the role of actors in ecotourism development needs to be redefined. In this area, the study concludes that the sector requires to be transformed from its current systemic exclusiveness to be locally embedded. Its reliance on external management is evident to its structural composition.

In both cases, the question of uneven power relations is clearly exhibited and it needs to be addressed immediately. Currently, the private sector with its advantage of financial capital determines the nature of participation, roles and agenda setting. This undermines the spirit of partnership, there should be shared powers. Government should redress the historical exclusion of indigenous people, by implementing pro-poor land policies to hasten ownership. As it stands, land rights, access to the market and resource management remains a bone of contention for rural development. Without these proposed changes, this research concludes that ecotourism development in the Western Cape Province will remain an advancement of mass-tourism, a construct of Western ideology that seeks to preserve elitism. It will remain nothing but an 'Old Wine in New Bottles' and a discourse, not a practice.

## 6.2 Recommendations

Following up from the above conclusions, the study recommends that community participation in ecotourism must be embraced as instigator of local economic change. The change process should be locally driven and managed and be embedded on locality networks. Thus, municipalities should play a leading role in facilitation of ecotourism. As part of a broader development strategy, ecotourism should be incorporated in local development and its conceptualisation must be opened to public participation guided by the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process. This process should go-hand in-hand with rural development agenda – to ensure poor people do not only have land rights but own the land. Regarding access to markets, since local, cultural and nature based tourism are facets of ecotourism and are "locally embedded", the marketing aspect should also be locally embedded, controlled and driven.

This practice would allow a direct interaction between local businesses, external markets and tourists to avert institutional beaurocracy. A comprehensive reinvention of ecotourism discourse is required. Currently its multidimensionality places too much focus on economic value of nature conservation than any other aspects it promotes. Policy makers and conservationists should streamline the focus in order to curtail further damage nature which contradicts the evolution of ecotourism. Therefore, further studies should delve on the correlation between conservation values and local attitudes towards such values. At present, the focus has been about the mere economic value of ecosystem. This problem is the caused by the absence of a consensus based definition for ecotourism. The current definitions are more sentimental or advocacy based ethics and perspectives such as; nature; development, cultural experience Table 5 below presents at least 3 typologies of ecotourism and their features based on different scholarly lenses.

**Table 5. Typology of Ecotourism**

| Type of ecotourism | Characteristics or features |
|---|---|
| Community-Based Tourism (CBT) | rural or local, cultural preservation, empowerment and local participatory principles; local economic development (Brohman, 1996) |
| Nature-Based Tourism | Environmental e.g. Parks, Botanical Gardens, etc. (Weaver, 2000) |
| Cultural Tourism | Heritage and traditions, e.g. Dance, music, food etc. (Fennel, 2003) |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on Weaver (2000), Butler (1990), Fennell (2003)

Moving from the above typology, this research paper concludes that, the overlapping features between these facets of ecotourism serves as basis of a definitional problem for ecotourism. This creates difficulty in finding a distinctive characterisation of ecotourism as alternative from conventional tourism. For example, there seems to be more commonalities between rural, cultural and community based tourism, however, they all sound as replication of sustainable development oratory. Also, it is important to note that neither the definitional perspectives given to these facets alone are sufficient to achieve inclusive ecotourism development. Thus, this research paper recommends that ecotourism definition should premised from "community interests and adhere to locality context and needs". Given the fuzzy definition of ecotourism and the overlapping features of ecotourism facets, this research paper recommends a merger of the characteristics on the table with strong emphasis on community participation in decision-making and ownership as a point of departure.

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