

**PROTEST AND IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF
SACRED SPACES: A HISTORICAL APPRAISAL OF
THREE SELECTED SACRED SITES OF THE
EASTERN FREE STATE**



DERICK HORECIOUS DALIFA NGOBESE

PROTEST AND IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SACRED SPACES: AN HISTORICAL APPRAISAL OF THREE SELECTED SACRED SITES OF THE EASTERN FREE STATE

by

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Thesis

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DECLARATION

I, Derick Horrecious Dalifa Ngobese, declare that the doctoral degree research thesis that I herewith submit for the qualification, Doctor of Philosophiae in African Studies (PhD in AS), is my original work, and has not been submitted for any degree at another university or institution.

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Derick Horrecious Dalifa Ngobese
Thohoyandou

Date

DEDICATION

This research thesis is dedicated to my daughter, Lethukuthula Ngobese, who was brutally murdered in August 2017 while pursuing her studies, Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree at the University of Zululand

May her soul rest with eternal peace.



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SUMMARY

Sacred sites are the preferred space for ritual performances and identity construction from which the issue of sensitive structures, distinctive features, individual interpretations, and symbol and meaning emanates.

The history and importance of *Motouleng, Mautse and Mantsopa* caves (Eastern Free State, SA) for different religious persuasions, indigenous knowledge and ancestral veneration of Africans and traditional healers, were investigated apropos of the following: namely, how sacred sites are exemplifications of African indigenous religion; why they form locations of cultural and spiritual expression, and why they may be regarded as pertinent nodes of identity construction in a vibrant, changing, South African society.

This study explored the way in which interpersonal experiences of the cave dwellers shape their sense of self, and the conflict they encounter in the context of interaction, in which identities are constructed and deconstructed in various ways. African religion, landscape and social identity theories are the basis of all theoretical claims utilised here. An interpretative phenomenological analysis research method was explored, to provide a detailed personal experience and examination of the participant's life world on various issues pertaining to contestation and identity construction at the sacred space of the Eastern Free State.

The existence of these sites poses a number of challenges to cave dwellers, land owners, heritage practitioners, and to continued preservation, management and restoration of the said sites. Crucial to this debate is how these sites may be protected both physically and legally. The study used qualitative findings to discover new ideas on identity construction and adjunct belief systems. The study also used thematic analysis to evaluate the research findings and make predictions on the effects on protest and contestation by cave dwellers around sacred spaces.

Key words: sacred space, cave, protest, identity, rituals, African religion, belief systems

GLOSSARY

Motouleng	-	The place in which the drums beat
Mautse	-	The entire district around Badimong, stretching over the area of farms situated between Fouriesburg and Rosendal towns of the Free State
Mantsopa	-	The famous 19 th century prophetess, seer and advisor to Basotho royalty; refers thus to Mooderpoort sacred site
Ha Mmadiboko	-	A popular site at Mautse, situated in the upper side of Nkonkomohi; it also called a place of the mother of the totems
Tempeleng	-	A popular sacred structure at Mautse, resembling a Temple of Israel
Bataung	-	One of the station at Mautse resembling a certain tribe of the Basotho are referred to as 'people of the Loin'
Nkonkomohi	-	It is similar to a name of the site called Badimong or Mautse means to rise up like bread, something mystically raises up
Ha ho kenwe	-	No entry or trespassing
Nokeng	-	Sacred river found at sacred sites of Mautse and Motouleng
Monyako wa lehaha	-	Spiritual entrance gate found at Motouleng site

Maseeng	-	A popular site at Mautse associated with fertility or children
Aletara	-	Cave altar; an important station site at Motouleng cave
Modimo	-	Sesotho word which means God, Supreme Being, the Creator
Badimo/amadlozi	-	Ancestors
Mabitleng	-	Cave graveyard area
Lekgotla	-	Basotho traditional court
Sediba sa pholoso	-	Sacred fountain/ pool
Sebaka sa Israeli	-	Sacred site at Mautse associated with the country Israel
Merapelong	-	Sacred site found in the deepest part of the shallow cave
Matlo a Badimo	-	Ancestral huts/ houses made of mud, stones of one metre height and some are covered with thatch or reeds
amathwasa/ lethwasane	-	A novice traditional practitioner or a trainee
Sediba	-	Sacred pool
Ukuthetha idlozi	-	Invoking the ancestral spirit
Bonkgono	-	A site of old people at Mautse, grandmother, collectively used referring to ancestors
Ditaba-tsa- Badimo	-	A name of the healer who spend decades at Motouleng cave and he refer to himself as 'news of the ancestors'

Ke lehaha le halalelang	-	The glamorous and spiritual cave
Le nale Modimo	-	Has a God appearance
Re direla Badimo	-	A Setswana words which mean to give offering to the living dead
UMdali	-	The Zulu word which means the Creator
Umsamu	-	A sacrifice place inside the Zulu hut where the ancestors are belief to dwell
Abaphansi	-	Those who are below, meaning the ancestors
Ke yunivesiti ya rona	-	It's our university
Botho/ Ubuntu	-	Humanity towards others; means 'a person is a person through other people'
Ukuthwasa	-	An ancestral calling
Dingaka tjhitja	-	A traditional healer who uses herbs
Ngaka ya Sesotho	-	A traditional healer/ doctor
Ho kena lefehlong	-	Begin of the initiation of the traditional healer
Ukuvuma idlozi	-	To accept an ancestral calling
Ukuthetha idlozi	-	Scolding or communicate with an ancestral spirit
Isangoma/ Lethuela	-	Traditional healer or a diviner

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sacred sites in South Africa: An overview

Sacred sites, in particular caves, have not been accorded their rightful place and meaning in the South African society at large both in concept and practice. Sacred sites have always been part of the historical, cultural and spiritual landscape of various African indigenous communities. The colonial ignorance and deprivation legacy of African cultural and spiritual expressions has contributed as a major obstacle to the invaluable role they held.

Sacred sites, as place of veneration and worship, have been expunged from the public domain; whereas, they were considered by large groups of indigenous people as of paramount importance. Not only were sacred sites viewed by Africans as part of their collective memory, they were also recognized and integrated in their cultural and spiritual landscape in its totality

Since the democratisation of South Africa, public awareness of the sites has increased; and gradually a new trend of reclaiming such sites has occurred. Currently, the popularity of the sites has increased significantly. The influences of Christianity through various denomination and adapted versions thereof in the form of African Indigenous Churches, have given rise to a religious and spiritual hybridism at the sites. Detachment and estrangement from the sites over many decades have considered the sites as pockets of the new South African identity dynamics in a transforming society.

These dynamics have not entered the public domain or received scientific evaluation. It has therefore become important to investigate the significance of these sites, both in terms of their cultural bearing and of their spiritual landscape. Apart from the fact that the sites are now considered to be important living heritage sites, they are

exemplifications of the transforming nature of indigenous belief. However, they may simultaneously be viewed as repositories of what one homogeneously term “African Indigenous Religion”.

The emphasis of the study is not, in the first instance, on the contradictions and conflicts between perceptions of shrine/site custodians and shrine/site scholars: but ultimately, the study will evolve, offering various perspective of the sacredness, contestation and identity construction in the context of sacred spaces. The notion of holy place was frequently used by Victor Turner; whose writings were heavily influenced by Eliade (1963). Eliade maintains that sites are sacred spaces which allow a direct or mediated contact with the divine.

However, there are also contradictory views to that which accords sites embedded specific meaning. Tilley (1994:9), for example, argued that the space is literally nothingness, a simple surface for action, and lacking depth. Such a view obviously denies the ontology of sacred sites, and deprives them from intrinsic meaning. The implication of this argument is that activities and events and space are not conceptually and physically separated from each other; and that they are contingently related. It shows that the meaning of the sacred space always involves a subjective dimension, symbolically constructed, and having relationship created between actors and places.

1.2 Sacred cave sites under scrutiny

Sacred sites are the preferred space for ritual performances and identity construction that elicits the issue of sensitive structures, distinctive features, individual interpretations and symbol and meaning. The history and importance of Motouleng, Mautse and Mantsopa caves (Eastern Free State, SA) for various religious persuasions, indigenous knowledge and ancestral veneration of Africans and traditional healers, have been investigated along the following lines: in which ways sacred sites are exemplifications of African indigenous religion; why they form locations of cultural and spiritual expression; and why they may be regarded as pertinent nodes of identity construction within a vibrant South African society, in a constant state of flux.

It was important for the study to examine sacred sites in a holistic manner. This implies that the entire landscape of a particular site receives attention; ranging through the geo-historical inclination of the site, its locality, its space, history (both factual and memo-history), ritual and belief systems, community or group practices and dynamics. Of particular importance is the way in which owners, communities, groups and individuals define, interact, and perceive sacred sites and their relevance to African communities.

The concept of “African Indigenous Religion” is obviously a homogenizing view. However, it serves as an important determinant when any scholar peruses the religious expressions of local or indigenous African people. It is also critical to survey the religious and spiritual expressions of ritual and practice at the caves in order to grasp the similarities and differences of what, academically, has been defined as views of African Traditional Religion.

The study can, in other words, not isolate itself from the scholarly debate pertaining to forms and practices of African religion constructed by scholars of religion and social anthropology. The researcher is well aware of the shortcoming of studies on African religion, specifically manifested in generalized assumptions in terms of conceptual constructs adopted from the study of sacred sites.

Sacred cave sites provide an ideal opportunity to study forms of African religion, and belief in its local expression. Localized data may counter the “natural” inclination of scholars to generalize. It is, therefore, important to be mindful, throughout the study, of how the findings of the sacred sites under investigation reverberate with generalized scholarly ideas of African religion.

Coplan (2003) provided a descriptive survey of the number of sacred sites currently in the eastern Free State, stretching from the north of Lesotho along the Caledon River border in the south. He pointed out that,

“each of these sites is a sacred ritual shrine to miracle made visible by the ancestors, located in a high shallow cave near the stream.....
These entire shrines are found on white-owned farms in a Free State” (2003:34)

The selected sacred sites are specifically *Mantsopa's* cave, situated at Modderpoort, near Ladybrand, *Nkokomohi* (to rise up like bread) or *Mautse (Badimong)* located in a valley between Fouriesburg and Rosendale and *Motouleng* (place where the drum beats), situated along the Maluti Mountain and Rooiberg Mountains, twelve kilometers from Clarens.

1.3 Motivation of the study

My persuasion to undertake this study was based on the premise that the landowners had threatened to blow up the caves rather than allowing healers or cave pilgrimage access to the cave. This action emanated from the incidents of rustling, trespassing and influx of illegal immigrants from the neighboring country, Lesotho. An SABC broadcast in 1998, Special Assignment, validated the rumors that the farmer intended to blow up the cave of Motouleng and unveiled the conflict over land, religion, race that threatened the White community in that time.

I hope to gain personally from this study. The study seeks to bring sacred cave sites into the center of scholarly debate and research. The caves are central to African life, culture, religion, and philosophy. The study attempts to answer the underlying questions: Who owns the sites; Who have a right of access to them; What do the sites means to an individuals and to Africans in the light of their supernatural connotation? Such subjects are central to the discussion of landscape, sacredness, codification of African religion, and cultural identity.

Recent controversies over the access to sacred cave sites, and threats made by private landowners to blow them up rather allow access, necessitated the study of this nature. The research accepts ethical and moral responsibility not to tap on the sacredness of sites and belief systems without empowering the community. A reappraisal of site's histories, cultural practices, and belief systems connected to sacred sites, is extremely important.

This study is about listening to voices of parties concerned regarding contestation, land access, payment versus vandalism, and other related concerns for the study. The ongoing debate, disputes on the above subjects, and intervention from authorities, are crucial in protecting the indigenous knowledge with regard to belief, healing, and practices. Significantly, the study does not only contribute to African religion and belief systems, but people's commitment to protect and empower their sacred landscape.

The study has been a useful contribution to a repository of indigenous knowledge that is performed and transmitted by the healers at the sacred sites. This research facilitates healing and material, symbolic restitution, and promotes new and previously neglected research into African's rich oral traditions and customs. The research strongly challenges government in intervening in carrying out its stated policies in the IKS, land reforms and heritage policies.

The study is based on the premise that, in order to nurture the sacred sites and their integrity, the sacredness of the place is guided by ancestral belief and indigenous knowledge. Based on the above, the research outcomes are crucial to the understanding and preservation of these sites. Furthermore, the outcome could have a direct impact on policy formulation, tourism and environmental preservation regarding access to and protection of such sites. Its findings and results will be used within the community to reinstate what is precious and valuable to African tradition and culture and also empower the healers for further development.

The study hopes to further initiate debate and academic scrutiny amongst scholars interested in African studies and indigenous belief systems. It is hoped that the study will contribute towards the understanding for various stakeholders, departments, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) institutions of African belief, local knowledge and wisdom.

This is an innovative research topic in the field of social anthropology, African cultural, social, and historical studies. It will contribute to legitimizing protection of sacred sites in South Africa. It will also deepen people's understanding of societal and cultural experiences with regard to cave-site pilgrimages.

The findings of the study are expected to make an invaluable contribution on ways in which the sites may be positively restored and protected. The findings help to define cultural identity and appraisal, and tolerance; and it has the power to build the nation, irrespective of colour, race, gender and religion. It also renders constructive recommendations to renewal and respect for African tradition and religion. It undoubtedly contributes to the growing interest on African regeneration and cultural revival in academic circles and communities, locally, internationally and beyond by reproducing it in two accredited journals.

1.4 Problem statement, aim and objectives

After the democratization of South Africa, there was a general observation of pilgrimages by African people to the various spiritual sites Coplan (2003: 196). It is solely because of very strong belief in the supernatural powers of these holy places that people converge on the sites to be trained as *isangoma*, to pray and sacrifice in honour of their ancestors. Utterances from the landowners threatened to blow up the caves rather than allow healers or cave dwellers access to the cave, further prompted the researcher to carry out the study.

The threats made were the result of incidents of rustling, trespassing and the influx of illegal immigrants from neighboring country of Lesotho. An SABC documentary, namely Special Assignment, broadcasted on October 10 1998, validated the rumours that the farmer intended to blow up certain sacred cave. It uncovered the conflict over land, religion, and race that threatened the White community at that time.

The area in question is very rich in cultural and historical remnants from the Later Iron Age and also of Anglo-Boer War origins. The connection between the sacredness of the site and pilgrimages remains unexplored in relation to ritual practices, healing, initiation, religious rites and ceremonies. Cave dwellers have, through their rites of passage, paid tribute to certain belief system. This has often been alluded to.

Community belonging, experiences and people's identities relating to sacred space are the relevant discourse of this work. The discourse is defined by African belief systems, diviners' s calling, spiritual expressions and symbols, ritual performances in order to render a strong sense of communal identity and religious practices. Sacred sites referred by cave dwellers as their 'homes' that provide the capacity and comprehension of the intellect, and the needs of the emotion and spirit. It is interesting to follow the way in which a sacred site, to a certain degree, generates a sense of being; and is the place in which the person and environment's identities overlap the most.

What the cave dwellers practices and perceive within the sacred sites remains a taboo to an 'outsider' and also to a repository of indigenous knowledge. Thus, this study involves not only the discovery of pre-existing patterns but also the creation of relationship which does not exist in absolute term. One of the most important phenomenological aspects of the sacred sites brings up the issue of sensitive structures, contestation (protest), identity construction, distinctive features, individual interpretations, symbols and meaning.

In this chapter, I have attempted to answer the following question: How do users of the sacred sites interrelate African religion with religious landscape, histories, and power of the space they possess? Secondly, what are the site's internal dynamics that include tension, fragmentation, access to the sites, contestation, or threads to sacred sites and their constitutive role regarding identity construction aspects? Thirdly, does the sacred space encode with African traditional religion and embodiment of the community's Indigenous Belief system? Lastly, how do symbols and patterns of community dynamics at sacred sites constitute new identity constructions in a changing society?

It is against this background that the study proposes to engage in a number of uncovered issues pertaining to sacred sites. The existence of these sites poses a number of challenges to cave dwellers, land owners, heritage practitioners for the continued preservation, management and restoration of the sites and its meaning. Central to this debate is how these sites may be protected both physically and legally.

To address these shortfalls in general terms, the broad aim of the study is to demonstrate the scope and complexities of indigenous religious practices connected with the three selected sacred sites of the Eastern Free State. In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives of the study are:

- i, To examine how the users of sacred sites interrelate African religion with the religious landscape, histories and power of the space they possess.
- ii, To explain how the users of sacred site attempt to codify African traditional religion as an adjunct to community belief systems, motive of dwelling and frames for identity construction.
- iii, To define the challenges faced by the cave dwellers, traditional healers and religious groups encountered in gaining access to the sites, usage of features and symbolic offerings.
- iv, To identify symbols and patterns of site and community dynamics such as tensions, identity construction, management and preservation that impact on the nature of the site across the affiliated traditional, cultural and religious groups.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions are essential to this study:

- i, How do users of the sacred sites interrelate African religion with religious landscape, histories and power of the space they possess?
- ii, What are the sites internal dynamics that include tension, fragmentation, access to the sites, contestation or threads to sacred sites and their constitutive role regarding identity construction aspects?
- iii, Does the sacred space encode with African traditional religion and embodiment of the community's Indigenous Belief system?
- iv, How do symbols and patterns of community dynamics at sacred sites constitute new identity constructions in a changing society?

1.6 General assumptions

An urgent historical and cultural reappraisal of the importance and cultic role of the Eastern Free State cultic sites is needed, to secure their unimpeded continuity as sacred sites and resources of indigenous knowledge, and to procure unrestricted access. It is not enough to speak of 'moral and cultural rebirth' without confronting the lack of indigenous natural resources which in many respects are responsible for a tragic situation which cannot be alleviated by enculturation alone.

The researcher argued that healers are involuntarily called by ancestors to sacred sites. There are beliefs that are embedded and, therefore, unsaid. It is obvious to the researcher that caves are invested with sacredness from ancestral power. The researcher, therefore, hypothesizes that there are abundant threats made by private owners and other forces of modernity, like capitalism, religious intolerance and tourism which obstruct healer's access to these sacred sites.

By constantly visiting the selected caves of the Eastern Free State, one may find answers regarding cave dwellers and pilgrims: issues of contestation of space, sacred cave as codification of African religion embedded into community belief systems, and identity construction in an attempt to uncover origins of dwellers and pilgrims: Who are they? Where do they come from? What are the key purpose of their presence in these sites? Is their presence aimed to rediscovering their roots, guided by ancestral wisdom and training in solving modern societal problems?

Given its originality and nature of the work, the research findings should make an innovative and worthwhile contribution to the field of African studies and history, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and African traditional religion.

1.7 Layout of the study

The content of the study illustrates landscape of spiritual and cultural identity within the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State. Throughout the respective chapters, the researcher deliberates on key arguments in relation to these particular selected sacred sites.

Chapter One presents the introductory chapter providing a brief background of the study, sacred cave sites in perspective, problem statement, aim and objectives. What motivates this research is explained in this chapter. In order to satisfactorily address the aim and objectives, the research process is explained in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two also presents the tools and procedures of data collection, together with the key methods. Historical and empirical evidence were generated by means of the literature review, qualitative descriptive in-depth interviewing and life stories from informants and captured by note taking, photographs and digital recordings will be narrated. Methodologically, the preference adopted for this study was qualitative research. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was applied as part of qualitative inquiry/ research. Finally, this chapter describes the data analysis and interpretation processes used by this study.

Chapter Three introduces the research settings by providing the socio- historical, religious and geographical context of the sites. It consists of an historical and descriptive survey of sacred cave sites of the Eastern Free State: Motouleng, Mautse and Mantsopa caves. In the final instance, I shall briefly explain the importance of these sites for codification of African traditional religion and for revamping African past and present through identity construction and reconstruction.

Chapter Four explores theoretical perspectives pertaining to sacred spaces and spiritual and cultural identity construction within the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State. Various concepts and definitions of sacredness, belief systems, and landscape will be addressed in this chapter. The study adopts African religion and social identity theory to understand the indigenous religious practices of the users of the three selected sacred sites of the Eastern Free State.

Chapter Five is a presentation of research findings, firstly, looking at ways in which sacred sites are exemplifications of African indigenous religion; reasons for the forming locations of cultural and spiritual expression, and reasons for their being regarded as pertinent nodes of identity construction in a vibrant, changing South African society. Chapter Five also narrates the relation of the sites to religious landscape, sacred sites encoded with African traditional religion and embodiment of Indigenous Belief system. The site's internal dynamics symbols and rituals and its constitutive role regarding identity construction aspects, including tension, fragmentation, contestation or threads to sacred sites will be presented in this chapter.

Chapter Six offers the analysis and interpretation of data to the discussion emanating from the main research question, namely, to what extent community and group dynamics in the site context impacts on aspects of cultural and religious identity construction, management and preservation. This has a further impact on the ancestral belief across the traditional, cultural and religious affiliated groups within the sacred sites of Eastern Free State.

In concluding Chapter Seven, the researcher, wishes to share the anticipated contribution this study will have to the fields of History, African religion and Cultural anthropology. Furthermore, recommendations regarding, amongst others, access to, contestation over and the effect of the burgeoning tourist industry on sacred sites.

Given its originality and nature of the work, this research study will make an innovative and worthwhile contribution to the fields of African Studies and History, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and African traditional religion.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE SACRED CAVE SITES, EASTERN FREE STATE

2.1 Introduction

I begin this chapter by examining the historical background of the sacred sites of Mantsopa, Mautse and Motouleng. The whole areas are rich in cultural and historical remnants from the Iron Age and the more recent times of the Anglo-Boer War origin. Understanding the historical trajectories of these sites directly affects integrated notion of the cave dwellers in the contemporary period. Pungetti (2012) pointed out that landscape of mountains and forests has been associated with sacredness solely because it provides a natural sanctuary where human beings have felt they could approach the divine. Therefore, this chapter cannot be completed without outlining the symbolic features of the space within the sacred sites.

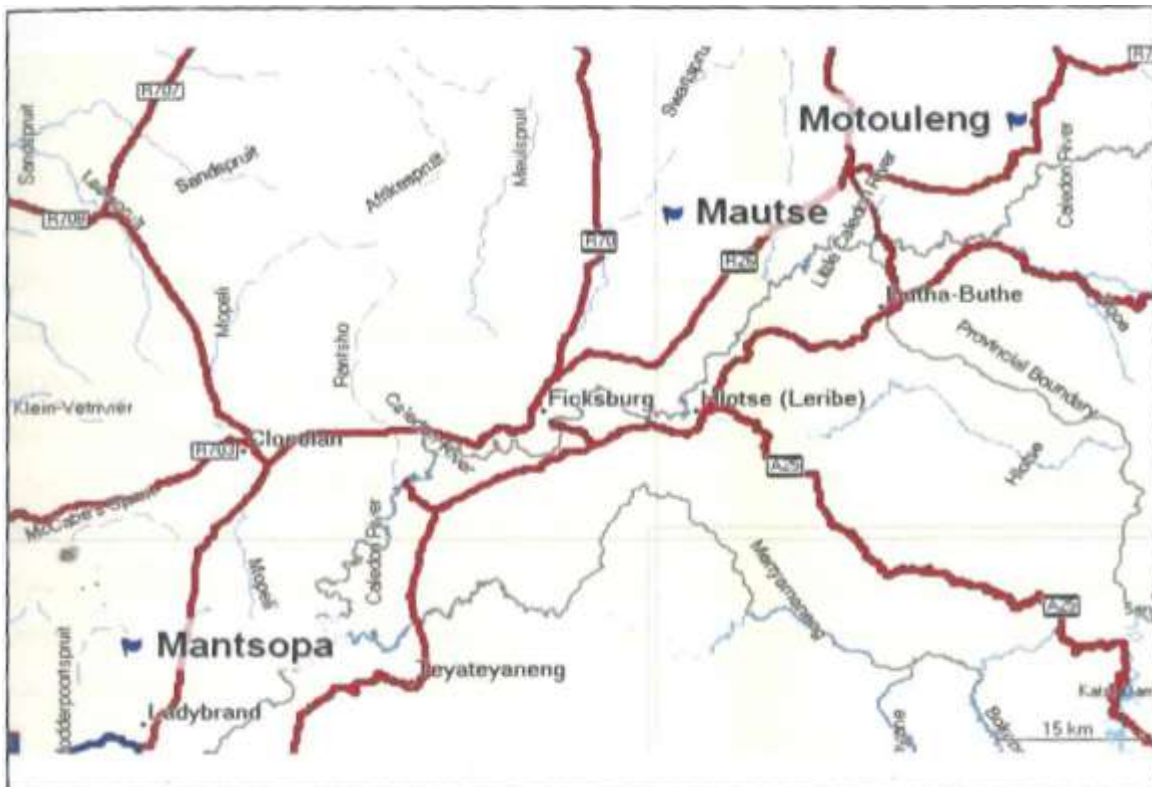


Figure 2.1: Topographical map of areas of Mohokare or Caledon River Valley
Source: CAWOOD STEPHANE (ed) 2010 NHC project report: Centre for African Studies (CAS) Bloemfontein

The complex interplay of landscape both as a natural resource and as a basis of superstructure, cemented and tied bonds among nations, ethnic groups, religions and genders in the pre- colonial and even the more recent epoch. The centrality of land to African community has been tied to the significance of land resource to cultural and traditional practices. It is also a strong African belief that any natural resource, especially landscape such as caves, mountains, pools, inter alia, are gifts from God and ancestors, even though land ownership has become the domain of men.

The discourse of physical location of the sacred sites is informed by the human recognition of sacredness and the interaction with the landscape by humans. The physical description of the sacred sites has been narrated and includes the following: geographical explanation and historical descriptions of the sites, sacred spaces and features existing within the sites. Three sites under investigation, namely Motouleng at Clarens, Mautse near Rosendal and Mantsopa at Mooderpoort are situated in an area locally known as *Mohokare* or Caledon River Valley. This forms part of the present north- eastern Free State (Coplan 2003: 978); Esterhuyse 2008: 10, Gill 1997:23; Cawood and Vos 2010:49). The area bordering on Lesotho are contextualized and located for inspection in Figure: 2.1

2.2 Early African migration to the Free State- Lesotho border

Coplan's article (2003: 975) "Land from the Ancestors: Popular Religious Pilgrimage along the South Africa-Lesotho border" illustrates a comprehensive historical ethnography of the race between Lesotho and South African particularly in Free State from the precolonial until the 'Conquered Territory'. Truly, Basutoland has a distinctive history, located within the borders of South Africa. This country was not only annexed by the colonial government and White minority state; it ultimately became the only country in the world surrounded by independent state (Ibid, 976).

Within the divisions¹ of the Basotho's, Hammond-Tooke (1974: 73) argues that the history of the South Sotho has been described in detail by the author Ellenberger in his book "*the History of the Basuto, 1912*". According to Ellenberger, the first Bantu to enter the country were not Sotho but three small Nguni tribes from the east, maPetla, maPolane. maPhuthi, the earliest whom traversed the mountains during or about the year 1600 (1974: 21). Noticeably, all these tribes lived side by side peacefully and undisturbed until 1822.

The aftermath of *Difaqane*² recorded the first fugitive Nguni tribe, the Hlubi under Mpangazitha, fleeing from Nata. The Hlubi fled over the Drakensberg into Tlokwa territory, later, the Ngwane of the Matiwane followed (Hammond-Tooke, 1974: 73). Subsequent to that, Moshoeshoe accepted all stray people who came to him for protection and warded off all the attacks of Tlokwa and Mzilikazi on the Ndebele people. With his great political wisdom, Moshoeshoe became a strong leader of all the Sotho people, first at Butha Buthe and then at his stronghold Thaba-Bosiu (Ibid, 74)

The confiscating of Basotho's cattle and destroying their crops, by Voortrekker under President Brand, begin to take effect to the Basotho people. Muller (1973: 242) argues that Moshoeshoe requested Wodehouse to place Basotho under British control. At the treaty of Thaba-Bosiu in April 1866, it was when Moshoeshoe agreed that Free State under President Brand should be annexed and referred as the conquered territories (Ibid, p 244).

¹ As illustrated by Hammond-Tooke that Basotho, an old word which mean 'Black people', had three major divisions, South Sotho in Lesotho and adjacent areas; Western Sotho who called themselves-baTswana and Transvaal Sotho or North Sotho who were formerly known as *maAwa*

² Difaqane is a Sotho/ Tswana word termed as period when tribes were dislodged from their homes and destitute and hungry, setting up a chain reaction of attack and flight. Chaos and famine became general (Hammond-Tooke, p 73) Mfecane is a Nguni word specifically referring to "Crushing or Time of trouble" (Thompson 1995: 81)

The South Sotho dwelling outside Lesotho on the south side is still organized in tribes under chiefs of their own. Many South Sotho people live along the South African-Lesotho border, specifically on the farms of the Orange Free State. The exception is the small number of the Basotho who reside in the reserve at Wetziesshoek and also found in Nquthu, KwaZulu- Natal.

Coplan's (2003) article is a key response to popular religious pilgrimaging along the South Africa-Lesotho border to sacred sites: Mantsopa, Mautse 'Badimong' and Motouleng sacred sites which he called "land of the ancestors".

2.2.1. Motouleng cave and its human interaction

2.2.2 Geographical location

Motouleng cave is situated in the heart of picturesque and mountainous Eastern Free State between Fouriesburg and Golden Gate Highland National Park. Travelling on the Phuthaditjhaba R712 route, the road lead to town of Clarens, thirty kilometers north of Bethlehem. There is no sign of the cave sites. A topographical map is provided as figure 2.1.

Surrounded by Maluti and Drakensberg Mountains, close to the historic site Surrender Hill, Motouleng is situated twelve kilometerse driving from at R26 road from Clarens to Fouriesburg. Entering the gravel road from the Surrender Hill, one travels close to six kilometers through Braamhof farm, signposted as Motouleng Heritage Site, it is where the cave dwellers enter the site.

The climatic condition of the site is extremely chilly in winter, with mountains blanketed with snow. In summer, the site has no large amount of rainfall but it is bathed in sunshine. The average minimum and maximum temperatures average between 14⁰C to 21⁰C in summer, and -4⁰ C to 15⁰c in winter (Motloun, 2003:13). Indeed, plants and animals have, throughout the winter season, adapted to such conditions, while visitors and cave dwellers find it extremely difficult to settle at these sites.

However, a number of cave dwellers have had to make their homes in cave sites even during winter seasons, against their will.

Three kilometers' s walk from the gate through the dense forest on a scary well-worn but desolate path leads the visitor to the cave. The large signboard on which is written 'NO ENTRY' 'HA HOE KENWE' as image 1.1 portrays. The sign indicates that the area is privately owned and permission is required for entering. The sources from the Dihlabeng Municipality in Clarens declared that the site is under the ownership of Mrs. Meleanor Scheepers. Mr. Phillip van Rooi took over the farm in 1985, who has attempted to blow up the cave rather allowing the dwellers access to the cave (Sunday Times, 2000:7). The entrance section and the valley close to the cave belongs to Mr Rooi' farm by the name of Braamfontein.

The name, Motouleng, as cave is known by the cave dwellers translates as 'the place where the drum beats'. The town closest to Motouleng cave is Clarens, found nestling between Rooiberge and Mount Horeb. The resort of Clarens is, apart from its scenic landscape, a very popular tourist attraction.



Image 2.1 NO ENTRY "HA HO KENWE" by DHD Ngobese, 25/ 11/ 2017

2.2.3 Historical narration of Clarens

The historical narration of the Clarens town, in close proximity to the Motouleng sacred site, is unlike to be found or written: it not mentioned in many geo- historical sources. Therefore, it is critically necessary to trace the cave's existence within the history of Clarens, as the closest town to Motouleng. There is ample unpublished literature on the history of Clarens. Rev Piet Grobler, former Minister of NG Church in Clarens wrote a book called 'Clarens 1900 – 2000', this remains part of the unpublished material on Clarens.

Clarens is known for its sandstones walls where the Basotho (people of the peaks), for centuries, defended themselves against the invaders. Later, the Basotho came into contact with the European settlers in the 19th century, when war broke out. As a result, caves, slopes along the Caledon River became the hideaways, ramparts, lairs and battlefield sites. Motloun (2003: 35) related that rendered the aftermath of the wars resulted to the formation of a town Clarens in 1912 as the "Jewel of Free State".

Motloun (2003) points out that Clarens, as a town, existed after Paul Kruger's involvement as a Voortrekker commander during the campaign against Chief Moshoeshoe. In 1865, Moshoeshoe was leader of the Basotho people in Lesotho and the Free State when five burghers were brutally assassinated by the Basothos. Consequently, there was a direct declaration of the war in 1866, and Basothos were defeated at Naauwpoort. Clarens was the Free state town in which Paul Kruger ended his days: it was named after the Swiss town. In 1899-1902, Kruger found himself on the losing side against the British during the Second Anglo Boer war.

It is recorded mostly in unpublished documents, that Paul Kruger spent his last days at Clarens before his death in 1904. Muller (1973: 328) argues that commemorations were usually held at Clarens to remember his life, together with his men who were killed during their participation in the Anglo-Boer War. Apart from this mention, there is no detailed study on the indigenous sacred landscape around Clarens and its surroundings.

Entering the site, a large sign at Surrender Hill welcomes the visitor onto the gravel road to the Motouleng site. Dreyer (2009) points out that Surrender Hill is famed for the nearly 4000 burgers from the Free State Republic who capitulated on 30 July 1900 during the Anglo-Boer War. Unconfirmed records claimed that after they surrendered it was found that over two million rounds of Boer ammunition had been destroyed by the British forces. Indeed, Surrender Hill is a memorial to the fallen British soldiers and Boers. Davenport (1977:123) confirmed that four thousand Boers surrender at the above hill. The majority of Boers were sent to India as prisoners of war.

In total, Coplan (2003: 978) pronounces that the period between 1840-1870 was one of almost constant conflict between Basotho and Boers, with other Bantu, Griqua, and even San people doing their part to keep the pot boiling; the British burning their fingers while attempting to put out the fires on their colonial borders.

2.2.4 Motouleng sacred cave

The Motouleng cave, literally means “the place where the drums beats”. It is an Amphitheatre size rock located on the Linwood farm near Clarens. This farm came into being in 2005 when the two farms, De Vlugt and Ridgeroad were merged (Davenport: 1977, p. 130).



Image 2. 2: Interior of the Motouleng sacred cave by DHD Ngobese 10/ 07/ 2017

On the R711 between Clarens and Fouriesburg, the road turns off at Surrender Hill. The visitor must travel 6 km along the gravel road until reaching Rooi's farm called Coerland. One comes across a newly constructed rock fence on which is written "Motouleng Heritage Site". The gate giving entrance to the site is always locked in order to control payment of visitors. A caretaker is always on the alert and awaiting to collect R20 entrance fee for everyone entering the sacred site.

In discussion with the caretaker, Mrs. Maqedelo Mokoena, in attempting to find out what lies behind the collection of R20 entrance fee before access is granted, she responded as follows:

"Ke thontswe ke mong'a polasi hore ke lefisisa batho bohle R20 ba kenang sebakeng sena sa hae. O le mong kapa le le bangata hape ho sa kgathaletsahle merero wa leeto. Mafelo a beke ke neha mong'a polasi tjelete ya hae. Ha ke

tsebe hore o etsang ka tjehelete eo a e lefisang patadising batho” (Mokoena, Interview, 2016)

“I have been assigned by the Mr. Roos, the farm owner, to collection R20 from any person entering his cave site, irrespective of the number of guests, and their purpose of visit. I give the fees to him weekly. I don’t know what he is doing with the money collected before the access is granted.”

Access is always controlled because the gate is kept locked to prevent any non-paying visitor from accessing the cave. It is clear that the caretaker does not know why this money is paid, nor whether it is meant for the development of the cave infrastructure development of the cave site.

Du Plooy (2016: 113) describes the 1, 5 km pathway from the gate to the cave site as that which crosses the small Caledon river. This is the first hurdle; during drier times of the year, crossing is not difficult, just a little jump across the stream. During summer months, a balancing act is required as the steep and slippery incline randomly chooses casualties.

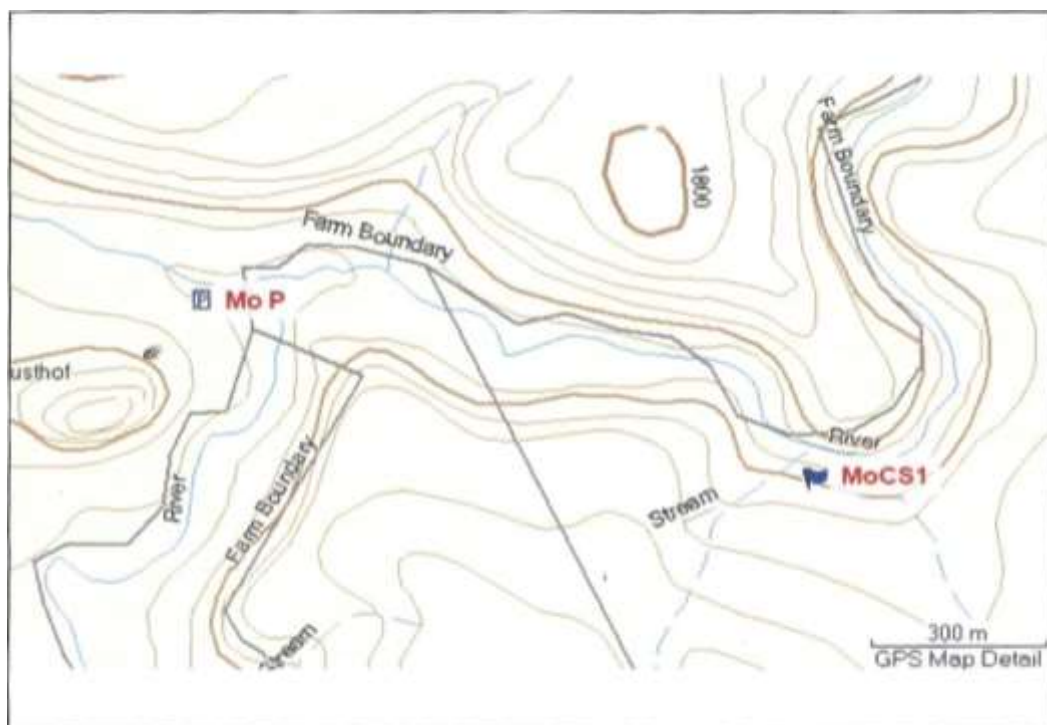


Figure 2.2 Topographic map of Motouleng sacred cave

Source: CAWOOD STEPHANE- (ed) 2010 NHC project report: Centre for African Studies (CAS) Bloemfontein

2.2.5 Partitioning of Motouleng cave site

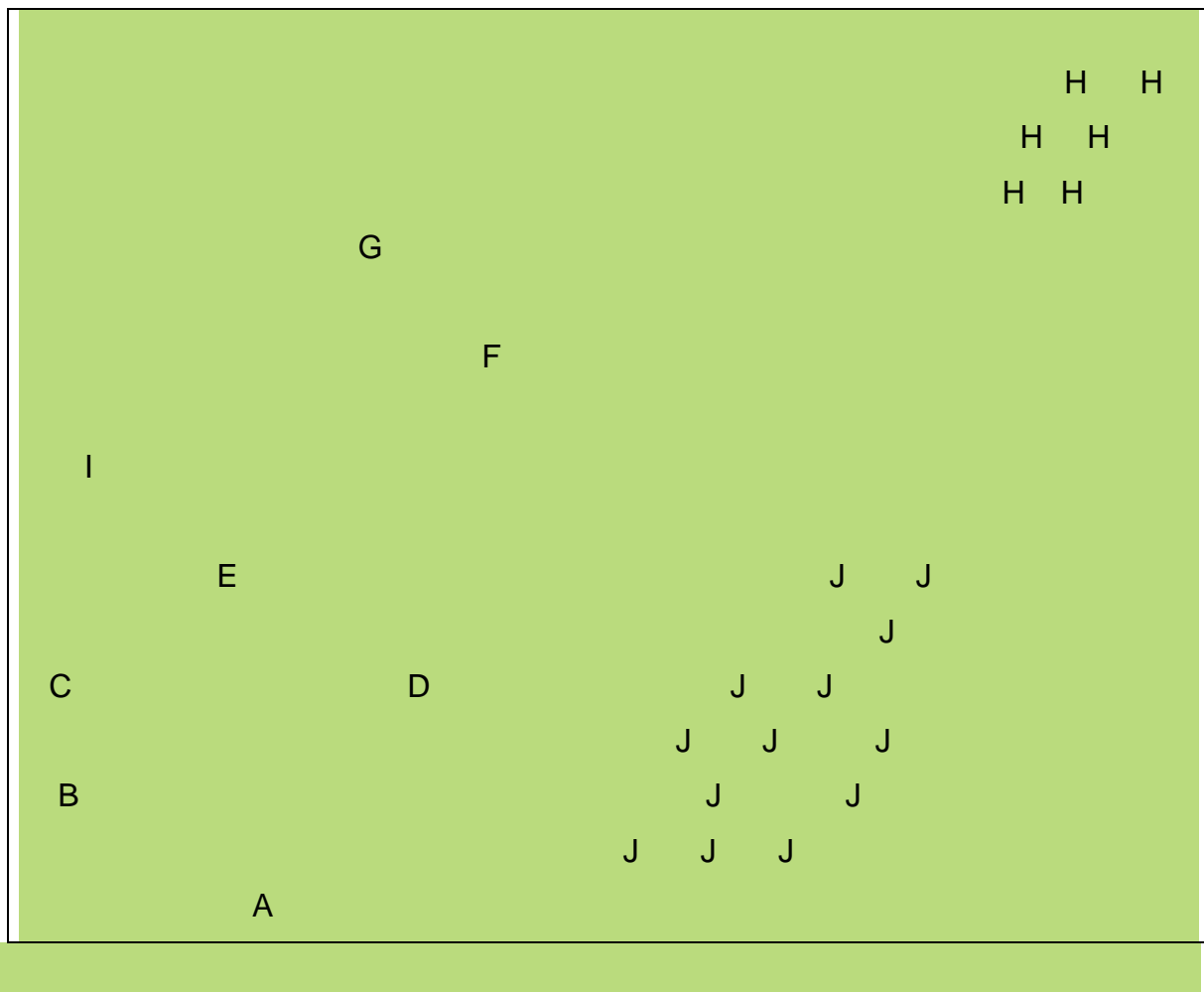
The sacred sites of the Eastern Free State are defined as acoustic space³ in nature where nothing taking place was invented (Seamon et al, 1989:87). To all cave dwellers, the site or space itself was directionless, boundless, dark of the mind and full of terror and emotions. It was a sphere without fixed boundaries where division manifested itself not by human course. The above argument permeates to all features defined in this work.

Symbolically, Motouleng cave has a number of features which have existed for centuries. Through paradigm change, new features came into existence relevant to sacred spaces and site dynamics. The site turns to be a space in which spiritual powers play a role rooted by the presence of ancestors. Some (1985:45) in his books '*African ritual and initiation, the case of Shaman tribe*' pointed out that there are natural features available at the sacred cave, especially in the Shaman community, made of both abstract and concrete objects.

It is important to note that Motouleng is a popular site in the Eastern Free State and associated with the Pastor Bishop Phuthi of the Apostolic Church, in Qwaqwa. After his death, there was an interval and a quiet period, with few visitors at the site until recent times. Increasing numbers of activities have resulted in an extension of dwelling huts and houses, solely because Motouleng cave is regarded by cave pilgrims as "holy".

Oral testimonies from the cave dwellers describe the assigned features by attempting to correlate symbols and meaning to the spaces that are sometimes directed by the ancestors at any given time. The researcher presents a conceptual framework of the internal features of the Motouleng sacred cave and its division.

³Acoustic space was the term firstly used by Marshall McLuhan and Edmund Carpenter in their magazine *Explorations* (Boston: Boston Press, p 207) which appear between 1953 and 1959 to work about the space before writing was invented



**Figure 2.3: A conceptual illustration of the internal features of Motouleng cave
@ drawn by DHD Ngobese, 2016**

A, *Nokeng* - Before one enters the cave, one has to cross the sacred river called *nokeng*. It is used mainly by the traditional healers, individuals, independent churches for initiation and baptism ritual, typically during Passover weekend celebration. Frequently, the river serves as a water source used by cave dwellers for cooking, bathing and clothes washing.

B, *Monyako wa lehaha* – Anyone visiting the cave for whatever motive, has to enter through the ‘spiritual’ entrance gate that is always left open. A small stone symbolically named ‘entrance altar’ faces the visitor. Visitors have to introduce themselves to the holders of the cave, the ancestors, and conveying their intentions of visiting amongst

others: healing, initiation, ritual accomplishment, ancestral veneration, etc. View the illustration of *monyako wa lehaha*, image 2, 3.

C: *Maseeng/ Serumong* – This is well known as the ‘fertility or children site’ and it is situated to the east of the site, close to the entrance. The site is normally frequented by women and children who have problems of various kinds. The belief is that any women who are cursed, therefore cannot conceive a child may pray at this site: the mystic power of this site will assist her. An illustration is attached to Appendix B, image no 2.3.

D: *Aletara* – The cave altar is a central point of the site and becomes an assembly point for the groups, churches, and individuals in promulgating their rituals, prayers, initiation and seeking. It is articulated by the cave dwellers as a sacred site of invoking ancestors, *Badimo*, and connecting with *Modimo* (God) through dancing, singing, praying, and giving of offerings. It is illustrated at image 2.4.



Image 2. 2: *Monyako wa lehaha* (Small Alter at the entrance) by DHD Ngobese, 10/ 07/ 2017



Image 2.3: *Sebaka sa Maseeng* (Altar for children) by DHD Ngobese 10/ 07/ 2017



Image 2.4: *Aletara* (Main Altar) by DHD Ngobese, 10/ 07/ 2017

E: *Mabitleng* – This name is derived from the resemblance to African graveyards. This is considered a symbolic site, and a place where ancestors have converged. Descriptively, the site has small, brown stones grouped together in rows resembling contemporary graveyards, with small amounts of water trickling from the top. Image 2.4 shown an *Aletara* (an altar).

F: *Lekgotla* – Traditional court is a most respected and sacred area amongst the African people where all critical decisions are taken. The attached image 2.6 reflects that it symbolically resembles the Basotho traditional court. This court is usually headed by the chief or a figure of high command, who safeguards all cultural practices. Therefore, the cave sites are not an exclusive: they also venerate all characteristics of other multi-cultural sites. An illustration of *Lekgotla* is portrayed at image no 2.6.

G: *Sediba sa pholoso* (sacred fountain/pool) is a sacred pool originating from the ground, containing unusual and undiluted water that is believed to have sacred powers. The water from this pool is extremely cold: anyone can drink from this pool without fear of infection. Cave pilgrims believed that water from this pool could heal various diseases. Notably, this water is often used by *sangomas* and spiritual churches in their ritual performances. It is illustrated at image no 2.7.



Image 2.5: *Mabidleng* (Place of graves) @ 10/ 07/ 2017



Image 2.6: *Lekgotla* (Cave court) by DHD Ngobese 10/ 07/ 2017



Image 2.7: *Sediba sa Pholoso* (Sacred fountain) by DHD Ngobese, 10/ 07/ 2017

H, *Sebaka sa Israel* - This site is found at the far end of the cave. It is known by cave pilgrims as *sebaka sa Israel*, Israel site. This site is associated with one of the cave sangomas, Mr. Hadebe argues that he was called by the ancestors to clean the place from what it used to be, the site of a toilet, thereafter building roofed chalets.

According to the cave informants, the site was officially opened to the public on the 5 August 2015 prior to Mr. Hadebe's death. Here the ancestral work is to be performed by cave dwellers. Mr. Hadebe was regarded as one of the most enduring residents of Motouleng cave. An illustration of ancestral sleeping huts is portrayed at image no 2.8.

I: *Merapelong* – This site is found in the deeper part of the shallow end of the cave site. The site is quiet and dark, and its height is less than a metre. It is one of the most respected sites; the belief is that it is host to ancestral spirits. Anyone who approaches this site should light a candle, bow to the ancestors, and enter, having removed shoes as a sign of respect.

J: *Matlo a Badimo* – The sleeping huts or houses, as they are called by Motouleng cave dwellers and pilgrims, are made of mud, stones of a metre in height; and some are covered with thatch or reeds. Mostly, they are open to nature to allow the free entrance of the ancestors. Coplan (2003:985) reflected on the spiritual architectural design of the *matlo a Badimo*, Image 2.8, saying that the structure emanated from a dream. Cave dwellers are cautious of any modern decoration that might offend the ancestors. The *matlo a Badimo* therefore strictly resembles African indigenous houses.



Image 2.8: *Matlo a Badimo* (Ancestral sleeping huts) by DHD Ngobese 10/ 07/ 2017

2.3 Mautse Sacred Cave Site

The Mautse sacred site located about 30 km the north-east of the northern border town of Ficksburg towards the south-western direction of Rosendal at the confluence of four privately owned farms: Wonderklip 722, presently part of Heelbo Boerdery; Sekonyelashoed 96; Moolmansberg 226; and Waterkloof 502 (Esterhuysen, 2008:21 and Meiring and Kitching, 1995: 10). The last farms are part of the Moolmanshoek farm.

2.3.1 Mautse Valley: Geo-historical settings

The Mautse valley sacred cave stretches among farms situated between the Fouriesburg and Rosendal towns of the Free State. The entire district around *Badimong* (*place of ancestors*) was known as Mautse, especially from the first half of the 19th century, when it was the stronghold of the powerful chief of the Batlokwa, Chief Sekonyela. As part of the Wonderklip farm, a long road takes the visitor to the entrance of Badimong, where the Mautse (*Nkokomohi*) is located.

Contemporary historians indicate that indigenous tribes had settled in areas between Ficksburg and Fouriesburg. One of these was Regent Mmanthatisi and her people, the Tlokwa (Saunders, 1975:34). Regent Mmanthatisi and her son, Chief Sekonyela built a formidable nation that survived the grim times of 'wars of extension' called *Difaqane*. Aswegen (1990:241) noted that their numbers diminished after 1824, when Manthatisi was defeated at Kuruman by the Griquas under Waterboer. The Difaqane retreated to settle on what is today Vailima farm, about 10 kilometres from Ficksburg, on the Fouriesburg road. The farm is adjacent to Moolmanshoek farm where Mautse valley is located.

The Mautse valley inhabitants may be traced as far back as a thousand years. Coplan (2003) named the valley near the Free State the Conquered Land, solely referring to land that was previously occupied by Black communities before the White man came, and unoccupied by the colonist (2003, p. 979). African people believed that the land could not be leased or sold nor tampered with. In resisting the colonization, Basotho

people entered into series of wars with the Whites in the 1860s (Davenport: 1977, p 104). As a result, Basotho communities were forced to leave their villages, and their ripening crops, and accept newly introduced boundaries.

Coplan's notion of 'conquered land' came because the land had been appropriated, seized, 'given' (conquered) after the defeat of the African people and later 'transferred' to White authorities. Once the land had been transferred, the Whites believed that Blacks must vacate the area and become detached from their cultural roots, and land ownership and be absorbed within the colonial system as employees. The study argued that the Black people of the valley and far beyond have been pursuing strategies of re-appropriation and reconnection with the land of their ancestors.

Concurring with Coplan, the researcher believes that there is no need for the cave dwellers to spiritually re-appropriate ancestral ground that is indisputably in the land and the hands of the Basotho. Despite the plentiful locations of these natural features of the Free State, all are found on the White-owned farms in the conquered territory. Yet this study also attempts to disclose that there are other reasons for Africans to reclaim conquered territory.

2.3.2 Symbolism and shared experience of Mautse

Nkokomohi, the largest clay site in the Mautse valley, is said to have had its beginning in the 1920s, when Basotho farm workers noticed columns of smoke rising from the spontaneous combustion of decaying reeds (Coplan, 2003:981). Approached at a close range, the reed deposits were found to be rising or welling up from below, leaving mounds of pure white, black and dun-coloured powder on the surface. The belief of the African community was that the ancestors (or those who had once inhabited the place) were causing fires to burn from beneath the earth.

From its inception, traditional healers and African independent healing churches began not only collecting the powdered reeds from *Nkokomohi*, as the place is commonly known by pilgrims, but preparing and conducting rituals, fertility and cult initiation at the site. Afterwards, the cave dwellers began to take refuge overnight or in bad weather. As certain rituals of healing and training, or divination could take weeks or months, cave dwellers began to build rude mud, sandstone, and thatched houses in the cave.

What is common amongst individual sites are depiction of altars made of cattle dung amongst natural rock formations. Cave dwelling became the order of the day, with pilgrims arriving from different parts of the province, even from Lesotho. These pilgrims had all been commissioned or called by the spirits of many persuasions, drawn by the call of the ancestors to the cave known as Badimong “among the ancestors”.

Interestingly, the thatched-mud shelters are built reflecting the spiritualized architecture designed in dreams. The symbols and certain patterns of the sites idealize particular ritual practices. It is noticeable that cave dwellers bring various kinds of offerings that serve to alert the ancestors to one’s presence (*Ngaka Ditaba-tsa-Badimo*, Interviewed, 18/06/2016). Coins are left on the altars as requests for permission and access to the sites, *Modimo* and *Badimo*. Besides coins, raw staple food such as grains and maize together with candles and tobacco, especially snuff, are some of the offerings the cave dwellers prepare on the way to cave sites.

Du Plooy (2016: 96) disputed Esterhyse’s positioning of the Mautse sacred site by dividing the valley into four parts. The first is Nkokomohi and its surroundings; the second, the main valley; the third, the right-hand side, and right branching(meaning?); and the fourth, the southern area above the plateau (Ibid, p 96). The clay site is on the farmland of Moolmanshoek.

2.3.3 Caretaker

It is common to all cave sites that the farm owners employ a caretaker, whose role it is to collect entrance fee from visitors or cave dwellers. Close to the entrance at the Mautse valley, there is small, modern shed, and small homestead where the farm worker lives. At Nkokomohi, a farm worker by the name of Abraham is employed by Heelbo Boerdery – the larger section of the valley is on Heelbo Boerdery property. The upper section is the site of *Tempeleng*, which belongs to another farmer. This farmer appears angry, but he collects R20 from each visitor, irrespective of the nature of visits. It is argued that the R20 fee is charged for the use of reed powder and the maintenance of the site, even though no infrastructure or maintenance is evident.

Opting for ‘farm tourism’⁴, farm owners convey their discontent regarding the presence of pilgrim ‘trespassers’ on their farms. Their initial concern was the safety of their livestock. Farm owners quoted incidents in which goats and sheep had been stolen by unknown people, suspected to be cave dwellers. Rumours spread that the farm owners would shut down the cave sites. This had upset the pilgrims.

Initially, the cave dwellers were disgusted at payment of R20 charged for accessing the site. Questions such as who owned the sites resurfaced. Cave dwellers later clarified the point that the farms belong to farm owners; however, the sites do not. Acknowledging the presence of powers possessed by these sites, cave dwellers reiterated that their dwelling there was simply in answer to the call of the ancestors, seeking for their identity attached to the landscape.

⁴ ‘Farm tourism’ – as the natural life tourism, through which the visitor may access the natural environment as opposed to commercially developed tourist activities and locations

2.3 Division of Mautse cave site

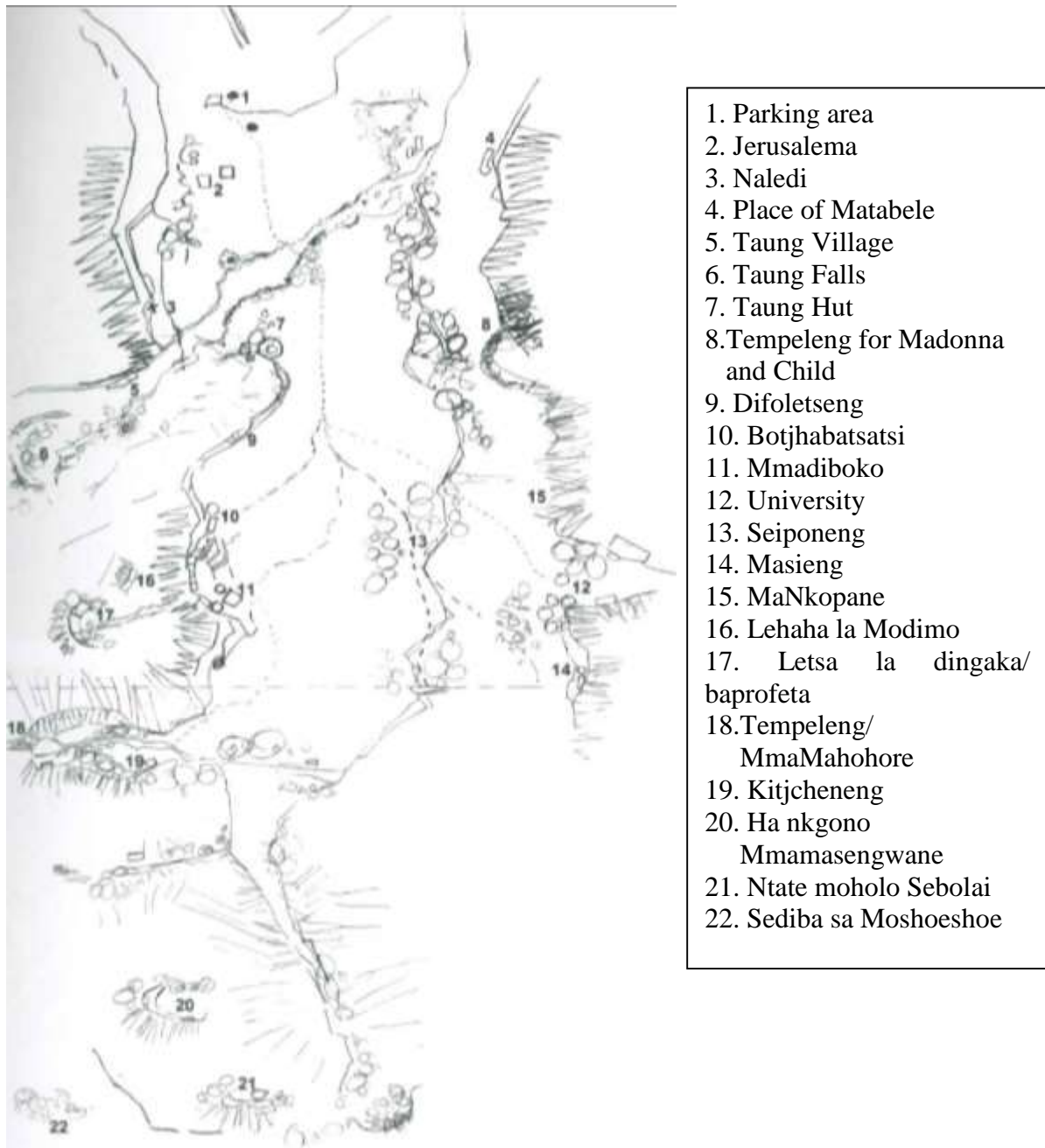


Figure 2.4: Artist's rendition of the Mautse Valley

Source: ESTERHUYSE PETRO 2008 Research Report on Two Living Heritage sites: Badimong and Motouleng. Unpublished Manuscript. Bloemfontein

2.3.3.1 *Ha Mmadiboko cave site*

One of the sacred shrines within the Mautse is the cave where Monica Mangengene lived called *Ha Mmadiboko*, it is illustrated on figure 2.4, No 11. Monica has lived for more than ten years at the *Mmadiboko* site; she has trained traditional herbal healers and diviners at *Badimong*. Quoted from her historical background (Interview, 15/ 07/ 2008), she stated:

“I was a nurse at Edendale hospital before I was called to leave my profession as a nurse. I got an order from the ancestors to leave my house near Johannesburg, to come here at the cave, where I stay in a mud hut..... I was called to be a ‘traditional nurse’ an *ngaka* (herbalist and diviner). I stayed in this farm cave under the instruction of my ancestors because they wanted to train me with the diploma, not from the hospital but from my roots..... Now I have a school, I trained the healers and I have left the nursing profession”

There is no sole authority over the site. Monica Mangengene herself controls the space that has a sacred hut, which is well- designed. She uses the sacred hut for consultation, praying and cultic ritual practices. Monica usually she uses her site to train *amathwasa* or *lethoasana* and to heal her patients. It is common to find both religious practices in equal use, with Roman Catholic rituals preceding ancestral worship. Monica presides over the above religious practices as she was baptized as a stalwart of the Roman Catholic church and as trained spiritual healer.

2.3.3.2 *Ke sebaka sa Jerusalema (Jerusalema site)*

The most commonly known temple existing at the Mautse valley is Jerusalem No. 2 which is found at the far end of the site. Of course, the site is frequently visited by various African Independent churches. It has an altar, and seating areas for the church members or individuals at the *sediba* (sacred pool). This is one of the sites at which the baptism ritual takes place: many congregations assemble here during Easter or Passover festivals.

2.3.3.3 *Ke sebaka sa Yunibesithi (University site)*

One of the cave sites within the Badimong is the University (*ke yunibesithi*), illustrated in figure 2.4, item no. 12. It is situated on the western side of the valley and surrounded by several traditional mud huts. Another traditional healer, Makhosi Musa Molefe, originating from Sebokeng, narrated why the place was portrayed as the university site. She articulated that:

“Mona ke sebaka sa Yunibesithi ya lehaha, e tshwana le sekolo sa nnete. Ke mona ho tla ithuta ka setso le hoba le lengolo a thuto ya setso. Hang ha ke qeta ke tla thola lengolo, mme ke ya hae. Sena ke sebaka sa thuto sa bohlokwa haholo. O tla pasa ha feela o qetile dithuto tsa hao. Ka nako enngwe ha re kwetlisetswe mona empa re kwetlisetswa lewatleng. Ha o fihla mona o tlameha ho itsebisa ho ba heno e be Badimo ba lewatle ba tla tseba hore o teng mona mme ba o bolelle hore o tlameha ho ya sekolong sefe”

“This is the university cave site; it is like a real school. I’m here at the school to study for an African certificate; thereafter I will take my certificate and go home. This is an extremely important institution. Once you pass, your studies are completed. Sometimes we don’t graduate here: we have our graduation ceremony in the sea. When you arrive there, you have to identify yourself, align with your clan surname, and then the ancestors of the ocean will know that you are here and tell you which school must attend.”

Ngaka Musa Molefe concurred with Mongengene Monica when she described the site as the university. It is a school for ancestral worship: *“Ke yunifesithi ya bona hape ke sekolo se seholo sa badimo”* (*This is our university and big ancestral school*). Yunifesithi sacred space encompass what are the outcomes of their scary rite of passage from the day they enter until their last day spent living the cave site. They referred to influence and knowledge the site possesses as they render ancestral insight, strength and power to reveal divine healing for various pandemic diseases.

2.3.3.4 Ke sebaka sa Tempeleng (Temple site)

The narration of du Plooy (2016: 110) gave a clear depiction of paths that lead to more secluded and more sacred places. The pass *Ha Monica* is the narrow, rocky path leads pilgrims on their way to *Tempeleng* (the temple), illustrated in figure 2.4, item no 8. Du Plooy (2016) explained that *tempeleng* is an enclave consisting of part baptism pond, part altar and part stairway to heaven, and an area allotted to domestic use, cooking and sleeping (Ibid, 102). It is apparent that the *tempeleng* is the ultimate destination of large number of pilgrims visiting on weekends.

2.3.3.5 Ke sebaka sa Bataung (Taung site)

One site strongly linked to the original Basotho folk is known as the Bataung site, and consists of an area which includes Taung Hut, illustrated in figure 2.4, item no 7, Taung Village, illustrated in figure 2.4, item no 5 and Taung Falls, illustrated in figure 2.4, item no 6. These sites are located on the western side of Badimong. Du Plooy defined Bataung as “the people of the lion” (2016: 102). The Basotho clan that has strong historical ties to the Eastern Free State landscape. It is clearly appropriate that this area be named after their clan name and lion totem as identity reconnection.

2.3.3.6. Peoples’ claimed sites

The southerly part of the valley, is well known by individuals who have played a crucial role in the history of Basothos. *Ke Sediba sa Moshoeshoe* (Moshoeshoe’s Fountain) illustrated in figure 2.4, item no 22, *Ha Nkgono Mmamasengene* (the place of the Grandmothers), illustrated in figure 2.4, item no 20 and *Lehaha la Ntante Moholo Sebolai* (the place of the Grandfather Sebolai), illustrated in figure 2.4, item no 21 are situated in this area and are far less accessible. There are far less populated sites both by stations and people. Du Plooy argued that lack of accessibility has been main reason for the exclusiveness of the site and for infrequent visits by people and pilgrims (2016: 103). For the purpose of this study, these sites are point of connection with familiar ancestors and with their veneration.

2.4 Mantsopa cave site

This is a well-known cave church near the Anglican Church at Modderpoort. Known as Mantsopa's cave, it lies two kilometers away from Ladybrand and ten kilometers from the Maseru border of Lesotho. David Ambrose's unpublished work 'Mantsopa, Prophetess of the Basotho' is dedicated to Ladybrand Municipality in line with the renaming of the municipality as Mantsopa on 09 August 2002⁵. In honour of her role as Prophetess and Defender of Traditional Culture, Mantsopa's cave is visited by various religious groups and pilgrims from as far afield as Gauteng North-West and KwaZulu-Natal provinces, and Lesotho.



Image 2. 9 Interior of the Mantsopa Cave site in Modderpoort @ Mantsopa website

⁵Dated back from the early August 2002 when the conduit includes, the then Mayor of Ladybrand, Councillor Deneys Ntsepe and colleagues from the African Languages and History Department of the National University of Lesotho requested an assistance to Prof Ambrose about Mantsopa four days before the 09 August 2002, International Women's Day, when Ladybrand Local Municipality was about to be renamed Mantsopa Local Municipality after the distinguished Prophetess Mantsopa (Ambrose, 2002)

Mantsopa's gifts of prophecy and rainmaker were still imprinted in the minds of the Basotho people. Professor Ambrose (2010) stated that Mantsopa had prophesized to the effect that Basotholand would be attacked by the Free State farmers: she advised all Basothos to be ready for war (Ambrose, 2010: 9). Setiloane also argued that his maternal grandmother, a Mokoena of Mokhethoaneng in Lesotho, was amongst young girls sent to Mantsopa to pray for rain. Indeed, as they arrived at the river, the first drops of heavy rain would begin to fall.

2.4.1 History of Ladybrand at which Mantsopa's cave is located

The study has looked closely at the history of the town as a place at which Mantsopa's cave is located. It is of paramount importance to note that this research will not attempt to render an in-depth account of the origin of Ladybrand, however, the author wishes to narrate a fleeting account of events concerning the town.

Eastern Free State Explorer (2010) portrays Ladybrand as the town providing the gateway to the magnificent sandstone highlands of the Eastern Free State. The town of Ladybrand nestles in the picturesque and fertile Caledon area with its mountains, hills, and valleys. Ladybrand is well-known for its beautiful historical buildings, old sandstone houses, and trees-lined streets. repetition

Ladybrand town was established during the period between 1813 and 1830. This was the time during which the native races were nearly wiped out by inter-tribal fighting. Bardill and Cobbe (1985) describes *Difaqane* as a series of conflicts and upheavals that swept the Highveld in the 1820s instigated by the king of the Zulus, Shaka kaSenzangakhona (1985, p.8).

Within the above cited period, many people fled from imminent slaughter by taking refuge in the bleak Maluti Mountains. At that time, Chief Moshoeshoe, head of the small tribe settled between Ficksburg and Fouriesburg, used the opportunity to offer shelter to refugees on their way to Lesotho (Bardill and Cobbe, 1985:10).

However, in 1824, Moshoeshoe's people were attacked by the Batlokwas and fled to Thaba-Bosiu, an exceptional mountain fortress about 100 km to the south-west. Moshoeshoe and his people reached Thaba-Bosiu late at night: they had to secure the place before they could sleep. Hence the name, Thaba-Bosiu, meaning "Mountain of the Night".

Thompson (1975: 43) describes Thaba-Bosiu⁶ as mountain with five trails, each about two metres wide, which gave access to Moshoeshoe's stronghold. In times of hostilities, these trails were strategically closed off by stones. King Shaka attempted to attack Moshoeshoe, however, the stone obstructions provided such excellent defense that they could not fully ascend the mountain. Historians argued that the Zulus shouted to the Basotho to come down and fight like men, not like old women who merely threw stones. Eventually, the Zulus had to retreat.

2.4.2 First appearance of the Whites and establishment of Ladybrand

Moshoeshoe had established himself firmly on Thaba Bosiu; he began to build a strong nation consisting of several tribes. Bardill and Cobbe (1985:10) argue that Moshoeshoe's decision to seek the assistance of the European missionaries was based on his ability to protect his followers. The first Whites encountered were the French missionaries who assisted Moshoeshoe with government administration. When the Voortrekkers arrived, the Basotho nation had peaceful dealings with them; however, stock theft and attacks by the Basotho threatened their relationship.

The settling of the Caledon valley region by both Whites and Basotho only started in earnest from 1836, soon giving rise to a complicated frontier situation (Aswegen, 1990: 252). At that time, Major Warden was appointed as British resident of the annexed Free State. His immediate task was to restore order in the area and to retrieve any stolen stock.

⁶ Is the name of the famous mountain used by King Moshoeshoe in the middle of 19 centuries, he used to visit it at the evening to perform his rituals until sunset. Later, it was used as protection strategy to defeat his enemy to intimidate the enemies, the mountain became larger than life

These events upset the Boers. However, the British forces were defeated by the Basotho nation at Viervoet, Modderpoort, near Ladybrand. The British lost 138 soldiers. Warden and the British forces then retreated to Bloemfontein (Becker, 1969, p.119)

In 1852, another attempted attack by the British forces led by Sir George Cathcart proved fruitless. Basotho people were defeated by British forces at Berea, a prominent plateau near Maseru, and totally crushed at Cathcart's Drift, 10 km east of Ladybrand. Moshoeshoe and Basotho acknowledged the independence of the Boer republics. Enmity between the Boers and Basotho continued, and the first Basotho war between the two groups took place in 1858 and later in 1865-1866 (Becker, 1969:183). After these wars, Moshoeshoe had to relinquish an area to the Republic of the Free State as conquered territory.

Originally, the border post during the Basotho wars, slowly but surely, the town of Ladybrand came into being. The Eastern Free State Explorer (2010) mentions that Ladybrand was named after first Free State President Brand's mother, Lady Catherine Brand (2010, p.28). After a long period of time, Ladybrand developed as a beautiful hospital town.

2.4.3 Anna Mantsopa Makhetha and the Cave Church at Modderpoort

This site of worship encompasses the St Augustine Anglican church. The Cave Church at Modderpoort farm is situated 5 km north of Ladybrand. This property, bought by Bishop Edward Twells in 1869, is situated within the so-called "Conquered Territory" lost by the Basotho through the conquest in the years 1843- 1869. Without probing much on the operation of Anglican church in Modderpoort, the research seeks to concentrate to cave church related to Nkgono Annah Mantsopa Makhetha.



Image 2.10: Mantsopa cave site by DHD Ngobese 18/ 09/ 2017

Little information is known of Mantsopa's existence before 1851, when she began her prognostications. Anna Mantsopa was born in about 1795 at Mekoatleng in the Clocolan district. She belonged to the tribe whose leader was *Mohlomi*, of the Basotho nation (Ambrose, 2010: 4). Mantsopa was married to her father's cousin, Lekote, who did not live long after the marriage: Anna was left a young widow. According to Basotho custom she then became a wife to Lekote's elder brother, Selatile, and had four children: *Ntsopa*, *Motsielehe*, *Tsiu*, and *Sisilane* (Ibid, p.4).

There was no doubt about the spiritual gifts of *Nkgono* Mantsopa, as traditional healer, prophetess, and Mosheoshoe's seer. As recited by Becker (1969, 238), Mosheoshoe relied far more on the prophecies and philosophies of his seers and diviners than on advice from the missionaries. During his era, two seers/diviners were Mantsopa Makhetha, the woman, and Katsi, a blind man. They were said to possess extraordinary powers of healing. Warriors who drank their special concoctions were believed to become invulnerable to White's men's bullets (Ibid, 238).



Image. 2.11. Nkgono Mantsopa,

Picture generated from the cup at Mooderpoort by DHD Ngobese, 03/ 09/ 2017

Becker (1969) confirmed that Mantsopa predicted the era of *Difaqane*, prophesying that the Black tribes would be wiped out by another tribe. It was also common knowledge that Mantsopa had told Moshoeshoe that the Basotho had to ready themselves, because an enemy would appear and be destroyed in a battle to be known as “the battle of hail”. Thereafter, the people would be able to sow and harvest as before, without fear (Becker, 1969: 174). Mantsopa also predicted that the struggle would be short and sharp and so fierce that it would be remembered as *Ntwa ya sefako* (the battle of hail), Ibid, p 175.

This prophesy came true in the Battle on Viervoet Mountain, where Major Warden and his troops were defeated by the Basotho. Of course, the outcome of this prophesy made Mantsopa a legend.

Much to Moshoeshoe’s concern, Mantsopa and Katsi predicted that the Boers would invade and destroy the Lesotho(Basotho?) before the end of the year. They warned him to disassociate himself not only from the missionaries, but also from the tribesmen who attended their services (Becker, 1969: 238). Most of all, Moshoeshoe was told to command his subjects and especially the converts, to turn their back on Christianity.

Becker states that failure to adhere to their warning, the country of Lesotho was cursed: a merciless drought prevailed in Lesotho in the summer of 1862 (Ibid, 238). Although the spirits were begged for assistance, they refused to send even the briefest shower. The land remained untilled and unplanted, fountains dried up. Lesotho was faced with horror of famine. Thousands of Basotho died, and some stole into Free State in search of food.

Suddenly, Mantsopa was divested of her riches by the eldest son of Moshoeshoe, King Letsie, of Lesotho, because Mantsopa could not make rain, as she promised. She was condemned by Moshoeshoe as a charlatan, and driven by Letsie across the Orange River into exile (Becker, 1969: 239).

Prior to Moshoeshoe's death, Gill (1997: 111) established stronger relations with the Catholic Church; Father Gerard was on close terms with him. In addition, Moshoeshoe, who, since 1850, had been dealing with Anglicans through their hierarchy at the Cape and in Bloemfontein, was able to cement ties as well when a large Anglican mission was established across the border at Modderpoort in 1868.

Thereafter, Moshoeshoe played a prominent role in encouraging the great diviner and prophetess, the likes of Mantsopa, that "the way to heaven is not a narrow road" (Gill, 1997: 112). Eventually, Mantsopa and others were converted to Christianity, and entered the narrow road. Mantsopa was baptized on the same day on which Moshoeshoe was baptized on the 13 March 1870 (Ibid, 113).

In the 1850s and 1860s, some Basotho people were developing certain esoteric theology. The group included a woman by the name of Mantsopa Makhetha, as reflected by Machobane (2001, p.40). Mantsopa declared that she worshipped the same God as the Christian missionaries; going further to claim that she had been in heaven (Ibid, p 41). Concurring with Becker, Machobane attested that Mantsopa had declared that the road to the divine village was not narrow as missionaries taught; it was wide, considering that God was a Supreme Chief.



Image 2.12: Nkgono Mantsopa' s grave by DHD Ngobese 18/ 09/ 2017

This is perhaps the most striking form of syncretism among the Basotho in the 19th Century. Esoteric theology was the movement aimed at unifying or reconciling the two divergent forms of religion. Manyeli (2001) states that one of the manifestations of revivalism was the rise of prophets and prophetess, as personified by Mantsopa. As an important consultant to King Moshoeshoe, Mantsopa even before the revivalism set in, she was regarded as a prize convert by the newly settled Anglicans, who saw her as the prophetess of the new Christian covenant (Manyeli, 2001, p 69).

Mantsopa became a famous prophetess who was influential amongst the Basotho, taking on the role of coaxing rain through prayer, Mantsopa later attempted to merge traditionalism with Christianity.

In 1868, Mantsopa was catechized by French missionaries at *Thaba- Bosiu*. In March 1870 she was baptized as a Christian, despite her beliefs. Mantsopa worked as a faithful Christian with French Protestants, and later with the Anglicans in Modderpoort. Anna *Nkgono* Mantsopa died in 1906, about 111 years old, and was buried in the Anglican cemetery at Modderpoort.

2.5 Reflections

The study has examined the historical background of the sacred sites of Mantsopa, Mautse and Motouleng. Understanding the historical trajectories of these sites directly affects integrated notion of the cave dwellers in the contemporary period. The physical description, symbolic features, history of the towns where the cave site is located has been narrated.

The history and importance of Motouleng, Mautse and Mantsopa caves (Eastern Free State, SA) for different religious persuasions, indigenous knowledge and ancestral veneration of Africans and traditional healers has been investigated amongst the following: namely; how sacred sites are exemplifications of African indigenous religion; why they form locations of cultural and spiritual expression, and why they may be regarded as pertinent nodes of identity construction in a vibrant South African society in a constant state of flux

The research covers the partitioning of sacred cave sites Symbolically; the sacred cave sites have a number of features that turn to be spaces where spiritual powers plays a leading role in the sacredness of the space and presence of ancestors. It is common to all cave sites that the land owners employ a caretaker, whose role it is to collect entrance fee from visitors and cave pilgrims. The study noted that the cave dwellers were disgusted at payment of entrance fee, ranging from R20 to R30, charged for accessing the sites.

It has, therefore, become important to investigate the significance of these sites, both in terms of the historical and cultural bearing and spiritual landscape while looking at aspects of protest and identity. Apart from the fact that the sites are now considered to be important living heritage sites, they are exemplifications of the transforming nature of indigenous belief. For Africans, they can be viewed as primary repositories of what is homogeneously termed “African Indigenous Religion

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3. THE RESEARCH PROCESS

3.1 Introduction

Research conducted thus far has demonstrated the scope and complexities of the common African perspective on natural resources. It further recognizes that certain caves in South Africa are sacred sites of contemporary cultural significance and also are essential to the continuity of the African traditional religion.

This study falls mainly in the field of African traditional religion and heritage sites, especially the sacred caves of the Eastern Free State. The qualitative method was used to investigate the protest and identity in the context of sacred space of the spiritual and cultural landscape of the sites. An qualitative descriptive approach was used to uncover and explicate the way in which cave dwellers and pilgrimages in the caves come to understand, account for, take action and manage their situations as well as their problems and difficulties they encounter in accessing the sacred space. The processes of uncovering and explicating were typically based on successive observations and interviews.

During the initial stages, the researcher had to decide on the methodological approach to data collection, and the data analysis to use. The researcher has established a cordial relationship with the participants: traditional healers, independent churches, government officials, farm owners, pilgrims and ordinary visitors over the time he has spent at both sites. For some participants, although the researcher took a strictly professional interest in them, it proved somewhat intimidating to be subjected to so much scrutiny of their practices, performances and rituals.

An introductory to methodology emanated from the research questions that were provided in Section 1.5 of Chapter One. This chapter aims to build on from the introduction chapter and describe the procedures followed in selecting a research methodology and techniques for data collection and analysis. The chapter is organized around the research methodology and design.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher has introduced an overarching plan for the collection, measurement and analysis of data in order to, amongst other items, identify the most important themes that highlight interviewee's answers, the techniques to be used for collecting of data, the approaches to selecting samples, and how the data has been analyzed.

The research design applied is the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis¹ (IPA), which forms part of qualitative inquiry/research. This particular research design is informed by interpretative studies through personal interpretation of the sacred sites' lived experiences and meaning. These experiences have been given under review. IPA acknowledges a debt to symbolic interactionism (Denzin, 1995), with its concern for the way in which meanings are constructed by individuals within both a social and a personal world.

In utilizing this design, the researcher attempts to draw close to the participants' personal world, to take, in Conrad's (1987) words, an 'insider's perspective'. However, one cannot do this directly or completely. Access depends on, and is complicated by the researcher's own conceptions. Indeed, the above is required in order to make sense of the participants' personal world, through a process of interpretative activity.

¹ Described by Smit (2011:4) as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), this is a qualitative research methodology used to understand participants' subjective realities through personal interpretations of their lived experiences and the meanings they attach to these experiences

By using IPA, Remler and Ryzin (2011: 84) argued that one might be using qualitative findings to discover new ideas on identity construction and adjunct belief systems. Predictions may then be made on effects on protest and contestation of cave dwellers around sacred spaces.

A qualitative descriptive approach was necessary, in order to establish the socially constructed nature of reality, to stress the relationship between research and object of study within the wider development of political, religious, and social inquiry at the sacred spaces. The IPA offers a qualitative approach to understanding participants' lived experiences, in order to describe the way/s in which a situation within a specific context, impacts on them (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2008; Smith, 2004). IPA is informed by three key positions, namely, phenomenology², hermeneutics³, and idiography⁴ (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2013).

This study focuses on three sacred spaces of the Eastern Free State, namely, Mantsopa's cave, situated at Modderpoort, near Ladybrand; Nkonkomoni (to rise up like bread) or Mautse (Badimong), located in a valley between Fouriesburg and Rosendale; and Motouleng (place where the drum beats), situated along the Maluti Mountain and Rooiberg Mountains, twelve kilometers from Clarens. These areas have been chosen because of their popularity with pilgrimages along the South African-Lesotho border.

²Describes the "what" and "how" of individuals' experienced phenomena; develops descriptions of the essences of experiences, but does not explain or analyse descriptions (Creswell, 2013)

³ Means a theory of interpretation concerning textual meaning, as in the techniques used in speaking and writing that divulge the intentions and context of the speaker/writer (Smith et al. 2013)

⁴ Relates to details and thorough analysis of small cases, which differs from mainstream psychological studies that are nomothetic in nature (Smith et al. 2013).

3.3 Data Collection–Tools and Procedures

This study has employed qualitative data collection strategies to collect data. Based on primary and secondary data, the analysis in this study was based on extended fieldwork and interviews, with in-depth data collection. Therefore, interview guides, in-depth interviews, and field observations, have been used for data collection.

An open-ended, semi-structured questionnaire, and face-to-face interviews were designed for this study as an example of interpretative phenomenological analysis. This has been applied to the research participants and cave dwellers available at the caves. This approach allows the researcher and participants to engage in a dialogue, eliciting detailed responses whereby initial questions are modified in the light of the participants' responses. The researcher has successfully able to probe interesting and important matters which arise.

Interviews provide an interviewer with some guidelines; thereafter, interviewees have substantial freedom to express their opinions on issues which the researcher deems important. During the course of the interview, additional questions and follow-up on issues which perhaps had not been anticipated and were therefore not included in the questionnaire, were explored.

Field observations, regular observation of cave dwellers travelling along their journey (arriving to departure) were also applied, in order to understand the social situation pertaining to the connection between sacred sites and their 'presupposed' adjunct belief systems. The research design proposes to draw methodologies in addressing the problem from the perspective of historical, social, anthropological, and indigenous knowledge systems and cultural studies.

Research participants informing the research were mainly landowners, department officials, traditional healers and diviners, and religious groups, individuals, and those experienced in traditional healing and divination within various contexts and capacities.

Anticipated fieldwork has assisted the researcher and the participants in overcoming any reservations towards the ethnographic researching dilemma, accepting that they are part of the research. This involves direct observation, note-taking, digital camera and tape recording, once permitted or agreed on with the participants.

3.4 Validity and Reliability Consideration

The researcher acquainted himself with the validity and reliability issues of the data-collection procedures. Nahid Golafshani (2003: 601) stated that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, collecting data, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study. Moreover, Nahid Golafshani (2003: 604) elaborated on the key objectives of using validity and reliability of a research. These are to eliminate bias and to increase the researcher's truthfulness of a proposition about social phenomenon.

To achieve the above, one has to remain in the field long enough to observe the full range of routines and behaviour that typify the case. All activities were recorded during the specified period, what Gray (2009: 416) termed 'time sampling'. Using time sampling, the researcher has identified during data-collection frequent routine activities and irregular events that are special or abnormal. To reduce unreliability, one has to record the observed events in such a way that data may be reviewed and reinterpreted. Lastly, the use of triangulation (use of multiple methods of data collection) was crucial as a way of improving the reliability of the study.

Part of the research design involved making judgments on the number of participants required for this research. Relevant data was collected by means of a purposive sampling survey. With purposive sampling, Gray (2009:152) stated that the researcher deliberately selects the subjects against one or more trait to give what is believed to be a representative sample.

Using purposive sampling approach, the researcher has attempted to achieve a true cross-section of the population attached to the sacred sites. The researcher undertook a preliminary study available on the population groups, and satisfied himself that all population groups were represented, including traditional healers, landowners, department officials, diviners, and cave dwellers available during the study period.

Adhering to what Gray (2009:149) says, “prior to determination of the actual size of the sample, the researcher should decide on the size of the confidence interval”, a sample of the study population was selected. Initially, the researcher intended to select 45 respondents of the entire population within the confidence interval. The envisaged number of participants was drawn from the following population: fifteen (15) traditional healers, six (6) healer trainees (*amathwasa*; *thwasa*), twelve (12) African church pilgrims, three (3) farm-owners, three (3) municipality officials, three (3) gatekeepers and three (3) tourism officers. As attested by Devlin (2006:56), the choice of the population to be sampled was greatly influenced by the available participants at the three selected sacred sites.

The researcher planned to include the perspectives and voices of many categories of individuals associated with protest, contestation and identity of the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State. The researcher, however, accepted that if not everything goes according to research, purposive sampling has been used as alluded to in the proposed study. The sacred cave site most challenging was the Mautse site which was shut down by the new landowner prior to completion of the fieldwork.

It is also in accordance with cultural and research ethics that, before commencing with observation or interviewing, access to the sites is negotiated with landowners and gatekeepers. Access to these sites was somewhat erratic. The entrance fee was increased without notice from R15 to R20 at Motouleng cave site over a two-month period. It differed from the Mantsopa cave site, where the entrance fee was R25 per person. Owing to the number of visits to sacred sites during my fieldwork, the total entrance fees amounted to R 2500. This dictated, at times, the number of visits the researcher could make when proceeding with research data collection.

3.5 Qualitative Research

There are various methods applied by researchers when conducting research. Such methods are chosen taking into account the nature of the investigation and the nature of data that must be analysed. The research methods include qualitative, participatory observation and interpretative methods. Referring to the introductory chapter, the study follows a qualitative (historical) research methodology. Sarakantos (1993:46), in his book, defines a qualitative method as a:

“..... naturalistic enquiry, which studies real world situations as they unfold. Qualitative methods involve personal contact and insight, with the researchers getting close to the people, situation and phenomenon under study”.

The qualitative approach was necessary because the sacred sites, especially caves, must be studied within the wider development of political, religious and social structures, most of which come by oral reports. The research uses research design which is relatively open and flexible. It also gives the researcher the opportunity of exploring new avenues of enquiry as they emerge. Design flexibility ensures that the researcher does not become trapped in rigid structures that reduce responsiveness.

Through a qualitative and participatory research method, the essential personal contact with participants under study was simplified. Therefore, the researcher has been provided with a rich understanding of the participants' feelings and experiences. To the same extent, quantitative research also been applied so as to make comparisons between other sites within the province, yielding more valid data. With the involvement of research participants, the participatory observation is essential for better understanding of the way in which people interact with their landscape, social structure, and the meaning they assign to their own life experiences.

It is important to emphasize that observation is one of many kinds of qualitative social-science methods that may be used in studying human behaviour. Spradley, in his book '*Participatory observation*', described three elements of a social situation as a first step in performing ethnography. Places, actors, and activities were his key elements in performing participant observation (Spradley,1996: 36). Preceding Chapter Two,

locations of each sites were pinpointed, with names clearly reflected in implementing the qualitative method of research.

Terre-Blanche and Durkheim (1999: 124) note that interpretive method researching relies on first-hand accounts. It is for this reason that fieldwork was used as the main source of data collection. The main purpose of conducting field research was to collect what the landscape of sacred site renders, that is, meaning and shape of spiritual and cultural identity to cave dwellers.

3.6 Sampling Methods

3.6.1 Direct observation

The qualitative method of participant observation was selected as a primary method of data collection. Interactions are central to this study. This method has the potential to generate data based on observation of events as they occur in a natural setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Mason, 1996; Silverman, 2000). The case studies of *Nkokomohi* and *Motouleng* caves were selected because the researcher does not control the data-collection environment; rather, he intrudes into the world of the participants. Through participation and direct observation of their activities and interaction, the researcher collects material for the study database.

Amongst the scientific field approaches that the researcher undertook, direct observational research was the most appropriate method to be used. For this approach, the grasping of knowledge, perception, and local realities were at least at the heart of this work. Using the direct observational research method, the study aimed closely to scrutinize activities occurring at the site, shaping the dialogue with the key informants and participants at the sacred sites.

Direct observation of cave dwellers in obtaining data, observing, interviewing, inter alia, was extraordinarily welcomed at all levels during the study fieldwork. The research processes are informed and driven by all the cave dwellers and participants. Their presence in the cave, as cave dwellers, was altered from being research

subjects to partners in research. The study altered from being an activity to a process only under the researcher's control.

It was important to build long-term trust, even after the fieldwork had been completed. The fieldwork trips did not only assist the research participants to escape and overcome the ethnographic dilemma, but to realise that they were part of it. Various cave dwellers co-operated as research participants, whether divine and spiritual healers, independent church leaders, seekers, or random individuals. Ways of interaction included direct observations, personal visits, interviews (open-ended and semi-structured) and group discussions, all such data-collecting playing a prominent role in the research.

3.6.2 Degree of observation

The key significance of the role of the observational research was to allow everyone ownership of the project, in grasping, writing, and publication of the entire research outcome. On the other hand, over-identification of research subjects is avoided by participation of local actors. In direct observation, the participants are observed directly by the researcher (Welman et al: 2005, p.170) In the final analysis, the observation provided useful information about the sacred cave site include how the space is used, pilgrimaging, movement of material and people.

Observation was conducted face to face, assisted by sophisticated equipment such as digital tape recorder and video camera. Ethical issues with regard to sacredness of the sites were taken into consideration. Per their permission, the researcher was told which borders might be crossed, and what is either sacred or profane. Observation of some divine rituals such as invoking the ancestors, and ritual dances, *ukuthetha idlozi* was strictly prohibited.

3.6.2.1 Communication place against margin

Cave dwellers' communication was treated with a dignified manner and patience as main elements of observational research using the common language known to participants at both Motouleng and Nkonkomohi caves. Access to the sites without proper permission was avoided solely because the cave dwellers may not feel insecure, discriminated, resentful and demoralized. In other words, the researcher had to be at pains not to intrude on unwilling participants, and to adhere to requirements of those participants who made themselves available.

A good researcher is one who listens carefully to what is said. The researcher is participating in an event or an activity through active listening. Active listening is well defined by De Walt (2002: 76): it is to listen attentively, using casual facilitation techniques, making mental notes about the conversation. As one replays (in the mind) and recounts (in the field notes) conversation and events, many different details emerge.

One of the obstacles to academic investigation through communicating with the research participants is the dealing with expectations and actions raised by a previous researcher. Participants had been promised and sometimes even given remuneration by previous researchers, journalists and tourists in exchange for knowledge. Such participants had also trespassed on the sacred sites, disrespecting what had been secluded from the public eye.

3.5.2 2 Note taking

The researcher seeks to recover information on the cultural landscape of the past through, inter alia, note taking. du Plooy- Cilliers et al (2014: 183) there is a need to make detailed notes in field research, by making a detailed recording of the thoughts and feelings of the community that the researcher is studying. It is necessary to record and reflect on not only your emotions, but also your personal opinions, ideas, notions of the community.

Detailed field notes and transcripts of discussion between the researcher and research participants make it easier for the researcher to make sense of their experiences. Of course, it has greatly assisted in the process of data collection and identify possible recurring themes and patterns that develop within the cave dwellers being studied (du Plooy- Cilliers *et al.* 2014, p 183).

It was thus important for the researcher to keep careful notes of emotions and feelings they experience in order to avoid the risk of becoming emotionally involved with the group. This was done in order to establish whether the observation that one made during the research process was not affected by the emotions that the researcher experienced. This in turn has enabled the researcher to have a more objective viewpoint when the data is interpreted and presented (Ibid, 183).

To accomplish this task, the researcher has to develop special techniques. Ideally, the area of study has to be surveyed, in order to locate the places showing evidence of human habitation, and to locate the symbolic artefacts in sites, where they are engraving, illustrated, photographed, and mapped.

3.7 Data Collection

3.7.1 Fieldwork

Fieldwork research and data collection began over the past few years at both Mautse Valley and Motouleng caves. Much has been learned from the research fieldwork. First of all, the researcher had to learn to live and work with the diviner and spiritual healers, the church and traditional leaders. The fieldwork process was of assistance to the researcher that the research depends on the willingness of the cave dwellers to be observed and entry is restricted because people normally have good reasons to keep their identities and activities hidden.

When I first entered the cave, it was difficult to determine the various types of actor present. Observing various dress-types and garments, behaviour, demeanor, rituals, cultural identity, and other features attached to their practices, the researcher realized that various denominations, day-visitors, and patients dominated the area. For the purposes of this research, it was important to interact with all these actors: their common goal was maintaining the sacredness of the landscape.

I have noted that research participants or communities are more likely to be open and curious to accept an outsider at the beginning of the fieldwork. In such instances, the researcher has requested permission from the appropriate members of the group to gain access. I saw a need to be open about the research purpose and make it clear from the onsets that they are part of a research project. At the end, I successfully prevented what de Walt called refers to the fieldworker as either professional 'stranger-handlers' or 'deviants' (de Walt and de Walt, 2002:37).

3.7.2 Frequent personal visit

It is important to note that research fieldwork and data collection has occurred over the past five years both inside and outside the caves. The method of gathering data was conducted in various ways and at various sites and destinations. Based on the nature of data collection, frequent visits to individuals attached to a researched site were conducted. Personal visits were made to cave dwellers at various spots/locations within the caves. Such people included spiritual healers, traditional healers, African church leaders, and assorted individuals.

The most visited sites at Mautse Valley were *Maseeng*, *Lesedi la Modimo*, Temple, Monica's place, and the University sites. At Motouleng, usually the first site to visit is *Maseeng*. Here an old man calls, *Ngaka Ditaba- tsa-badimo*, usually a welcome to the site. Thereafter, the visitor is escorted to sites such as *Aletari*, *Bonkgono*, *Iseraele*, amongst others.

Personal visits were undertaken not only inside the cave but to cave owners, departments, local and traditional authorities. Prior to any visits, appointments were secured to an intended research participant by telephone or word of mouth. Thereafter, the researcher met up with pilgrims and visitors *en route*. Cave dwellers are always visited on a daily basis. The researcher had to submit food, candles, and matches to those who requested such items prior to my visit. Annual events are held, that are known by the community and religious churches at which all cave dwellers meet in a cave, be it the month of September or October, and Passover celebratory month be it March or April.

3.7.3 Tape recording

Tape recording is crucial when collecting data. After collecting data, using a tape recorder, interviews should be transcribed in order to analyse the data collected, using the preferred method of data analysis.

Interview cassettes were labelled and secured in a safe place for transcribing when the interviews had been completed. In some cases, tape recording goes hand in hand with note-taking in order to complement the recording of data. This caused challenges. In some cases, the interviewees' voices were not sufficiently audible owing to dancing and singing performed at the sites. In some cases, the interviewees simply spoke softly or too quickly. Sometimes they spoke a language unfamiliar to the researcher, for instance Sepedi, Setswana, or other languages that could not easily be translated.

3.7.4 Structure and unstructured interviews

An interview is one way of gathering data, and gives respondents the opportunity of expressing their thoughts and feelings. Its primary focus is to discover what is on someone's mind (Maharaj, 2005: 62). Interviews provide an interviewer with few guidelines – the interviewees have a substantial amount of freedom to express their opinions on issues which the researcher assumes to be important. During the course of the interview, there were additional questions and follow-up on issues which perhaps had not been anticipated and therefore not included in the questionnaire.

To eliminate selector bias, the research was conducted as both a structured and unstructured interview. It was also conducted amongst various African communities on pilgrimages to the sacred caves of the Eastern Free State. This included urban and rural communities, literate and illiterate people, the affluent and the indigent. Questionnaires were administered to various speakers of official indigenous languages, to ensure that the investigation was representative of the indigenous peoples of South Africa.

The questionnaires were prepared in the English language, which was used as the medium of written communication. Interviews were held in the language of the participants' choice. During the course of administering questionnaires, it was discovered that unstructured interviews do bear some fruit: participants were comfortable to express, albeit somewhat illogically, their way of thinking, revealing hidden data that may be classified as unhelpful to the study.

Since random sampling was used, the research was not restricted to one area. This made it easy to administer questionnaires in various places, receiving varied responses. The use of both structured and unstructured methods makes the interview a more flexible and adaptable data-gathering device. Consequently, the interview had a higher response rate in fieldwork pertaining to both illiterate and literate respondents.

3.7.5 Envisaged limitation and delimitation

The study has identified some possible constraints or limits in this study that are out of the researcher's control. It is important to note that there is a limit to the amount of information one has to collect within the given period of time. However, it cannot cause the scope of the research to be redefined. It takes time to accumulate the essential basic control over nature of the study that the researcher has no option but to visit the sacred sites in a wide range of environment and survive under difficult conditions such as rainfall and snow.

The method of data-capturing involves spending a considerable amount of time observing non-disruptive and unobtrusive activities. Time is spent face to face with participants and large amounts of contextual data may be obtained quickly and easily. During that time, data on non-verbal behaviour and communication may be retrieved; and access to immediate follow-up data collection is facilitated.

Irrespective of limitation and delimitation, the study has no sign of failure. This is the case, because the researcher, does not have total control over every condition within the scope of the study, it is necessary for the research study to encounter limitation. It will be discussed in detail within the concluding chapter, Chapter seven.

3.8 Data capturing and data editing

The computer was the key equipment used for data capturing and data editing. All information was manually entered into the computer. During data capturing, the researcher applied a detached and non-judgmental approach; and did not portray any indication that feelings were affected by the responses provided., nor whether he regarded or disregarded what was said or what occurred. Intricate statements and non-directive probes were frequently used to argue the information at the researcher's disposal. Statements and questions, such as: 'Tell me more', 'What else?' 'What do you think?' 'How do you react?' were posed. This information is likely to add to the richness and depth of the data already gained.

3.9 Usage of available data

Research cannot be conducted scientifically without first understanding the literature relevant to the field of study (Boote and Beile, 2005). A wide ranging literature review contributed to the formulation of the research problem, with questions asked providing a base for gap analysis in scientific research.

The narratives told with reference to sacred sites of the Eastern Free State are diverse in their content and context; however, they play a similar role in their effect on the structure of society: origins, tradition, culture, and religion associated with sacred spaces. These narratives are most impacted by the history of sites determined by the content of predominance and emphasis of African belief systems.

There are few records of the sites associated with sacredness along the Caledon River, traced back from the narrations of pre-history, stone-age and colonial historical dispossession of African people in South Africa. Elphick and Malherbe (1989) mention that Whites did not found the Cape Colony in an empty land. In 1652 Jan van Riebeeck set foot on the shores of the Cape, which indigenous people had occupied for centuries. This was viewed as the launch of the dominance of the Europeans over Blacks (p.3). Elphick and Malherbe's views are reflected in several chapters of the book, "*The Shaping of South African Society*" edited by Elphick and H Giliomee.

The Basotho are part of the greater south-eastern Bantu-language group. Originally, the Basotho consisted of one single group; however, in the course of time this group became divided. As mentioned by Aswegen (1990), this division, Tswana, Southern Sotho, and Northern Sotho, resulted in the Basotho having a complex group composition (p. 60). It is noted that, when chiefs and sub-chiefs were continuously locked in a power struggle, this affected even the neighbouring Basotho in Lesotho, who also suffered because of their raids (Aswegen, 1990: 62).

Aswegen (1990: 67) highlights several important events from the year 1800 that strongly influence the history of the interior, by citing the outbreak of *Mfecane/Difaqane*, increasing contact between the Black people and the Coloured, the White frontier communities who had gradually penetrated the area. The situation was exacerbated by the settlement of the Boers along the Caledon valley region from 1836. This soon gave rise to complicated frontier conflicts, and later opened the colonial borders (Aswegen, 1990: 252).

To account for the rise of Basotho kingdom, most studies have emphasised the character and skills of Moshoeshoe that enabled him to take advantage of *Difaqane* thus attracting and protecting his growing following until the end of his reign. Bardill and Cobbe (1985) explain the features that make Lesotho unique, tracing its history, the effects it has on its development; culturally, economically, socially, and politically. Bardill and Cobbe correctly concluded that Moshoeshoe's tenacious defense, his military strategy coupled with conciliatory gestures towards his foes, offered the best chance of his survival beyond the 1830s (p. 10).

'Stories of origin' of the Basotho people was conducted by MJ Pitso (2009) in his Master of Philosophy work, "The Story of the origin of the Sotho people of Qwaqwa". This work examines the history of Qwaqwa and its relationship between members of society that share the same beliefs, for example Christians, while 'mythical' stories are used to create bonds between all Sotho people. However, 'historical' stories draw clear lines between members of society and outsiders, thereby creating solidarity within society.

These findings are specific to the society of the Sotho people in QwaQwa, and cannot be generalized to other Sotho societies. However, the narratives and social structure of Pitso's (2009) study may be applied to other societies, including those of indigenous peoples. Coplan (2003: 983) found that pilgrims take advantage of these sites through the considerable movement of the Basotho from the pre-colonial roots in the conquered territory.

July (1998: 56)'s work gives coherence to both fact and hypothesis, thereby providing a balanced and intelligible account of the past from the beginning of African history. This harks back to Africans in the Ancient world, great migration coming from Europe, population explosion and the humanitarian revolution in Southern Africa.

This history, though mostly chronological, deals with themes that cut across time and place to furnish their own unity and consistency. Upheavals have periodically convulsed the savanna population even since the advent of Islam (July, 1998: 76). In essence, his work covers a 500-year interval of uncertain romance between Africa and Europe that has greatly influenced events on both continents.

In essence, what July (1998) narrated, given above, Machobane (2001) exposes in his article “*Basotho Religious beliefs and Western thought*”. Machobane (2001) tells of the remarkable mutual relationship of the two missionary sects and their policies towards Africans. Essentially, the European missionaries’ sects were seen as having declared war on the respective African cultures. Quite logically, Africans reacted through aggressive forms of cultural resistance, sometimes physical, and often in the form of passive resistance (2001, p 35).

In the end, the missionaries admitted that they were losing the cultural war. Christianity come to be perceived as a European-inspired epidemic (Ibid, p 39). Traditional healers combated it. Society took cover under the institution of initiation, in which the hearts of Basotho were given a spiritual shield against the epidemic.

Having interacted with key sources linking historical incidents and human interaction, the study is convinced that history is both a product and a source of social memory. Fentress and Wickham (1992) employ what is called a social memory. They argue that:

“Past or present, memory is everything, both tools and material that constitute our identity and provide the context for every thought and action are not only our own but are learned, borrowed and inherited- in part, and part of a common stock, constructed, sustained and transmitted by families, communities and cultures to which we belong” (p.1).

As Fentress and Wickham stated above, meaning of memory refers to past events and past experience, whether real or imaginary, and recalling the past experience and shared images of the historical past. Nevertheless, the bulk of their work is concerned with the public and social side of memory, remembering, ordering, and transmission of social memory. The debate about whether social memory is often selective, distorted, and inaccurate, will form part of the discussion in Chapter Five.

An insignificant number of studies have been conducted on sacred sites and adjunct belief systems. The Sunday Times newspaper of the 09 July 2000, for example, confirmed that people misconstrue the belief attached to sacred sites, connecting this with trespassing, stealing, land invasions, thus raising threats from the farm-owner to blow up the cave in Clarens. Responses and utterances from *sangomas* such as Mrs Bongiwe Dlamini concurred with Setiloane (1986), who said that advancing to caves is simply to answer the ancestor's call to worship and for purposes of initiation.

Eliade's work offers the basic narration of ritual performances, landscapes and sacredness. Carmichael (1994), in his text, "*Sacred sites, and sacred places*" gave an example of the Aboriginal people of Australia who were deeply concerned about threats, destruction, and access denial to sacred places. LaDuke (2006) explored in detail the multifaceted process of discovering that which is sacred, in his book, *Recovering the Sacred: The power of Naming and Claiming*. LaDuke's narrative documented the remarkable stories of indigenous communities whose tenacity and resilience had enabled them to reclaim their lands, resources, and their way of life after enduring centuries of incalculable loss.

LaDuke (2006: 13) affirmed that laws could ensure indigenous people's right to hold ceremonies; laws could not protect the places where many of these rituals take place. Understanding the complexity of these belief systems, LaDuke (2006: 15) pointed out that sacred sites are fully connected to the understanding of a spiritual foundation that is the relationship of people to their land. Despite these centuries of spiritual challenges to sacred sites, pilgrims continued to express gratitude to the Creator in their prayers, songs, performances, and understanding of the sacredness of the land.

Besides the literature on pilgrims already referred to, the proponents and their ideas will be used by the researcher in the analysis and interpretation of data, include the parameters set by Tim Ingold's work on dwellings, landscapes and animacy (2000, 2006, and 2011); Nurit Bird-David's (1999), reformation of animism; Ian Hodder's (2012) work on entanglements; and the ideas of absence and presence.

The study further seeks to provide general views of landscape and the use of landscape. It will explore the meaning imputed by local people to their cultural and physical surroundings by exploring the way in which the sites under investigation are integrated (or not) within the cultural and religious landscapes of user communities and individuals. Such views are incorporated conceptually into cultural landscapes that generates ideas of sacredness, avoidance, and worship.

The concept of landscape is frequently applied by anthropologists to casually describe settings pertinent to ethnography (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003: 16). Many anthropologists have attempted to problematise the definition of a landscape. Hirsch (1995:1) defines landscape as developing from and involving a tension between idealised or imagined settings, which he called the foreground of everyday, real, and ordinary life. Utilising this framework, Hirsch (1995:15) explores comparable foreground-background elements of landscape attached to complexities of culture and representation. Hirsch (1995:15) also attempted to activate a relationship with background to overcome everyday struggles.

The argument of Lovell (1998:7) focuses on the construction of landscape as a primary source of involvement for the establishment of human belonging and emplacement. In his broader essay, Lovell (1998:7) titled the landscape as locality, turning landscape into places by human action. Lovell (1998:7) emphasised the way in which landscape was inscribed onto bodies by positioning human within nature and nature within society. This is accomplished by stressing the political dimension of the appropriation of landscape (Ibid, 9). In simplest terms, landscape has been used to refer to the meaning imputed by local people to their cultural and physical surroundings.

There is always a correlation between the landscape and space as the place where the natural and cultural orders of things converge. In order to promote a key understanding of local concepts of 'place and identity', symbolic spaces used by cave dwellers as shrines express African belief systems. It is necessary to present any ethnography of African community as representing space. What has referred to as representation of space are the body, house, village, land, and graveyard, and so on. This ties together the boundaries of body and landscape within the representation of space, time.

Low and Lawrence-Zuniga (2003: 217) add that sacred caves of *Motouleng* and *Nkonkomohi* provide a pertinent and interesting example of landscape attachment to place; and recording of myth and history of the spaces. They do not contest boundaries between the living and the dead, between places and conflicting interests of various groups.

Archem (1986:24) also connects the indigenous sites with the powerful ancestral spirits. Berglund's views, in his book, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism*, appropriately argued that sacred sites possess certain symbols, power of ancestors over the living, initiation, and divination. Bujo's (1992) book, *African Theology in its Social Context*, is a testimony to the above that deals with faith, cultures, life as a unity, and cults of the ancestors.

The notion of holy places was frequently used by Victor Turner (1969), whose writings were heavily influenced by Eliade's work. Eliade (1963: 65) argued that sacred sites are sacred spaces which allow a direct or mediated contact with the divine. From there the idea of profane or sacred space emanated. Coleman (2002: 361), on the other hand, maintained that sacred sites or pilgrim's sites should not understood as bounded or fixed, but "as contexts for dynamic historical and ritual fields of practice".

On the other hand, there are also views contrary to the above that sites are embedded with specific meaning. For example, Tilley (1994:9) argued that the space is literally nothingness, a simple surface for action, and lacking in depth. Such a view obviously denies the ontology of sacred sites and deprives them of intrinsic meaning.

The implication of the above argument is that activities, events, and spaces are not conceptually and physically separated from one another, and that they are contingently related. This shows that the meaning of the sacred spaces always involves a subjective dimension, symbolic construction, and a relationship created between actors and places.

Thus far, it has been accepted that scholars are in agreement about the definition of sacred sites or sacredness. The fact of the matter is that the definition of sacred sites is not as simple as it may seem at first glance. The study will, therefore, also involve the scholarly debate pertaining to sacred sites and sacredness as part of the landscape of the sites.

Coplan (2003) came up with descriptive survey of the number of sacred sites present in the Eastern Free State. He stated that there is a chain of sacred sites stretching from the North of Lesotho along the Caledon River border in the south. He pointed out that,

“each of these sites is a sacred ritual shrine to miracle made visible by the ancestors, located in a high shallow cave near the stream..... These entire shrines are found on white-owned farms in a Free State” p.981

Assmann (2006) added to the discussion of religion and cultural memory in detail, stating that memory bridges the gap between then and now. Assmann (2006: 31) described the two concepts ‘invisible religion and cultural memory’ as not merely an abstract function of specific religious systems but existing within a given culture-validating framework of meaning for the various fields of cultural practice, communication and reflection. Moore and Whelan (2007) brought forward sub-themes relating to new perspectives on the cultural landscape in their book. *‘Heritage, Memory and Politics of Identity’*.

Sources from various scholars pertaining to pilgrimages range from its definition, elements of pilgrimages, types of journey, theories of movement associated with sacred place and religion has been consulted. The classic work by Victor Turner (1978) *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian culture* as well as *Pilgrimage in the Hindu tradition: A case of west Bengal (Morinis 1984)*; *Pilgrims of the Andes: Religious cults in Cisco and Permanent pilgrims* describe the journey of reverence by the pilgrimages to the sacred sites.

The role of pilgrimages in the lives of West African Muslims in Sudan (Yamba 1995) brings up the important foundational work of pilgrimages. Leslie Nthoi's (2006) book '*Contesting Sacred Space: A pilgrimage study of Mwali cult of Southern Africa*' is a pioneering work on Southern African pilgrimages.

An extensive narration of pilgrimages in South Africa, specifically in the Free State province, has culminated in the research output from Shirley du Plooy's unpublished PhD thesis titled, "*Pilgrimage to sacred sites in the Eastern Free State*". Du Plooy (2016) explored the pilgrimage phenomenon, pilgrims and pilgrimages as motivating factors for their journey. In camera, du Plooy (2016) tied up the loose ends for pilgrimages to the Eastern Free State, by examining three domains: landscapes, dreamscapes, and personscapes (du Plooy, 2016: 245).

The above-mentioned research set the tone by holistically explaining the reasons for undergoing pilgrimages, elements constituting pilgrimages and types of journey, and motivations for the journey. What has been omitted, amongst others aspects, is the protest, contestation, and identity construction emanating from the sacred or pilgrimage sites.

The history and importance of *Motouleng, Mautse and Mantsopa* caves (Eastern Free State, SA) for different religious persuasions, indigenous knowledge and ancestral veneration of Africans and traditional healers, will be investigated apropos of the following: for what reasons sacred sites are exemplifications of African indigenous religion; and why they form locations of cultural and spiritual expression.

The report from Dreyer (2007:2) indicated that the historical and cultural significance of the cave and surroundings should not be endangered, recommending that the whole region should be handled with caution. Mensele's unpublished thesis (2011) titled '*A study of Rituals performed at two sacred sites in the Eastern Free State*', solely discussed the ritual performances which occurred at the sacred cave sites. Her study highlighted the classification of rituals and the use of local language as modes of typifying different rituals performances.

Brown (2009) edited a book *Religion and Spirituality in South Africa: New perspectives* that emerged out of an interdisciplinary research project on Religion and Spirituality in a postcolonial Context. Most of the contributory authors dwelt mainly on the place and role of religion and spirituality in modes of individual identification and belief, as well as structure and functioning of public spheres of governance and policy-making. Authors also engaged with the challenge of accounting for the range and power of religious/ spiritual discourses that run through individual and communal identification.

To explore the Eastern Free State, but particularly the Mohokare (Caledon) Valley, the researcher relied on classic ethnographic texts and historical sources. These include the works of missiologists such as Thomas Arbousset *Excursion Casalis, The Basothos* (1997) and Fred Ellenberger's *History of the Basotho* (1997). The more recent works by Hugh Ashton (1967) on the Basotho; Stephan Gill's (1993) *A short history of Lesotho*; and Robin Well's (1994) *An introduction to the music of Basotho*, will contribute to historical narration on the sacred sites.

The available literature for the original inhabitants of the area in historical times was consulted. The rock art and place names in the region are evidence of the San presence (Gill, 1997: 2, 7, 23; Ellenberger, 1992:11; Ellof 1980:1; Ashton 1952: 2). According to Gill (1997:23), the first Sotho groups to inhabit the area were the Fokeng (c 1600 AD), followed by *Bakoena* groupings (north-eastern Free State), and the Sotho-influenced Nguni-speaking groups (Petla, Polane, and the Phuthi) in the south-central Lowland areas of the present-day Lesotho. Other perspectives claimed that it was the Phetla, followed by the Polane, and the Phuthi of the Nguni descent, who were the first Bantu-speaking groups to settle in the Caledon area.

The above evidence is not disputed. It is, however, extended to offer a clearer perspective when considering this flow of peoples into the Mohokare area, the MaPolane's trek to the Caledon. Kriel (1976: 35) interpreted his historical views that the migration of the Basotho took about 200 years often absorbing individual and smaller groups of other interior inhabitants into their Sotho chiefdoms. They were then distributed over most of plateaux of South Africa.

Blain and Wallis's (2004) article delves into much on the sacred sites and contested rites or rights by examining physical, spiritual, and interpretative engagement of today's pagans with sacred sites, and theories of 'sacredness'. It explores the implication of pagan engagements with the sites for varying purposes. Examples of pagans portrayed by Blain and Wallis (2004: 328) were those attending the Avebury and Stonehenge sites of Wiltshire. This demonstrated that pagan engagement with sacred sites are not only widely dispersed, but also that heritage management has not been entirely neglected.

Anderson (1992) attempted to present a sympathetic and yet objective appraisal of what has become one of the fastest-growing church movements, globally, the African Pentecostal Churches known as *abazalwane*. Sub-themes of his work deals with important characteristics and the history of the African Pentecostalism in South Africa. His case study was set in Soshanguve township, North of Pretoria. Anderson (1992) concluded his work by relating his observations and research to other African churches, including pilgrimages of the African Pentecostal churches to the sacred caves of the Eastern Free State.

Mbiti's (1986) book, titled "*Bible and Theology in African Christianity*" examines the phenomenon of new Christianity in Africa by tackling forms of Christian faith, combining certain characteristics of apostolic Christianity with realities of African life in the present (1986: 176). Mbiti (1986) broadly explains various forms of Christianity, while leaning heavily on the religious culture and background of African peoples, yet seeking and find legitimisation in the Bible.

As the conversation of Christianity spread across Africa, theologians began to construct theology pertaining to Christ all over again; looking at the reality of his resurrection, reflecting scripture, and engaging in Christian worship and ministry. Stinton's (2015) edited work titled "*African Theology on the way: current conversations*" defines African theology broadly, tracing its development and outlining its sources and methodologies. Specific issues of doctrines of God, Christology, the cross, and salvation have been examined from the African perspective.

Stinton's present volume reflects both continuity with John Parratt works "*A reader in African Christian Theology*" edited in 1987, and "*A reader in African Theology*" edited in 1997, offered further innovations in theological expressions for Africans.

The relationship between religion and human rights is both problematic and unavoidable in all parts of the world. As religion is broadly defined to include various traditional, cultural, and customary institutions and practices, Lerner (2000) insisted that religion was a formidable force for violence, repression, and chauvinism of untold dimensions. Then, his book "*Religion, Beliefs, and International Human Rights*" viewed religion not only as a natural ally in the global struggle for human rights, but as a universal statement of the good life and good society.

Lerner (2000) provides an authoritative distillation and analysis of modern international norms on religion rights and liberties, with particular attention to modern controversies over religion and racial discrimination, genocide, and group libel, proselytising and conversion, and religious group rights, and their limits.

Having considered these various perspectives from both African and non-African writers, more than fifty secondary sources have been examined. and there are genuine reasons to aggrandize this research include the sacredness of the cave, and African belief systems in general. It is against this background that the current research work has not been previously investigated and thoroughly explored.

Sources such as oral testimony, interviews, documentaries, and photographs will complement the literature review. Frequent records of ritual performances, initiation, divination, and healing processes has been used to cross-check the hypotheses generated. This has provided a better understanding of the context.

3.10 Data analysis

The research has used the qualitative data analysis by progressing through the initial description of the data, connecting it to new concepts, and providing the basis for a fresh description. This research has examined approaches to how data may be analysed, looking particularly at content analysis.

The data has been analysed thematically, focusing on examining themes within data. Thematic analysis seeks to understand participants' subjective realities through personal interpretations of their lived experiences and the meanings they attach to these experiences.

Gray (2009) pointed out that analysis begins while the interviews are still underway; and eventually the researcher can redesign the questions to focus on central themes as the interview continues (p.36). In the final analysis, the researcher has integrated the themes and concepts into a theory that offers an accurate, detailed interpretation of the research arena.

The analysis is complete when the researcher may share with others what has been interpreted, contributing to policymaking, theories, and the understanding of the social and political world (Mountain, 2001: 198). The above process was assisted by making use of computer-aided software for the analysis of qualitative data. In return, Ruben and Ruben (1995: 89) stated that the management of textual data, storage, and retrieval of information is possible.

3.11 Ethical considerations

The proposed study is in accordance with ethical standards and principles set out in the university policy, and to ensure compliance with the national regulatory framework. The researcher is aware of the ethical aspects of the research, relating to various communities under research or pilgrimages to the sacred caves of the Eastern Free State. In particular, the researcher undertakes to:

- Respect the dignity, safety, anonymity, and confidentiality of the research participants, including the graffiti writers, unless express written permission is given to the contrary.
- Consider and be sensitive to different cultures, languages, beliefs, perceptions, and customs of persons who participate in or are affected by this research
- Acknowledge and attribute to others the ideas, designs and writings that are not original
- Reference the research work accurately, according to the selected referencing guide, complying with copyright requirements, and seeking the necessary permission, where required.
- Conduct the research and produce the thesis unaided, subject to normal supervisory and collegial assistance
- Disclose to the relevant supervisors, should circumstances arise that impact upon ethical obligations. Appropriate action will then be taken in terms of the relevant university policy

3.11.1 Informed content

The study acknowledges the sacredness of the site and the meaning it possesses for the cave community. Entering the sites requires ancestral permission from both known and unknown 'site possessors'. In essence, no one has to ask permission to enter a site. It is an individual obligation to communicate with the site's ancestral spirits through silence, offerings, prayer, and burning of *impempe* (incense).

As time passed, the researchers had the opportunity of engaging with the sacredness of various features within the sites, that is, borders, common practices, symbols of respect, acceptable dress codes, coins, inter alia. Although cameras, and tape recorders and video cameras are not permitted in the cave owing to the secrecy of certain activities, rituals, and performances, such as invoking of the ancestors, schools -of circumcision, amongst other practices, it is only under strict monitoring that an individual may infiltrate such a sacred space by using technological media researching.

3.11.2 Negotiating for entry and access

Gaining entry to a field site and beginning the process of building rapport can be a daunting experience in this setting. However, it is imperative to make the research nature of the relationship clear and to request a formal research permit well in advance. The cave setting might wish to display some sort of introduction to cave dwellers in the form of letters from institutions or organisation. The researcher acknowledged that setting by identifying local leaders, group leaders, gatekeepers and the farm owner, who represent the community in which the research was to taken place, asking permission to work in the community and on to their site.

The research into the sacred landscape of the spiritual and cultural identity is sensitive. The contexts and settings are sensitive and unique The ethnic identification of the researcher created an easy opportunity of accessing this emotionally embedded phenomenon. However, there were also serious ethical issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability of the data. This threat to validity was, however, anticipated, and taken care of methodologically.

3.11.3 Respect for privacy of research participant

The sacred caves of the Eastern Free State offer a complex degree of accessibility. It was extremely difficult to approach the cave dwellers, let alone to participate in any activities or to record any performances. It is taken for granted that the privacy of the participants must be respected.

Previous researchers, such as media representatives, and non- governmental organisations have extracted knowledge from the locals without rendering anything in return. Some have even made empty promises, such as financial aid or attending to their grievances. At present, therefore, these folk hesitate to participate in any research activity or investigation.

3.12 Reflections

It is necessary to conclude this chapter by offering a full picture of an analysis of quality of data collected, by highlighting some shortcomings, limitations, and gaps in the data.

The major weakness of this method is bias, in that it is open to misinterpretation, and ethical dilemma; procedures are not as strictly formalized, while the scope is more likely to be undefined and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted (Mouton and Marais, 1990, p. 155). There may be danger or discomfort for the researcher should tensions run high. The use of tape recorders, video cameras, and other technological equipment aroused discomfort during the data collection. This may lead to omission of relevant data and distortion of response. These weaknesses have ethical implications for the research.

Some topics were regarded as exclusive and unavailable to the public: participants were not in a position to disclose such information to the researcher. Questions asked on these topics may result in prospective participants' refusal to participate. Specific questions falling into these categories include those on interaction with the ancestors, whether or not one believed in ancestral spirits.

It is important to note that the interviewer's methods overlapped making the questioning time consuming. It was also difficult to obtain a suitable sample size: the researcher as to rely on those interviewed to recommend possible candidates for interviewing. As the proceeding is between the respondent and the divine interaction, it is sometimes difficult to be given an explanation of certain actions taking place in such a way. For some, silence is maintained throughout one's presence in the sacred landscape.

This chapter has fully described the procedures of the research under investigation. Tools and processes relating to data collection, such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and field observations, types of data gathering, and techniques used to capture empirical material, have received attention. The data analysis and interpretation processes, as related to this study, were also explained. This chapter will not be complete without looking at ethical issues concerning the research participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORETICAL BASIS FOR ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

After discussing the historical background and social context of sacred sites of the Eastern Free State, it is important to look at the religious beliefs of the individuals making pilgrimages to these areas. Along the Caledon River, as all over South Africa, there is a huge variety of religions to which individuals subscribe. Some of these include what Pitso (2009: 55) termed 'traditional' beliefs, African regional beliefs, Islam, Christianity, and the Hare Krishna religion, amongst others.

It should be noted that other religions, such as Islam and Hare Krishna, will not be included, no participant representing these religions. This, of course, means a limited representativeness in the area of religion. Data gathered from informants will be useful in determining the relationship between religion, myth and history.

The study adopts the African religion, landscape, and social identity theories, to elucidate the indigenous religious practices of the users of the three selected sacred sites of the Eastern Free State. The study has firstly utilised the African religion as the theoretical framework by which to understand activities, patterns and symbolic operational intricacies found in the sacred sites. A brief account of general ideas about the African religion in relation to the significance of sacred spaces will form an academic basis of the study.

The author must delve in great detail into ethnographic views of landscape and space. This should be done systematically, and in such a manner that the study, at a later stage, engages with these views when interpreting the research results. Of course, these theories will be imperative for real theoretical claims for this study

Currently, identity has become a more discursive concept, in other words, different sets of discourses define identity. Selected sources that perceived and narrated notions of identity have been discussed. Furthermore, the study hoped to differentiate the process by which categorization and segregation came into operation, stemming from racial schema in the service of colonialism.

Selected views about African religion, which indicate how important geographical spaces are to this religion, have been discussed, in which African religion is linked to a religious geography. The religion is also linked to dimensions of different spaces, in particular, sacred spaces, such as rocks/stones, trees, rivers, mountains, pools, springs, and caves. Hubert (1995), Cox (1992) and Eliade (1959) agreed that sacred spaces were attached to a particular symbolism and meaning of a particular culture or religion. This is so because they carry the whole range of cultic practices, human behaviour, and sets of beliefs connected to a non-empirical world.

4.2 General Observations about African Religions

Thorpe's introductory chapter closely interwove Africa with African culture, and African traditional religion; religion and culture being two sides of the same coin, both needing serious attention and inquiry (Thorpe, 1991:1). The author argued that, since the African religion is described as a primitive religion, there are no sacred written scriptures about it; and no one may speak of either orthodoxy or heresy in this regard.

Taylor (1963:35-40) suggested that African people are inclined to objectify attitudes and feelings, so that what happens inside a person spills out to touch not only other people, but even the environment as well. His argument was based on the religious principle of the African traditional religion that is permeated by an awareness of the spiritual and invisible dimension of life, which fosters harmony and well-being.

Setiloane's (1986) contributory work to African traditional religion defines African worship in a holistic approach. He argued that the word worship does not convey an authentic meaning, as it simply denotes 'service', which people perform for their ancestors. Initially, Berglund coined the term *ukuthetha idlozi*, simplifying the actual communication occurring between the person and *Badimo* or *Amadlozi* (Berglund, 1979: 35). That mutual relationship and respect Setiloane referred to, became a process which continued even after death.

Setiloane (1986:17) acknowledged that the concept of *Amadlozi* or *Badimo*, within the African religious practices, has been wrongly understood right from the outset. In his African religious debates, the above-mentioned scholar accepted the term 'living dead' as a working definition of the ancestors. He strongly believed that ancestors are real people ordained as divine. By living death, he meant that ancestors are not dead, but still live with people on this world as guides to morality and social order (Ibid, 21). Communication with the living dead occurs through personal contact.

Murray's work on ritual practices and beliefs recognised the supreme being as *Modimo* (1980: 123). He described this being as closely associated with the natural phenomena, the essence of mystery that evokes a sense of awe (Ibid, p 123). Concurring with Setiloane, Murray said that *Modimo* represents the ultimate source of man's well-being. However, he is not directly involved in the affairs of the living through *Badimo, the ancestors*. The most common manifestation of the *Badimo* is transmission by way of dreams.

To understand the religious ethos of African religion, Mbiti (1989: 88) considered the narration of spiritual beings, spirits and the living-dead. It is not the prerogative of this work to dwell at length on these concepts. However, Mbiti's undeniable claim is that spirits are a reality (Ibid: 89).

Africans do associate the African religion with ancestral beliefs. Richards Norman (2011: 105) argues that the existence of God play some kind of explanatory role in people's understanding of reality. Religions claim to explain not only how the universe came into existence and continues to operate, but also why human beings understand and respond to the claims (Ibid, 2011: 106).

4.2.1 Conceptual understanding of African Religion to Supreme Being

Machaba (2004:64) stated that the worship of a Supreme Being amongst Africans, is an old practice that cannot be traced with accuracy. It is indeed correct to say that, before the arrival of the White people in South Africa, Africans were already acknowledging the existence of a Supreme Being known as, *uMvelinqangi*¹, *UNkulunkulu*², *Modimo*³, inter alia, to whom they owed their existence. Setiloane (1985) offered an overlooked reason for Africans deciding to accept Western religion. He said that the message was first heard as a confirmation of the values and principles of *Botho-Ubuntu* (Setiloane, 1985, p 40).

The values and principle of Botho-Ubuntu were taught, aspired to, and striven for in the African traditional world-view:

“For they did have a strong sense of moral equity concerning the behaviour of man as he lived with others. It is this sense of moral equity they drew from when they condemned the evil they saw among themselves by declaring of the perpetrator: *"Ha se Motho"* (he is no man!)” (Ibid, p. 41)

When the White people arrived in Africa, Setiloane (1985) stated that they found African people living in groups, bound together by lineage and language and a common origin (1985, p 45). These groups they called "tribes". At the head of each group administering its laws, customs, and feelings of the African people, was a tribal leader. We shall attempt to show that Africans' attitudes to civil authority are indeed deep seated, emanating from their African cultural background. This does not necessarily mean to say they are not "Christian".

¹ Referred by Berglund (1976) to the Lord- of-the-Sky as translated in isiZulu terms as *iNkosi yaphezulu* or *iNkosi yezulu*

²This is a praise-name of the Lord of the Sky, referring to origin and creation, encompassing an atmosphere of antiquity, age and seniority

³ *Modimo* - a Sesotho word referring to the Creator

Traditionally, indigenous people had their own religion; however, the majority of missionaries deemed the indigenous folk heathen. Credo Mutwa's (1966) book titled '*Africa is my Witness*' portrayed the beliefs of the indigenous people in South Africa and beyond. Indigenous people do believe that a Supreme Being is always watching them, protecting them, healing them and responsible for providing them with supernatural things in the universe (1966: 342). Credo Mutwa (1966) narrated how the Black people show their gratitude to God when their prayers have been granted; they come dancing before God, clapping hands and beating the drums (Ibid, 343). In a nutshell, they thank the God of all their ancestors, the chief of the skies and the earth.

The above was concluded by Elizabeth Isichei (2004) who devoted her book on the history of religious traditions of Africa, concentrating on the traditional religion of West and East Africa. She argued that the historical writings about religion in Africa tended to be dominated by books on Christianity and Islam at the expense of Africa's many "traditional" religions (2004; 4). The author described all the changing faces of traditional religion that are informed by divinities, ancestors as divinities, ritual and divination, mythology, and proverbial wisdom.

4.2.2 Interaction between geographical space and African religion

Sacred sites are an important component of local people's culture, and history. They are what Nyangila (2012: 351) affirmed, serving as places at which to appease the spirits in the event of calamities, sacrificing for rain, peace-making, and conducting certain traditional rites.

In this context, Nyangila's (2012:351) remarks contributed to a definition of sacred sites. He refers to:

"a specific areas believed by local people to be traditional 'holy' and associated with supernatural powers, comes in different forms, including sacred lakes, rivers, mountains, hills, caves and forestry, trees and open grounds" (Ibid, 352).

Then, the broad overview of sacredness of the sites carries with it a whole range of rules and regulation regarding people's behaviour, spirits of the ancestors and sacred landscape (Carmichael et al: 1994, p. 8). The loss of these sacred land is perceived not only as a material loss but as a spiritual deprivation. Protesting issues raised by cave dwellers amongst other, denying access, weaken respect, safeguarding sacred space is detrimental to the continuation of African religious practices

4.2.2.1 Sacred space

The word sacred has been defined by biblical scholars and anthropologists in attempting to provide meanings and scientific understanding of the idea of sacred and sacredness. Hubert, Cox and Eliade (1959) are in agreement that sacred sites hold within themselves sacredness that is venerated and attached to a particular meaning. Sacredness makes use of symbols of a particular culture or religion, carrying the whole range of cultic practices, human behaviour, and sets of beliefs connected to the non-empirical world.

Eliade (1959:11) suggests that man becomes aware of sacredness because it manifests itself. Cox (1992) added that the word becoming aware corresponds to what he defined as 'faith' in his book '*Expressing the sacred*'. This generally meant that an object was sacred because it had been embedded by sacredness.

Lovell's (1989:2) argument concurs with Eliade, that sacred spaces connect the past with the present or the living within the sacred sites. Alluding to the above, sacred spaces are not chosen by man. Such spaces are discovered by mystical powers and reveal themselves to man. An alternative view was portrayed by Carmichael (1994:17). In his argument about sacredness, he utters that sacred sites are holy places, always treated with a particular respect. He associated sacred space with landscape and living figures because that is where life evolved, and where it will end.

Eliade (1959: 367) furthermore averred that sacred spaces are always part of the complexity of things from the sacred landscape. For example, the researcher refers to a Bolivian tribe that reconnected with their ancestors by returning to the indigenous sites associated with ancestral spirits and forces. Simply by entering the space, the landscape enables an individual to have a share in the power to hold communion with the sacredness. In such a belief, it is paramount important that sacred sites must be treated with proper respect.

The word sacred is stranger to cave dwellers than the word portrayed in local meaning and understanding. Mokoena's (interviewed, 2004) utterances and understanding of the sacred cave represents closely way the locals define it. There is no obvious common definition of sacredness in African vocabulary. Words such as '*ke li haha le halalela*' (the glamorous cave) '*le nale modimo*' (it has an ancestry appearance), '*sebaka sa di piri*' (sacred site) attempt to follow a common consensus in their working understanding of the site.

Mbiti (1991) argues that an important and distinctive aspect of African indigenous religion covers religious objects and places which people have set apart as being holy or sacred (1991, p 11). They are not commonly used except for a particular purpose. My conclusion is made that, sacred sites of the Eastern Free State, cave sites are not only of places where the ancestors reside, but where ancestor veneration and ancestor involvement are experienced at different levels.

4.2.2.2 Ancestors and ancestral worship

Mbiti's account defines *Badimo* or *Amadlozi* as the real authority figure who maintain the norms of social action, causing trouble when they are not obeyed. By contrast, Magesa (1997) argued that ancestors are part and parcel of the family in the same relationship that of father as father, mother as mother, sister as sister and so- on (Magesa, 1997:48).

The African belief and its operating is that of the presence meaning that ancestors are not departed but still lives with us. Ancestral belief and role continues to influence life of the people and erstwhile communities on earth. The presence of the dead is assumed and invoked, when the life of the individual, family, or tribe, is in threatened with danger.

Magesa (1997) brings a new dimension to the meaning of ancestors in his book titled "*African Religion*". He stated that all life and power in existence flows from God and from his right. God has also granted ancestors a qualitatively more powerful life force over his people (1997, p. 47). Relating to ancestral function, Setiloane relates ancestors as an agent of *Modimo* (God), and their role are to ensure good ordering of social relationships among the living, and the fertility and well-being of men and their livestock (Setiloane, 1976, p. 65).

Reading from the above, ancestors reside with African people as a core foundation of a particular clan or tribe. They are viewed as pristine men and women who originated from a particular clan or ethnic group, and who provide people with their names. They form a chain through which the forces of the elders exercise their vitalizing influence on the living generation.

Setiloane (1986) acknowledged that the concept of Amadlozi or Badimo has been wrongly understood rightly from the outset (p. 17). In his African religious debates, Setiloane (1986) accepted the word *living-dead* as a working definition of the ancestors. He strongly believed that ancestors are real people ordained with divinity. By living- dead, he meant that ancestors are not dead but still live with people in this world to provide guidance on morality and social order (Ibid, 18). The way of communication with the living dead is through person-to-spirit contact.

Ancestral worship derives from the African traditional religion assuming a central role in illustrating any African devotion and faith. An anthropological view presented by Kertzer (1988) pointed out that there is an uncertainty in authenticating the power held by the ancestral spirit. African society is endowed with a divine mission of sharing certain attributes within African religion (p.37). Emanating from the above argument,

there should be no doubt about the importance of the site, religious beliefs and ancestral powers.

Furthermore, Setiloane (1986:25) put into context an action attached to any ritual practices portrayed in Setswana language as “*Re direla Badimo*”. The above concept illustrates the holistic activities that transpire when people provide all necessities of life to *Badimo*, such as food, clothes, drinks and offering, rituals, amongst other items. The African’s life cycle is not limited to the physical world but is also linked to the supernatural world. In essence, Africans do believe that the process of dying is never completed.

4.3 Theoretical exploration of landscape and space

This study provides a theoretical overview of perspectives on landscape. It is only afterwards that study does explore the way in which the sites under investigation are integrated (or not) within the cultural and religious landscapes of user communities and individuals. This landscape arises as part of a way of life and attached to memories. Hirsch (1995: 1) referred to the attaching of meaning to landscape as imputed by local people in their cultural and physical surroundings. However, indigenous people define landscape differently, as arising from a particular experience or interest (Ibid, 1995, p. 1).

The concept of landscape is frequently used by anthropologists to casually describe settings pertinent to ethnography (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003: 16). Many anthropologists attempted to problematise the definition of landscape. Hirsch (1995: 2) defines landscape as developing from and involving a tension between idealised or imagined settings, which he calls backgrounds against the foreground of every, real, and ordinary life. Using this framework, Hirsch explores comparable foreground-background elements of landscape in relation to religion and cultures, in order to consolidate the relationship amongst these concepts.

The argument of Lovell (1998:7) has focused on the construction of landscape as a primary source of involvement for the establishment of human belonging and emplacement. In his broader essay, Lovell (1998:7) titled the landscape 'locality' in which he turned landscape into places derived by human action.

The researcher emphasised that landscape inscribed onto bodies by positioning human within nature and nature within society by stressing the political dimension of the appropriation of landscape. In simplest terms, landscape has been used to refer to the meaning imputed by local people to their cultural and physical surroundings.

There is a correlation between the landscape and space as the place in which the natural and cultural order of things converge. In order to promote a key understanding of local concepts of 'place and identity, symbolic spaces are used in cave dwellers shrines' to express community belonging attachment to the site. It is necessary to present an ethnography of African community representation space. What is referred to as representative spaces are the body, house, village, land, graveyard, and so on. these entities tie together the body and the landscape with the representation of time and space.

Human experience of place, meaning and structure of intentionality is central to any understanding of place. Without places, there can be no spaces as centres of activity, human significance, and emotional attachment. The meaning of place is grounded in existential or lived consciousness of such. Places are always far more than points or locations, because they have distinctive meanings and values for personal and cultural identity. As a result, cave dwellers live out their lives in places and have a sense of attachment to sacred sites.

Mbiti (1989: 26) argued that Africans are tied to the land not only because the land provides them with the roots of their existence. It also binds them mystically to their departed. According to Mbiti (1989), people must be allowed to walk to the graves of their forefathers. Remove them from the land is tantamount to an act of great injustice to the spiritual world. This study will attempt to contribute to explication of the spiritual world that plays an important role in African life.

4.3.1 Symbolic locality of sacred space

Powerful meaning is found in the way in which the symbolic locality of the site contributes to the specialness of a place. Each place has a unique power to stir the hearts and minds of a particular tradition and religion. Swan (1993: 321) mentioned sacred spaces as the places visited by pilgrims, who leave behind a gift for others to share in the place.

Places which are held sacred vary immensely in their nature and in their reasons for being valued. The physical part of the site offers powerful patterns of nature that draw Africans into an awareness of primal forces. Truly, human action does not dominate in these places; however, power and dreams convey the attaining of individual experiences of the depth of knowing.

Human beings have created various cultural spaces and time systems in order to maintain their spiritual relationship with the universe. These landscapes and symbols are clearly visible, with distinct shapes, sizes, features, idols, and immovable cultural items depicted in painting, rivers, dance, and poems from primitive times. Many volcanic caves and mountains around the world are spectacular (Swan, 1993: 335), whether symmetrical, conical-shaped and curving, with dramatic lines. These unique features provide a backdrop to the spirit of the place.

4.3.2 Power of the space

Sacredness embedded in places forms an interesting topic. Memories that implicate people and events are held in such places. It is an undisputed fact that the relationship between the people and their surroundings entails more than attaching meaning to a sacred space. Its attachment extends beyond physical settings to include personal, social, and cosmological spaces holding emergent qualities that are activated during rituals events.

The precise nature of the territorial bond and connection between the cosmology and the sociocultural in particular, the relationship between the idea of territory and practice of tenure remains, however, largely unexplored. Each dwelling group is associated with a bounded sacred landscape: a specific, ancestral birth place.

This place is conceived as a dwelling of the ancestors, and as a home for all departed souls and deceased people. The dwelling group also portrays what is described as sacred space properties. These are also referred to as intangible ritual material (ornaments, musical instruments), sacred substances (candles, snuff, tobacco, etc.), and intangible spiritual wealth, such as chants, songs, prayers and dances.

The power and spirit of the place may be held to reside in a landscape, therefore, the place acts dialectically in creating the people who are residing at that place. These qualities of locales and landscapes give rise to a feeling of belonging and rootedness when one enters the sacred space.

Through space, history is crystallized in each particular place, community, and family, and is engendered by time. It is therefore always actual and synchronic. Places amongst the African community are reproducible and allow for the repetition of social relationships (Lovell, 1998:68). Therefore, landscapes became bodies of memory, mapping out places of belonging in the intertwined processes of individual and societal birthing, growth, and history.

Besides the power of the place, there is a pervasive spiritual element in the invisible world that influences human life. Such places have spirits particular to human spirits. These are spirits of the dead who have passed out of the memory of the living. Mageza (1997: 50) mentioned that spirits usually dwell in the air as 'spirit[s] of the above' and spirits dwell on earth as 'spirit[s] of the below'. Some of these spirits may be identified with rivers, mountains, trees, streams, and other geographical features. Usually, sacrifices and offerings must be made to placate such spirits; who sometimes also possess people.

The spirits on the earth or of the below inhabit natural objects. The people speak of the spirit of the water, river, mountain or the lake (Mageza, 1997: 53). Dwellers refer to water spirits, mountain spirits, cave spirits, rock spirits, and so on, as powers more or less identical to these realities. In many cases, the possessed may display special powers, particular ancestral or 'priestly' powers to sacrifice, to divine, or to prophesy.

4.3.3 Interwoven between sacred landscape and dwelling

Seamon and Mugerauer (1985: 201) recognise cave dwelling as a practice conducted by uneducated and poor people, those perhaps not respected by ordinary people. The researcher differs completely from the narration as undermining the African religion and its practices. To start interrogating this topic, one must move towards an understanding of human habitation, by examining dwellings and reflecting on the mysterious alliance between a person and his world.

This study observed the way in which dwellings are best conceptualized, both generally and specifically, in connection with the built environment. Rapport (1989) introduces the topic by differentiating between dwelling and settlement. The researcher noted that it is sometimes difficult to separate dwellings from settlements, particularly in extreme cases of communal dwellings, where dwelling and settlements are one (Rapport, 1989: 78). It is clear that the dwellings' built environments are more than artefacts, albeit conceptualized in four variables: space, time, meaning, and communication (Ibid, 1989, p. 79).

The theoretical approach to this study, as defined by Hester (1989: 277) is provided by semiotics and inspired by socio-linguistics. Thus, this approach requires extensive fieldwork utilising both ethnographic and historical methodologies informed by thematic narration. Interviews, and photographs were used to elicit the meaning, use and significance of various architectural features of the sacred cave, for various contextually-defined categories of inhabitants.

Dwelling refers to the creation of meaningful places that together form a surrounding world. Dwellings bind people to their world, motivated by concern and consequent involvement to a sacred place, solely because of embedded African belief. Writers have argued that dwellings support the practical and the spatial in constituting of knowledge and meaning. Low and Lawrence-Zuniga (2003) reveal the four ways in which dwellings have implications for the organisation of space, and definition of place.

This study explores dwellings as belonging to a journey process and experience of leaving one's native land and moving to a foreign place. The journey may be done as an act of devotion. Similar to pilgrimage, dwelling involves leaving the place, journeying, and settling in a new place temporarily or permanently is narrated in three general stages. One has to note that dwelling at the sacred cave is an individual and voluntary decision, involve individual perception of their activities as religious rather than recreational or as in tourism.

The concept dwelling is clearly described and pointed out by Heidegger (Tilley, 1994: 14) as a focus for the perception of a humanized world and social being that constitute the fundamental presuppositions for beginning to think about the relationship between people and landscape in a fresh manner. These sacred landscapes are located in the eastern part of the Free State along the Caledon River. They include three popular sacred caves, revered not for only nature conservation, but also for their cultural, spiritual, and historic heritage.



4.1 Image: *Matlo a lehaha* (cave dwelling huts/ houses) by DHD Ngobese 18/07/ 2017

Understanding the use of space within the dwellings requires that one take into account the relationships of people who inhabited the sites (Shami, 1989: 470). The areas around the sacred caves comprised multi-purpose mud 'rooms' for general purposes such as lodging, divination, storage of herbs, and ancestral communiqué through dreaming. Increasing numbers of pilgrims visiting the sites, demanded the addition of new mud 'rooms' for dwelling, called by cave dwellers *Matlo a lehaha*. It is noted that the rooms are built by the inhabitants themselves, perhaps with the assistance of *Badimo*, through dreaming (Hadebe, interview, 04/ 05/ 2015).

These mud-room structures are built out of easily available materials, required little skill; they are expanded as the use of space changes with the changing relationships between inhabitants. After an elapse of time, pilgrims regard caves sites as sites of dwelling, what Shami (1989: 470) depicted as 'sense of home' and what home means to them. Considering the number of dwellings, mostly in Mautse and Motouleng, one feels a sense of township.

The above description shows a clearly complex relationship between material and social concerns. The emphasis on social determinants of the structure and the use of space has not been stressed here to devalue the importance of purely architectural and technical features of dwellings. Concurring with Shami (1989: 474), the study has aimed at highlighting certain aspects of a particular historical context playing a major role in determining cave dwellers' choices in constructing their tangible African beliefs.

4.4 Social identity theory

4.4.1 Historical notion of identity

Historically, identity has been handled in a primordial way: one is born into a specific identity with God-given characteristics of ethnos, language, customs, inter alia. Du Preez (1980:75) argues that a separate language, a distinct religion, and a pioneering life were blended to produce a unique style of struggle for power. Both uniqueness and differences became the tools of inhabitants' identity. The more the indigenous inhabitants defined themselves by opposition, the more cohesive and exclusive their group identity became (Ibid, 1980: 76).

Currently, identity has become a discursive concept –different sets of discourses define identity. Du Preez (1980: 2) articulated that the preponderance of persons of a particular identity in positions of power are dispersed throughout society. His depiction was used to convince the members of excluded classes that they were legitimately excluded.

Identity is a construction and not a permanent or essential feature of a person or a group. Various discourses and value systems are employed to construct identity. The prioritization of aspects of a discourse may also vary from time to time. For some local groups in the Eastern province, it was important to define themselves in terms of the broader struggle narrative of Black consciousness, but since their marginalization from the metropolis, they could again start defining themselves in tribal terms (Meer: 2014, p 38).

The concept 'identity' means various things to various people. Superficially, the term means a sense of self. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, identity comprises the state of having a unique characteristic, the individual characteristics by which a person or a thing is recognized (Hornby: 2010, p.763). This definition from the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary cannot be considered as absolute in defining identity, rather, it is a starting point.

Identity is not only limited to individuals: a group of people may be said to have a single identity (Machaba, 2004: 242). The other reason for this is that, although identity comprises more than what the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary identifies. In contrast to what Machaba contended, Taylor and Spencer (2004: 4) define identity as:

“work in progress, a negotiated space between ourselves and others; constantly being re- appraised and very much linked to the circulation of cultural meaning in a society”

The study of social identity will offer insight into the complex range of factors influencing the way people see themselves, the way one is seen by others, and the pressure exerted on individuals to readjust to some priority of social agenda. Reiterating what Taylor and Spenser (2004) observed, Spenser (2014:30) argues that identity is intensely political, dwelling much on the constant efforts to escape, fix or perpetuate images and meanings of others.

A question may be posed as to what constitutes or what forms a sense of self when dealing with the identity of people. Is a sense of self made up of the language they speak, the people they live with, the food they eat, the places they go to, the people they associate with? It should be borne in mind that identity is not found in a vacuum: it is found in communities, societies, nations, and countries. It is an undisputed fact that various communities have sets of values, customs, traditions, amongst others, that may be used to identify them.

People adhere to a religion because it shares the framework of understanding and devotion inherited from the society in which they have been born and raised. The emphasis on religious beliefs Richards Norman (2011: 121) suggested, is primarily a matter of identity. To be an African, is to be a member of a particular race or nation whose identity is specified by particular habits of memory and ritual, of understanding and hope.

Machaba (2004) in his thesis "*Naming, identity and the African Renaissance*" mentions that one may have various identities, depending on where one finds oneself at a given time. For example, a White person may identify herself as an African because she identifies with the African landscape where she has been raised. A person may have more than one sense of self, namely, one may identify with various people who in return may not identify with each other.

This suggests that no one person has one identify in the eyes of the society in which she lives. Even in displacement, the memory of a collective identity may crystallize around a notion of place. In this case, the focus is on how locality can be created as a particular place through the memory of its existence in the past. Each community or individual is part of the chain of attachment to places, and eventually creates its own social landscape.

4.4.2 Reflection on social identity theory

The question of 'identity' is being vigorously debated in social theory. Hall (1992:274) introduces the argument that the old identities which stabilized the social world and gave rise to new identities. Taylor and Spenser concurred with Hall (1992) that social identity is a concept which embodies a sense of uniqueness as individual beings, and as a member of groups sharing values and beliefs.

Concurring with Abrahams and Hogg (1990), Maharaj (1995: 5) argues that social identity is important to an individual in order to create an emotional and social stability. The transitional process in South Africa and the accompanying social stress and uncertainty about the future is likely to have a considerable influence on the social identities of African communities. A social transformation is likely to generate enormous reforms, including redefining of land ownership, traditional natural resources and rights, creation of new conflicts and disintegration of old alliances.

To explore a new approach to social influence, Heady Brown (1996: 33) commended the work of Tajfel and Turner (1979) who are interested in what happens to people's identity and then to their motivations, judgements and perceptions when they became members of groups. The above-mentioned researchers suggested that the basis for people's self-definition changes in groups (Ibid, 33): simply put, personal identity gives way to social identity.

Brown (1996)'s article titled '*Themes in experimental research on groups*' includes narration of the social identity theory. Brown (1996: 40) describes the social identity theory as:

“an active research area which may continue to produce much interesting and empirical work, that attempt to resolve distinction between social theory and personal theory”

In linking personal identity and social identities, Brown (1996: 40) argued that both are not wholly divorced from each other. In other words, one's experience of social identity will affect personality and character of one's identity as a unique individual. To perceive the way in which people's social identities are made and constructed, the researcher must reflect on the relationship between the life history and social history.

Society is not static: it is continually evolving and being brought into being as people create their own life histories. Wetherell (1996: 302) argues that both Hall and Steedman's accounts view people's current identities as strongly dependent on their past and present social positions. Wetherell points out Hall and Steedman's

exploration of social history, which does not concentrate only on class, 'race', and gender, but on other features of social life, such as religion (Ibid, 302).

4.4.3 Spiritual and cultural identity attached to landscape

Smith's (1990: 3) article titled "*The sharing and Dividing of Geographical Space*" in the book *Shared Space and Divided Space* indicates that humankind establishes an identity with pieces of geographical space, a sense of place with the deepest emotional ties and feelings. Thus, territory is offered as a source of human identity, in expressing what may have been the harrowing historical experience of surviving the struggle with nature or some hostile competitors for territory

The formal social exclusion of individuals or distinctive groups of people is a long-established practice in South Africa. Smith (1990) depicted that geographical space is deeply implicated in social exclusion (1990, p.8). He implies the physical propinquity and separation of people from their indigenous (Ibid, p 8). Many Blacks still 'know their place' after land has been used for the purpose of political control of a diverse population. Recently, Blacks have challenged the dispossession of land by the minority White groups.

A strong sense of communal identity in Smith's argument shows the intentionality of ethnic identity. Here a strong memory and beliefs of the sacred landscape forms a potent exhortation of collective action across ethnic boundaries united by shared spiritual and religious inclinations. This shared experience and attributes results in tension and conflict between the landowners and cave dwellers that is central to a revolutionary sense of identity in a struggle for appropriation of land without compensation (Spencer 2014: 57).

This study suggests that it is important of not necessarily taking territory at face value, but understanding landscape as specific manifestations in the broader cultural, social and political context.

4.4.4 Construction of identity vis-à-vis community identity

In some cases, social organization and the history of a particular society play a role in the construction of identities of people living in these areas or sites. It is noticeable that all major ceremonies and celebrations occurring in the sacred landscape of the Free State also plays a major role in both deconstruction and reconstruction of identities of various indigenous people.

Response from Bishop Kokota (2016) of the Ebenezer African Church in Kroonstad confirmed that every year his church usually gathered at Motouleng for the Passover Celebration. All Anglican Church members from the Diocese of Ladybrand and the community of the Free State host an annual event in August at Mantsopa's cave (Kokota, interviewed, 18/ 07/ 2016). During these events, pilgrims at the sacred sites associated these events with individuality and uniqueness. In this way, social organisation and change influence people' identities.

Everyone seems to acknowledge that construction of identity continues to exert power. It is centred on differences in fundamental aspects of cultural identity. In attending these events, a new identity emerges as an identity not constant and not defined only according to race, colour, beliefs and language. Denial of access to these sites becomes a threat to community identity, and an incitement to perpetual conflict.

The struggle of democratic emancipation in the twentieth century has been fought against subtle social contracts and oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, and culture, that has created a new identity in South Africa.

Before one can contribute to current debates on identity, one must understand what such identities are, how are they formed, and how can they may be transformed. Alcoff & Mendieta (2003:3) pose a question: 'Are identities simply the congealed effect of collective historical experience or are imposed on individual from the external forces and why are cave dwellers so attached to their ethnic identity that they are willing to go to war over it?'

Despite the above hypothetical questions and multiple points of view represented in this study, there is an underlying suggestion that individuals shape their own identity. In fact, identities are created in the crucible of colonialism, racial and sexual subordination, and national conflicts; but also in the specificity of group histories (Ibid, 2003, p. 4). Identities must be analysed, not only in their cultural location but also in relation to historical epoch, belief, desire, and experience.

Irrespective of historical trajectories, social identities are the subject of intense theoretical analysis as well as in pondering the central questions, theories, and debates posed in this regard. Identity awakens as conscious and urgent issues surface: Who I am? Why am I here? What am I doing? Who do I want to be? That is what identity becomes when an individual enters into a discursive contest, when one's naturalized privilege is challenged, and existing ideologies do not reflect imagination.

Tanno and Gonzalez (1998: 34) pointed out that there is an unprecedented harmony of union between what cave dwellers and landscape possess. This merging of the past and present, together with the reality of the spiritual and cultural identity in between, has specific results for cave dwellers living at the cave sites. Their identities and interaction are constituted within the prescriptive parameters of both old and new environments.

Through identity, ideological symbols of the past are revived, entering the site with renewed commitment. These symbols became doubly significant in the process of nostalgic connection of the distance past with the recent cultural past. This study will explore the way in which the interpersonal experiences of the cave dwellers shape their sense of self, and conflict with what they encounter in the context of interaction, where identities are constructed and deconstructed in various different ways.

In concluding the above theoretical exposition of social identity, the next chapter will narrate in detail the kind of discourses important to and relevant to the groups or individuals at the sites. It will furthermore bring into discussion the community dynamics, revealing ways in which the cave sites allow movement across identity boundaries; and how new discourses are constructed for new identities.

4.5 Theoretical reflections

In summary, the study has adopted African religion, landscape, and social identity theories to understand the indigenous religious practices of the users of the three selected sacred sites of the Eastern Free State. The study has firstly selected the African religion as a theoretical framework by which to understand activities, patterns, and symbolic operational intricacies that are found at the sacred sites.

Theoretically, the study has sought to justify theism by advancing arguments for the existence of the theistic God; what St. Anselm (1973: 99) classified as ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments. The most important of these arguments may be classified as ontological arguments that endeavour to conclude the existence of God, given the African concept of God; *Modimo, Mvelinqangi and uNkulunkulu*.

Theories are often broken down into sub-theories which are easier to apply to designated fields. In the case of this project, African religion, sacred spaces, and identity construction are accepted as generic theories

A brief account of general ideas about the African religion in relation to significance of space will form the academic basis of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter rendered a theoretical narration discourse of African beliefs as viewed by contemporary researchers, and referred to various societal complexities. It also proposed that various rites are performed to keep this contact with the ancestors, rendering both the eschatological and community dimension.

This chapter has attempted to give an overall view on what may be expected inside the sacred sites, whether *Mantsopa, Mautse and Motouleng* caves. The introduction focuses on the sacredness of the space, later offering an essential theoretical narration of rituals for the unlocking of understanding and growth of African tradition and religion. The preceding argument about the ancestral belief is anchored to the evoking of the spirits of the living dead, recognising the ancestral worship conducted by various African religions and denominations.

It also attempts to examine conceptual issues associated with rituals. The natural features found with the sites will simplify any processes to be undertaken by a specific ritual. Meaning and symbols associated with the sites impact on the sacredness of the site. Some of the common rituals performed at the cave sites are *ukuthwasa*, ancestral calling, training, graduation, evoking the ancestors, inter alia.

All aspects of community dynamics at the sites will be discussed, as well as how these dynamics impact on modes of identity construction, including reconstruction of new identity. Lastly, the presentation of the site's internal dynamics will be properly examined, amongst others, tension and interaction, and contestation and conflict within the sacred sites.

5.2 Codification of African Religion as adjunct to community belief systems

The question of ancestors' veneration and the importance of this to African people is of interest here. Nxumalo (1985) assures the reader that the African traditional religion is alive. By this Nxumalo (1985: 65) means that the study is not attempting to exhume an obsolete African past, but to take an interest in the African present.

Nxumalo (1985) is not trying to resuscitate a dead African religion; he is attempting to grasp and understand African cultural values and religion, and their relationship with religious faith today. Therefore, the study is considering of the most important elements of the African traditional religion; that is, the ancestors' adjunct to community belief systems.

Caves, as the dwelling sites of the Africans, traditional healers, and African churches, uphold tranquility as an important function of African communities. Caves are spaces that offer both protection and shelter because of their spiritual disposition; they are associated with birth and regeneration. To Africans, cave sites have the power to preserve and refurbish indigenous knowledge, and also to codify African religion and beliefs.

The caves of the Eastern Free State represent possibly the best codification of African indigenous religion and spirituality. The increasing popularity of pilgrimages to the cave sites provides an ideal geographical context in which peculiar aspects of African religion may be witnessed because of its importance, histories attached to the caves.

The idea is not to discuss African religion or spirituality in minute detail, but to select the most distinctive and observable aspects found at the caves. The researcher has substantiated the claim about the codification, by selecting sufficient aspects to convince him that these sites are indeed significant contexts in which idiosyncratic aspects of African religion are preserved. The same applies to practices, even though hybrid expressions are also present.

Ancestral belief expressed at Mantsopa, Mautse, and Motouleng sacred caves by the practitioners or participants will be elaborated later in this chapter. The research answered the questions asked in the first chapter. Sacred spaces, are indeed encoding within the African traditional religion that form part of the embodiment of the community's indigenous belief system. It is also used for the engagement of a generic view of ancestral belief; and contributes to the general scientific debate.

From the data collected about observable belief systems and meanings at the cave sites, a definite line of argument draws the conclusion that the sites may be deemed as codification of indigenous belief systems. There is a central belief that sacred cave sites provide the space for ancestral worship and its calling. The connectivity between sacredness of the space and landscape, African tradition, and adjunct community beliefs, are largely expanded on in this chapter.

5.2.1 African beliefs

The study has selected typical beliefs for arguments. The underlying idea is not to describe the beliefs in detail, but to treat beliefs as manifestations or substantiation of the codification role of the sites. Cox's (1992: 115) definition of African beliefs is that it holds a unique place within the traditional religious experience. Cox defined beliefs as:

“Thought of ideas or opinion about what people respond a being of unrestricted value to them”

His definition lacks full integrities and systems found in the African tradition, religion and culture. What is alluded to by Brown (1987), when he quoted Arglyle and Biet-Hallahmi (1975), he defines of religion as:

“a system of beliefs in a divine or supernatural power, and practices of worship or other rituals directed to that power”

Brown (1987:18) addresses the question of religion as a state of mind and of the way in which it is tied to the doctrinal and institutional concerns that shape and direct the way African people express their beliefs.

The underlying questions remain that it is impossible for people who have different religious beliefs to believe in the sacredness of the sites or objects that are part of another religion. Perhaps for these reasons, people such as farm owners find it difficult to understand the reaction of the 'indigenous' people to the desecration of their sacred sites (Carmichael et al:1994:7).

However, it introduced the sacred dimension of human relationship with the sacred. In addition, Turaki's definition of African religion incorporates all forms of religious foundation, beliefs in mystical power, spirits, divinities, and the Supreme Being. Among Africans, there is a general recognition of the existence of God as *uMvelinqangi* in Xhosa, *uNkulunkulu* in isiZulu and *Modimo* in Sesotho who is present in daily activities and existence of believers. Therefore, the inclusion of God to any interpretation and analysis of African beliefs and of traditional religion is essential to this piece of research.

The word beliefs as the study attempted to define from the above paragraph occupied the central discourse in this chapter. Adhering to the above definitions, the sites and adjunct belief systems carry a whole range of human behaviour in relation to sets of African beliefs, ancestral spirits, rituals, and sacred landscape. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to unravel the fundamental belief systems that are attached to sacred sites of the Eastern Free State.

Cox (1992: 177) rightly defined beliefs as thoughts, ideas, or opinions that people hold about what is traditionally valuable to them, when describing a particular religious' phenomenon. It is argued that concepts such as *Badimo* (ancestors) and *Modimo* (God) play the primary role of enshrining a better understanding and meaning of African belief systems as perceived by the cave dwellers. Therefore, in gaining understanding on adjunct beliefs within the sacred dimension of the site, various perspectives of communities found at the sites will be narrated.

5.2.2 African belief systems: an understanding

There are a great number of beliefs and practices found in African communities which vary from one tribe to another. Mbiti (1969) argues that African people have their own religious systems, with sets of beliefs, traditions and values. These traditions have been handed down from the forefathers to the next generation. African communities assimilate cultural and traditional practices and cults by observing from their families.

Belief is a broader concept than religion. Lerner (2000: 5) pronounced that belief includes religion but is not limited to its traditional meaning. Lerner argued that belief was legally defined as a conviction of truth of a proposition, existing subjectively in the mind and induced by argument, persuasion, or proof addressed to the judgment (Ibid, 5). Lerner (2000: 3) adopted an international instrument to cover the rights of non-religious person such as atheists, agnostics, rationalists, and others in defining the word belief.

Brown (1987) explains that belief in a transcendental world is made plausible by the acceptance of those doctrines by the wider society that maintains them through individual experiences. Brown (1987: 36) noted that any attempt by the outsider or reformer to modify the existing systems of belief are in conflict and totally resisted by that society. Since large proportions of the South African population are involved in religious behaviour and beliefs, one should not expect to find very large differences in personality between different groups.

The researcher aims to understand how belief shapes or colours human consciousness, how it operates as way of knowing, or as a way of feeling, by which one understands the state of emotion. Morgan (2010:9) introduces the argument of Webb Kean, an anthropologist, who argued that religion may not always demand beliefs, but it will always involve material forms. Kean (2008: 124) offered forms of materiality that include sensations, things, spaces and performances, in which beliefs occur as touching, seeing, hearing, and tasting.

Beliefs vary according to their ideological perspectives across the spectrum amongst the societies in Southern Africa. The most key concern to an African is to maintain the continuation of cultural renewal be it activities or beliefs. Emanating from the above, question such as do beliefs constitute quest for belonging or hope for the future leave much to be desired. The researcher will narrate some of the religious beliefs practiced by African societies, to what Lerner (2000: 119) referred to the enjoyment of individual and collective rights relating to religion and belief.

5.2.2.1 The Basotho people

Life after death is not a matter for argument or speculation to Southern Sotho peoples. Lamla (1985:14) reiterated that belief is generally an ancestor-worship. The spirit of the most recent dead is the most important and the main difference seems to be that of beer offerings, tend to be more important as opposed to ritual killings amongst the Nguni. It is noted that all Sotho people have preferential cross-cousin marriage that is permitted.

The recitation and sharing of folktales is common amongst the Basotho communities, transferred by elders to children, orally. The oral tradition as a source of knowledge has become a medium of education in African society. It encompasses the way people live, preparing them for their survival through tradition, norms and values.

There are similarities between the founding myths of a number of African societies. The story of *Masilo* and *Masilonyana* was popular amongst the Basotho people. It expresses the crucial understanding of African beliefs both culturally and historically (Setiloane: 1986: 57). Although considerably varying in their elaboration and content, it possesses a common sequential relation between reality and the supernatural world. All accounts reflected the acceptance of life and death, in believing that Masilo had been resurrected from death and returned to normal life.

The main observation at this point is that Basotho people do not exhaust the historiography potential of the various systems, including how the world came into being. The Basotho people view the world as mountains, rivers, vegetation, and more, clearly emphasizing the vital participation of *Modimo* (God) as Alpha and Omega in every aspect of life.

African belief systems are most common to the Basotho, from the past to the present. The arrival of missionaries during the 1860s at Basotho-land could not change the religious belief of the Basotho people (Becker, 1969: 238). Becker (1969) articulates that even Frenchmen could not make direct contact with the spiritual world, and had to rely on books for knowledge. This, according to the prophets or the seers, accounted for the White's men ridiculous attitude did not destroy to most aspects of Basotho life.

Suffice to say that the Mantsopa prophecy was very accurate description of what happened, as the Basotho overwhelmed by the Rolong forces on the plateau of Viervoet, where many perished after being thrown down from the steep cliff (Gill, 1997: 96). Armed conflict occurred shortly thereafter, at the end of June 1851.

Gill (1997: 126) states that the belief of prophetic movement, as was evident during the earlier period of the diviner/ prophetess Mantsopa, takes its messages from the spiritual world in terms which blended local spiritual imagery and symbols with those brought by missionaries, for example references to the River Jordan as the river of the gods (*Melimo*).

5.2.2.2 The Zulu nation

Although many present-day Zulu people have moved beyond the borders of Zululand and become urbanized, many remain there and enjoy a traditional life style. Zulu people feel that, despite the spread of Christianity by the missionaries, they should perform the rites of their forefathers, especially paying homage to their ancestors.

The belief of the Zulu people was correctly expressed by Thorpe (1975) in his book '*African Religion*'. Thorpe broadly discusses pertinent topics of African religion includes African cultural bearings, spiritual connectedness, and belief of *uMvelinqangi* (God). Thorpe (1975: 35) depicts that any distinction between religious beliefs and social contexts of the Zulu life is probably artificial. The religious orientation of the Zulu people is viewed in terms of belief in the spiritual power of divinity, and also in the visible and invisible power of *uMvelinqangi* or *uNkulunkulu*.

Berglund's description remains on the level of unfolding the symbolism of Zulu "thought-patterns" without showing the interactional social reality. Zulu ancestor religion appears as an integral part of a religious universe which includes a detailed cosmology about God, evil, witchcraft, and medicine (Kuckertz, 1985:8). Nxumalo (1985) reports in his article titled '*Zulu Christians and Ancestor cult –A pastoral consideration*' make efforts to grasp and understand African cultural values and religion and their relationship with Christian today. For him, the most important element of African traditional religion is the ancestors, who represent one of the basic values of traditional African life (Nxumalo, 1985: 65).

Berglund noted that the relation between men expressed in belief, ritual, and symbols of their society make living in that society a meaningful experience (Berglund, 1976:18). The Zulu people are a nation that practices their beliefs and honours their cultural roots in every aspect of life. Concurring with Berglund, Thorpe (1991: 36) noted that the usage of the word *Supreme Being* by Zulu people seems to support the existence of the Creator, *uMdali*, prior to the arrival of the missionaries.

Concurring with Setiloane, Berglund argues that the Zulu people 's beliefs are based on life after death. Most of rituals are respectfully performed by Zulu people, such rituals as *ukubuyisa idlozi* (bringing home the departed spirit), *ukugeza*, and others. Whereas the underlying aspect of all of the above is that the divine force and the belief in the supernatural being are closely related. It is noticeable that the departed person continues to be remembered and to undertake key responsibilities in the family.

Questions are asked about the usage of the terms *amadlozi* (refers to the dead) and *abaphansi* (those below). Nxumalo's (1985: 66) argument makes no distinctions between the two terms. With *amadlozi*, he refers to forebears and ancestors, *obabamkhulu nokhokho* who are *amadlozi*, representing a collectivity which is the family of all those who are silently gathered beyond the real world. It is noted that death does not bring an end to family relations but continue beyond the grave. Community and continuity are the most important elements that characterize the relationships within the family, in the Zulu spiritual world.

Sacred sites like *umsamo*, *isibaya* (cattle kraal) in any Zulu household clearly indicate some similarities with natural sacred sites, like pools, rivers, mountains and caves. At sacred sites like Mautse and Motouleng caves, there are features visible identified for offerings and praying, dancing for the *Badimo* (ancestors). Also, there is an undisputed belief that the sites are sacred, owing to the presence of *Modimo* (God).

5.2.2.3 The Swazi people

The Swazi discourse is dominated by the perception of illness and healing, interpreted as abnormality of societal order and troubles and evils. Van Dijk et al. (2000) argues that the role of ancestors in healing aims to preserve the role of traditional healers in their communities. Contrarily, Reis (2000, 61) anchors that African beliefs communicated to the next generation are derailed by lack of knowledge.

The outstanding dimension based on Jansen's work pointed out the role of Swazi people' beliefs by concluding that supernatural power and ancestral spirit's work remain in the hands of the traditional healers. Thus, the above is demonstrated from the diviner's knowledge to reveal what remains hidden from the common people. The word '*vuma*' (agree or confess) controls the healers' traces and entails the power to diagnose illness. Indeed, the ancestral spirits in the sacred sites have power over rites of passage, initiation, and divination for healing.

Reis concurs with Jansen that African beliefs would have vanished from the Swazi healing practices and the work of *izangoma* (diviners). They usually referred to the beliefs that prosperity and powerful beyond the natural world. Furthermore, they based their belief from the Christian perspective that good people will be good again and bad people will remain bad forever. Swazi people argues that people should portray themselves while they are still alive, in return, they may become good ancestors in the 'land of the Dead'.

For the above nations, Middleton (1967:15) introduced a moral concept in African beliefs. His argument related to the Apa tribe who offered the idea of life in the Land of the Dead. The idea of a positive act or transcendental reward after death has no place in the Apa Tani tribal thinking (ibid, 1967:16).

5.3 Landscape and its beliefs

5.3.1 Belief in human spirituality

Belief in the existence of human spirits is widespread throughout Africa, specifically in African societies. By human spirits, Mbiti (1975: 75) meant people that once were ordinary men, women, and children. Strong beliefs remain intact amongst the African people that human life does not terminate after death, but continues beyond death. Mbiti classed human spirits into two types: spirits of those who died long ago and those who died recently (Ibid, p 75).

Hypothetical questions form part of this deliberation: how do human being become converted to spirits after death? Can they be literally identified? In what form do they return to people? The traditional belief argued that there is no physical form of human spirits. It is their belief that when they appear to people, they look like human beings, having been human beings prior to death. It is for this reason that African subscribe to incarnation, by giving the name, of the departed person to a new-born child as a symbol to the family of remembrance and recognition of his presence.

Setiloane (1986) concurred with Mbiti that the process of dying amongst African society has not yet been completed, yet the dead are still part of the family. Setiloane (1986: 17) strongly opposes school of thought regarding the dead and the living, and suggest that the departed people are wrongly interpreted from the beginning. Their role is to guide the people's human affairs, traditions, and ethics, and people activities. Apart from what the human spirits called folklore, legends, myths, they visit in people's visions and dreams.

In both Simon (2016) and Bishop Kokota's (2016) accounts, there is also a mention that human life does not terminate at the death of the individual, but continues beyond death. They describe how cave dwellers perceived the ancestral beliefs:

“Batho ba tlang mona ba rometswe ke Badimo ba bona, e kaba Bapostola, dingaka kapa baeti ba lehaha le batho ba kulang. Batho ba tlang mona ba tswa dibakeng tse fapaneng mona Afrika Borwa le Lesotho. Ho bona lehaha la Mantsopa ke sebaka se halalelang. Ba dumela hore ba bua sefahleho le sefahleho le Nkgono Mantsopa ha ba le mona lehaheng”

“People coming here are sent by their ancestors be it Apostles, traditional healers and cave dwellers and sick peoples. There are coming from places around South Africa and Lesotho. To them, Mantsopa cave is believed by everyone who came here as a holy place and they attest that they are communicating personally with Nkgono Mantsopa when they are inside the cave”

The ‘problem’ of the ancestors is at the centre of the age-old controversy about African religion in general. Kuckertz (1985: 79) concludes that the theme of the ‘ancestors’ is closely woven into the whole fabric of an emerging African theology. He quoted Rev CG Baeta's article entitled *“The challenge of African culture to the Church and the message of the Church to the African culture,”* in which he declared that Africans “lives with the dead” (1955: 60). Kuckertz simplified the above notion that the dead are not at all dead, rather they are a spiritual force which makes life possible (1985: 79).

For this reason, Mbiti (1975: 125) denotes the dead as the 'living-dead', in clarifying that to be alive is to be with the 'dead'. People regard ancestors as being much like any human being, although they are dead. According to Kagame (1956), the living would be dead if they were to forget their ancestors.



**Image 5.1: Cave dwellers pay homage to Ngono Mantsope by
DHD Ngobese, 10/ 07/ 2010**

5.3.2 Spiritual space

Bringing in the narration of Morgan (2010) about space in understanding spiritual spaces is critically important to this study. Morgan (2010) explains that spaces are the arenas erected in different times and places for certain things¹ to happen, for performances to take place, for the sacred to become sensible, for the discrete modes of possibility to prevail (Morgan 2010:15).

Sites that are sacred are said to house spirits. The whole area reflects features, symbols, and typical structures of a spiritual territory. The territory is made sacred by myth-time events that are said to have taken place there, in historic times, or by the presence of the supernatural beings that dwell in these places (Carmichael, 1994: 250). This is demonstrated by the many rituals that take place in and around the sites. Powerful ritual substances and objects remain behind when people leave such a dwelling, to live elsewhere.

There is an inseparable relationship between the land and spirits found at the sacred cave. Various rites are performed to fulfil a particular ceremony. Mbiti (1975: 71) observed, in his argument about territorial spirits, that African people consult their spirits at sites such as ponds, caves, groves, mountains, and rivers.

The nature of territorial spirits and subtle connections between cosmology and socio-political groups, in particular, the relationship between the idea of the territory and practice, remains unexplored. Novell (1998) pointed out that territorial spirits, for example, in Amazon territory, remain within a house of spirits, irrespective of its identity. Relating this to Motouleng sacred cave, there is a site allocated specifically to women and children (Masieng), for praying, offering, healing, inter alia.

¹ Spaces and things are cultural realities that belong to one another. Things imply a certain kind of space; spaces allow certain kind of things.

The popular slogan in defining the sacred cave is “*Ke yunibesithi ya rona*” (It’s our university) is believed by cave dwellers as their institution of education. They referred to the knowledge and power of the territory as it sustains their life, knowledge, and ancestral worship, and renders strength and power to heal any diseases. This knowledge forms part of the ‘defenses’ of the human spiritual legacy of the clan or group.

5.3.3 Attachment of sacred space to *Badimo*

Examining the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State, there are numerous beliefs and myths about attachment of sacred space to ancestral land. Controversies over accessibility to the cave prove problematic. Cave dwellers have unanswered questions concerning the sites: who owns the sites? Is it a farmer or territorial spirits?

According to Western traditional laws, the person who possesses the title deed, is the sole owner of the land. This applies to farms on which the caves are situated: legally the caves belong to the farmers. Hubert Bucher (1980) in his book “*Spirit and Power*” disputed the initial argument that the real owners of the land are perforce the spirits of the deceased (Bucher, 1980:34). Wallace (2016: 168) delves into the genesis of what is termed the “religious field”². The researchers maintained that no discussion on the religious field in either colonial or post-colonial South Africa could be understood without reference to the complex debate of religion (Ibid, p. 168).

Wallace’s narration is influenced by Bourdieu’s concept of field that implies a clearly delineated space consisting of a set of objective, historical relations between the positions anchored in certain forms of power (Wallace, 2016, 169).

² Echtler and Ukah (2016: 7) defined it as “what is at stake is the monopoly of the legitimate exercise of the power to modify, in a deep and lasting fashion, the practice and world-view of lay people, by imposing on and inculcating in them, a particular religious’ habitus”

Tracing historical trajectories of power, Wallace (2016) refers to historical development prior to the colonization of South Africa by the Dutch in 1652, later the British (1814), the Khoisan, and the various Nguni-Bantu people who were inhabitants of the region from the Cape (Ibid, p 169).

Draper (2016)'s contribution to Bourdieu in Africa focused on the relation between the spirit, field, and power. Draper (2016: 36) reminds of Fogelqvist's definition that power is everything that does not explain the specific role of Spirit in the universe (p. 36). Draper (2016) continues, saying that what is central to the understanding of traditional religion and independent churches is the presence of the spirit in the field/space. To sum up his debate, he argued that spirit is the key instance of the negotiation of power for Africans between the two worlds of the colonizers and the colonized.

At times of burial, the spirit of the deceased person is believed to be resurrected, allowing him or her to be present in the world of the African. The spirits of the deceased men and women are believed to be dispersed all over the area. As a result, they have the role of protecting the fertility of land, initiation of the diviners and healers, bringing rainfall, and controlling social order.

5.4 Community beliefs

5.4.1 Views on human beings

Community belief is based on African idea and experience of Botho-Ubuntu (personhood) across multiculturalism. Setiloane (1986:9), as one of many African writers, did acknowledge this African insight in his book 'African Theology: an introduction. Setiloane (1986:9) insisted that it is through myth that Africans are able to penetrate the inner recesses of people's soul and find answers for many cultural behaviours and extended views about life.

Prior to colonization, people from the African township were allowed to settle without disruption of forced removals. This simply means that, in an African context, everyone is related to everyone else (Setiloane, 1986:9). This becomes evident when a community need arises, such as the tragedy of death, and on occasions of rejoicing, such as weddings.

Botho–Ubuntu within the sacred sites has prevailed for many years ago as one of the principles of African traditional religion and belief systems. This is seen amongst cave dwellers who reside at the site for more than a month. Healers, diviners, independent churches, prophets, and spiritual healers, share a communal belief in the power of the ancestors. It is noticeable that cave dwellers have an equal distribution of available features within the caves. At times of prayer and dancing, from the individual church or group of diviners, performances are attended by all residents, and distribution is made of whatever is available.

At certain times, the site is flooded with water as result of heavy rains. Cave dwellers find it difficult to cross little streams. All male residents would assist the arriving visitors to cross, even carrying their belongings. The above example of various approaches of working together, illustrates the concept of *Ubuntu-botho* making it explicable. Setiloane's (1986:14) utterance that '*Motho ke Modimo*'³ expressed that a person is divine, sacred, and holy, and possessing all traits of divinity (Setiloane, 1986: 14).

5.4.2 Belonging

The study explores ways in which notions of belonging and locality are attached to a particular territory. The exploration of belonging and identities, and their construction is set in certain cultural contexts, as appropriately narrated by Nadia Novell (1998:2) in her book '*Locality and Belonging*'.

³*Motho ke Modimo*: This is a Sesotho-Setswana proverb uttered by Setiloane, describing human beings within society, with mysterious and pervasive energy forces as a source of life.

Novell (1998: 2) pleads with various land users, cave dwellers, owners, and organisations, urging them to restore the land to the indigenous people. Emphasis was laid on cultural empowerment associated with rights of access to territories and sacred sites. Landscapes that housed sacred sites do not stand as an absolute geographical site or a conquered territory and its sidedness of belonging is constantly re-enacted in order to simultaneously allow the vagaries of migration and movement (Ibid, 1986:10).

From the above, the site provides a sense of belonging, through imprinted memories and past experiences. Africans have adopted the adage 'home is where the heart is' as one of the key principles for the existence of the sacred sites of Nkokomohi and Motouleng. Despite the intensity of colonial pressure and private farm regulation, cave dwellers have maintained a robust sense of belonging, and cultural continuities attached to these sites.

Cultural practices remain central within the societal daily activities found today at the cave sites. The key to this resilience is the sacred land. African communities and individuals who have been relocated to urban areas, cling to sacred sites which remain central to their reconstruction of knowledge and identity.

Setiloane (1986) quoted John Mbiti (1991: 75) when he said, 'I belong, therefore I am'. Literally speaking, Mbiti meant that there is no human being who does not belong and therefore, belonging is the root and essence of being. Therefore, the whole system of African society is based on this order.

Community beliefs emerged from the spiritual-well beings; ancestral forces have a particular place for every individual's spiritual beliefs. Consequently, the sites open avenue for ancestral veneration and sense of belonging as an individual enters the sacred space. In the end, people's experiences at the site are not merely a matter of attending, but a way of engaging with knowledge about spiritual and emotional life.

5.4.3 Challenges

For the purpose of this study, Ratzsh (1986: 17) examined four degrees of challenges in African belief. The first argument was that belief is not scientific, and does not depend on scientific evidence in which Africans have totally dispute that narrative. Belief is neither acquired nor tested and it is not evaluated on the basis of sensory evidence. It is clear that the definition of belief is separated from any scientific principles, being located within the philosophical approach.

The second factor is that belief is unprovable: religious belief cannot be proved. Occurrences of tradition in a particular nation, suggest that there is no need to provide beyond any reasonable doubt of existence of belief systems. The third belief points out that the critical thinking based on the issue of evidence does not denying the existence of life.

The final key challenge to African belief, as noted by Ratzsch, centres on superfluous beliefs. Ratzsch (1986:111) argues that science has taken over the territory once occupied by African beliefs. He pointed out that science renders a natural explanation for everything, while beliefs flourish in the gap so that there is eventually no place left. Philosophers' understanding that science cannot solve all problems is applicable to this context.

The reflection of this argument in science and beliefs presupposes that beliefs and divine activities should find refuge in the gaps of scientific explanation and causes. It may be better to reflect on the traditional view that insists on the empirical nature of science. Its important procedures are based on prediction, explanation, testing, and confirmation, as a key prominent element.

5.5 Sacred spaces, ritual, and symbolism

From the preceding survey of codification of African religion applicable to belief systems, it is important to render perspectives that have been and continue to be central to the study of African religion, including sacred spaces, religious rituals, and symbolism. These are the key to an understanding of any religion, offering both the phenomenological and sociological levels of analysis.

5.5.1 Sharing and dividing of geographical space

The occupation of sacred spaces is fundamental to human existence, in particular, the African people. For their survival, it is necessary to gain access to natural resources of the land, sometimes supplemented by landscape, sea, or sacred rivers. Whether perpetually on the move, or fixed or permanent settlements, Smith (1990) argued that access to a particular territory or their product is a necessary, basic condition of life.

The space accessibility to humankind is necessary, yet there is a need to control access and hence respect the sacred cave partitions in what Gottmann (1993) recognises in his classic work on territoriality. Without any shared and divided geographical space, as set out by Smith (1990: 1), conflict will be an inevitable outcome.

This discussion will be preceded by a portrayal of the realities of segregated space in terms of measures of separation; and followed by an exploration of the societal outcomes of the divided space. It is noted that prior to non-racial democratic South African, Africans had to settle separately from their White counterparts. This is the case for Black South Africans.

Antony Lemon (1990: 194) claims that division of geographical spaces may be traced back from the apartheid policies that represent an extreme response to the problems of ethnically divided societies. For him, apartheid sought to create a divided social and political space, which coincides with officially defined ethnic divisions at personal, local, and national levels (Ibid, p 194).

The design of the apartheid structure was planned to endure, allowing space for future growth of group areas in their allotted sectors. Lemon (1990: 200) alleged that natural features such as rivers, mountains, valleys and escarpments or man-made barriers such as industrial and commercial belts, have been used to separate groups of people into various areas. The whole system was planned and designed to discourage movement of people of one group through the area of another.

Many South Africans anticipated that, post 1994, Whites would have no place in the territorial reordering agenda and proposes that a long term constitutional solution in a 'un-negotiated' settlement (Lemon: 1990, 211). Refers to Australian aboriginal people, Gale (1990: 217) noted that every piece of land belonged to people whose ancestors had lived there for thousands of years. Contrary to the South African context, there is still fierce competition for the same areas by vastly different cultural groups with opposite views of both land ownership and land use.

5.5.2 Selected ritual performances at the sacred sites

African ritual remains a mystery, even to the society of today. It is generally understood from this work that African rituals are taboo and are only discussed by people behind closed doors. Nelson (2009: 412) correctly indicates that rituals are the important forms of religious practices, and a central aspect of religious commitment.

It is generally accepted that religious rituals are also important within families, as they assist in maintaining religious identity, reaffirming relationships, and teaching correct behaviour (Nelson, 2009: 412). Although rituals change over times, particularly in various cultures, they help to create an ordered world, separating the sacred from the profane.

There are number of different kinds of ritual performed at the sacred cave sites, such as rites of passage, evoking ancestral veneration, thanksgiving, healing, and purification inter alia. For the purpose of this study, selected religious rituals performed and attached to sacred spaces will be interrogated.

5.5.2.1 Ritual: an understanding

Nelson pointed out that rituals can be broadly defined as the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers, but dependent upon tradition and community influence (2009: 413). Reflecting on Mbiti's (1991: 131) idea on meaning and connotation of ritual, he defines ritual as;

“Ritual is a set of form of carrying out a religious action or ceremony that meant for communicating something religious significance through words, symbols and action”

Victor Turner has defined ritual as a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, objects, and symbols performed in a confined place (Lehman et al. 1985:55). There is a wide variety of rituals in African Religion. Rituals are central to the life of individual from before birth to after death. Another interesting discourse derives from the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in 2003 in which there was a public outcry against slaughtering of goats as part of African traditional ritual and cultural display (Herald, 2003:1).

Ritual killing was roundly condemned by the organisation SPCA, who observed ritual killing in the light of cruelty to animals. They found that methods used caused suffering and brutalizing of the animals. Contrary to the report by the SPCA, Berglund (1976:229) describes how the ritual killing for the ancestors is conducted: the goat's throat has to be cut with a knife, with the mouth open so that the animal may bleat. The blood at the killing site is collected and stored at the sacred place, *umsamo* for fulfilment of particular rituals.

Rituals are seasonal, and performed as result of a particular circumstances occur only in specific months. At sacred cave site, there are numerous rituals that are performed includes divinatory, healing, initiation and some ceremonies in order provide continuity and unity amongst those who perform or attend them. Mbiti (1991: 131) pointed out that people find a degree of identity through this common observation and experience.

There are hidden assumptions regarding the concept of rituals that pervades African wisdom and knowledge. In terms of this assumption, rituals have two dimensions: What is 'said' and what is 'done'. Ray (1976: 78) pointed out that what ritual does or attempts to do is a variety of practical things. In his view, ritual is a way of communication with a divine for the purpose of changing the human situation.

Concurring with the above, Berglund (1976) refers to a ritual as a celebration which aims at communion with *amadlozi*. In ritual, people are able to go back to the origins of their world, to experience the creation of order out of chaos, and to find themselves renewed (Cox, 1992: 81).

Cox added that some rituals occur in sacred spaces different from other spaces (Ibid, p.82). These may be defined as seasonal, occurring at various times of the year and often relating to a person's needs and ancestral calling. Rituals occur in different areas with prescribed regulations aimed at fulfilling certain criteria, such as training by an experienced diviner, or as outlined by ancestors.

Masoga (2003: 102) strongly maintains that:

“In ritual context, oral discourse is presented represented repeatedly not as verbatim, but with a context, style and formulaic structure which remain constant from performances to performances. What has to be noted is the fact that narrators narrate what the audience call for or will tolerate.”

The general principles before anyone found himself or herself being a cave dweller, as confirmed by Masoga (2003: 46), is that no one decides to become a healer but are forced⁴ into it. Initially it is the decision of the ancestors, guided by the *ugogo* (the departed member of the family), the ancestral spirit. Masoga (2003:46) outlined a number of steps that must be followed before one qualifies as a *sangoma*. Masoga (2003:46) furthermore, refers to actual entry into divination and its intricacies.

For the purpose of this research, there is a wide variety of rituals to be examined, within African religious settings. Mbiti (1975: 126) mentions some of the rituals, including life of the individual from birth to death, for wider community that embraces the activities of life. Narrowing the scope of the research, what prevails in the sacred sites must be viewed, together with the trends in African initiation and prophecy.

The report arises from an extensive participatory fieldwork during the months of April and October 2004, and July to November 2006. It is a comprehensive narration of the *ukuthwasa* ritual, involving calling to the cave, training, and graduation amongst healers who have gathered there.

5.5.2.2 Rites of Passage rituals

The most elaborate rites of passage usually concern the acceptance of the journey from the real world to the divine world. What is said by Benjamin Ray (1976:91) in his book on African religion may elucidate further the rites of passage at the sacred sites which creates odds to human events. This is what Ray (1976: 93) says about rites of passage:

Rites of passage create a similar bond temporal processes and archetypal patterns in order to give forms and meaning to human events. This is done according to a threefold ritual pattern consisting of rites of separation, transition and reincorporation in order to create a fixed and meaningful transformation in the life cycle, in the ecological and temporal cycle and in the accession of individual to 'high office'.

In this phase, people are metaphysically and sociologically remade into 'new' beings with new social roles. Initiates are neither children nor adults, male or female, human nor animals.

Mensele's article (2011), titled "*The study of rituals performed at the two sacred sites in the Eastern Free State*" describes how the invocation of ritual is performed as part of a rite of passage. The author stated that one of the most important and core aspects of Basotho tradition and culture is respect; to the living, as well as to those who have

passed away (ancestors). It is not surprising, therefore, that this kind of respect is displayed by local user communities visiting the sacred sites at Motouleng and Badimong.

Visitors feel there is a need to perform a ritual to ask ancestors for permission to enter the site. This is a sign of respect, as Mensele (2011: 30) states, when entering these two sacred sites and announcing their presence to ancestors. They respect their ancestors, who are believed to be dwellers and owners of these sacred sites. As it stands, one most important practice or part of invocation ritual activities at both sacred sites of this study is that local user communities always introduce themselves to the ancestors at the entrance. This is also a symbol of humility, as they are, in a way, asking for permission to enter the sacred sites; a dwelling place for ancestors.



Image 5.2 - A traditional healer burning candle as a sign of invoking the ancestors for permission by DHD Ngobese, 25/ 11/ 2017.

Asking for permission to enter a home, yard or premises other than one's own (*Hokokota*) is one of the most ancient or long-standing behaviours and practices among Basotho people and human societies at large. This practice symbolizes the level of 'respect' towards other people, their property and premises. It is owing to this practice that there is no way in which one can simply enter another person's house/ premises without announcing oneself at the gate or entrance and asking for permission, before entering.

The same behaviour is practised at the sacred sites under study. Visitors and pilgrims announce their presence to the ancestors and call upon them for guidance throughout their visit at the sacred sites. In practising this ritual, people must be straightforward and open in telling the ancestors their reasons for coming as a group to the sacred sites.

Pilgrims and traditional healers introduce themselves to the ancestors at these special spots before entering the sacred cave sites. It is noted that ritual materials used for the activity are gifts in a form of cash, sweets, snuff, grains, tobacco, and anything symbolizing humility. These gifts are left at the spot for the ancestors. Mensele (2011:31) confirms that the usage of candles depends on the number of individuals performing rituals that must be lit as a symbol that 'participants are asking the ancestors to enlighten their way' throughout their journey, chasing away the darkness as they enter the sacred sites.

5.5.2.3 Initiation and divination rituals

In most African societies, there are certain types of religious authorities such as diviners, prophets, priests, and sacred kings who perform ritual functions. Although these authorities operate in different contexts and in different ways, they serve a religious purpose that is to mediate between man and the sacred. Some diviners and traditional healers also perform initiation rituals at the sacred cave sites of the Eastern Free State.

Through initiation, Ray (1976:103) has pointed out that man becomes a diviner only after he or she has suffered the afflictions of divination by the ancestral spirit. Much of what Mensele (2011) has written about initiation ritual for a traditional healer (*ho kena lefehlong*) functions as the first stage or step on the road to becoming a fully-fledged Sesotho traditional healer or doctor (*ngaka ya Sesotho*). Mensele concurs with a number of informants who had undergone formal traditional healer training ritual (*ho thwasa/ ho fehlelwa*) (Ibid, p 128).

Mensele (2011: 33) refers to traditional healers as (*dingaka tshitja*). It is said, that they (*dingaka tshitja*) are those who only happened to gain knowledge of traditional herbs and their use. This could have been through their close relationship with a traditional doctor for example, grandfather or grandmother, etc. In other words, a traditional healer (*ngaka tshitja*), according to local user communities, does not have formal training hence is not a traditional doctor.

Zahan (1979:54) defines initiation of traditional healers as:

“The slow transformation of the individual, as a progressive passage from exteriority to interiority. It allows the human being to gain consciousness of his humanity”

The above narration simply affirms that the individual would acquire the taste for divine knowledge and wisdom which will allow them to detach themselves from earthly matters and orient themselves towards the life of God (Zahan, 1979: 63). Mbiti (1975: 81) supports Zahan’s argument in believing that an individual is possessed by spirits of the living dead.

In contrast to the above argument, a recent book, *Spirit Possession in Africa* (1990) edited by Behrend and Luing, attempts to relate spirit possession to an idiom of sickness, or to take it as an index for social conflict or as a means of generating power, giving evidence that it is impossible to explain spirit possession with reference to one or the other institution.

De Sousa (1990: 81) argues that spirit possession is not considered a sickness: it calms and heals suffering individuals. The 'problem' to be resolved is not on the human side but on the side of the spirits, the wandering souls lost in the forest. De Sousa attests to what informants at the sacred cave say:

“The steps of the initiation cycle, no matter whether they are carried out by a living man or a dead one, begins when the man dies symbolically to be re-born with a new one” (1990, p 86).

In most cases, the initiates are kept for a few months or years in a sacred and secret places of the forest, surrounded by prohibitions. Most informants stated that the sacred space is where the solemn and secret ceremonies are performed, at the end of which the initiate takes another identity. Informants at the Motouleng and Badimong cave sites stated that these sites are places at which ancestors (*ke sebaka sa Badimo*) are embedded with sacred power, and therefore at which initiation rituals could be performed.

Jacob Teboho Molefi (ancestral name) Mokete explains how he experienced his calling to the Badimong sacred cave:

“A young male traditional healer trainee from Botha-Bothe in Lesotho said that he was very ill before he accepted the calling of being a traditional healer, coming in and out in different hospital but the doctor could not detect the nature of disease. He was forced to consult a prophet who revealed that he is possessed with ancestral spirit and he should go to Badimong in Rosendal for initiation”.

Extensive data investigated the initiation rituals performed by traditional healers at Mautse, Motouleng, and Mantsopa caves. This proved that initiation rituals communicate certain religious significance through symbols and words, also embodying African beliefs.

Initiations narrated by healers are performed and participated in various features of sacred spaces of the caves. However, barriers and restrictions directly or indirectly prohibited the healers in accessing the cave as a sacred place. Such sites have embedded knowledge that may be used to strengthen existing debates and to preserve indigenous and cultural knowledge.

5.5.3 A diviner's call

It should be noted that there are dimensions which contribute fully to the understanding of African concepts and practices of initiation in the cave. Hence, a diviner's call is devoted to an understanding of *ukuthwasa*. A diviner's call is a complex affair with tradition, religion, and ancestor's spirituality overlapping and inseparable.

Like Berglund, Masoga (2003: 46) refers to calling as actual entry into divination and its intricacies. This is the stage at which the ancestors reveal themselves to an individual or *ithwasa* (a trainee) through dreams, visions or excessive pain, which is caused by ancestors as a symbol of their presence. Commonly, all the diviners found at the cave sites agree that nobody can become a diviner by personal choice. Makhosi Mnguni (2003) concurs with them, saying:

“Sangomas had endured a definite way of calling to the institution of bungoma (in a possession stage with ancestral spirits) by the ancestors. Excessive headache, drowsiness, terrified dreams, body pain are an exceptionally signs or symbols through the ancestors (amadlozi) call their servants”.

Penny Bernard's (2010) unpublished PhD thesis titled *“Messages from the Deep: Water divinities, Dreams and Diviners in Southern Africa”* enumerated restrictions and taboos (codes of conduct) for accepting or rejecting the calling. Bernard's (2010: 144) suggests that, in African belief systems, it is the ancestors who choose the person to be the diviner, not the other way around. Resistance to the 'calling' may lead to misfortunes. Failing to accept the calling of the ancestors can lead to insanity or the death of the chosen one/s.

Bernard (2010: 144), furthermore recorded some possible reasons for one to resist the calling that are mainly linked to forces of modernity, religious faith, and the inability of the relatives to afford the expenses entailed in becoming the healer. Reports from various traditional healers indicate that, should an individual who has been called to be a diviner reject the calling, this will be then transferred to their offspring.

5.5.3.1 Account of being ‘possessed’

It is a reality that the stage of possession becomes a first point of entry to initiation. Scholars confirmed that the phenomenon of possession affects the human behaviour. Referring to the Shona people, Bucher (1980: 97) made a distinction between the phenomenon as a concept and its physical expression of the ‘possessed’. He further points out that possession is a construction of the human mind. The human mind becomes a ‘house’ of ultra-human power which extends to the possessed.

Tobias Wendl (1999) offers the anthropological theory in formulation of various positions and paradigms and periods, in order to interpret African cults of spirit possession. The author sees this cult as the expression of a strong antithesis to the ‘manistic’ awareness of life as he associates it with ancient civilization (Wendl, 1999, p. 119).

A traditional healer, Makhosi Lerato Mofokeng from Katlehong in Gauteng, attests that, during the initiation, she used to dream about the site at night; one night her ancestors came to her while she was sleeping, directing her to leave her home and accept the calling. They gave her the vision of the site and directions for finding it. Without any money, she had to hitch-hike and seek lifts from passing cars until she arrived at the Motouleng cave site (Mofokeng, Interviewed, 05/ 06/ 2017).

Makhosi Mofokeng lived at the cave site for almost two years. She lost her name and earned a new initiate name. All links with the past have to be broken. She had to abandon previous boyfriends. Certain behaviour and unions formed before the initiation must not be continued into the new life. Mofokeng had to establish a new family after the initiation (Mofokeng, 2017). The family spent their days walking around the cave, singing, dancing and teaching the traditional medicine through instructions by the ancestors.

Participants in possession rituals often simulate dissociation in a more convincing manner. Possessed individuals come to terms with the spirits once they have been possessed in a dream. It is usually one of the departed members of his or her family who infiltrate the ancestral spirit and continue to guide the initiate throughout his practices.

5.5.3.2 Possessed cave dwellers' accounts

The *ithwasa* had to consult an experienced diviner in order to establish the cause of the dream. Besides dreams, Berglund (1976:136) noted that ancestors called through frequent sneezing, yawning, belching, and even by means of pains in the shoulders, sides, and upper and lower back.

Cave dwellers, especially the diviners from the Motouleng, testified that what is mentioned above serve as notification of their new role. *Sangoma* Joseph Radebe and Mme Masechaba narrated their dreaming discourse, outlining what had happened to them before they knew about the cave sites. This is the narration of *sangoma* Joseph about dreaming, giving this account:

“Bekufanele ngihambe ibanga elingamakhilomita angamashumi amathathu nesishiyagalombili ngezinyawo ngisuka eBetilehema kuya eClerense lapho umgede ukhona. Okokuqala ngahluleka ukuyibona lendawo ephusheni, ngaduka ngaya kwenye intaba ecishe ifane nayo. Kuthe sengihleli isikhashana ngathola ukuthi akusiyona, ngakhonjiswa futhi ngokugqamile lomgede onezimanga, iMotouleng. Yingakho ungithola la”.

“I had to travel a distance of thirty-eight kilometres by foot from Bethlehem to Clarens where the cave is situated. At first, I failed to follow the dream accurately, then I was lost. I had to travel to another mountain/cave similar to this one. After a while, I was told that it wasn’t the cave; that I was supposed to go. I was again clearly shown the vision of the sacred cave called Motouleng. That is why you find me here.”

Secondly, Mme Masechaba’s account did not differ from that which Joseph Radebe (2016) narrated. She had also journeyed to the sacred cave sites of Motouleng. She describes her journey as follows:

“Ke tswa Lesotho, Maseru. Ke bitsitswe mona lehaheng la Motouleng ka ditaello tsa badimo. Ba mpontshitse sebaka sena ditorong. Ho fihlile moya wa sefaha le kereke, empa ha ke tsebe hore ke tla tswa neng. Ke badimo feela ba tsebang hore ke tla tswa neng. Ke Badimo ba tsebang letsatsi la ho tswa”.

“I come from Lesotho, Maseru. I was called to the sacred cave by the will of the ancestors. They came to me and shoe me this place in dreams. Ancestral spirit and Pentecostal spirit did visit me. Presently, I don’t know when I will come out. It’s only them who know about the date”.

Joseph Radebe (2016) continued with his narration that he was a former mine worker from Johannesburg. He had to abandon his work and accept the ancestor’s call to become a *isangoma*. His excruciating pain was simply a revelation from his ancestors of the required service he had to undertake. Aligned with what he said, most of the healers residing at these sites had undergone a similar process.

Evidence provided by cave dwellers shows that there are good reasons for *isangoma* being called by the ancestors to the cave. Such sites have power to evoke ancestral spirits. *Izangoma* state that a calling to divination varies from one healer to another. In the end, through this painful and traumatic process, healers have had to accept the ancestor’s calling to be a *izangoma*.

Berglund (1976) offers another account of ancestral calls to an individual. The author states that further signs of activities of the ancestors (the shades) in a person are realised by the pain experienced in the shoulders, sides, upper back and possibly lower neck, known as *izibhobo* (1976: 137). When a man has pain in these places, this is a sign that the shades are claiming him.

Ukuvuma idlozi is the phrase coined by Berglund (1976) when he portrayed the accepting of the calling by the Zulu *sangomas*. Then, *ukuvuma idlozi* is an essential step towards further training and receiving knowledge in matters pertaining to divination and healing. Subsequent to that, the training of *ukuthwasa* begins sometimes under supervision of an experienced diviner or in the form of training guided by ancestors.

5.5.4 Divination training (*ukuthwasa*)

The above perception clarifies the narrative account of the healer's calling and underlying processes relating to legitimacy of the site. As it was outlined above, there are various kinds of training at the sites. Almost all trainees (*mathwasane*) are guided through instruction from their ancestors, while a quarter of them are brought to the cave by their female traditional healer (*ugogo*). For the purpose of this study, the training as prescribed by the ancestors will be interrogated.

The narration of Mme Masechaba stressed that dreams and training do intertwine within the ancestral contexts. There was no prior knowledge of what was expected from them, nor of the *modus operandi*. Dreams are the only means of communication between the trainee and a trainer (ancestors). Most of the *sangomas* found at these sites concur that,

“Re laelwa ke badimo ditorong”

“We are instructed by our ancestors in dreams”.

Ancestors are active throughout the training process. It is also important for the trainee to frequently evoke the ancestors by means of praying, dancing, and *ukuphahla*, in various features of the cave. Berglund (1976:151) pointed out that diviners who reacted positively to the message from the ancestors cease their training instantly.

Throughout the rest of this training, *ithwasa* received a multiplicity of skills from the cave, be it the use of herbs for healing, diagnosis of diseases, divination, and healing remedies. The process is undertaken to unveil their ancestral spirits and to remove inner sickness caused by ancestors. Some of the tactics, such as reinforcing alertness, while training is to be performed daily, the following, *ukuhlambulula*⁵ through *amabulawo*⁶ and *ukuphalaza*⁷. Vomiting, orientation to speaking tactics with the ancestors, evoking of the ancestors through dancing are part of the daily schedule of the *ithwasa* performed inside the cave.

Masoga (2001) unpublished thesis titled “*Dimensions of Oracle Speech in the Near Eastern, Mediterranean and African context: A contribution towards African Orality*” refers to an extensive work that he provided from his life history as it was informed by divination and divination oracle. As part of the above research, he reflects to a number of steps to follow before one qualifies as a *sangoma*. (2001: 78).

His training as an African healer attempts to bring previously marginalized discourse and practice of divination into the centre of debate and scholarship (Masoga, 2001: 16). However, this research will not cover the detailed discourse of training as a *sangomas* guided by the experience *traditional healer (ugogo)*.

As part of this study, the outcome of divination discourse suggests that sharing of scarce features and resources available at the cave sites teaches one how to work with other people. In essence, the *sangomas* have to fulfil the will of the ancestors, interacting at various features. Therefore, the personal communication between the ancestors and the *sangoma* is central in this case. Contact may occur between twelve at midnight and twelve middays.

5.5.5 Completion of ancestral training (*Ho phetha mosebetsi wa Badimo*)

The *amathwasa* have no accurate date for their coming out: the ancestors reveal this to them at a later stage. Berglund adds that training ceases when healing has been completed and divination knowledge is assimilated (1976, p 68). This implies that all activities have been performed.

The epistemological concept of dreaming takes its course, and the *isangoma* will know when and how are they expected to come out from the cave.

Makhosi Mnguni gives an account of her graduation after the ancestors had been revealed to her in a dream. She described how the ancestors revealed her graduation:

“Ngangingazi ukuthi ngizoqeda futhi ngiphume nini? Kepha ngelinye ilanga, ngaboniswa ephusheni, izinkomo eziningi zime umuqga njengendlu yesiZulu. Zabe zilishumi nesishiyagalombili isilinganiso. Kusenjalo kwaqhamuka inkomo emnyama nembuzi emhlophe zehla zinqamula phakathi kwazo.....”

“While I did not know when to complete my training, one day I dream of many cows at night. Approximately there were eighteen cows. Symbolically, they stand in a circle follow each other like a Zulu hut. Apparently, there comes a black cow and white goat crossing this cows.....”

The logic behind this dream was that the initiate would be released before or after eighteen (18) months had elapsed. A white goat and a black cow should be slaughtered as a prerequisite for her graduation; she would then be accepted as a trained traditional healer (*isangoma*) by his family and community.

The success of the *izangoma* may be seen from his/her intellectual capability, knowledge, intuition, and capacity to translate supernatural messages. These modules indicate the completion of the course of being a *sangoma*. The *ithwasa*'s ability to approach the ancestors in a convincing manner, *ukuthetha idlozi* (to scold), diagnose disease, or to find a lost item, is publicly evaluated by the ancestors and relatives.

The general assumption that cave training is a university like any academic institution has been confirmed by cave dwellers. Bujo (1986: 97) maintained that, towards the completion of training, a diviner should cease to think individually, but should listen to what was said by the ancestors.

Setiloane critically stated that, during a period of interaction between a diviner or *sangoma* and the spirits, cave dwellers transcended to listen and interpret the ancestral deeds and provide some possible remedies (1986:18). He furthermore described *go thwasa* literacy as 'to blossom' and an experience that gives birth to *Ngaka (sangoma)*. Despite the existence evidence that divination constitutes a central elements of the history of human culture, it is generally acknowledged as one of the most central element of human spirituality.

5.5.6 Sacrifice rituals

Ray (1976) argued that ritual sacrifice accomplishes a two-way transaction between the world of man and the world of gods. In his argument, Ray (1976) stated that there are certain symbolic features which link the human with the divine so that the divine is subject to human control (1976, p 79). In the process, animal victims are the mediating symbol solely because they play a part in both worlds.

Ray (1976) concurred with *Ngaka Ditaba-tsa-Badimo* (interviewed, 2017) regarding killing of an animal. Killing of the animal marks the culmination of the sacrificial process which began with an act of consecration. This releases the most sacred part of the animal, its life substance, as food for the ancestors, making the animal's meat available for the human community. The offering of the victim is not a propitiation or bribe to induce the ancestors to act on the supplicant, but as an act of communion between the lineage members, who have identified themselves with the victim and the ancestors (Ray: 1976: 84)

There is no reconciliation between the ancestors and trainee (*ithwasa*) without the participation in ritual slaughtering of killing; this aims at connecting the ancestors with a person who has just graduated. It is also important to note that the *ithwasa* is not alone, but, has a group of ancestors who will be working with him or her in divination and healing.

Goats, sheep, or cows are the acceptable animals for slaughtering prior to the *ithwasa*'s entering his or her clan or family. This serves as satisfaction of hunger expressed by the ancestors. The slaughtering of goats should be conducted in the presence of *ithwasa*, who could drink its blood and *umqombothi* as a symbol of accepting the ancestral spirit.



**Image 5.3- Sheep as one of the animal for ritual sacrifice
by DHD Ngobese, 25/ 11/ 2017**



**Image 5.4 – Goat as one of the animal for ritual sacrifice
by DHD Ngobese, 25/ 11/ 2017**

Traditional healers at the sacred caves agree that one of the phases of the ceremony is the presentation of the sacrificial victims before the shrine. These are acceptable offerings because they symbolically mediate and control ancestral relations with mankind.

The researcher observed killing of animals at Mautse and Motouleng caves in terms of Ray's (1976:84) mediation vehicle par excellence between the profane and imperfect world of men and the sacred and the ideal world of the ancestors. It is common that before the killing occurs, speeches are made about the particular purpose and circumstances of the sacrifice. Of course, sacrifice is concluded by purifying the patient and sharing of the meat. This is viewed as genuine reconciliation and corporate unity.

Details and accounts given by *sangomas* stressed that *ukubonga* (thanksgiving), *ukubika* (introducing) and *ukuphehla* (invoking) are reasons leading to slaughtering. The above is necessary so that there will be no misunderstanding between ancestors and *sangoma*. Sometimes, the family will hide (*ukufihla*) the said animals, and allow the *ithwasa* to do *ukubhula* (prophecies). Progressing from the inspection, the *ithwasa* could be wholeheartedly be welcome and accepted by the family and entire ancestors.

Thus, the diviner goes beyond himself insofar as he acquired a new vision, divine knowledge and ancestral spirit.

5.5.7 Dreaming

There are number of different types of dream expressed by the attitude of a dreamer towards the future. Shorter (1985, p.90) described three types of dream which he considered of paramount importance: anxiety dreams, dreams about physical illness, and the so-called convenience dream which comes nearest to Freud's idea of dream as wish-fulfillment (Ibid, 1985, p. 90).

Not all dreams are about future fears, and yearning, and not all dreams by any means are vivid or important to the dreamer.

Shorter (1985: 90), in his debate, mentions that dreams are an imaginative activity of the intellect which employs a symbolic mode. This is based on the private mythology which must be placed in the context of the dreamer's own life situation (Ibid, p 91). This is an evident when the cave dreamer narrates the journey from their point of departure until they arrive at the sacred sites. Bringing Freud's belief that dreams are not symptoms of neurosis, but there are personal documents of healthy people. It is of course relevant to discuss what dreams mean to cave dwellers.

In so far as cultural belonging is concerned, dreaming may have social uses and may be subject to socio-cultural analysis; however, ultimately, the cave dreamer asks questions about the dream. What does this dream mean to me? Does it affirm courses of action and prepare me for a new means of action and development? For initiation purposes, dreaming strives to integrate the personality or to bring about a healing of social relationships to a greater or a larger degree.

Shirley de Plooy's (2010: 211) interview transcript and field notes illustrates that the traditional healer seeks assistance in interpreting dreams or making meaning of events or symbols that defy regular understanding. Shirley interrogated over a long period of time Mme Mmarerato and Ntante Sam who live in the cave of Motouleng, trained as

water healers. Neither subject uses *ditlhare* (plant medicine) or ancestor's intercession during their healing practices; only interpretation of dreams.

Shirley de Plooy (2010:211) related her first dream to Mme Mmalerato, who later offered its interpretation. de Plooy (2010:211) recounts to them by revealing her dream:

'I enter a small general trade-store in the mountains of Lesotho. This is a typical Store of a kind I have seen many times in the remote villages. When I enter the store, we first browse around the bit and at the back of the store: on the ground but the rack of shelves my attention is drawn to two bright yellow buckets. One is inside the other. They are not standing upright but are rather lying on their side' (Shirley, 2010: 212).

Wanting to know more about these secrets, she asked the informant, Mme Mmalerato to reveal or uncover the secret. She recounts that:

The buckets, almost hidden under shelf represent those things that were hidden, that you are making known and coming to understand. Other people didn't see them; you saw them and you took them under the shelf/hidden place (to make them known). The fact that one bucket is within the other indicates a 'secret' that's not yet known (sephiri, se-sa- tsejweng) that will be revealed/become known – revealing the hidden. When you come to the cave, you are ruffling through people's stuff, in their proverbial cupboards, under the shelves. This place is like a shop to you. You come and shop here. With your kelello (intellect, understanding, studies/research) you are buying. You are seeing these hidden (sephiri) things. The bucket tells of the fountain/water pools: the work with or the gift of water. There is a task that you must come and do. But the task/work is related to two things (like the two buckets – the one riding on the back of the other) (Shirley, 2010: 212).

Upon hearing the dream but not conferring with his wife, Ntante Sam joined the conservation and declared:

“That person that you are walking with is here: this place – this place that you are coming to. And, the buckets, are your things that means gift and talent” (ibid, 213).

From her research, Shirley du Plooy attempted to illustrate the kind of service pilgrims might expect when arriving at the sites. She was told that her intention to learn and know hidden secrets through her research will benefit not only his study but herself about what is happening at these site.

Bernard’s (2010) account of dreams acknowledges that many diviners, even novices, have the ability to communicate with their ancestors through various means even if they do not experience subversive, Bernard (2010:146) argued that not all diviners receive the dream to signify their new status; however, for those who do the dream is highly significant and requires further ritual action. For example, Hirst (1997: 219) stated that most diviners and their initiates merely dreamed about being submerged in the river.

Penny Bernard (2010:139) concludes that, although the dream experience is not held to bestow divinatory ability, it signifies a high level of qualifying skills, alerting one to the potential of later physical submersion.

In the African tradition, dreams serve the goal of wholeness, connection of the living with the ancestors. Dreams are treated as prophesying of dealing with future events, reflecting a deeper reality. The telling of dream is often related to vocational stories and religious crises. Because of the shared symbols and meaning of the dream, the dreamer will seek divine intervention on analysis of the dream.

5.6 Cultural and spiritual memory

Butler (1989:3) acknowledged that he did not know at first of cultures as memory. The author began to conceive of man's history as a spiritual evolution in which genetically transmitted archetypes were a primary means of intergenerational communication and growth. The memory of the African lies in oral traditions.

Perhaps one should conceive memory and its place in human culture in terms of what Carl Jung used to describe the relationship with core of culture (Butler, 1993: 14). For memory is not only what we personally experience, refine, and retain but also what we inherit from the preceding generation, passing it on to the next. It is correct to define memory as that seen, heard, said, felt, touched, and smelled by every human being who has ever lived. It is correct to accept that all material of the past memory remains somewhere in existence.

Morgan (2010:57) quoted Victor Turner, who is convinced that the dynamic character of social experience was lost to the approach that stressed rationality as the key to human sociality. For him, postmodernism represented a change in sensibility that would allow researchers and anthropologist to strike an appropriate balance between thought, will, and feeling.

It is not possible to distinguish cultural and spiritual memory from cultural landscape and space. The key concept in this approach is the manner in which places constitute space as centres of human meaning. Such an approach starts from the initial presupposition that human experience of place and its meaning is central to any understanding of place (Tilley, 1994: 14).

Cave dwellers are immersed in spaces such as sacred cave sites, in the context of human experience, constructed in movement, memory, encounter, and association. To them, the meaning of the cave sites is grounded in existential or lived personal consciousness because cave sites have distinctive meanings and values within African culture. My conclusion is that landscape is embedded in the social and individual times of memory.

Tilley (1994:27) stated that memories of previous moves in a landscape are essential to an understanding and remembrance. Memories continually provide modifications to a sense of place which never be exactly the same place again. Tilley suggest that authorities should build monuments in order to avert diminishing of sacred site memory and mythological significance (Ibid, p. 28)

5.7 Religious objects found at sacred sites

In the previous headings, I have discussed rituals which are performed at the sacred sites in connection with almost every aspect of cave pilgrimages. Entering all spaces of the caves makes one feel that many objects and places have a religious significance. Some of these are natural objects and items and others are made by people themselves. In this study, both types have been considered in order to show their value and place in the African religion.

Some of the objects and places regarded as sacred are used for particular religious' purposes and occasions. Indeed, there are beliefs, sentiments, and myths attached to these religious objects. Mbiti (1991: 144) argued that ritual objects embody the beliefs attached to the ritual. Without them, rituals would not be as meaningful and impressive.

Ritual objects found at sacred cave may include ritual drums, candles, incense, and sacred stones. Ritual dresses, staffs, and insignia are often considered sacred. Certain items such as mealies grains, tobacco, snuff, crushed traditional beer grain, sweets and fruit are used for religious rituals and ceremonies associated with specific beliefs and ideas.



Image 5.5 - Rituals objects displayed at Maseeng space from Motouleng cave by DHD Ngobese, 25/ 011/ 2017

Every sacred cave site in the Eastern Free State has its own religious places. These are not for common or careless use, being considered sacred or holy. It is noted that natural places are set apart as religious places by common belief, practice, and consent at the area concerned. These include temples, altars, shrines and graves. In most cases, the places are used for religious activities such as praying, making offerings and sacrifices, and other major ceremonies and rituals.

At Motouleng cave, one may observe small structures, or altars, on which sacrifices and offerings may be placed. There often stand on their own on the open. Entering the cave, small altars are used for introducing one's presence and request a good stay. The larger altars are commonly known as places for praying and personal communication with your ancestors and God. People use these altars for rituals, sacrifices, offerings, and prayer (Mbiti, 1999: 149).



Image 5.6- Aletara la Nkgono Mantsopa Alter at Mantsopa sacred cave site by DHD Ngobese, 18/ 07/ 2017



Image 5.7- Main alter at Motouleng cave site by DHD Ngobese, 18/ 07/ 2017

5.8 Symbolic features

Scholars agree that there is much discussion about symbols and their meaning. In some instances, words do not communicate much to African people what they originally do and what they intend to communicate may be done through erection of symbolic features. Paul Tillich (1973) has compared symbols and signs, saying that symbols are similar to signs in one decisive respect: both symbols and signs point beyond what a person perceives in reality but they point to something else. Tillich argues that symbols do participate in its meaning and power in a way which is constructed and point (Tillich: 1973: 480).

Symbols represent something not itself, giving power and meaning to that in which it participates. Symbols opens up a level of reality for which non-symbolic speaking is inadequate. Leader of Ebenezer Church, Bishop Kokota (2016) states that symbols arise from the group or the collective unconsciousness. He made an example of his church flag which acknowledges their presence at the sacred site of Motouleng (Kokota, interviewed, 18/ 07/ 2017).

Symbolic places abound at the Motouleng cave site serve as the meeting points between the heavens or sky and the earth and therefore the invisible and visible worlds (Mbiti, 1999: 149). Cave dwellers regard these places as sacred and therefore as places where they feel the symbolic presence of God. No one dare contests such a belief for fear of causing a dangerous reaction from the people concerned.

Flags of various denominations are installed and constructed for religious activities and as identity constructions for claiming the space. These are held as sacred. People who encounter flags greet them with respect as the symbol of life and continuity. Some tend to inscribe the name of the church in memory of participating in religious activities. When they revisit the sacred cave, they gather at the same spot or store their belongings at that hut.



Image 5.8- Flag of a Zion Christian church by DHD Ngobese, 25/ 11/ 2017



Image 5.9 Flag of *Naledi ya Botjhabela* Apostolic Church by DHD Ngobese, 25/ 11/ 2017

Mbiti (1999: 152) notes that rivers, lakes, and waterfalls are regarded with religious awe. He further states that people make sacrifices and take offerings there, a sign of wishing to be in harmony with their waters, especially if they are attached to the site. In all the sacred caves of the Eastern Free State, there is sacred water found at a specific fountain, waterfall or river. In most cases, it is believed that there is a spirit inhabiting such fountains, waterfalls, and rivers.

At the fountain of the Mantsopa sacred save, people believe that the spirits of the *Nkgono* Mantsopa dead dwell there and use the water to heal the sick people. For this reason, people feel close to the departed through coming close to the fountain and even taking water to their homes. Use of water in many rituals within the sacred cave, symbolizes purification and cleansing, not only bodily, but also from mystical impurities contracted through broken taboos and contamination by evil magic or curse.

Often such water is drawn from sacred lakes, thereby becoming a religious object. This ritual is commonly observed at the annual Anglican Church family weekend gathering at Mantsopa. Thousands of church members and ordinary people fetch water from the fountain of *Nkgono* Mantsopa for religious activities. They claim that this provides healing of many diseases and cures for sickness.



**Image 5.10 Cave pilgrims queuing to fetch water at Nkgono Mantsopa fountain by
DHD Ngobese, 04/ 09/ 2017**



**Image 5.11- Cave pilgrims fetching sacred water at *Nkgono Mantsopa's* fountain by
DHD Ngobese, 04/ 09/ 2017**

5.9 Communicating with the Divine at the sacred caves

In King's (1986:59) discussion portraying communication with the divine, he deals with the way in which the divine communicate with the human and the human with the divine. Africans are familiar with the continual two-way communication. The divine can speak directly or through intermediary people or objects, which King (1986:59) described as mysticism and sacrifice.

5.9.1 Prayer, fellowship and sacrifice

Ritual sacrifice is something any observant person will perform all over Africa. King (1986; 64) defined *sacrifice*, in its ritual or ceremonial use, as 'making sacred, an offering that becomes divinized", confirming that human intent and thought are offered in sacrifice.

Intention is conveyed and sealed in words and action: for example, the cow is slaughtered for sacrifice symbolizes the reasoning and content of why the ritual has to be undertaken. Mbiti (1991) noted that when the animals are sacrificed, being used for a religious purpose, they become religious objects (1991, p.141) It is the intention and their use which make them religious objects.

One of the common features of Africa is the praying tradition. Mbiti (1986:67) enlarged on the variety of praying forms. The researcher gave the difference between the congregants of Kimbanguist church in Zaire and others that:

"its members can and must pray at all times and in particular in the morning on rising, at noon and if possible at midnight, before going to sleep and before consuming any food or drink" (Mbiti, 1986: 67)

In Nigeria's, the Church of the Lord (Alundra), members have six commands, of which the first one is 'to pray'. Members are instructed to and expected to keep regular times of prayer or watches at every three hours during the day; praying at midnight and in the morning is regarded as particularly valuable for special time for requests and intimate knowledge of God (Ibid, p 68).

It is noted that in many African countries, these praying traditions are still organized today, although in a smaller scale. Concurring with Mbiti (1986:69), overseas missionaries brought the gospel to Africa over the last 600 years ago and taught people to pray. Mbiti argues that prayer is an indispensable element of the Christian tradition which later was practiced and taken for granted by both the missionaries and African converts. This later escalated to African traditional religion where many Africans felt that they do not have enough prayer within the official framework of the mission churches (Ibid, p. 69).

It is an undisputable point that African Christians have nevertheless taken up the praying tradition and elevated it beyond the normal practices and teachings. Common hypothetical questions still remain unanswered. What is it in the praying tradition that attracts African Christians so readily? How do they interpret prayer? What is the content of prayers, and how do people deal with unanswered prayer?

One may address these issues, not necessary supplying the answers, but at least exploring the situation which may help us to understand the depths of prayer in the African setting, especially at the sacred caves.

Mbiti (1986: 70) disputed that fact that prayer was introduced by the Christian missionaries or by the church. He pointed out clearly that prayer is a well-established and deeply-rooted tradition which has evolved over centuries and generations. It is part and parcel of traditional African life. Prayers are offered not only at places of worship, but also at any time and in any place.

Interaction with *Sangoma* Monica Mongengene (2016) has confirmed that African people often stop on their way at shrines, be it sacred trees, brooks, graves or sacred signs, to offer brief prayers; or they may speak their prayers in intimate ways to their divinity, whom they believe to be ever present though unseen as they walk along the road or are engaged in their work. Through prayer, African people ask blessings on their journeys, their work, their wares, their families, or their private undertakings.



**Image 5.12 Cave pilgrims offer prayers next to the grave of Mantsopa by
DHD Ngobese, 04/ 09/ 2017**

Scholars who have collected and studied the texts of African prayers are deeply impressed by their richness. One of them was Mbiti (1986: 71) who holds the same view that prayers contain the most intense expression of African traditional spirituality. Prayer presents the African religion with the most fertile ground for the reception, retention, assimilation, and practice of the Biblical faith (Ibid, p 71).

In traditional life, African people understand and practice prayer as a natural form relating to spiritual realities. Through prayer, man expressed his anxieties and gratitude, his fears and hopes, his confidence and assurance, his faith and intimacy. Mbiti (1986: 72) argues that people do not spend time theorizing about prayer, or analysing its academic meaning, or its form and structure. Prayer is therefore a living spirituality, an integral part of being a human being.

Cave pilgrims of Mantsopa are convinced that there is no particular time set for the worship and honour of the ancestors. As with *Nkgono* Mantsopa, ancestors are honoured by every good deed which a person performs in the course of daily life. In essence, Africans know no distinction between the living and the dead. Life can only be enjoyed in its fullness when the ancestors are remembered and honoured. Bujo (1992: 25) emphasised that people are conscious of the presence of the ancestors whenever they enjoy the fullness of life. It is common to Africans to believe that the dead person becomes a guardian spirit who shares life with the earthly family.

In praying, God and ancestors are both invoked to ensure a successful outcome, or what Mensele (2011:101) termed '*Re rapela Modimo ka badimo*' meaning that 'we pray God through the ancestors'. These are very important words that form a major core of the language used during prayer rituals at the sacred sites.

Mensele's (2011:101) presupposition is extremely important, in that the above words have strengthened the researcher's view of the nature of prayer rituals performed by local user communities of the sacred sites. This indicates that they believe that they are part of the Bible, hence, the children of God. That belief may also be seen in what most of them wear; the long robes in different colours, known to be Jewish attire.

5.9.2 Drumming and dancing

Africans are naturally very fond of music. Mbiti (1975: 9) offered some key characteristics of the African people over large areas of the continent: music, dance and singing. He argued that music is used in all activities of African life: in cultivating the fields, fishing, herding, performing ceremonies, praising rulers, and so on (Ibid, p 9). African music and dance are the chief treasures of the African culture and heritage.

Within the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State, there is occasion for singing and dancing at times of communal acts of worship in which prayers are offered or sacrifices and offerings are made. All religious churches and traditional healers meet together for public rituals, celebrations, and worship, such as singing, dancing, clapping of hands and expressing rejoicing. Cave dwellers thus participate emotionally and

physically in the act of worship, through beating the drums, playing musical instruments, dancing and rejoicing.

Traditional healers' accounts on possession testify that dancing and singing evoke the ancestral spirit. Mbiti (1975: 67) concurs with dance participants at the sacred cave, that some of the dancing and singing sessions which accompany communal worship may last the whole day or even several days. Thereafter, dance participants feel satisfied in spirit, even though physically exhausted (Ibid, p. 68).

Communal dancing and singing was observed on two ceremonies at the sacred cave site. One was observed on the 3 September 2017 at the service held at Mantsopa cave by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Diocese of the Free State. Approximately five thousand church members, traditional healers, apostolic church congregants, and ordinary people were in attendance.

The second ceremony was held at Mantsopa cave site. Over two hundred traditional healers gathered for the launch of the Lesedi Production Association of traditional healers in the Free State province. The occasion was graced by the presence of the Mayor of Mantsopa Local Municipality, Councilor Mamsie Tsoene who also donated the cow for the ritual sacrifices.



Image 5.13 Singing and dancing during cave church service at Mantsopa by DHD Ngobese, 03/ 09/ 2017



Image 5.14 Singing and dancing during the launch of Traditional Healers' Association (Lesedi production) at Mantsopa cave by Ngobese, 20/ 07/ 2017

Among the Sotho- and AmaZulu-speaking people, there are many shrines at which possession takes place. Some of these are major spirits where the trainee (*ithwasa*) is screaming and begins to jump, like a wild animal, all four feet off the ground. He would fall heavily as these jumps increase in height, but the attendants catch him and restrain his leaping. They remove him and finally succeeded in calming him. As the process continued, dancing takes centre stage until the early hours of the morning. Adherents are then given a cooked meal including meat from the sacrifice.

5.10 COMMUNITY IDENTITY IN THE SACRED SITES

5.10.1 Identity construction and reconstruction

Community belonging, experiences, and identification with a site are relevant discourses of this work. The focus of this study is to uncover what is defined through the sets of experiences, sets of shrines, and ritual performances in understanding people's identities. Sacred sites are referred to by cave dwellers as their 'homes', providing them with the capacity and comprehension of the intellect, and the needs of the emotion and spirit. It is interesting to follow how a sacred site generates a sense of being, and the overlapping of the person with the environment.

Amongst what has been investigated is how symbols and patterns of community dynamics at sacred sites constitute new identity constructions in a changing society. Cultural and social boundaries of various kinds mediate the perception and presentation of ambiguous behaviour of what is happening at the sacred sites such as cultural imperialism, sacred sites dynamics, and mutual attributions, relations between putative centres and their peripheries and denigration of identity.

Cave dwellers argue that the social identity of a group may be contested within the group itself, on grounds related to cross-boundaries interaction solely because people visiting the sites are coming from various ethnic, cultural, religious and political background. Cohen (2002: 2) claims that it is this cross-boundary transaction and discourse that identity and its predicates may become explicitly depending to each other.

5.10.2 Dynamics between the Whites and indigenous (African) people

The study began by examining indigenous people in relation to the Whites (Settlers). It also emphasises how the settlers are coping with the indigenous people of South Africa. I have to acknowledge that the very notion of 'boundary' presuppose the two sides. Robert Paine (2000: 78) brings forward the current politicization of issues about indigenous people's identity and rights. Heralding their emancipation, efforts to self-bestowal amongst Africans have led to ask of themselves "Who is us", "What is our tradition?"

What if one has to look for moral concern historically amongst Whites population regarding their indigenous people? Paine (2000: 79) is concerned about the individual existence and its credibility and brings forward the concept authenticity as cultural construct of the modern western world. He defines authenticity as,

"about changing the present in the present and being different from what one is, for an Aboriginal people; this probably mean being different from what others made us into or made us out to be" (Paine: 2000, p. 82)

The bottom line is that White's greediness began with the detachment from colonial status vis- a- vis a mother country and the emergence of a politically sovereign state, coincided with emergence of white national consciousness. Robert Paine asked the simple question, when does the Whites society pass beyond being one in relation to the Aboriginal populations in its midst (2000: 104).

5.10.3. Dwelling as identity constructed phenomenon

On the appearance of the campsite or ancestral huts, I seen that nothing is permanently built. Perhaps holes were dug mixed with stones and sometimes not covered or covered with grass to serve a shelters. Despite many myths and stories about the caves, it actually resembles that our ancestors once lived in many part of the world includes caves and mountainous landscape. Of course it is fact there were no convenient natural housings were available.

Blij and Murphy pointed out that the diversity of dwellings around the sacred cave has ancient origins, however the distribution patterns was further complicated by migration which diffused building practices along the numerous routes and different origins (2003, p 288). At the sacred site of Motouleng, account from the traditional healers who reside for a long period argued that he was send by his ancestors through dream to introduce a new construction technique that led to abandonment or modification of existing practices.

Mr. Jacob Radebe from Bethlehem in the Free State testified in the interview held on 04 May 2016 said,

“Badimo ba bollela motho hore le ntlo ba batla a ba ahele e jwang, ha o ahe feela ka moo o ratang”

“It’s the ancestors who told a person what kind of the house/ hut should one build; you are not building a house/ hut as you like”

Mensele (2011) concurs with Jacob Hadebe, a cave dweller, that all what the healers do and perform are done according to ancestor’s approach. She alludes that:

“Ancestors even instruct the traditional healer as to what kind of the hut/ house they want him or her to build for them, one does not build after all it is their house not the traditional healer’s.” (Mensele, 2011, p. 80)



**Image 5.15 Old construction techniques of dwelling hut/ houses by
Ngobese 08/ 07/ 2017**



**Image 5.16 New construction techniques of dwelling hut/ house by
DHD Ngobese 25/11/2017**

Beyond this most general observation, the greatest influence on patterns of settlement and land use are from the physical environment and from social rules concerning land ownership and distribution. Comparatively, dwelling house/ huts follow a township and range system where it is designed to facilitate the dispersal of settlers evenly across the farmlands. At the end, the system imposed a rigid grid-like pattern on the land.

Although cultural traditions promote continuity in building types and styles, time does bring change. To my surprised, some traditional healers still retained their old building methods even when there are new dwelling ancestral huts. Dwelling at the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State had become an integral part of their culture and belief systems about traditional life of their forefathers.

5.10.4 Identity and other social identities

One has to consider how far religious practices can be utilized in traditional religion discourse as a marker to religious practice in discourse about religious allegiances. To find out whether one have ever made use of reference to religious practices in discourse about religious allegiance is paramount important to come to some conclusion as to whether one should talk in terms of shifting religious identities.

Sandwell (2007) simplify the above notion by saying construction of identity takes place in the sphere of language, in what people say and write and how they think about themselves and others (2007: 245). Furthermore, Sandwell noted that practice and behavior are often shared across the boundaries of ethnic difference that human discourses seek to construct (Ibid, p. 245). Then, religious practice does not have to be totally antithetical to identity because of their public and visible nature.

Some anthropologist argue that ritual and religion practices behave like language in being a form of symbolic communication that can be interpreted to gain meaning. As a matter of fact, Sandwell (2007: 279) and Anthony and Ziebertz (2012: 2) argue that one religious identity would always be a factor in social interaction.

In the South African context, the transition initiated in 1994 was an external objective event that was the replacement of white government by black majority rule but did not guarantee an 'inner' transition in people's thinking or mentality (du Toit, 2009: 21). That transition would require white citizens to see their black compatriots as equal partners enjoying the same rights and privileges as whites had enjoyed all along. Such radical shift in the white mentality would require mentoring and reorientation projects, for an example mentality of exclusiveness.

Du Toit (2009: 23) voice out that a sense of exclusiveness may be nurtured by various aspects of an individual's existence: race, gender, culture, religion, personal space, ideas, identity, consciousness of one's dignity and the like. He concludes by saying these things don't change easily and it would take decades of exposure to unforeseen historical changes for the impact to register (Ibid, 2009: 24).

It is not clear how and to what extend African identity can be changed, recovered or reformulated. The process of identity retrieval may be more or less radical, more intellectual and psychological than physical. Du Toit (2009: 32) argues that in African culture, group identity normally takes precedence over individual identity. Although eroded by urbanization, group identity is still of vital important. The question is to how to accommodate a multiplicity of group identities in a process of nation building and national unification.

Africa does have identity and there is no need to identify African culture with ancient Egyptian culture. Du Toit's book (2009) simple define what is African identity. He says,

“African identity is a pluralistic, incorporating a multitude of languages, religions, lifestyles and customs, stories and rites” (2009: 35)

Anthropologist proposed that a new identity is about developing and sees Africa as searching for a new identity alongside with other continents. Du Toit (2009: 36) poses this question that can identities be tied up with the question of who people, persons, human beings are? African identity is properly explained only when history is known. Dealing with the past, history is also an act or restoration and reinterpretation through which one redefine and reshape herself.

5.10.5 New identity

Du Toit quotes Smart (1995: 44-47) when he believes that intercultural contact will produce new intermediate social forms, just as contact between major religions that gave rise to new variants. He asks the following questions: is it possible in South Africa with its plurality of ethnic groups, languages and cultures? and Is it race or skin colour sufficient to engender the idea of a nation (du Toit, 2009: 37)?

It is noted that culture is not a self-contained whole and nation does not have only one culture. Du Toit proposes that South African may never be a nation in the idealistic sense of the word, but it may become a people united by mutual values and interests (2009: 38). That ideal presupposes a process of bonding, commitment to values like respect, freedom, diversity, interdependence and shared sacrifices.

In achieving an overarching identity in a multicultural context requires a culture of recognition of individual and collective one as a prerequisite for peaceful co-existence. It is undisputed that religion binds most people in this country and it is an exception to the sacred cave. It is of course a key factor which interrelates most ethnic and cultural groups in the cave sites. The challenge is to create an environment where poly-nation societies remain openness, recognition, tolerance, mutual empowerment and respect.

Du Toit suggests that a single ethnic group cannot dominate too long before uniting other groups against it (2007, p. 41). The success of the South African experience spells hopes for the rest of the continent to conquer the struggle for multiculturalism and ethnocentrism. It also refutes the perception, common to Whites and land owners, that Africans are rationally inferior to Westerners.

Meer (2014) brings a new concept of mixedness¹ in attempting to define a new identity found at the sacred caves. He argued that the concept of mixedness is a recent addition to the study of race and ethnicity but does not describe a new phenomenon (Meer, 2014, p. 80).

¹Meer (2014) describe something about our prevailing categories as much as new social processes and also describe a shift in our way of conceptualizing variety in ethnic and racial identities.

With a broader challenge to the coherence of fixed racial identities, however, race and ethnicity studies have been required to rethink ways in which the racialization of mixed categories has developed.

One of the implication here has been the tendency of people with more than one ethnic or racial background to refuse seeking recognition instead that mixing constitutes their perceived heritage. This creates a misrecognition on how the minority religions provide some politically valid categories of identity-related claims-making in manner that departs from an earlier kind of secularism in recognition theory (Meer, 2014, p 134).

5.11 SIDE DYNAMICS

5.11.1 Tension and interaction

Throughout the period of research at sacred sites, the researcher has noted that there is looming tension between the land owners and cave dwellers. Then, the study will look at some of this tension resulted from accessing the site, collection of entrance fees and looming tourist establishment in all sacred areas. The study will also trace the local and national government involvement in resolving any contestation and conflict that may arises.

5.11.1.1 Landowner collecting of entrance fee

Land owners argue that sacred sites have to generate money in order to be maintained preserved, conserved and presented. It is noted that all sacred sites have no fully-operational visitor's centre and adequate facilities, for an example, toilets, footbridge, water and sanitation. In an attempt to control the visitors access to the cave, caretakers are employed to collect entrance fees rather than to guide visitors and tour to entire sacred space and landscape. Entrance fee differs from site to site. For an example, entrance fee at Mantsopa cave is presently R 25 per person and Motouleng cave has just increased to R20 per person, as it illustrated in figures 5.1 and 5.2.

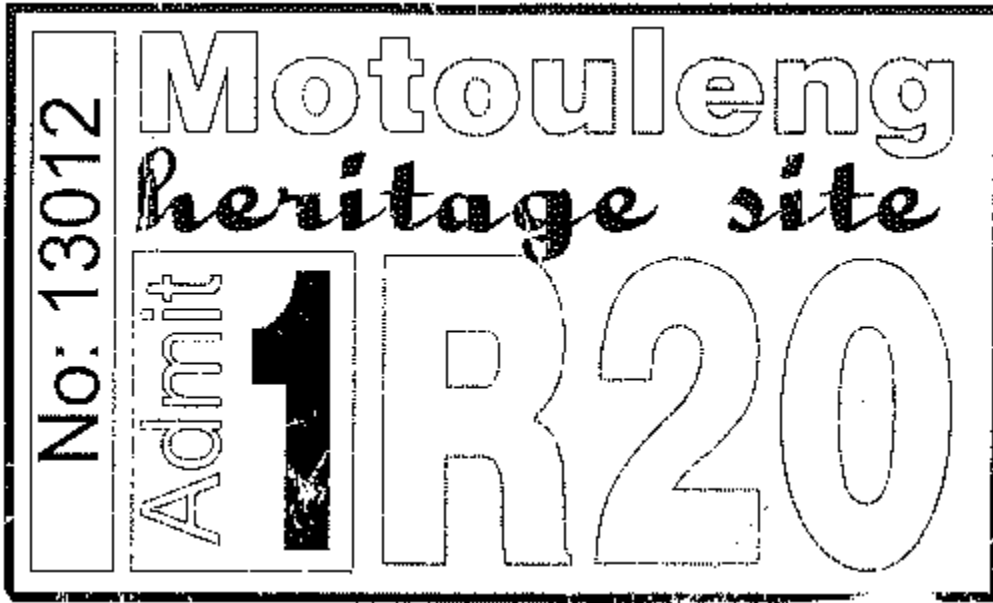


Figure 5.1 Entrance payment receipt received by DHD Ngobese at Motouleng sacred site, 04/ 09/ 2017



Figure 5.2 Entrance payment receipt received by DHD Ngobese at Mantsopa sacred site, 07/ 07. 2017

Interview' account from Mrs. Mmaqetelo Mofokeng (2016), the caretaker at Motouleng, render an indication that farm-owner used the entrance fee for their personal gains, not assist the cave dweller. In an attempt to find out what are entrance fees use for, she passionately responded and say,

“Ha ke tsebe hore o etsang ka tjhelete eo a e patadisang batho”

“I don't know what he is doing with the money collected before the access is granted” (Mofokeng, Interview, 2016)

5.11.1.2 Contesting authorities in the caves

Bender (2002: 142) explores how the land owners attempted both physically and aesthetically, to appropriate sacred landscape not to allow cave dwellers free entrance. Their driving force is, amongst others, economic and political power and necessity of cultural capital. I argue that people's experience of the land is based on their everyday attentiveness to the tasks in hand, routines and their relations to each other, land, history and cultural belief. Of course, their engagement is also shaped by the particularity of historical moment.

Having stress that one can only understand the contestations and appropriations of a landscape by carefully historical contextualization. Bander (2002: 142) strongly argues that those in power, they are not only driven by internal factions and tensions but are dependent upon some degree of acceptance by those without power and therefore perform their reaction, contestation and subversion is needed.

The first impulse of protest and contestation for the existence of the sacred cave site was at Motouleng site early twenty- first century. As I noted in the preceding chapter, Sunday Times newspaper Jordan, B. (09/ 07/2000) reported on Sunday Times Newspaper that the farm- owner attempted to blow up the cave rather allowing access to the traditional healers and diviners. Consequently, the fierce intercession by the Africanist includes the spiritual and religious leaders demanding access to the cave sites led to the national wide outcry and reaction from various sectors of the community.

To mention the closure of Mautse sacred cave situated near Rosendal after decades of operation and existence aggravates the dissatisfaction from members of the community, diviners and traditional healers. The sacred site was officially shut down at the end of June 2016 after it was purchased by Mr. P Mapelepo from Johannesburg, Gauteng province. Two months notice was issued to cave pilgrims and visitors informing them about the closure. There is an unconfirmed allegation that Mr. Mapelepo even announced the closure at provincial radio station, Lesedi FM. Cave dwellers confirm that they witness the demolishing of all the ancestral building, huts and various structures by bulldozers vehicle.

Interviewed maintenance officer of the farm, Mr. Tseditso Tebeho, held on the 26 November 2016, gives a clear indication why the sacred cave of Mautse was terminated. He outlines reasons the new farm owner decided to close amongst others:

- To prevent in fighting amongst the cave dwellers that led to assault and murdering of other people
- Untidiness and littering of bottle and other waste material increased beyond control of the maintenance officers
- Prevention of visitors and other traditional healers to use the fixed structure in their time of visit and even requesting them to pay renting fees
- Hiding of criminals inside the sacred cave who were running away from the police and the community.

Irrespective of several meetings between the farm owner and cave dwellers in attempting to alleviate the situation, the farm owner opted to shut down the site. Until today, there is no indication whether the Mautse sacred cave will ever be open to public. What is left is the sign written "Nkonkomoni Heritage Site" and big sign saying "*Ha ho kenwe mona*" "No entry here"



**Image 5.17 Closure Mautse cave site shown by gate locked
DHD Ngobese, 24/ 11/ 2017**

Mr. David Kgoabane from Brightside location in Ladybrand had a positive attitude about the reopening of Mautse cave site. In an interviewed held on the 19 July 2017, he pointed out that,

“Lebaka la ho kwalwa ha Mautse ke hobane hona lekgowa le kwetseng sebaka ka baka la dikgomo, masimo a hae. Jwale batho ba batsho ba a tjesetsa, hape o batla ho lokisa sebaka seo, hore batho ba kene ka tjhelete. Hape o batla ho kampela hore batho ba felle feela mahaheng base ke ba utswa mehlape ya hae”

“The reasons for the closure of Mautse cave site by the farm owner was to protect his plantation crops and livestock. It’s because Africans steal them and he decided to fence his territory away from the caves in order to prevent stealing and begin the process of charging people entrance fees”

According to Turner (1969), pilgrimaging continues to maintain a subsystem of beliefs and symbols derived from its historical origin. The constant contestation of supremacy and hegemony between advocates of the “nuclear paradigm” has made a major sacred a centres of conflicting discourse. Nthoi (2006: 78) argues that the conflict, competitions and a variety of multi-focal discourse are the key concern of uniformity, peace and tolerance amongst the pilgrimages and cave dwellers.

This does not suggest that there is no control of the use of the sacred space by cave dwellers themselves and senior officials. Mr. David Kgoabane (interviewed, 17/ 07/ 2017) confirms that there were ongoing conflict and contestation amongst the cave dwellers, between the officials and visitors, and cave dwellers and farm owners. between the pilgrims themselves about the use of sacred space at Mautse sacred site. He does not want to elaborate further in this regards. There is no doubt that the whole scenarios highlight the farm owners’ attempt to stamp their authority and establish a semblance of orthodoxy in the use of sacred space.

Pilgrimage in historical religions is triggered by spiritual (salvation, divination, seeking penance, endure suffering and pain) and materialistic motivation (desire for health, strength longevity and fertility). Therefore, individual and personal motivations for undertaking the arduous journey of the sacred space or pilgrimage shrines need to be considered very seriously.

A major controversy as crafted by Lerner (2000: 39) relates to the question of striking the balance between the prohibition of incitement against religious groups and the freedom of speech or association, as enunciated in Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966.

I belief that there is solution to conflict and contestation in sacred sites depending on the constitutional systems of respective countries. In South Africa, provincial and national legislation has provided the guideline on how the sacred sites should be managed and preserved.

South African Heritage Resource Act, 25 of 1999 do instigate the promotion protection of sacred sites be it graves, landscape, mountain, rivers and pool that have sacredness and use by communities for cultural practices. The precedent trends presently prevailing in connection with religion rights seem to indicate a growing understanding of the need to protect substantive social values against abuses of freedom of speech and association (Ibid, 39). Surely, there is a need to ensure protection of religious, ethnic and cultural groups, irrespective of nature of the religion, color and beliefs.

The preamble above legislation states that the primary aims to promote good management of the national estate, and to enable and encourage communities to nurture and conserve their legacy so that it may bequeathed to future generations. Our heritage is unique and precious and it cannot be renewed. It helps us to define our cultural identity and therefore lies at the heart of our spiritual well-being and has the power to build our nation. It has the potential to affirm our diverse cultures, and in so doing shape our national character.

5.11.2 Contestation and conflict

The notion behind this study is to underline the inherent nature of contested space and also illustrate that sacred space is not contested by all groups at all scales. Sacred sites of the Eastern Free State are indeed a contested space.

I concur with Daniel Olsen (2008: 174) when he said that one of the consequences of social groups or individual marking certain spaces, is control those spaces that practices a politics of exclusion. This dominant discourse about places has led cultural geographers to examine the ways in which landscape constitute social construction of power and the naturalization of those power discourses within the landscape.

There is a strong dissatisfaction towards the farm- owners who use the boundaries outside the sacred cave to contest what they see as no farming activities. Contestation comes from cave dwellers, diviners and traditional who perceive the sacred sites as religious space not as commercialize tourism facility where they are forced to pay entrance. Moreover, individual tourist operators and government department do want to increase their business by extending their cultural tourism initiatives at cave site.

Daniel Olsen (2008) work on “Contesting Identity, Space and Sacred Time Management at Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah” thesis research what happens on Temple of Square as a sacred site and depicted similar contestation that relates to “power relation”. Olsen (2008) uses the example of Mitchell work to look at two protected groups within Jerusalem sacred sites.

There are contested ideology regarding the dwelling at the ancestral place. Coplan (2003) mentions that the farmers attempted to forbid the building of permanent structures at the shrine and the pilgrims too observe strictures against modifications to the natural environment that might offend the ancestors whose home this is. Interestingly, the makeshift shelters as labelled by Coplan (2003: 982) is built into the long cave wall reflect a spiritualized vernacular architecture designed in dreams and bear only an underlying, not a decorative resemblance to indigenous African housing.

Prior to the demarcation of South Africa and Lesotho, pilgrims claim that the shrine of Badimong and other sacred sites regarded as being located within Lesotho borders. Coplan (2003: 985) argues that pilgrims offered a consistence response for Badimong and Nkonkmoni, as a source of spiritual power, came equally from communities in the Free State and from across the border in Lesotho. They even stated that they did not passed through any border post, crossing the river in the high valleys on foot.

5.11.3 Booming tourism industry

In contrary to a conservation initiative, preservation and promotion of culture, religion and heritage, the reality of preservation, conservation and public access to tourism industry is presently a “booming” business. It is noted from all the sacred spaces of the Eastern Free State that the tourist market which require less investment and maintenance in fixed facilities look to expand its jurisdiction and tap to cultural tourism and sacred spaces.

Mr. Tom Gill, Tourism officer found at Clarens Information center, confirmed that they were happy to work with Dihlabeng Municipality Tourism office to promote tourism at sacred sites (Interviewed, 04/ 09 2017). Meaning that they do attract large number of tourist, coming from local and international countries, to sacred site on weekends and their itinerary involves Motouleng, Mautse and Mantsopa caves, tourism sign written “*Lekgalong la Mantsopa*” is illustrated in image 5.16

Nowadays, tourism is part of the broader capitalist systems with most stakeholders interested in turning a profit rather competition over sacred space for its own sake, tourism stakeholders and businesses tend to work together in order to maximize tourism revenue (Olsen, 2008: 175). However, local tour operators have not negotiated access and cooperation with the cave dwellers or traditional healers in order to grow the industry and even informed about ethical consideration of the cave dwellers.

I strongly believe the cave dwellers have no problem with the influx of tourist to ancestral land provided they do honour the sacredness of the site and ethical consideration attached to the site. Indeed, sacred caves are space where modern reflective subject-making in tourism takes place through encountering and interacting with different cultures and places.



**Image 5.18 *Lekgalong La Mantsopa* (Mantsopa's Pass) by DHD Ngobese,
03/ 09/ 2017**

Cave dwellers hope that cave visits on the sacred space will reconnect with one religious belief and reinforce cultural identities. Olsen attests to the above that visitors should ideally not leave as the same people that they arrived, but rather should either have their religious identities deepened and strengthened (2008, p 185)

5.11.4 Local and national government involvement

Officials from the local municipalities have been interrogated on pertinent issues regarding government involvement to control and management of sacred sites in the Eastern Free State. Personal interviews were held on different dates with officials responsible for local economic development or tourism offices. The responses were diverse in particular their knowledge of the sites, role and responsibilities, economic spin- off and co- management and preservation of the sites.

The municipality under which Mautse cave falls is Setsoto Local municipality that has no attachment to the sacred space irrespective of its size, popularity and blessed with ancestral belief and practices. Mr. Oupa Khaoletsa, Local Development Officer, confirms that Setsoto local municipality has not priorities for the sacred site development in their integrated development plan (IDP) and programme (Interviewed, 03/ 09/ 2017). Therefore, I strongly conclude that there is a lack of knowledge about the existence of the sacred cave within their area and its importance to immediate communities and diviners along the Caledon Valley areas.

Mr. S Ngema, a tourism officer from Dihlabeng Local Municipality, response from the open questions during the interview I had with me on the 18 July 2017, confirms that there is no good relationship with the farm owner of Motouleng cave and municipality does contribute to cave operation. Although Motouleng sacred cave is under Dihlabeng municipality's jurisdiction, Ngema (2017) confirmed that the municipality laid no hand to the site's control and management and no financial injection directed to the site.

What is surprising is that the municipality do arrange and hold tourism forum meetings with tour guides and they show keen interest in investing tourist attraction to sacred cave sites. Ngema (2017) argues that the municipality's interest is not on cultural site promotion and preservation but on key service deliveries like houses, water and sanitation.

Therefore, Motouleng, as sacred space, is solely neglected by the municipality authorities. He also responded to annual visitor's statistics that the municipality does not keep records of tourist/ visitors, visiting the site and also he was also surprised to learn that the farm-owner has commercialize the cave by collection entrance of R25 per person (interviewed, 18/ 07/ 2017).

Steve Shaull, director of Mantsopa Cave Complex, has a dissimilar view with one of Dihlabeng municipality. He uttered that Mantsopa Local Municipality fully supported the cave site (Interviewed, 19/ 07/ 2017). He argues that Mantsopa municipality even took initiative of renaming the municipality from Ladybrand Local Municipality to Mantsopa Local municipality on the 09 August 2003 in honour of Nkgono Mantsopa,

the seer. In return, the municipality spent over ten (10) millions of rand to upgrade the whole complex: building and paved the pathway to the fountain, installed parasites and walkway to the cave (Ibid, 19/ 07/ 2017).

The name change has now been widely accepted, and the pictures below show how Mantsopa's name has made its mark on the district's largest town, Ladybrand.



5.19 Image of Renaming of Ladybrand Municipality to Mantsopa Local Municipality by DHD Ngobese, 12/ 10/ 2017



5.20 Image of New constructed Mantsopa Hospital JV by DHD Ngobese, 12/ 10/ 2017



5.21 Image of New- naming of Mantsopa Liquor Store by DHD Ngobese, 12/ 10/ 2017

The South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) as an agent of the National Department of Arts and Culture do safeguard the protection of living heritage areas and sites in South Africa. The South African Heritage Resource Act, no 25 of 1999 has endorsed that any cultural sites should be preserved and protected includes pools, caves, landscape and mountains. No 4 of Section 5 of an Act, recognises basic principles of heritage resource management that includes heritage resources form an important part of the history and beliefs of communities and must be managed in a way that acknowledges the right of affected communities to be consulted and to participate in their management.

However, it is silence on cultural sites situated within the privately owned land. Eventually, it portrayed negatively to individually and cultural activists who regards the sacred sites as ancestral land.

Rowlands (2002: 117) asserts that the absence of legal definition of cultural rights, reflects a more general problem that of defining collective rights by contrast to those of the individual and the state. Many arguments avow a right to culture without defining what it that has a right. As enshrine in the international Bill of Human Rights or 1992 UN Declaration on the right of the person, cultural rights are personal insofar as they protect the right of the individual to a cultural life or the right of individual (Ibid, p. 117).

Defining cultural property as a right means seeing heritage as part of the process or reproducing social relationships rather than simply the accumulation of things. Rowlands stated that the link between the cultural rights and property is embedded in current and proposed international legislation (2002, p 128). He quoted the resolution presented by the UNESCO Draft Declaration meetings, that says:

1. Indigenous peoples should be recognized as a primary guardians and interpreters of their culture, arts and sciences whether created in the past or developed by them in future.
2. All forms of tourism based on indigenous people's heritage to be restricted to activities which have the approval of the people and communities concerned and which are conducted under their supervision and control.
3. Protection against debasement of cultural significant items.

4. Appropriate the standards to be presented for the use of indigenous imagery by the tourist industry.

The above are the few of the list of culture property claims which should be protected. In a nutshell, this of course allow little room for the establishment of mutual respect in shared cultural property and no dispute for the right of indigenous peoples to protect their cultural heritage and prevent it being exploited.

National heritage of a particular country deems to be crucial for its socio-cultural cohesion and political autonomy. It rather reflects the ethos or lifestyle of a people according to which they practice, protect, and pass on their national traditions with keen interest to subsequent generations. The actual way of life prescribes that cultural and religious tolerance render successful consensus in promoting any forms of peaceful existence (Anthony and Ziebertz, 2012, p 2).

It is for this reason that the study is heavily involved in ameliorating the social impact of development on diviners and traditional healers and their culture at the sacred space. Rowlands (2002:130) is triggered to state that the destruction of sacred sites went hand in hand with the gradual dispossession of Aboriginal from their traditional lands. The issue remains how to collaborate, negotiate and participate with all stakeholders involved include government departments in alleviating tension and conflict that arises.

5.11.5 Reflections

In this chapter I attempted to focus on analyses of the symbolic of religious experience and ritual form may reveal indigenous conception of rapid change and oppression. In such context, Sharp (1999: 13) ritual responses cannot be viewed simply as archaic forms of traditionalism that arise in time of desperation and hopelessness. Rather, they reflect a keen awareness of existing power structures and hegemonic forces.

I tried to demonstrate that identity, land use and local autonomy are intrinsically linked. Thus, the frequent desecration of sacred territory often leads to the permanent destruction of local culture. Cave dwellers and healers reveals that the re-routine of sacred landscape, refers to closure of Mautse cave site, cut the sustenance of a community and its cultural practices solely because land owners need the sacred space for their economic reasons. It is fact that without the land and sacred space they ceased to exist.

The more devastating account offered by Mr. Tshediso Teboho (2016) who narrated how traditional healers are disputing the fact that closure of Mautse sacred cave site was caused by crime, contestation, conflict and in fighting and spiritually impure. To mention few repercussion: lock-out of cave dwellers, discontinuing usage of the site leads to community social disorder, rampant alcoholism and drug abuse, rape and cannibalism among African people.

Tackling Wendl's (1999:121) concludes that possession cults may, certain circumstances, serve to challenge and correct a people's mainstream historical tradition, thus constituting and articulating a kind of ritual consciousness that tries to fill in the lacks of the historical consciousness.

Ancestral presence in sacred space renders a place its rootedness and weave it into the wider networks and pathways of socio-cultural natural textures. In the 'living' ancestral shrine of sacred caves, places are no longer mere replicas of reproduced structures but became a living entities which are each born, grow and wither their own unique way. De Boeck 's article on "*place as cultural and natural texture*" mentions that space is both cosmological, natural and societal (1998: 47). In the process, social space stops being a cultural product and becomes a site of births

Furthermore, it also integrates the individual into the ongoing generational succession and relate them to the people with whom they share a common ascent or residence. Then, landscape become bodies of memory, mapping out places of belonging in the intertwined processes of individual and societal birthing, growth and history.

Freund (2009: 606) recites identity as a shifting, multifaceted concept that should be traced as it changes over times. With refers to Zulu identity, it may be associated with an internally created, primordial structure that has been shaped by the more by external processes. He further argues that it would be rush to predict that serious Zulu cultural revivalism is likely to emerge to counter the effects of globalization and reject the modern notion of state citizenship (ibid, 612). The fact remains that South Africa has not gone far to promote a post- apartheid national identity.

The study proceeds from the proposition that where there are boundaries, centres and peripheries. It proceeds from the assumption that the experience of being in the peripheries shapes the sense of identity and the way of thinking and also it assumes that centres have need of peripheries not only for their own identity but because there is always something to be learned from the peripheries.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF DATA

6.1 Introduction

As I discussed in the previous chapters that terms sacred sites and environment are inseparable in this study. A distinction between the two has been alluded by Pungetti et al (2012: 75) that 'sacred sites' implies a separation from what is profane and 'environment' implies separation between human beings and the world they live in.

What I presenting here is the decolonization of sacred landscape, meaning divesting Africa philosophy thinking of all undue influences emanating from the colonial past. Colonialism was not only a political imposition, but also a cultural one. It would not be rational to try to reject everything of a colonial ancestry, however, sacred landscape has no option to be interrogated in this study.

I argue that the notion of Ubuntu appears to have been eroded to the extent that it is currently seems unable to play a meaningful role in nation building. As a society that has undergone discontinuous change, South Africa is in a liminal space where there is both threat and possibility. Eliastam (2015:1) explains that there is a threat that erosion of positive social values will continue ad fragmented society will tear itself apart

The focus on documenting Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) or converting it to oral form, to one that is both more accessible and acceptable to a dominant society has an impact of separating the knowledge from all of the context that gives its meaning. It has the impact of separating knowledge from the people who possess it (Simpson: 2001, p. 139)

6.2 Cultural and spiritual values of the sacred sites

6.2.1 Decolonising the sacred landscape

Sacred cave sites have survived for many years and continue to this day throughout the African region despite many pressures like displacement of communities from the traditional land and resources, challenges of access, expropriation of community resources. I propose that sacred landscape are the bedrock for people and communities religious and spiritual beliefs and cultural identity. It is morally unjustifiable to remove the rights of peoples and communities to protect and manage such sites.

In decolonising the sacred landscape, there is a need for the recognition of spiritual and cultural rights that will ensure the continuation of livelihood and cultures of indigenous and traditional people. Such initiative may address questions such as possible cooperation between the communities and authorities involved with sacred natural sites and protected areas and staff employed within protected areas.

Using the landscape approach towards land use planning and management, it should be interesting to map sacred natural sites together with protected areas by identifying possibilities to link sacred sites together with spiritual and cultural values of neighboring sites using “green corridors” and providing buffers against the expected disturbances to sites that are sacred.

Twala (2009) disputes the traditional approach that the sacred sites are mainly for the Black people. Twala (2009: 97) quoted Rapitso from City Press who discovered that white people do come to the site and also claimed that they were called by the ancestors. Twala argues that the coming of the whites is an indication that the widely held view that the sites were made mainly for Africans had undergone some changes (2009, p. 98).

Twala narrates how Rapitso' s visit coincided with the 34-year-old white woman who claimed to reside at the sacred cave for more than three (3) months. The woman stated the following about her coming to the site and trained as a *sangoma*:

“I left my stable job and a rented townhouse in Cape Town, Initially I trained to become a *sangoma* three (3) years ago in the Transkei, but fled before finishing when I realize that the training was flawed and the unscrupulous teachers were only after money. Here it is the real thing. Gogo knows what is doing. Last Saturday I did the sheep offering and got my white *sangoma* dress. I do not know how long I am going to be here, but I am prepared to stay for as long as I have to. I do not know what I am going to do when I leave here but the ancestors will guide me. I do not see myself working in the formal job market”
(Ibid, p. 98)

The interaction in spiritual or religious spaces is not only with God (*Modimo*) but with the ancestor's worship. In whatever forms of worship, the spiritual experiences are embedded in collective identities through religion and religious practices. Marais (2014) introduces the concept of a supreme 'God' in trying to explore the relationships between African spirituality and identity connection to the sacred landscape.

Simpson (2001: 141) states that refusing to participate in co-management agreement, treaty negotiation and natural resource management agreement are effective ways of resisting the dominance of sacred sites by the land owners and its assimilative tendencies. Simpson (2001) explores the indigenous people and its knowledge have their own indigenous paradigms perceive and understand knowledge and power different than western alternative paradigms. Knowledge is ultimately originating in the spiritual world and it is controlled in a very specific and intricate ways in aboriginal lifeways (Ibid, 2001, 142)

6.2.2 Voices from the margin: indigenous people

Sacred sites become internalized within people's heart and mind, even in blood that runs through their veins. After years of appropriating, assimilating, ignoring and undermining and degrading their knowledge, Simpson (2000: 138) states that sacred caves are finally acknowledged by members of the dominate society. They are not interested in all kinds of knowledge, but remain interested in knowledge that is parallel to the western scientific discipline.

After years of documenting and integrating of knowledge, indigenous people are reviewing the results of this approach with great concern (Nel: 2005, p. 4). Early researchers in the field of African studies felt that by documenting Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and integrating it into their research, environment impact assessments and co-management agreements with the traditional healers and diviners may achieve a greater voice and greater control over the decisions that impact their land, communities and their lives.

The focus on documenting indigenous knowledge, converting it from its oral form to one that is both accessible and acceptable to the dominant (white) society, has impact of separating the knowledge from all of the context (the relationships, the world views, values, ethics, processes, spirituality) that gives meaning (Simpson, 2000, p. 139). The knowledge producers, be it diviners, prophets, argued that they have no power over how that knowledge is interpreted and used. In this instances, very little is done to promote the interest of the African knowledge practitioners and producers.

Knowledge within the traditional religion is perceived differently than it is in the western knowledge. In African context, knowledge ultimately originates in the spiritual world and it is controlled in very specific and intricate ways in African traditional religious lifeways. The process of learning, gaining new knowledge is focus around the learning more about ancestral world in relation to the land, the spirits and their relations.

It is noticeable that this knowledge come might come to them from relationships, experiences, story-telling, dreaming, participating in ceremonies, so-on. As more people look at their tradition, and to their knowledge with strength and courage to meet the demands of contemporary society, the process of cultural revitalization should be recorded and becomes part of indigenous knowledge, just as Africans experiences with the process of colonization. Truly, indigenous knowledge is part of the body of knowledge.

6.2.3 Localizing our knowledge systems

Introductory note from Prof PJ Nel (2005) edited book titled “Indigenous Knowledge systems in Theory and Practice” stated IKS research still needs to be recognized and legitimized in all domains of scientific inquiry and demonstrate its effective role and implementation in the restoration and development of indigenous communities. At the end, he stated that there is growing awareness of the important role has to play in the restoration and revitalization of the cultural and spiritual values underpinning a healthy society.

Given the dislocation and displacement of communities during the colonial and apartheid eras, communities have become estranged from the knowledge bases to which they were accustomed (Nel, 2005: 2). It is against this underscored assumption that indigenous knowledge is out there in local communities ready for collection. This shows how knowledge is creatively engaged to advance the knowledge of the community. It is for this reason that such knowledge must be embraced and accepted within a specific geographical area with historicity, integrity and respect it deserves.

Masoga (2005: 22) dilutes this discussion by asking this question, does indigenous refers to local or does local knowledge equate the knowledge that is local? He establishes that the two terms are used interchangeably, but indigenous refers to the embedded knowledge whereas traditional refers to the ‘handed’ knowledge (Ibid, p. 22).

I concur with policy document on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) that it is generally used synonymously with traditional and local knowledge to differentiate the knowledge developed by or within the distinctive indigenous communities from the international knowledge systems (Mkhabela: 2005, 362).

Luvuyo Dondolo (2003) points out that attempt at drawing indigenous knowledge and its systems, which were previously marginalized, stigmatized and viewed as backwards, in the main stream in order to be recognized, are the result of politics of recognition (2003: 112). The demand of recognition in these latter cases is given urgency by the supposed links between recognition and identity.

What is interesting, is that identity and recognition are intertwined and indicate the crucial features of the human condition caused by colonialism, apartheid and anthropological discourse. Dondolo (2003) suggest that Indigenous Knowledge should be defined as Local Knowledge, a communal knowledge shared by particular individuals, neighborhood, and community and language group within the particular geographical area.

I concur with Dondolo (2003: 116) that local knowledge is human centred and is about human beings, skills and knowledge in relation to their landscape. Dondolo further argues that Local Knowledge (LK) manifest itself in various aspect of social life, amongst others encompasses social, ecological, cultural, political and economic aspects, and so-on (Ibid, 118). I have no doubt that LK of sacred sites are socially constructed and resides in living memories, practices and expressions of the practicing communities and it is sometimes transmitted orally, by word of mouth, by practices and observations from one generation to the next.

This systems of knowledge which have been marginalized for a long time needs to be revived and claim its rightful place in the broader body of knowledge. Dondolo's paper titled "*Intangible Heritage: The production of Indigenous Knowledge in various aspects of social life*" attempts to do that and have also inform socio-political and cultural landscape of South Africa. Lately, I note that aspects of LK partly have been recognized and revitalized. However, this phenomenon raises question such as: Is this

the result of Africanization or forging of national heritage and identity that is more inclusive in the post-colonial period?

6.3 CULTURE, RELIGION AND IDENTITY- AN INEXTRICABLE LINK

6.3.1 Recognising the pilgrimaging

Sacred sites are unusually places that inspire awe in human beings and command respect from all around them. Mention in Chapter two when looking at historical background and physical landscape of the sacred site, there have been pilgrims to sacred caves of the Eastern Free State since their foundation. It has been recorded from Coplan's article titled "*Land from the Ancestors: Popular Religious Pilgrimage along the South Africa-Lesotho Border*" that the caves were at first remote and little visited by secular tourists.

The Sunday Times Newspaper article published in July 2000 and SABC broadcast in 2002 did sensitizes the nearby communities about the existence of the sites. With respect of the above, the advertisement opened it up on a larger scale. This in turn, led to the publication and marketing of the site's guidebooks, maps and pamphlets by farm owners, tourism structures, government departments and different municipalities.

Since the year 2000, tourism has become the driving force and farm owners sees an opportunity of sourcing income. They have also not promoted their facilities but religious and cultural practices that have taken precedence over pilgrimage and cave management. Pungetti et al pronounced that these mass tourism driven by historical and cultural interest brings many visitors and eventually adds more cars and buses to sacred sites (2012, p. 78).

It is noticeably that access is restricted at Motouleng and Mautse, by payment of entrance fees, but an increase of tourist attraction especially during Easter month, make it difficult for the community of these cave site to observe the degree of silence. This is significant to sacredness of the site and promotion of understanding and respect in the general public.

The above scenario arouses problems of toilets, parking and the balance between use and conservation of the caves and eventually creates tension, potential conflict arises between conservation of the natural heritage and the protection of spiritual and cultural values.

As Coplan argues, the spatial organization and temporal sequencing of the way of the pilgrims is also tied to this multiple, individuated spiritual ideology of the shrine (2003: 984). He further uttered that all pilgrims share an explicit calling (usually in dream) from the ancestors either to be healed of their afflictions or venerate, propitiate and thank them (Ibid, 984).

6.3.2 Memory and representation of belonging

What emerges from the previous chapters, is to note that African religious belief and their deities buried under thick layers of the prejudices of the colonial oppression. Throughout the long history in South Africa, African religions have never been the object of study in their own right. African deities were used as mercenaries in foreign battles not religion which has the interest of African peoples.

The decline of the study of African religious beliefs is that the burning theological debates in South Africa have now ended. P'bitek (2011: 50) perceives that the missionaries had another chance of convert Africa at the time of *uhuru*, have redoubled their efforts in the study of African religions. P'bitek (2011) cites the problem of unification and codification of law in a cultural and religiously plural society. Key question should be answered that how the consciousness of the great strength of the social norms which hold them together be combined with the need for a creating a modern, intelligible, unified systems of law (P'bitek, 2011, p. 53).

It should be noted that the landscape of mountains and forests has been associated with the sacred because it provides a natural sanctuary where human beings have felt they can approach the divine. Pungetti and et al (2012: 65) point out that the landscape came to have a symbolic significance favorable to a specific spiritual vocation.

Unlike the white farmers, however, the Basotho find it appropriate to draw a spiritual connection between themselves and the San, among whom they first lived and later displaced. It is evident that the San were the first to 'write' the sacred visions of the ancestors upon the walls of the caves. As known by the cave dwellers, the ancestors of the Basotho, whose land this was, are not given precedence at *Badimong*, it accommodates all the ancestors of the world, even those of the whites (Coplan, 2003: 985).

Often many self-respecting Africans have had to hang their heads, dumbfounded and their nationalist pride quenched by shame. Setiloane (1985) argues that it has become feared that, left to themselves, Africans cannot bring into being nor manage institutions of government which would uphold personal liberties and rights.

Setiloane (1985: 58) further continues saying the "tyrannous" rulers of African history, especially King Shaka and chief Mzilikazi, 's misrepresentation and misinterpretation by prejudiced imperialist historians and observers, have been cited to indicate how contrary it is to the nature of Africans to be fair in public dealing, sage in council and considerate in judgement of people as persons.

What makes memory usable as a source, is the fact that one can articulate it as replicas of past events, that are stored and remembered in the minds of the African people. Fentress and Wickham (1992: 7) emphasises that memory is structured by language, by teaching and observing, by collectively ideas and by experiences shared with others. Any attempt to use memory as a historical source in a sensitive way means to confront the subjective, yet social, character of memory from the outset.

Fentress and Wickham's view is that social memory is a history of its transmission in which oral historians could set themselves to explain how and why traditions fit the memories of certain groups (1992, p. 202). I conclude that so long as the story of *Nkgono* Mantsopa, King Moshoeshe, *Ha* Mmankopane, Mmadiboko is always be remembered as personifying heroic courage and valour in the face of desperate odds. In this study, they serve as part of raw material from which innumerable local legends are forged.

6.3.3 Prospect of 'Ubuntu' as construction of new identity

Mzamane (2009)'s article titled "Building South Africa using the Building Blocks of *Ubuntu*" in discussing the new form of consciousness stated that there are numerous and onerous challenges that faced the new South Africa, brought about by the changes of the first democratic elections of 27 April 1994 (Mzamane: 2009, p 234). Most of these challenges are tangible, in the material realm, societal relations as in agriculture, the economy, education and politics. This study presents an excellent opportunity to reflect on these matters in the sacred sites.

The dynamism of Ubuntu is testified to by the fact that in the past, it was a philosophy that underpinned the liberation struggle and today Ubuntu is laying the foundation of new South Africa (Mzamane: 2009, p. 237). He continues saying that without the building blocks of Ubuntu provides, we are trapped in colonial moulds of living and thinking. One of the least talked and most elusive issues is how to reconfigure the perception of *Ubuntu* as the creation of the new identity construction amongst the cave dwellers, visitors and pilgrims.

Eliastam's (2015) article explores the current state of the social value of Ubuntu that seems to offer possibility for nation- building and social cohesion in post- Apartheid South Africa. He advocates the guiding principle of Ubuntu that resonate with universal values of human worth and dignity. It involves sensitivity to the need of others, charity, sympathy, care and respect, consideration and kindness. It is also presented as an ideal stage of being a human being and best way of understanding of the human person.

In outlining this path, van Niekerk (2013) noted that *Ubuntu* is very difficult to render and define into Western language. It speaks to the very essence of being a human. Quoting Desmond Tutu's definition of *Ubuntu* when he said, Ubuntu refers to a constellation of value claims and morally normative requirements taken to be entailed by them, ostensibly drawn from traditional (South) African folk- psychology (van Niekerk: 2013, p 20).

While Mzamane reiterated what Tutu simplify Ubuntu when one wants to give a high praise to someone, we say, “*Yu u nobuntu*”; “Hey, she or he has Ubuntu” (Mzamane: 2009, p. 236). This means they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate.

The account of one of the apostolic church leader, Bishop Kokota (2017), says,

“People residing at the sacred sites are taking care of each other, when they eat sacrificial food, they invite other cave dwellers to join them. Even if there are left overs, they give to those who will remain behind, were are all people of *Modimo*. We are equal and look after ourselves. Even those who came with ulterior motives, he or she will change solely because this is a holy place” (Interviewed, 18/ 07/ 2017)

In a nutshell, the account above does confirm that Ubuntu responds that a human being exists in humanity through his or her relationships to other human beings. Mzamane phrased differently, “I am because we are” (Mzamane: 2009, p 247). In terms of this study, the ambivalence of black identity clearly makes it difficult to overcome the tension in black identity construction.

Mtose (2008) ‘s thesis raises the epistemology that underpinned the approach that carries a number of assumptions about culture and identity which are shaped by postcolonial theory. Quoted Mishra and Hodge (1994:276), Mtose claims that postcolonial theory is foregrounds the politics of opposition and struggle and problematizes the key relationship between the centre and periphery (Mtose: 2008, p. 38). This means that politics and the history of being black is a starting point for postcolonial theory.

Mtose uses Hall’s claims that one way to consider identity is as being consistent with a singular, shared culture (2008: p. 51). This cultural identity is underpinned by a shared history and heritage of a people. It belongs to the future as much as the past. Mtose continues to reflect to an understanding of identity as ‘becoming’ rather than ‘remaining’ allows one to acknowledge that identity is not just about being a subject of

or subjected to a discourse, but that one can position one 'self in relation to differing meanings.

Mtose's thesis shows that there are various struggles ongoing in black identity construction (2008: 57). It continues saying that there is a need to discuss the postcolonial perspective in order to consider redressing the construction of black identity and the ambivalence present in the construction of a contemporary black identity in South Africa (Ibid, p 58).

As a way of life, I strongly convinced that Ubuntu is the clay from which to mould and the soul to breathe into the new man and woman in South Africa. As Mzamane (Ibid, 247) concludes that Ubuntu is a pre-requisite building block to a successful and habitable society as it ensures a collective effort in maintain a mutually beneficial environment through respect, selflessness and understanding.

6.4 MANAGING THE SACRED SITES: A DISCUSSION

6.4.1 Introduction

As I discussed in Chapter Five, the cave dwellers have no problem with the influx of tourist to ancestral land, provided they do honour the sacredness of the site and ethical consideration attached to the site. Of course, sacred caves are space where modern reflective subject-making in tourism takes place through encountering and interacting with different cultures and places. Cave dwellers hope that these visits on the sacred space will reinforce religious identities. Olsen (2008) attests to the above that visitors should ideally not leave as the same people that they arrived, but rather should either have their religious identities deepened and strengthened

Sacred sites are not generally built with tourist in mind, but rather are distinctive social spaces where religious groups express their faith in a spatial manner (Olsen, 2008: 187). I argue that sacred spaces can be used to transmit religious and cultural values and ideologies from one generation to the next and thereby help to maintain cultural and religious identity.

6.4.2 A discussion: Way forward

With religious heritage becoming an important cultural resource in competitive marketing efforts to attract visitor and tourist to tourist destinations, many religious heritage sites have becoming marked and designated as multi-use tourism attractions by government and tourism officials.

Olsen (2008) envisage that this overlapping of religious and tourism space an add complexity to the traditional management practices at religious heritage sites (Ibid, p. 187). The motive behind this alteration where the focus has historically been on cultural practices of pilgrims and worshippers rather that visitors with multiple motives and expectation.

The most concerned by many researchers is that all this religious sites have no rigid hierarchal management structure and tour guide and caretakers are not trained tourism professionals, rather, they tend to use volunteers or cleaners who have been appointed by farm-owners or religious leaders to run a particular site.

Similarly, to Motouleng cave site, Mantsopa was not originally built for tourism consumption the site quickly became a place of tourism when thousands of tourist from the South African provinces and neighboring countries flocked to the sites. The inability of sacred site managers to focus on tourism opportunities by focus on tourist or visitor aspect of overall tourism management create a denting scenario. My observation from frequent visits confirmed that there is lack of infrastructure in particular site interpretation and guiding, security, toilets, catering, etc.

Pungetti (2012:444) says that a need for a thorough investigation is also urgently required to document for what is happening at these sacred sites in order improve the conservation and management of the sites from endangerment and destruction of African practices because of their sacred value. However, in some cultures, the sacred site has a secrets meaning that local people may be reluctant to divulge their sacred sites for the fear of desecration. In some cases, Pungetti ((2012: 445) maintains that

landscape may be retain certain anonymity, the related lessons the landscape bring forward should be delineated and documented.

Sacred sites represent what is almost the largest and fastest conscious deliberate change of land use in history. People have been dispossessed of their traditional land to make way for protection. It is important to understand the variety of management and governance types in protected areas and variety of sacredness in nature. Of course, I agreed with them that protected areas are not all managed uniformly but the term embraces literary hundreds of official and unofficial ways of protecting nature.

While management issues such as maintaining a 'sense of place' lies with the site owners, there is no co-ordination of collaborative tourism efforts at local, provincial and national levels by allowing each department to manage their sphere of responsibly more effectively. Olsen (2008: 190) argues that in many cases, religious site managers are required to run a facility that is financially self- sustaining and therefore opted to 'illegally' charge an entrance fee which is not regulated.

6.4.3 Re-opening of Mautse

"*Sangoma Valley*" called by the local people Mautse is a gorge just over the mountain from Franshoek/ Rustlers valley where *izangoma and Inyangas* (traditional healers/ diviners/ herbalists) have been living and practicing a well over a century

Quoting Paseka Dlamini's facebook page of 13 July 2016, titled "the end of *Sangoma valley*, he was phoned by one Monica' *le thoasane* (a trainee) whom he had contact with since Monica died that the police and army swooped into the valley, evicted all the resident and demolished all the buildings. They attempted to take out all Monica's belongings and sacred items which were kept in her closed up house but cannot dove off the road onto the property as the fence has been erected across the entry road. All cave dwellers sacred items and their belonging were unceremoniously dumped at the gate.

In essence, Dlamini (2016) was so upset that what could not be achieved legally in more than twenty- five years (25) years of negotiations by the white farmer, can be effected within the months of a black farmer buying the property. It is virtually impossible for the police and army to come out for anything requires a major disaster. The whole cultural practice and sacredness of the site has a threat to the continuation of the African traditional religion and can be invoked by a private citizen inconvenience.

The outcry of people of Free State and surrounding provinces shows that people were angered, especially the failure of government to negotiate with the farm owner to buy the place. The cave dwellers were so adamant that the farm owner is not going to generate any income from the closure of Mautse said “*Badimo batla mo shapa a be mo putswa*” (“ancestors will reiterate and punished the farms until become grey”).

Mofokeng (2017) mentions that the traditional healers are extremely devastated about the closure of Mautse as the sacred space where their African identity is invigorated and as a site where African culture and religion are continuously practiced (Interview, 28/ 11/ 2017). Mofokeng reiterates that they even wrote a letter to the Premier of Free State, Honorable Mr. Ace Makgashule to intervene in re-opening of the site but he has not yet responded until now. Their fundamental request is to call for them sacred site to be administered and preserved by government authorities (Ibid, interview, 28/ 11/ 2017).

I’m fully convinced that cave dwellers of Mautse exercise their fundamental rights enshrine in an Act to consult a Premier of Free State as the head of the cabinet to intervene in this regard. According to duties of the Free State, heritage resources authority must furnish information, advice and assistance to enhance public sensitivity towards and awareness of the need for management of the national estate.

Section 25, no.1 of the National Heritage Resources Act stipulates that provincial heritage resources should endeavour to assist any community or body of persons with an established interest in any heritage resource to obtain reasonable access to such heritage resource, should they request it, and may for this purpose enter into negotiations with the owner of such resource; facilitate the making of arrangements as may be required for the achievement of such access, including the execution of a

heritage agreement under section 42. It also stipulates that if such negotiations are unsuccessful, the matter should be referred to the Minister in any case may be; to make arrangements to ensure the protection and management of all heritage resources and property owned or controlled by it or vested in it.

There is ongoing attempt by the association of traditional healers, Free State Lesedi Production, to negotiate with the farm owner to reopen the sacred site. However, their major stumbling block is the raising of money in order to hire a lawyer be speaking on their behalf. They also had to look for government involvement be it provincial or national to reinstate their South African laws applicable in this matter.

Dundley and Higgins-Zogib (2002) reiterates the need for the protection of sacred areas such as Mautse cave. There is an increasing interest in the concept of converting an entire sacred site into a protected area, managing it for its dual spiritual and biodiversity values (Ibid, 2002, p. 43). Although certain faiths may choose to keep their sacred sites outside the protected area network, they should encourage to play a role and act as buffer-zone for the unofficial protected sites.

Even the sacred building is often surrounded by land that can be managed for its biodiversity values (Dundley and Higgins- Zogib, 2012: 44). The fact is Mautse became an important sacred site or pilgrimage route can attract huge numbers of visitors each year which can sometimes clashes with conservation aims. In many cases, the protection of sacred sites can be an effective way of protecting people, culture or ethnic group while recognizing the role that sacred site of Eastern Free State play in protecting people belief systems.

Tensions between the farm- owners, tourist professionals and cave dwellers and pilgrims need to be considered in a proposed management plan of the site. However, the difficulty of administering the complex relationship between farm- owner and cave dwellers of the Mautse cave sites. Better planning and management are necessary to resolve conflicts between the needs of the religious communities.

6.5 Reflections

In this chapter, the decolonization of sacred landscape has been discussed. The literature reviewed on decolonisation of sacred landscape helps us to understand the basis for the ongoing troubling nature of accessibility and usage sacred landscape by the displaced communities. The tension in the previous chapter, chapter five, was based on the progressive model of how blackness could overcome, function and become a psychologically well-rounded being.

The focus of this chapter is on listen to the marginalise voices of the indigenous people and its cultural practices. It addresses the reinstated local knowledge that previously marginalised, stigmatised and viewed as backwards. It also proposes that knowledge need to be revived and claim its rightful place in the broader body of knowledge.

This study has in various ways enhanced people's understanding of pilgrimages, as a religious phenomenon, at sacred space in South Africa. The study engages some of the theories and conclusion, in chapter four, that pilgrimage of African traditional religion is an important means of gaining insights into cultural conceptions of relationships between humanity and divinity that are encoded and dramatized at sacred landscape.

Inability to tolerate difference within the sacred sites is reflected in the representation of marginalize groups and challenges inherited from the apartheid era. The new dispensation should accommodate a recognition of the shifting nature of identity and of essential questioning of identity by the individual. It should give space to a different kind of power whereby an individual is freed from the inevitability of returning to a particular identity, redefining and recreating African identity (Cloke and Little:1997, p 279).

While there can be no disputing the need for African religion and belief systems to enrich our understanding of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, a number of issues must be borne in mind in the construction and interpretation of that information. The knowledge producers, be it diviners, prophets, herbalist, must be given a space as participants in the construction and interpretation and use of this knowledge.

The debate over the role and value Ubuntu as creation of new identity is not one to be resolve in the sacred sites. My point is to argue that Ubuntu resonate within the universal values of human worth and dignity that involve in the sensitivity to the need of others, charity, sympathy, care and kindness.

The following chapter, chapter seven, concludes the study by drawing conclusions, examining limitations and making recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present the overall conclusions of this research. I also highlight the limitations and make recommendation for this study. This study has been concerned with protest and identity in the context of sacred spaces. It has been a study of the historical appraisal and its importance of Motouleng, Mautse and Mantsopa caves for different religious persuasions, indigenous knowledge and ancestral veneration of African and traditional healers.

This study explores the way in which interpersonal experiences of the cave dwellers shape their sense of self and the conflict they encounter in the context of interaction, where identities are constructed and deconstructed in various ways. The study has also demonstrated how sacred sites are exemplifications of African indigenous religion; why they form locations of cultural and spiritual expression, and why they may be regarded as pertinent nodes of identity construction in a vibrant changing South African society

I commence the study with the utterances from the landowners threatened to blow up the caves rather than allow healers or cave dwellers access to the cave in Sunday Times Newspaper of July 2000, and an SABC documentary, Special assignment, broadcasted in October, 10, 1998, validated the rumors that the farmer intended to blow up the cave and uncovered the conflict over land, religion, race that threatened the white community in that time in Chapter one

This actions emanated from the incident of livestock stealing, trespassers and influx of illegal immigrants from neighboring country, Lesotho and further prompted the researcher to undertake this study.

In order to address the aims of this study, the following research question were explored:

1. How do users of the sacred sites interrelate African religion with religious landscape, histories and power of the space they possess?
2. What are the site internal dynamics that include tension, fragmentation, access to the sites, contestation or threads to sacred sites and their constitutive role regarding identity construction aspects?
3. Does the sacred space encode with African traditional religion and embodiment of the community's Indigenous Belief system?
4. How do symbols and patterns of community dynamics at sacred sites constitute new identity constructions in a changing society?

A succinct response to each of the research question provide the study with the platform to amplify and reflect on meaning of protest and identity construction or reconstruction at the sacred space of the Eastern Free State.

7.2 Concluding remarks

What the cave dwellers practice and perceive the sacred sites remains a taboo to an 'outsider' and also to a repository of indigenous knowledge. Thus, this study involves not only the discovery of pre-existing pattern but also the creation of relationship which does not exist in absolute term. It is against this background that the study proposes to engage in a number of uncovered issues pertaining to sacred sites: be it account of being possessed, communicating with the ancestors, initiation rituals, divination, symbolic features and practices attached to African belief system and codification of African traditional religion and modes of identity construction.

These sites are embedded to a particular historical background and physical landscape of the sacred cave which have been narrated in Chapter two. Reflect on Coplan article (2003: 975) "Land from the Ancestors: Popular Religious pilgrimage along the South Africa-Lesotho border", a comprehensive geo-historical ethnography of the areas between Lesotho and Free State (South Africa) has been well- articulated.

The argument of Troeltsch (1991: 77) coins religion as a constitutive part of historical existence and its main question arise in the area of history. In fact, the rise of a comparative history of religion has shaken the Christian faith more deeply than anything else. For a historian's mind, the way they portray nature, it contains independent spiritual contents, dispositions that gave rise, in interaction with the demands of empirical reality, to a rich world of history.

In many centuries, settlers, professionals, colonials and apartheid officials, viewed the African way of knowing and their systems of knowledge not as science (Dondolo, 2003, p. 115). Factors contributed to this notion, amongst others, politics, ignorance, colonial and anthropological discourses and viewing local knowledge from a Eurocentric understanding. In post- apartheid South Africa, there is a great challenge to produce a natural heritage and identity that transcends the colour line.

The reviewed literature on protest and identity in the context of sacred spaces of three selected sites of Eastern Free State contributed in the formulation of research problem, question as well providing a grounded base for the gap analysis in scientific research. From the post-colonial history literature, emergence of African kingdom and its leaders, sacredness of the sites and African traditional religion demonstrated by contemporary historians and authors reaffirm that land and sacred landscape was taken away from the African communities through barrel of the guns, Christianity and degrading of African cultures.

Having interacted with various sources linking historical incidents and human interaction, the study has convinced that history is a product and source of social memory that cannot be forgotten and taken- away from the African past experience and sacred sites and adjunct belief systems.

Despite the pilgrimaging on sacred landscape, identity literatures already referred to, the proponents and their ideas that the researcher has utilized in analysis and interpretation of data and instigate some possible solutions and recommendations for further study.

Having considered sources from various perspectives, from African and non- African writers, there are genuine babbles to aggrandize the research and come with the conclusion that this study has not been previously investigated and thoroughly explored, pertaining to forms and practices of African religion constructed by scholars of religion and social anthropology.

Sources like oral testimony, interviews, documentaries and photos has complemented the literature review. Frequent record of ritual performances, initiation, divination and healing process to crosscheck the hypotheses generated has been systematically observed in providing a better understanding of the context.

7.3 Shortcomings

It is necessary to bring an entire picture of an analysis the quality of data collected, data presentation and analysis by highlighting some shortcomings, limitations and gabs in the data.

This study falls mainly in the field of African traditional religion and heritage sites and cave of the Eastern Free State. The qualitative method was used to study the protest and identity on the spiritual and cultural landscape of the sites and adjunct identities emanated from the study findings. A historical approach was necessary because sacred sites scholarly studied within the wider development in natural resources, political religious and social context most of which were oral reports

The research design has applied is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as part of qualitative inquiry/ research. This particular research design is informed by interpretative studies through personal interpretation of the sacred sites lived experiences and meaning they attached these experiences under review. IPA do acknowledge a debt to symbolic interactionism (Denzin, 1995) with its concern for how meanings are constructed by individuals within both a social and a personal world.

In utilizing this design, the researcher attempts to get close to the participant's personal world, to take, in Conrad's (1987) words, an 'insider's perspective', but one cannot do this directly or completely. Access depends on, and is complicated by the researcher's own conceptions. Indeed, the above is required in order to make sense of their personal world through a process of interpretative activity. Qualitative findings of the study have discovered new ideas on identity construction and adjunct belief systems and make predictions on the effects on protest and contestation of cave dwellers around sacred spaces.

The researcher has attempted to achieve a comprehensive cross-section of the population attached to the sacred sites. Population available within the period of study and represented in the three selected sacred cave sites includes traditional healers, land owners, department's officials, traditional healers, diviners and cave dwellers were visited and structured and semi- structured interviewed using personal visits, telephone interview and question's response through emails.

After deciding on the size of the confidence interval and populated the sample of the study, 40 of the intended 45 respondents of the entire population within the confident interval has been reached. The hiccups of the remaining five (5) responded varied range from the vacant post from certain municipalities, closure of Mautse sacred sites and non-cooperation from one farm owner after several attempt to interact them. I have no doubt that the choice of the population to be sampled have greatly influenced the available data from three selected sacred sites.

The major weaknesses of this method are bias, namely it openness to misinterpretation, ethical dilemma; it is difficult to replicate because procedures are dependent on research's opportunity for gaining access or his /her personal characteristics; it can cause danger or discomfort for the researcher when interaction tension run high. Mostly the use of tape recorders, video cameras and other technologically equipment arouse discomfort during the data collection. Sometimes it may lead to omission of relevant data and distortion of response. These strengths and weaknesses have ethical implication for research.

Some topics were regarded as exclusiveness and unfasten to the public that the participants are not in the position to disclose to the researcher. If questions are asked on these topics respondents may refuse to participate. Specific questions that fall to these categories are: What your interaction with the ancestors is? Do your belief in the ancestral spirits, permanent settlement, so-on?

It is important to note that the interview's methods were overlapping to each other although it is time consuming. It is also difficult to obtain a suitable sample size as the researcher as to rely on those interviewed to recommend possible candidates for interviewing. As the proceeding is between the respondent and the divine interaction, it is sometimes so hard to receive an explanation why certain actions do happen in these ways and even to some silence is obeyed throughout her presence in the sacred landscape.

This chapter entirely described the research process under investigation. Tools and procedures of, relating to data collection such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews and field observation, types of data gathering and techniques used to capture empirical material have received attention. The data analysis and interpretation processes as related to this study were also explained. This chapter will not be complete without the ethical considerations and question of paramount important.

7.4 Recommendations

An attempt to find out what the pertinent issues regarding the protest and identity in the context of sacred space of the Eastern Free State, raised some interesting questions that seeks to bring sacred sites (cave) into the center of scholarly debate and research. It is central to African life, culture, religion and philosophy.

It attempts to answer the underlying questions: who owns the sites; who have a right of access to them; what the sites means to an individual and to Africans relate to supernatural connotation. Such subjects are central to the discussion of landscape, sacredness, codification of African religion and cultural identity.

This study has listened to voices of parties concerned regarding contestation, land access, payment versus vandalism and other related concerns for the study and attempt to reappraisal of site's histories, cultural practices and belief systems connected to sacred sites

The ongoing debate, disputes and contestation between the farm owners and cave dwellers and pilgrims led to the closure of Mautse cave site and failure of government and authorities to intervene in the protest and contestation has been a crucial phenomenon in protecting the indigenous knowledge with regard to belief, healing, and practices. The study does not only contribution to African religion and belief systems, but people' commitment to protect and empower sacred landscape. It eventually addresses acute issues of identity, consciousness, ancestral powers, land, African religion, youth, rituals and initiation tit a tat from the sacred sites.

The study has been useful to a repository of indigenous knowledge that is performed and transmitted by the healers at the sacred sites. It facilitates healing and material, symbolic restitution and promotes new and previously neglected research into African's rich oral traditions and customs.

The study is based on the premise that, in order to nurture the sacred sites and their integrities, sacredness of the place is guided by ancestral belief and indigenous knowledge. Based on the above, the research outcomes are crucial to the understanding and preservation of these sites and it could have direct impact on policy formulation, tourism and environmental preservation regarding access to and protection of such sites.

I also recommend that the municipalities, tourism and economic development authorities should look at self- appointed caretakers that are collecting entrance fees, resulting in a profitable money-making scheme without paying business taxes.

The study should initiate debate and academic scrutiny amongst scholars interested in African studies and indigenous belief systems. It is hoped that the study should contribute towards the understanding of African belief, indigenous knowledge and wisdom to various stakeholders, departments and IKS institutions.

This is an innovative research topic in the field of social anthropology, African cultural, social and historical studies. It should contribute to legitimize protection of sacred sites in South Africa. It will also deepen people's understanding of societal and cultural experience with regard to cave site pilgrimaging.

I recommended that the findings of the study expect to make an invaluable contribution on how the site can be positively restored and protected. It helps to define cultural identity and appraisal, tolerance and it has the power to build the nation irrespective of colour, race, gender and religion.

It also renders constructive recommendations to renewal and respect of African tradition and religion. It probably contributes to the growing interest on African regeneration and cultural revival in academic circles and communities locally, internationally and beyond by reproducing it in two accredited journals.

I also recommend that the study bears a strong challenge to government in intervening to carry out its stated policies in the IKS, land reforms and heritage policies. It is suggested that the legal protection of heritage should not treated material heritage and immaterial heritage as a separate entity. This artificial division is also evident in the South African National Heritage Act (No. 25, 1999) which treats tangible heritage and intangible heritage as a separate entity.

I further recommend that its findings and results must be used in the community to reinstate what is precious and valuable to African tradition and culture and also empower the healers for further development.

I also draw a conclusion from reflecting on these stories about *Ubuntu* is South Africa, especially the sacred save of the Eastern Free State in light of the optimistic and pessimistic positions on the usefulness of *Ubuntu*? There can be little doubt that both forces and meaning of *Ubuntu* have been eroded in South Africa today and in some cases even distorted to justify blatant corruption and nepotism.

The erosion of Ubuntu as discussed in the chapter six could be understood by referring to a number of forces that have impacted on traditional African culture. Decolonization to systems of colonialism, apartheid, individualism and encroachment of materialism have all played a role in shaping the contemporary African culture. Surely, part of these legacy has contributed to the weakened and distortion of the meaning and practice of *Ubuntu*.

From the comment of the scholars, it is concern that *ubuntu* do not seem to have given much attention its deserved and to all forces have had on indigenous African cultures as it attempted from the sacred sites of the Eastern Free State especially Motouleng cave. Apart from its use in discourse, rapid increase acts of discrimination, violence and exclusion take place in African communities suggest that *ubuntu* has lost its power to shape the actions of people of South African society.

Within this context, I lastly recommend that there is an important task for individual, leaders, land owners to create spaces in which our society can be re-imagined and to facilitate the clarification and adoption of the social values that would support the kind of society we like to build. Indeed, there is hope, in this limited space, for a healing of identity and creating pattern of living which embody the notion of *ubuntu* in its not basic sense.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IPA	-	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
IKS	-	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
IK	-	Indigenous Knowledge
ATR	-	African Traditional Religion
SPCA	-	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
PhD	-	Doctor of Philosophy
ZCC	-	Zion Christian Church
ICCPR	-	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
LED	-	Local Economic Development
SAHRA	-	South African Heritage Resource Agency
SAHRA	-	South African Heritage Resource Act
UNESCO	-	United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	-	United Nations
IDP	-	Integrated Development Plan

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RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr DHD Ngobese

Student No:
16001256

PROJECT TITLE: **Protest and identity in the context of sacred spaces: A Historical appraisal of Three Selected Sacred sites of the Eastern Free State.**

PROJECT NO: SHSS/17/AS/13/2811

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof MA Masoga	University of Venda	Promoter
Dr RA XXXXXXXXXX	University of Venda	Co - Promoter
Mr DHD Ngobese	University of Venda	Investigator-Student

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: December 2017

Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee ~~Grants~~

Signature of Chairperson of the Committee:

Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Senior Prof. ~~GA Ekosse~~



UNIVERSITY OF VENDA DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION 2018-01-11 XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX
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APPENDIX TWO

PHD RESEARCH INTERVIEWS GUIDE

PROTEST AND IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SACRED SPACES: AN HISTORICAL APPRAISAL OF THE THREE SELECTED SACRED SITES OF THE EASTERN FREE STATE

MUNICIPALITY OFFICIAL VISIT AND INTERVIEW

1. Full name and title within the municipality.

2. How long have you been working in the municipality?

3. What is your full job description?

4. How your job description link to sacred site?

5. What is the name of the sacred site/s within your municipality?

6. Where does these site/ s located (municipality boundaries or private own land)?

7. What is the relationship between the municipality and the owners of the site?

8. How do the municipality and people define or perceive sacred site?

9. Does the municipality have any historical information around the site if so how is it documented?

10. Was there any attempt of land claim based on the site? If not what might be the reason?

11. Tell me what are the municipality's programmes and projects accommodate the sacred site in the past five to ten years.

12. One noticed that sacred site is term "heritage site" what the municipality is' account on the naming.

13. What is the municipality statistics of cave dwellers and pilgrims visiting the sacred site annually and in the past five years?

14. According to your records, who are the most people visiting the sites and why?

15. Does these site/s contribute to economic spin- off of the municipality?

16. Does the cave pilgrimaging have any difficulties in accessing / visiting the site? e.g. access, entrance, cultural practice, dwelling, tension, protest, etc.

17. What is the intervention of the municipality in addressing those difficulties and challenges?

18. Does the municipality have any anticipated proposal for preservation or management of the sites?

19. What is your relation with the provincial or national government agencies/ departments with regard to the development and management of the site?

20. What is the municipality future plan for the development of this site?

21. Do you have any information that can assist and enriching this research area, e.g. maps, photos, published or unpublished municipality documents and so on?

PHD RESEARCH INTERVIEWS GUIDE

PROTEST AND IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SACRED SPACES: AN HISTORICAL APPRAISAL OF THE THREE SELECTED SACRED SITES OF THE EASTERN FREES STATE

LAND- OWNERS OR FARM OWNERS'S VISIT AND INTERVIEW

1. Please can you tell me your name and surname and details of the farm (OPTIONAL)

2. How long have you been staying/ owning the farm?

3. What kind of the product does your farm produce (crop, stock taking, son-on) and what are your market industry?

4. Can you elaborate the name and meaning of this site and how it links to African religious belief and practices of the African people?

5. Are these site/ s located (municipality boundaries or private own land) and can you refers to any historic evident?

6. What is the relationship between you (owner of the site), the municipality and government?

7. How do the people define or perceive your farm and sacred site?

8. Can you narrate to me any historical information around the site/ farm, and how is it documented?

9. Were there any attempts of land claim directed to you and the sacred site? If not what might be the reason?

10. One noticed that sacred site is term "heritage site" what has been your view on the 'new' site naming?

11. What is the farm statistics of cave dwellers and pilgrims visiting the sacred site annually and in the past five years?

12. According to your records, who are the most visiting people the sites and why?

13. Does these site/s contribute to economic spin- off of the farm?

14. Does the cave pilgrimaging have any difficulties in accessing / visiting the site? Eg access, entrance, continuation of cultural practice?

15. Did you have any protest, contestation and protest directed to your farm in the past five to ten years, if so what were the causes of it?

16. What is the intervention of the municipality in addressing those difficulties and challenges?

17. Does the municipality have any anticipated proposal for preservation or management of the sites?

18. What is your relation with the provincial or national government agencies/ departments with regard to the development and management of the site?

19. What is the municipality future plan for the development of this site?

20. Do you have any information that can assist and enriching this research area, eg maps, photos, published or unpublished municipality documents and so-on?

PHD RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE

PROTEST AND IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SACRED SPACES: AN HISTORICAL APPRAISAL OF THE THREE SELECTED SACRED SITES OF THE EASTERN FREE STATE

TRADITIONAL HEALERS, INDEPENDENT CHURCHES VISIT AND INTERVIEW

1. Please tell me your full name and surname (Optional)

2. Where do you come from and who told you about this place?

3. How long have you been staying or often visiting this area/ cave?

4. What is your intention of coming here?

5. Can you describe your journey to this cave?

6. How do you define or perceive this site?

7. Have you noticed the mural artwork sign written “heritage site” what is your view and account on the naming of the site?

8. Tell me more about the history and management of this site/ cave

9. Do you have any historical information around the site if so tell what you know?

10. Are there any Conflict and Contestation amongst cave dwellers within the cave?

11. What is the relationships between you and caretaker and farm-owner?

12. Have you heard of any attempt by the farm- owner to shut down or close down the sacred site if so, what will be your reaction?

13. What is view on the entrance fee paid at the gate and does the caretaker inform you of any information that you must know?

14. Do we have any relationship with the caretaker except of collecting money?

15. Can you define the sacredness of the site/ cave, includes the existence of God and ancestors, and how does this site venerates sacredness?

16. Does this site have ancestral spirit, if so how do you attest to it?

17. Tell me all the sacred spaces with the cave.

18. What is the most important space to you and why?

19. What are the key functions of the sacred cave to you?

20. What are your daily activities inside the cave?

21. What tangible artefacts/ items do you use in your activities and why?

22. What happened to them after your completion?

23. Have you come with any offering to the cave site, if so, what are those offering or sacrificed animals (creators)?

24. What is your view on the codification of the space as a site for African cultural identity and renewal?

25. Can you narrate any activities occurred at the site that brings back African identity and principles of *ubuntu*?

26. Do you have any tension, contest, fighting and religious affiliation, ethnic background, language, etc. amongst cave dwellers and how do you resolve them?

27. Do you have any challenges encountered in gaining access, usage of features and symbolic offering?

28. Was there any attempt of land claim based on the site? If not what might be the reason?

29. Tell me of any farm owner's programme and project to develop the sacred site in the past five to ten years

30. What is your view on the location of this sites at the private own place?

31. Due to number of pilgrimages and visitors, visiting the cave site annually, can you suggest renaming of the site to Tourism sites?

32. From your point of view, who are the most people visiting the sites and why?

33. Have you seen any developments and changes at the sites as the result of entrance fee paid at the gate?

34. Can you suggest any anticipated proposal for preservation or management of the cave sites?

35. How do you react to any involvement of provincial or national government agencies/ departments on any strategic plan for the development of the site?

36. Does the farm- owner voice out to you any future plan for this site?

37. What is your aspiration about this sites in next five or ten years to come?

38. Can you render any information to me that can assist and enriching this research area, eg maps, photos, published or unpublished municipality documents, informants?

APPENDIX THREE

The following narrative is the result of an interview I had with Kennett Khumalo from Qwaqwa regarding his experience of becoming a healer and a trainer

D: What is your name and when did you arrived at the sacred cave of Motouleng?

K: My name is Kennett Khumalo, staying at Thabong village, Lusaka in Qwaqwa. I started visiting the site in 2013 when I brought my wife to be trained as *sangoma* and I'm always coming and going to this place, staying on occasion and sometimes going back to my place where I am residing. When I arrived in 2013, I was told by my ancestors to build a cave house/ hut with my hands. I presently came here to train four *mathwasa/* as being directed by ancestors to accept the ancestors calling, not a house in Thabong village, but here at Motouleng. I stayed with them until they graduated to be a *sangoma* in January 2017.

D: How did you find out about this site of Motouleng?

K: I knew about this site in decade ago, however, I did not receive ancestors calling here, but I was trained at Mautse sacred cave and spend full years.

D: Please can I deviate for a minute, do you know any history about this site, its sacredness and site's veneration of ancestors?

K: To be honest, I don't know any history about this site, but I knew about this site in dream. When I asked people about this site, they did not tell me the truth until I found out myself in dreams. When I arrived here, I met an old male *sangoma* by the name of *Ditaba tsa Badimo*.

D: How did you find out about this male diviner called, *Ditaba tsa Badimo*?

K: I was told by my ancestors in dreams and even gave the mental picture of his facial appearance. Where I arrived, he was expecting me and proceeded showing all the sacred space available around the site. He further narrated to me that training to be a *sangoma* at Motouleng is different from the healers training conducted at home. Here at the Motouleng sacred cave, one is being

trained by the unknown person. He or she will speak to you at night and give you all the proceeding that have to follow from the initial stage until the completion of the training. We stayed at Motouleng from 2013 until January 2017 solely because my wife was trapped with spiritual conflict and contestation.

D: Were there any symptoms of her calling to the ancestral world?

K: She was very sick and I found out that she was possessed with ancestral spirits; I took her to traditional healer for diagnoses and detect any cause of illness. The whole process was a flaw and it failed to divulge any cause of illness.

D: Tell more about the unknown person who was a trainer of your wife and in what time and circumstances does this unknown person conduct his/ her training?

K: He usually came at night when we are asleep. Sometimes they do come during the day and they start communicating with him. You will think, she is talking alone, but she is directly talking to them. Where she stands up, she will narrate exactly what the conversation is all about and she will do exactly as what the ancestors told her to do. Therefore, my wife will wake up at communicate with the ancestors and sometimes ancestors told her to be trained in the water. The name of the water ancestor is called *Tsido Makhosi*; she is the one who train all *mathwasa* residing at Motouleng site inside the water.

D: Did she train *mathwasa* to be *sangoma* (traditional healer) or prophets in the water

K: She has an expertise to train both traditional healers and prophets when you finish your training, you will able to use both divination systems, as a traditional healer and a prophet.

D: Did your trainee use or train how to use herbs or medicinal plants?

K: Yes, the traditional healer completes his/ her training using divination systems and healing with herbs. The healer will stimulate the ancestors and request any curing medicine for that particular diseases. All the questions will be answered in dreams. Most of the traditional healers trained at Motouleng vacate the sacred site having the knowledge of healing of variety of illness and diseases.

- D: How do you know or your wife that she has completed the training as a *sangoma* or traditional healer?
- K: The ancestor will communicate with her that the process of training as a *sangoma* is finalised or she is ready to leave. Two way of revealing that one is professionally trained is to undergo a prophesizing technique or revelation of one's problems. If one has successfully retrieve what has been hidden, it shows that the process is fully complete.
- D: How do you receive the client to be cured?
- K: Do the ancestors usually communicate with the traditional healer for the person who is about to visiting or consult. When he comes, they will start with the process of finding out what is the problem, consulting his ancestors, divination and thereafter start with possible remediation. Healers are always told about the visiting person and wait for his arrival.
- D: What type/s of animal sacrifices is usually accepted for the person who is about to complete?
- K: The ancestors required me to slaughter two goats and one sheep before she is released and returns home. Moreover, I am required to slaughter a cow before the end of December 2017. This cow resemble a symbol of an apology because they left their children behind without any notification of our family ancestors.
- D: Do you often invite people or traditional healers to attend the graduation of being a Traditional healer?
- K: We do invite other association of traditional healers to join the ritual of completing ancestral training and also perform dance the whole day and night.
- D: Can you tell me about the internal relation amongst traditional healers and visitors come to stay for a longer period?
- K: As far I know, we are staying in peace and harmony inside the cave of Motouleng. If it happened that we are in loggerhead, we do call the meeting and confront the problem or a person who cause the problem. Then the problem will be addressed and life eventually continues. It so happened that a person arrived without any food, clothes and so- on, they will meet and discussed about

how they can assist that person: Even someone wants to be assisted with a revelation of a particular dream, we are at liberty to offer assistance.

D.: Let us look at what is happening beyond what is happening inside the sacred cave, what is the relationship between you (cave dwellers) and the farm-owner

K: The relationship with the farm-owner is extremely bad. He does not in favour of the African people, he hates the African people. When I came for the first time, I learned that he forced the traditional healers us to pay R20 as an entry fee every month, even those who are already residing inside the cave site, you are expected to pay such entry fee if you failed, and he will chase you out of the farm. Secondly, he doesn't allow the traditional healers to look for firewood inside his mountain. Thirdly, farm-owner doesn't want the healers to dig for medicinal plants, pointed out the following reason: he claimed that his cattle are falling inside the hole and eventually broke their legs. Thirdly, farm-owner chooses to close the way towards the fountain. All the above is the clear indication that farm-owner does not accept any stranger to his farm apartment. Recently, the farm owner's behaviour is changed and he has stopped.

D: Do you normally receiving any assistance from him of any kind?

K: Although, we are in good terms with him, he sometimes does assist us, in emergence situation like, someone has pass on, the farm owner does assist in calling the pathologists to fetch him or her. In case of theft and no one is prepared to accept that he or she is guilty, we rely to him and he called the police and they come to the cave and sort out that problem

D: Are there any means of communication that you have with the farm-owner or you rely on the caretaker who is residing near the gate?

K: Yes, our means of communication is through the caretaker. We notify the caretaker at the gate about the problems and he called the farm-owner and eventually our problems are addressed.

D: Do you know the name of the farm-owner?

K: I don't know the name of the farm-owner, but he is known and called by his employees as *Mkwanatsi*, maybe because of his fluently in speaking Sesotho

language. The fact is that I do know him physically because he used to visit the cave at any time.

D: What is your view on the entrance fee required to pay at the gate, especially the trainee who does have money for entrance, being send by his ancestors to be train at Motouleng and has no knowledge of payment at the gate?

K: Regarding payment at the gate, were there people who were totally against the payment of entrance fee and begin with several protest to payment many years ago. All our attempt was fruitless. The argument of the farm-owner is that we are staying at his farm, we collect some firewood from his farm, even he tells us about the water of which does not belong to him, it belongs to *Modimo* (God). If you tell your story to the caretaker that you don't have money, he uses his discretion and allow you to enter without the knowledge of the farm-owner.

D: Do you have any knowledge of what is he doing with the entrance fee, collected at the gate?

K: The money is belonging to him; nobody knows what he is doing with the money. Initially, he promised to erect the bridge for providing access to the visitors coming to the cave. Solely because it is difficult to enter the cave when it is raining. Especially during Easter weekend, thousands of people do visit the site and celebrate the Passover festival, therefore, he received thousands of rand from the entrance fees.

D: Do you have any contact with government departments regarding all challenges encountered in the sacred site?

K: We don't have any contact with government departments in whatsoever, but there were government officials who came from Bloemfontein and spoke to sangoma *Ditaba Tsa Badimo*. We don't know what the integrity of their conversation are.

D: The above question is emanating from the incident that I think you know, the closure of Mautse sacred site. What is your view about what happened at that side that will eventually lead to similar incident to this site, Motouleng?

- K: As far as I know, Mautse was closed immediately after the farm was sold and the new owner took over the management of the farm. According to us, the person who purchased the farm has no knowledge of African belief and practices of what is happening at this site. To our surprise, the farm was purchased by the Black person who is currently residing at Johannesburg in Gauteng Province. The unconfirmed statement is that he is preparing to build at hotel at Mautse site. His intention is to alter the site from being a religious site to a tourist attraction site, where people who have money will book for an accommodation. Even here at Motouleng, there was rumours that the site has been circulate to be on sale. But nobody knows what happened to that intention to sell this site.
- D: What do you think would be the solution of preserving and protecting this site from closure that may arises in due course?
- K: I think the only solution to this problem is to request government of South Africa to buy this cave because the farm-owner can in a long run decide to sell this property any time and eventually shut down as what happened at Mautse site. We don't want the entire farm, but only the sacred spaces within the site, like the cave, fountain and other spaces of African religious importance. The reasons that may cause the closure of the cave are that there are people who came here without ancestral calling, due to poverty, hiding for the police and they usually wear similar attire of the traditional healers. Some of this people start to date each other inside the cave and this eventually will lead to decision to shut down the cave, because, people are not practising their calling but fall in love here at the cave site. Some people enters the cave with the intention of stealing sheep and goats at the expense of ancestral calling.
- D: Are there any things that you can add from what we discussed?
- K: It is important to note that this site is like the hospital, people who are coming here are extremely sick from various disease, we are healed here by our ancestors. To be possesses with ancestral calling, is similar to a person who is sick, then they should come to receiving healing through training to be a *sangoma*. After the training, I return to normality and becomes a normal person again.

APPENDIX FOUR

The following narratives is the result of an interview I had with Mr Mpostoli Elias Mofokeng, Ficksburg regarding his experience residing at Mautse and knowledge of closure of Mautse.

D: My name is Dalifa Ngobese, a student at the University of Venda. I am presently conducting a research about sacred sites of the eastern Free State include Mautse, Motouleng and Mantsopa, can I please request you to introduce yourself (for record purpose) before we start with our conversation

M: My name is Bishop Mpostoli Elias Mofokeng, a diviner, and a leader of Spirit Apostolic Church of God in Ficksburg.

D: My attention is to research about the sacred cave site of Mautse, its operation and why the cave site is closed down

M: The association of traditional leaders has contacted me about the same matter and I was about to visit the site this coming Thursday, in order pray next to the cave and find out what is problem with the closure of the site. If the site is really close, we don't know where can we submit our problems? Anyway we will approach other site like Motouleng and Mantsopa and asked them to intervene in this matter and told them to open the site of Mautse. The most important issue is the healers who came from far and without the knowledge of the closure of Mautse and end up requesting the sleep to our homes.

D: How long have you been staying at Mautse and why you the site now?

M: I had fifteen years residing at the sacred site at the time when the entrance fee was R0, 50 and I returned after ten, I found out that the price has increase to R15- 00 without telling us the reasons why the entrance fee has increased.

D: During that fifteen years residing at Mautse, I hope you know all the in and out of the site, kindly tell me what you know about Mautse?

M: I know all the sacred spaces which are present at Mautse, to mention the few; the site of *Moshoeshoe*, *Tempeleng*, *Modimo Nthuso*, *Matebeleng*, *Porolong* and so- on. Personal I was staying at the place called *Modimo Nthuso*, it is where all your problems, that people have, are sorted out by means of staying or sleeping at that site. *Tempeleng* is known as the place for prophets and priests, and anyone who has been assigned to be train with water. When you enter the cave, there is the place called small court, it where all your challenges regarding bad things that a person has done.

D: Do you know that place called a Monica's place and what is so important about that space?

M: I am well conversant with Monica sacred space but I have no idea why that site is so important except that she had many traditional healers who were her trainees. About the closure of Mautse, we are so devastated because our African culture and religion are portrayed at these sites especially Mautse site that is known as *Badimong*.

D: Tell me about the entrance fee are is required at the gate?

M: To be honest, it was our key problem. We forwarded complains to a farm owner about R5 entrance fee at that time and later it changed to be R15 rand. There was a White owner who decided to sell the farm 20 years ago and he had to vacate the farm due to evil spirit that came to him at night and leave at Kroonstad. I really forgotten his name and surname.

D: Can you tell me if you have requested any assistance regarding the re-opening of the site?

M: Of course, we include church members did contact all government department for the re-opening of Mautse, but our attempts were abortive. We even

contacted the Honourable Premier of Free State, Mr. Ace Makgashule, requesting for help but he has not responded until now.

D: Tell me what you know regarding the eviction of traditional healers and diviners at Mautse cave site?

M: It was the middle of last year when the new farm-owner sent bulldozer cars to destroy the building of the healers and they were escorted by the police and security guards. What I can tell you is that many of the traditional healers were left stranded, without place to sleep, food and clothes, especially because more the cave dwellers were residing as far as Gauteng, Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal.

D: In conclusion, what is your overall intention about the site of Mautse?

M: In short, I can say we grow from the Mautse sacred cave and our ancestors are residing at Mautse. Then, I strongly request that the site should be administered and preserved by the government. We don't want to have the same problem again. For an example, they were people who came to me with the hope that I will bring back the reported missing their family member. They intention was to pray at the Mautse site and know that the ancestors of Mautse will help them to find the beloved one.

APPENDIX FIVE

The following narratives is the result of an interview I had with Kgono Madineho from Mandela Park, Qwaqwa regarding his experience training the traditional healers at Motouleng.

D: What is purpose of coming to Motouleng sacred cave?

M: I am to train the novice (*thwasana*) at Motouleng

D: How do they come to you?

M: They come to me with a symptoms of possession with ancestral spirit and old that hey dream about the big house, open at the top and it is where the calling is. Then I will reveal to them that site is called Motouleng and tell them that their ancestors would like them to be train there.

D: Do they know what it entails in their journey to be tradition healer?

M: They do have a knowledge of what they can expect at Motouleng cave sites, solely because ancestors have already communicated to them. They communicate to her the process that she must follow when she arrived at Motouleng.

D: What is role in this regard because ancestors are the one who train the novice healer?

M: My role is to simplify any issues that she felt is not clear to her. The person who is trained by the ancestors will always listen to what they direct her to do: for an example, go and play at the mountain, slaughter the goat for that particular purpose and so-on. Usually, she is the one told me what her ancestors tell her to do and in what way. Sacred site is quite place, outside from any issues that can disturb her from following the rules and processes. She is only thinking about ancestor's command.

D: Does the *thwasana* go out before the finalization of the training process and does traditional healer's family visit the trainee and know whereabouts of beloved one?

M: They do come to visit her and even if she wants something, she will call them and deliver straight to the cave. There is no way that *thwasana* leave the training, she had to be directed by the ancestors an exact time of completion.

- D: What can you narrate about her behaviour of the trainee on the first day entering the site.
- M: It's difficult for them to cope but they have option, they have to wash themselves in the river, wash their clothes with river water and collect wood for cooking. Initially, life demands that they should go back to their roots.
- D: Do you have any time assigned for praying and communicate with their ancestors
- M: There is no specific time of praying, the ancestors will indicate to them that it is a time of praying whether at night or during the day. They communicate with through action and when they display certain courtship, then they understand that it is the time for praying. Usually, they usually opted for 12h00 am and 07 am.
- D: How does she know that the training is completed?
- M: The ancestors reveal to them through dreams that the training is completed. Moreover, she has to 'write a test' if the test is passed then she will know that she has completed. Meaning of the test is that they will hide certain object and thwasana has to find out where is that object. The ancestors will reveal to her and eventually the object will be found. That shows that she can use ancestor's spirit to diagnose any problems that the people are facing and cure them.
- D: How do you relate to other cave dwellers inside the sacred site of Motouleng?
- M: We relate very well and I don't see any hiccups. What I know that any person is changing when he or she arrived here, solely because ancestor's spirit of Motouleng will changed person's behaviour. We are a big family here, we do help each other in terms of food, money and other sacred things need to be done for the ancestors
- D: What is your view on the issue of entrance fee paid at the gate?
- M: I don't have a problem for me to pay because, this is not my farm and the farm owner has a right to demand entrance fee because it is his property. The like of what occurred at Mautse, we don't want this place to be shut down, and then I think it is proper for him to let us pay the entrance fee. My key problem is that I don't see any development and tangible things what the farm- owner uses money for.

APPENDIX SIX

The following narratives are the results of an interview I had with Mr. Tsiditso Tebeho from Lesotho regarding his account of the closure of Mautse sacred cave.

D: Kgotso Ntante, I am coming from Kwazulu- Natal and a student at the University of Venda. My reason to be here is to visit the site of Mautse/ Badimong

T: Are you here to visit the site, the truth is that no one is allowed to enter or visit the site. The fact of the matter is that Mautse site is officially closed, the new owner has decided to shut down the site.

D: What are the reasons that led to the farm owner to shut down the cave?

T: He decided to close down the cave site due to many problems that arise from the people who were residing at the cave. There was in fighting amongst the cave dwellers at the site due to number of conflict and contestation. Cave dwellers started to centralize the site and prevent other pilgrimages and visitors from entering the site. They started to possess the sacred space as their individual space and fight for sacred space's ownership. At the end, this will come back to the owner of the site and eventually may lead to loss of life.

D: I belief that the closure of the site was a last resort, were there any means of resolving this conflict except closing it down? As far as I know, there is display board which have rules and regulations for people entering the site, was there any violation of the rules by the cave dwellers?

T: The rules that were displayed at the entrance of the gate was posted by the previous farm-owner. Then, in the process of selling his farm, he decided to thrown away the board that contains the rules and regulation.

D: Who is presently a new owner of the Mautse sacred site?

T: The farm where Mautse sacred site is located is owned by Mr Maqelepo who is originally coming from Johannesburg. He is indeed a black person.

D: Does he know what was happening inside the sacred cave of Mautse?

T: Yes of course, he inherited all what was happening inside the site. Due to problems arise at the site, then, he took a decision to close down the site. He did not just close down the cave without any issuing of notice cave dwellers, if

I am not mistaken, he gave them three weeks. He even went to Lesedi radio station broadcasting mostly in the Free State province.

D: Can you confirm that there is no people presently residing at Mautse site?

T: I am honest, nobody is residing at Mautse and all people were evicted. However, the sacred space (divisions of the cave) and sign written “Nkonkomehi Heritage Site” are still in existence, but the dwelling huts and houses are all destroyed.

D: I remember the number of people flocking to the site during Easter weekend, are all people informed about the closure?

T: Not all people are informed about the closure, some healers are still assembling to Mautse site to honour his and her “ancestral calling”, coming from all corners of South Africa even Lesotho.

D: It’s going to be my pleasure to have an appointment with the new owner, Mr Maqelepo, especially to find out more about eviction, consultation, marketing and his future plans (way forwards) about Mautse sacred sites

T: He does not explain to us what his are future plans- forwards. As far as I know, the cave dwellers were dispersed and scattered to other cave sites.

APPENDIX SEVEN

The following narratives are the results of an extract from the interview I had with Mr. S Ngema, Dihlabeng Municipality, Tourism officer, Bethlehem regarding his experience work as tourism officer and representative of the Dihlabeng local Municipality.

- He confirmed that there is no involvement of the municipality towards the site of Motouleng cave, in respect of the site, located under the jurisdiction of the municipality. They knew that there are caves within its jurisdiction include Qwaqwa caves but they never visited them especially Motouleng as the municipality. On behalf of the municipality, he can confirm that there is record of Motouleng's administration, management and funding resources available to them
- Motouleng as a cultural site, the municipality do have projects relate to cultural events, monument and celebration but the municipality has no hand in the operation of the sacred cave site. Although there is small financial budget injected to cultural sites but Motouleng has been excluded. He illustrated that there is no name of Motouleng cave site in the municipality data base of the established tourist attraction. That may be the reason why Motouleng site is not being counted from the municipality's annual tourism statistics. He has no knowledge of cave dwellers and visitors paying entrance fee, and it is a surprise to him and municipality that R20 is charged to an individual entering the site.
- Although there is a collaboration between the municipality and provincial government department, it was a surprise to learn that Motouleng is declared as a heritage site, after showing him an image of the sign written "Motouleng Heritage site". He denied any knowledge and involvement of the municipality in discussing and endorsing such initiative. It seems to them that certain provincial structure came and declared Motouleng site as heritage site without the consulting the municipality.

- He subsequently agreed that there are a lot of peculiar incidents within this province of Free State whereby provincial government departments work as a separate entity. For an example, Dhlabeng municipality has never met with Provincial Heritage Council, irrespective of its existence, to discuss heritage issues especially located within the municipality. To them, there are new local tourist sites that they envisage to register with Heritage Council, for an example, Anglo-Boer war sites, but their attempts were fruitless. He strongly emphasised that the common rule must prevail whereby the provincial government department cannot implement any projects without the knowledge of the local municipality.
- He makes a concluding statement that there is an overwhelming lack of understanding of tourism and cultural projects by the municipality and its council. In most cases, municipalities are concentrating at service delivery of basic services, for an example, sanitation, water, electricity and houses. Generally, he uttered that there is a low level of cultural pride amongst Basotho people as compared to other ethnic groups. It's hardly to hear the Basotho person saying that he is going to consult a sangoma or diviner. It's a taboo to them and it is not discussed in public arenas. This could be the key element why the municipality's official cannot discuss African religious and cultural beliefs sites.

APPENDIX EIGHT

The following is an abstract from the National Heritage Resources Act, no 25 of 1999, delegation of power to the Provincial Resources authorities, its establishment, functions, powers and duties.

Establishment of provincial heritage resources authorities

23. An MEC may establish a provincial heritage resources authority which shall be responsible for the management of the relevant heritage resources within the province, which shall be a body corporate capable of suing and being sued in its corporate name and which shall be governed by a Council constituted as prescribed by regulations published in the *Provincial Gazette*: Provided that the members of the Council shall be appointed in a manner which applies the principles of transparency and representable and takes into account special competence, experience and interest in the field of heritage resources.

Functions, powers and duties of provincial heritage resources authority

24. (1) A provincial heritage authority must—

(a) advise the MEC on the implementation of this Act or relevant provincial or municipal legislation;

(b) annually submit a report to the MEC regarding its activities during that year;

(c) promote the systematic identification, recording and assessment of heritage resources and heritage objects which form part of the national estate in a province;

(d) protect and manage heritage resources in a province which fulfil the heritage assessment criteria prescribed under section 7(1) for Grade II status;

(e) notify SAHRA of the presence of any heritage resource in the province which it considers fulfils the heritage assessment criteria prescribed under section

7(1) for Grade I status, nominate such resource for national level protection and furnish SAHRA with the information in its possession relating to such resource;

(f) maintain data bases on heritage resources in accordance with national standards, and at regular intervals furnish SAHRA with such data;

(g) establish policy, objectives and strategy plans for heritage resources management in the province;

(h) determine the competence of local authorities to manage heritage resources in accordance with the national system for the heritage grading of local authorities prescribed under section 8(6);

(i) co-ordinate and monitor the performance of local authorities in the implementation of their responsibilities in terms of this Act and provincial heritage legislation;

(j) assist local authorities to manage heritage resources in their areas of

jurisdiction; and (k) provide for any areas of responsibility in terms of this Act or any provincial heritage resources legislation when a local authority does not have competence, or has insufficient capacity, to perform a function in terms of the criteria prescribed under section 8(6).

General powers and duties of heritage resources authorities

25. (1) A heritage resources authority must—

(a) furnish information, advice and assistance to enhance public sensitivity towards and awareness of the need for management of the national estate;

(b) maintain a list of conservation bodies which have, in accordance with regulations by the heritage resources authority concerned, registered their interest in—

(i) a geographical area; or

(ii) a category of heritage resources;

(c) regularly inspect heritage resources which are formally protected by the heritage resources authority concerned in terms of any provision of Part 1 of Chapter II;

(d) endeavour to assist any community or body of persons with an established interest in any heritage resource to obtain reasonable access to such heritage resource, should they request it, and may for this purpose—

(i) enter into negotiations with the owner of such resource;

(ii) facilitate the making of arrangements as may be required for the achievement of such access, including the execution of a heritage agreement under section 42; and

(iii) if such negotiations are unsuccessful, refer the matter to the Minister or MEC, as the case may be; and

(e) make arrangements to ensure the protection and management of all heritage resources and property owned or controlled by it or vested in it.

(2) A heritage resources authority may—

(a) promote and engage in research relating to the identification, assessment and management of the national estate as necessary for the performance of its functions;

(b) publish, or by any other means make available or distribute in any form, or cause to be published or distributed, any knowledge and information relating to the national estate and any of its functions or activities;

(c) inspect or document any heritage resource—

(i) which has the potential to become protected in terms of this Act;

(ii) which is, or which the heritage authority has reason to believe may be, so protected;
or

(iii) which it wishes to document for research purposes, for purposes of building up a public record of heritage resources or as part of an investigation into a suspected offence in terms of this Act, and must maintain a register of such inspections;

(d) whenever it is investigating the desirability of protecting any place in terms of this Act, take such steps as it considers necessary—

(i) for erecting beacons on the corners of and surveying and preparing a diagram or plan of such place; or

(ii) for determining by survey the location of such place or object in relation to the beacons and boundaries of the land on which it is situated;

(e) undertake or make arrangements for the presentation of any place under its control or, after consultation with the Department concerned, any heritage site which is owned by the State;

(f) by agreement with the authority or body concerned, co-operate in the management of any heritage resource which is owned or controlled by the State or a supported body;

(g) lend anything under its control to a museum or public institution, subject to such conditions as it deems necessary and appropriate;

(h) subject to the provisions of section 59, make and from time to time amend regulations relating to any matter which the heritage authority concerned considers to be necessary or expedient to prescribe to fulfil its functions and implement its powers and duties under this Act, including—

(i) the standards of practice and qualifications required of individuals, institutions or other bodies for the performance of work on heritage resources protected in terms of, and in the various fields covered by, this Act; and

(ii) the monitoring of activities at protected sites;

(i) create and where necessary register with the relevant authorities a badge, or an emblem for the authority, any of its projects or any category of protection provided for in terms of this Act;

(j) where appropriate, affix to or otherwise display at any place protected in terms of this Act a badge or other sign indicating its status;

(k) produce, acquire and market products relating to the national estate, or enter into arrangements for the production, acquisition and marketing of such products;

(l) recover costs incurred by it and, where appropriate, charge for the provision of services rendered in terms of this Act, including but not limited to the—

(i) processing of applications received;

(ii) carrying out of investigations;

(iii) production, acquisition and marketing of products; and

(iv) provision of information;

(m) arrange for the provision of insurance cover for—

(i) itself against any loss, damage, risk or liability which it may suffer or incur regarding any property under its control;

(ii) members of the council of a heritage resources authority, co-opted members, members of committees and members of its staff, in respect of bodily injury, illness, disablement or death incurred wholly and directly in the course of the performance of their duties on behalf of the heritage resources authority concerned;

(n) enter into contracts; and

(o) employ consultants to assist in the performance of its functions

APPENDIX NINE

Report: First phase of Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment of the proposed residential development on the farm De Vlugt 340 (Linwood), Clarens, Free State.



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28 JANUARY 2009

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Attention: Andrew Salomon
SAHRA File no: 9/2/300/0023

**REPORT: FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENTS ON THE FARM DE VLUGT 340 (LINWOOD),
CLARENS, FREE STATE**

My CIA report dated 13 March 2007 in connection with the proposed developments at Linwood, Clarens, has reference.

BACKGROUND

Residential developments are planned at the farm De Vlugt 340 (Linwood), near Clarens, Free State.

The whole area is very rich in cultural and historical remnants from the Later Iron Age and Anglo-Boer War origin.

A number of circular and rectangular stone-walled structures were found on top of the hill and along the western slope below the ridge.

Surrender Hill nearby, is also famed for the nearly 4000 burghers from the Free Sate Republic, who capitulated there on 30 July 1900 during the Anglo-Boer War. Records claim that over two million rounds of Boer ammunition had been destroyed by the British forces at several places in the area after the surrender.

The sacred cave known as Motouleng or Slaapkrans is located nearby. There is a very strong belief in the supernatural powers of this holy place and people come here to be trained as Sangomas or to pray and sacrifice in honour of their ancestors.

During a personal visit to the site it was clear that there is an active presence of people from as far as the Eastern Cape and Gauteng who visit and stay over at the cave regularly. Even the number of people living at the site permanently is ever extending.

The recommendations in my original report (13 March 2007) were as follows:

1. Due to the great historical and cultural significance of the area, the whole region should be handled with caution.
2. There is a risk around the development of a relatively small residential area near the sacred cave as a cultural feature with an elaborate population.
3. A comprehensive survey to establish the viability and desirability of the developments in the whole area before any further planning.

DISCUSSION

Prof Phillip Nel, Head of the Department of Middle East Studies at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, is an expert on the sacred caves in the Eastern Free State. He has a vast experience of the dynamics of the cave at Mothuleng acquired over many years of close involvement.

Currently Prof Nel has several PhD and MA-candidates doing research at the cave.

During a recent discussion with Prof Nel, he shared the following views on the present situation at Mothuleng:

1. The number of people settling at the cave is increasing rapidly and residents are now even building huts outside the cave along the spruit.
2. Opposing groups are forming amongst the inmates.
3. Self-appointed caretakers are collecting entrance fees, resulting in a profitable money-making scheme.
4. Conflicting interests between different groups are developing over financial income and control of outsiders entering the site.
5. Unwanted elements have managed to sneak in and are creating a security risk by causing an escalation of criminality in the area.

6. Tension is growing amongst the inmates about the presence of researchers and tourists, (who sometimes enter the site without appointment or permission), during the execution of their sacred rituals and the training of traditional healers.
7. There is a growing risk that the situation might get out of control if nothing is done to regulate the current state of affairs.
8. A meeting of the main stakeholders, including representatives of the inmates, affected farmers, South African Police Services (SAPS), the Mautse Municipality and SAHRA (or PHRA?), is set for 10 February 2009.

CONCLUSION

1. It is clear that the atmosphere in the area is very sensitive at present.
2. For future relations the historical and cultural significance of the cave and surroundings should not be endangered.
3. My main concern is about the development of a leisure residential housing scheme, with visitors wandering about in relatively close proximity to the sacred cave, together with all the unwanted elements present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The developers should temporarily stop any further planning of the project.
2. SAHRA ought to withdraw their proposal that a permit should be obtained and that test pits should be made at the stone-wall remains.
3. The application of minimum standards for site museums, as recommended by SAHRA, also seems unnecessary in this case.
4. The owner/developers should contact Prof Nel (051-436 1468), or the local farmer's union to obtain particulars about the forthcoming meeting.
5. The owner/developers should attend the meeting on 10 February 2009, to observe the attitude of the people and officials and only then make a final decision, either to continue or to terminate the planning of the development.

J. DREYER