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Co-working on Heritage Issues with
Local Communities

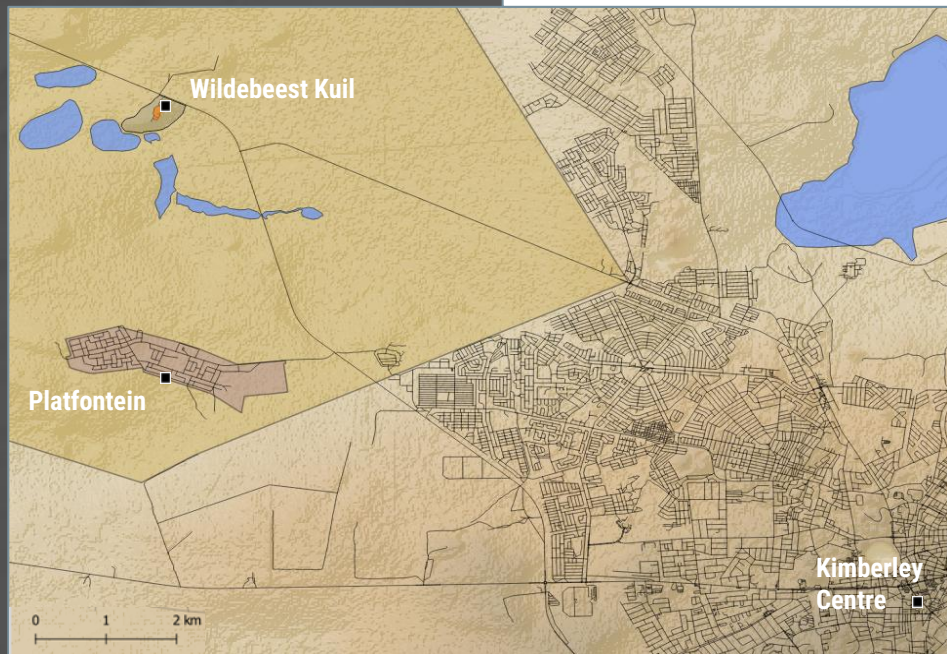
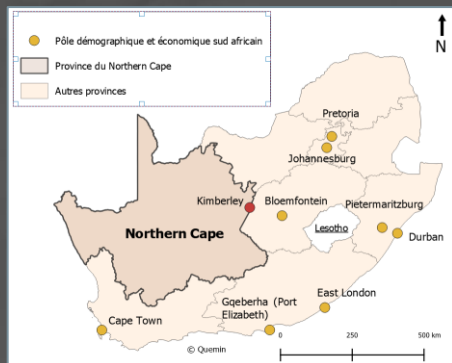
*Uses and abuses of "community".
Lessons from Wildebeest Kuil
Rock Art Tourism Centre*

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Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Tourism Centre



Aims of the project



Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre

Several objectives: to highlight the country's neglected heritage and inform, educate and inspire South Africans about it; to create jobs through tourism at rock art sites; and to protect rock art sites through responsible development.

Jointly managed by a trust in collaboration with the !Xun and Khwe. The project aims to make the rock art and painful yet fascinating history of the !Xun and Khwe accessible to tourists.

"The fact that the Center is located in Platfontein - where the !Xun and Khwe communities will soon be settling - will make it one of the province's main tourist attractions." Manne Dipico, provincial PM

Extract from a local newspaper, December 6, 2001

NEWS Wildebeest Kuil | DIAMOND FIELDS ADVERTISER | THURSDAY 6 DECEMBER 2001 | 5

A TASTE OF HISTORY KIMBERLEY SITE

Rock art on your doorstep

The Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre is set to open its doors to the public on Tuesday just outside Kimberley. News Editor Patsy Beangstrom has the details.

CHERYL Carolus, the SA Tourism Chief Executive and former SA High Commissioner in London, will officially open the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre outside Kimberley on Tuesday.

Wildebeest Kuil is situated about 15 km from Kimberley on a farm belonging to the !Xun and Khwe San refugees from the Angolan and Namibian wars.

The rock art centre, which has been funded by the Rock Art Research Institute (Kari) at the University of the Witwatersrand, will be formally opened by Carolus and Manne Dipico.

Kari identified two locations for sites to be developed for rock art tourism in this pilot project: a painting site in the Drakenburg Kimberley area.

The project has several aims, including redressing the country's neglected heritage for the benefit of all South Africans and to inform, educate and inspire South Africans about this heritage, creating jobs through tourism to rock art sites, and protecting rock art sites by developing them responsibly.

Kimberley co-ordinator for Wits University Tara Turkington said yesterday that of the three sites chosen in the Kimberley area, only the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre, was currently being developed due to financial constraints.

The centre, which will be open to the public from Tuesday, will be managed jointly by a trust set up this year for developing rock art tourism, called the Northern Cape Rock Art Trust, in conjunction with the !Xun and Khwe CPAs.

"The project has focused on making both the rock art and the painful, yet fascinating, story of the !Xun and Khwe accessible to tourists."

...ing point of the experience.

"Here visitors will be able to peruse a display and watch a 20-minute film as an introduction to a walk back in time to the engravings, thought to have been made by Later Stone Age ancestors of the !Xun and Khwe also form part of 200 years ago," Turkington said.

The engravings are on a low ridge of ancient sandstone rock.

Visitors will follow a circular route of about 800 m with the assistance of an audio tour and a boardwalk to the best of over 400 images on the hill.

Eland, elephant, rhino, wildebeest, hartbeest, ostrich and dancing human figures can be seen.

A tea room and shop run by the !Xun and Khwe also form part of the visitors' centre.

The art and crafts of the !Xun and Khwe are evident everywhere in the centre, from the central floor mosaic made out of chipped tiles and incorporating images such as snakes and concentric circles, to the striking prints on the walls.

According to Turkington, the project is aimed at benefiting all the people of Kimberley and its surrounds as well as the Northern Cape and South Africa in general, and the !Xun and Khwe communities in particular.

Most of the 32 people who are already working in the !Xun and Khwe Communal Property Association's textile and ceramics projects, which will be selling the shop, are women.

"Our project aims to grow this pool substantially in order to help these women gain self-confidence and economic independence, and regain their dignity, stolen from them by history."

The admission fee to the site is R15 for adults and R10 for children. R10 extra per audio tour.

It will be open every day from 9.30 a until 6 pm.

Most importantly, though, the project aims to create jobs.

The aim is to create about 30 new permanent jobs, mostly for people from the impoverished !Xun and Khwe communities.

Kimberley

Aims to preserve rock art as a precious, non-renewable resource and to take advantage of the existing worldwide interest in the San.

The aim is to create around 30 new permanent jobs, mainly for members of the impoverished !Xun and Khwe communities.

Conflicts

"The maintenance and upkeep of the site, it had to be spent on things that visitors don't see, but without which there is no site. (...) Because the community... and not just the nearby community because of the site's remoteness... There's free access on weekends. When I say free access... Free access for people who know how to get in. Hm... They steal everything they want: piping, electrical wiring, and just recently I had to spend over R100,000 just to get the electricity restored on the site. And I think that's something people don't realize, you know? They just visit. Hmm... Trying to keep this site in good condition has been a real nightmare... Now that we have this [second] electric fence, I touch wood. I don't wake up every monday morning wondering "what was stolen from Wildebeest Kuil?"

Absences

=>

Evictions

=>

Restrictions

"Meryl-Joy Wildschut said on behalf of the South African San Institute (SASI) that the Wildebeest Kuil rock art site represents the culture of the entire San people and that if the current staff do not do justice to the site and contribute to the community, the Trust has no obligation to employ them. Decisions taken by the Trust must be for the improvement of the site. A clear message must be sent to staff regarding the unacceptability of absenteeism and theft."

Minutes, NCRAT, 2006



“Community” : a homogenizing whole



South African San Institute

in partnership with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture
invites you to

a Story-telling Evening

Artists include the individuals from the !Xun and Khwe community, Mr Louis Mallett, Mr Niek van Zyl and Thabo Motlhabi

at Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre

16km on R31 (road to Barkly West)

Date: 24th September 2015
Time: 16:00 for 16:30
Refreshments will be available

Donations to the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre will be welcomed

For information please contact: Caitlin on 072 3785 763 or caitlin@sasi.org.za



Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

McGregor Museum

“People should appreciate the sacredness of rock art in South Africa. And wherever you go to a rock art site, people should realize that they’re standing at a site that is sacred, and [that is] part of the sacred heritage of the San”

Khoisan representative, member of the National Khoisan Consultative Council - from the Wildebeest Kuil movie



- This project was carried out from assumptions of shared facts simulating cultural affinity.
- Thus, the community was an 'imaginary' form, when several thousand people were gathered under the idealised banner of a single expectation.
- 'Community' should not be analysed as a substantial pre-discursive fact but as a performance carried out regularly by various actors
- We should pay renewed attention to 'community' by adopting a pragmatic posture : What is this community we pretend to talk about ?

“Community” : a legitimizing representation

Benjamin Smith	Archaeologist, Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand
David Morris	Archaeologist, McGregor Museum, Kimberley
Barend van Wyk	National Khoisan Consultative Conference
Adele Wildschut	South African San Institute
Nikolaas Tenda	South African San Council
Rennie Mishe	!Xun and Khwe Communal Property Association
Jason Marenda	!Xun and Khwe Communal Property Association
Janette Deacon	Archaeologist, SAHRA Council member
Ann Pretorius	Director, William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley
Colin Fortune	Director, McGregor Museum
Andrew Hall	Department Sport, Arts & Culture, Northern Cape
Sharron Lewis	Northern Cape Tourism Authority

“From early on there were people stealing equipment and that kind of stuff. It’s impossible to consult a whole community. The communities were kept informed all the way through..” (Ben Smith, interview, 2022)

- Limits on wider participation were exacerbated by the fact that most of the !Xun and Khwe were still living at Schmidtsdrift until after the site was opened.
- The “community” – though it was the means, the goal and the justification for a project – found itself forced to participate in the shadow of representatives
- While it is impossible to consult an entire community, it would still be possible to speak on its behalf to justify a decision.
- The !Xun and Khwe had to dig their way within this ***frame of community representation***

“Community” : a frame of recognizability

“While ancestors of the !Xun and Khwe are unlikely to have been the makers of the engravings at Wildebeest Kuil (they had come from Angola), **these communities being San leads them** to recognise a general cultural affinity with the engravings. Other Khoe-San **groups and organisations** in the area have claimed similar affinities” (Wildebeest Kuil Management Plan, 2008)



Unlike the !Xun and Khwe, the presumed descendants of the engravers were not *recognizable* as a community.

- At Wildebeest Kuil, the selection of the !Xun and Khwe ultimately resulted in the side-lining of individuals living in the vicinity of the site (they had claimed an affinity with the site).
- Segmenting a whole and referencing it as a community is already being able to recognise it as a whole that can be referenced under the term community. Therefore any “selection phase” **is contingent on the way in which the concept of "community" is apprehended during the selection process, and is therefore preceded by a “recognition phase”**
- If recognition characterises an act, a norm of recognizability characterises the more general conditions that prepare or form an individual for this act.
- The complex issue surrounding this condition of recognition is not so much to understand how to include more people in an existing norm of recognisability, but to consider how norms distribute recognition in a differential mode.

Which conception of the “community” should we choose ?

It depends what we want to study...

Anthropological
(and geographical)

Juridical
(and political)

Pragmatical
(and critical)

... but we should not think that these different conceptions share common traits

Recommendations : In these times where the anthropological becomes juridical... better being pragmatic !

Claims for rights

Memorandum for the Traditional Khoi-San Leadership Act, 3 of 2019

1. a) Recognition of an indigenous status for the Khoi and San *communities*.
2. b) Recognition of distinct heritage practices of the Khoi and San *communities*.
3. c) Government to give the land back to the actual owners who are the KhoiSan *communities*

Intellectual property claims

2003 : Hoodia
2008 : Zembrin®

5% of all sales are placed in a trust fund for the San - paid back to the communities - and a further 1% is paid for the use of a San logo.



sceletium tortuosum

2019 : Rooibos

1.5% annual levy on production costs

R12.2 M first-year profits



!Aru Ikhuisi Piet Berendse with rooibos bush

Territorial and cultural claims

1st method: Land claims

From 2008 onwards: increasing pressure on the government to return land spoiled after 1913 to *communities*.



Chief Aútshuma! Francisco MacKenzie protests against Amazon's plan to locate its headquarters in Cape Town.

2nd method: Activism

2022: "Our heritage is not for sale", say Khoisan community members opposed to the development of what would become Amazon's African headquarters.

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