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► **To cite this version:**

Hugo Quemin, Mélanie Duval, David Morris, Lourenço Pinto. Exploring Multiple Conditions of Participation on Community-based Heritage Management: A Case Study of Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Tourism Centre, South Africa. *Public Archaeology*, 2024, pp.1-21. 10.1080/14655187.2024.2355787 . hal-04669349

HAL Id: hal-04669349

<https://hal.science/hal-04669349v1>

Submitted on 8 Aug 2024

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Quemin, H., Duval, M., Morris, D., & Pinto, L. (2024). Exploring Multiple Conditions of Participation on Community-based Heritage Management: A Case Study of Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Tourism Centre, South Africa. *Public Archaeology*, 1–21.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14655187.2024.2355787>

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Exploring multiple conditions of participation on community-based heritage management : a case study of Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Tourism Centre, South Africa

Quemin Hugo, Duval Mélanie, Morris David et Pinto Lourenço

Abstract

This paper explores the limits to participation in community-based approaches (CBAs) for rock art heritage management. The construction of a tourism development project at a rock art site (Wildebeest Kuil, Kimberley, South Africa) in 2001 involved two San communities in order to provide economic and cultural support. Based on the assumption that CBAs are closely linked to participation issues, which are themselves linked to past inequalities, this article analyzes the multiple obstacles to community participation despite the goodwill of managers and highlights the limits of CBAs from a critical analytical perspective. To do so, we build on qualitative data from field observations and semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders. Hence, by drawing a conceptualized framework from the Wildebeest Kuil example in CBAs for heritage management, we suggest focusing on the conditions that CBAs impose on the community participation that justify them. Finally, this article draws lines toward a sustainable perspective between CBAs and community participation, and may be transferred to other case studies.

Keywords : community-based; heritage; rock art; tourism; postcolonial context; South Africa; archaeology.

In South Africa, since the end of apartheid, steps have been taken towards redressing past inequalities, not least in terms of heritage management. As such, heritage objects have been reconsidered since 1994 and their institutional management has become "*the most important sphere in which contests over South African pasts have been taking place*" (Rassool, 2000:21). A range of new objects have thus entered the heritage field. Set aside for most of

the apartheid period, only a few endangered rock art sites had received heritage status granted solely as a defensive measure (Deacon, 1993). Subsequently, in conjunction with the popularisation of the African Renaissance Project by President Thabo Mbeki in the early 2000s, various projects brought rock art to the fore, including its placement at the centre of the new national coat of arms (Smith et al., 2000). The situation, then, "*seems auspicious for a wider awareness of pre-colonial history and of rock art in particular*" (Morris, 2014:189).

Three rock art tourism development projects were launched during these years, namely the Clanwilliam Living Landscape Project in 2000 (Parkington, 1999), the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Tourism Centre in 2001 (Morris, 2003) and the Kamberg Rock Art Tourism Centre in 2002 (Ndlovu, 2009). These three different projects were implemented as *community-based approaches (CBA) of heritage management*. By allowing the participation of communities in a heritage project, this mode of management aims to increase their autonomy and to ensure the long-term preservation of a heritage site. Yet, nearly twenty years after the development of these CBAs, the outcomes reveal a harsh reality. The Clanwilliam Living Landscape Project has closed, while relations between institutions and communities at Kamberg and Wildebeest Kuil have largely deteriorated. Moreover, no substantial benefits have been generated, either for the local institutions involved in the projects or for the communities whose precarious living conditions persisted.

The purpose of this article is to present the recent and turbulent social history of Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre in order to interrogate the intersection between CBAs and participation. Although this project aimed to provide opportunities for two San communities (!Xun and Khwe) to participate in a rock art museum project, certain circumstances worked against this ideal. By questioning *what CBA does to participation*, this article analyses the ways in which a project unfolds and undermines the ideal of participation that justifies it. This investigation also seeks to devise lines of enquiry in order to provide answers to practical societal issues (following Gould, 2016). To do so, we propose to start from the analyses undertaken during three months of field research around Wildebeest Kuil rock art site (Quemin, 2022). In terms of methods, the article mobilises qualitative data from field observations and semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders. Following a literature review, the obstacles to community participation in Wildebeest Kuil are described in order to inform on the frame that CBAs impose on community participation. By highlighting a theoretically-informed case analysis, this article assumes a critical stance toward the CBA, as it is regularly formulated in the scientific literature and implemented in heritage management projects.

Rock art heritage management and the “community-based” paradigm

Major international institutions and NGOs have long considered tourism to have the potential to generate local economies and improve living conditions in accordance with the goals of sustainable development. With the intention of developing sustainable territorial economies, many countries have designed legal frameworks to incorporate communities in the organisation of tourism offerings. In South Africa, the legal inclusion of communities in the organisation of a heritage site is enforced by the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 (NHRA, 1999). It establishes the rights of South African communities to heritage resources and their dispositions “to be consulted and to participate in their management” since “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” (Section 5:4, NHRA, 1999). There is thus a legal imperative to include communities in the running of the sites, not only in carrying out daily work tasks and events, but also in sharing governance with other institutions.

Because the CBA paradigm held the promise of preservation in other ways, it was welcomed as an alternative to the progressive tendency to enclose rock art sites. Often ineffective and increasingly restricting the means of access, preservationist management approaches have generally failed: "wherever they were used, fences were breached. Some sites were then allowed to return to being unfenced; others were reinforced with dramatic cages" (Smith, 2006:323). In search of alternative management models, various reflections were motivated by the objective of making access to the sites less restrictive. In 2005, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated, "too many rock art sites [are left] unguarded against vandals and thieves. [...] Two initiatives are especially critical: educating our children and engaging local communities" (Annan, 2005). The CBA then seemed an effective way to overcome the barriers of the old model.

Since its emergence in the 1970s, the CBA paradigm has mainly been an object of discussion around two aspects. Firstly, this approach represents multiple models that differ both in the objectives and the means to achieve them. Thus, there are models arguing in favour of the CBA for the purpose of community development and participation (e.g., Okazaki, 2008) and models justifying the effectiveness of this approach in terms of economic development (e.g., Asker et al., 2010). Given the divergence in objectives, measuring the success of a CBA would therefore depend on one's perspective and expectations. Secondly, much work has highlighted a gap between the theoretical dimension of the models and their practical application. Many situations reveal the weak place given to community participation in project developments. For Novelli and Gebhardt (2007), the benefits of these models for communities are difficult to grasp because none of the conventional tourism actors place the community's interests at the centre of their thinking. In many projects, "participation in decision-making was only one of many ways to ensure that local people received benefits from tourism, and not a final goal itself" (Li, 2006:133) and communities may have been involved in a project only rhetorically (Chok, et al., 2007:159). To address these issues, it was suggested that project initiatives "should be owned and managed by the communities themselves in order to deliver 'higher intensities of participation'" (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012:38).

The diversity of CBA models and practices can be confusing. The same is true of conceptions and practices of community participation. In principle, no one is against the ideal of participation. However, when this ideal is defined as "a redistribution of power [...], the general consensus explodes" (Arnstein, 1969:216). Yet, "there is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process" (Arnstein, 1969:216). In a critical comparative perspective, Blackstock (2005) questioned the participation ideal of the CBA in relation to community development philosophies. While the latter "explicitly seek to dismantle structural barriers to participation and develop emancipatory collective responses to local issues", the advocates of the CBA would diverge from it in three ways (Blackstock, 2005:40). First, the results miss the transformative intent of community development by ensuring the sustainability of a profitable tourism industry. Second, communities are configured as homogeneous wholes with no internal conflicts and no plurality of values. Third, the CBA ignores external constraints on local control. In this way, the CBA model "can be perceived as an example of community development 'imposter' driven by economic imperatives and a neo-liberal agenda" (Blackstock, 2005:40). From this perspective, the tourism industry regularly emphasises economic profitability over community participation. Thus, "there are always questions to be asked when 'participation' is invoked [, namely] "who is involved, how, and on whose terms" (Pearce, 2000:33). The use of the case study of Wildebeest Kuil interrogates this participation ideal.

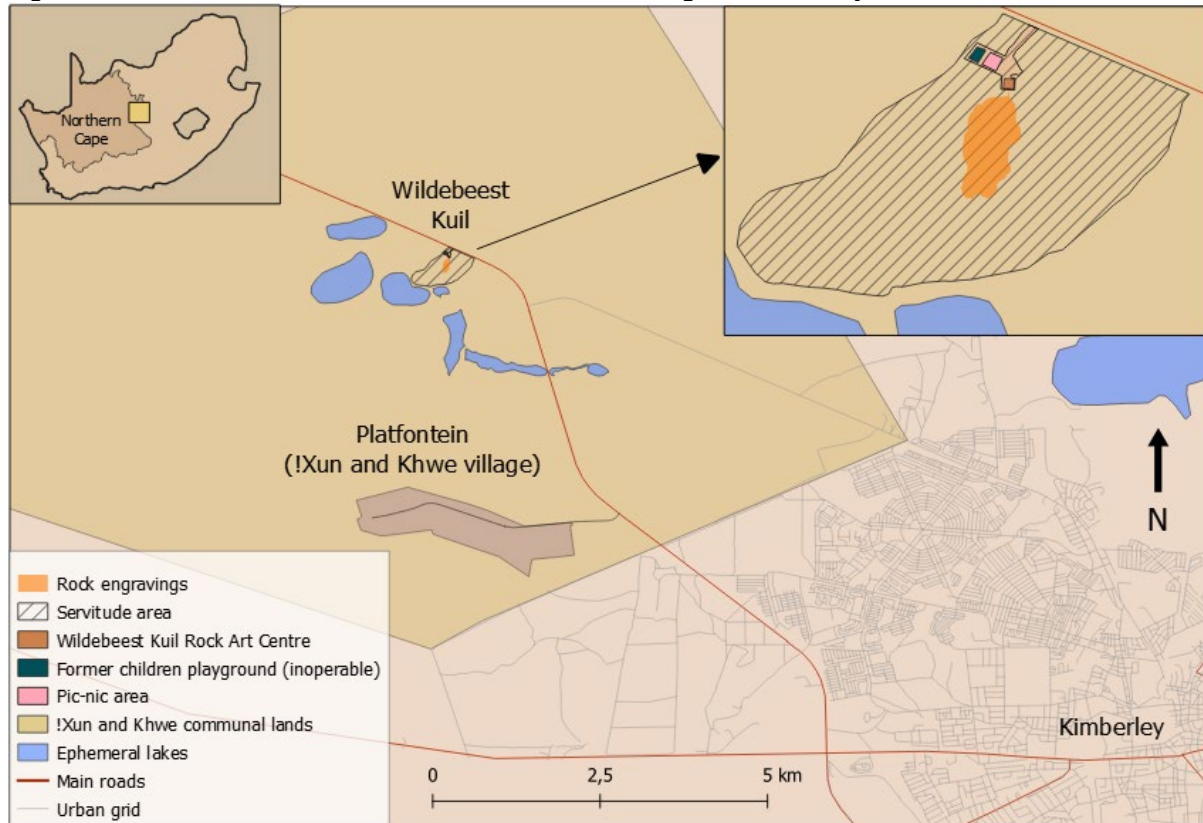
The making and unmaking of a community-based approach.

In the scientific literature, an important part of rock art sites in southern Africa has been attributed to Later Stone Age image-makers supposed to be ancestral to present-day San populations. Victims of waves of genocide in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries and then subject to radical acculturation throughout the twentieth century, the San populations were considered, until the end of apartheid, to be extinct in South Africa (Deacon *et al.*, 1996). Thus, at the beginning of a democratic South Africa, when two San groups acquired a farm on which the engraved rocks of Wildebeest Kuil are located, several issues and hopes emerged.

Originally from Angola and Namibia, the !Xun and Khwe are two San groups that lived through the turmoil of the last decade of apartheid. During the war of independence in Namibia, several thousand of them were conscripted into the South African Defence Force (SADF) to fight the independence militias in Namibia (Van Wyk, 2014). Having become pariahs in independent Namibia, those !Xun and Khwe found themselves in a difficult situation. The South African government offered to relocate them together; the majority accepting, despite their distinct languages and internal disputes (Sharp & Douglas, 1996). Regardless of a worsening situation of inter-communal friction, the !Xun and Khwe were accommodated together to share their daily lives in adjacent areas of a refugee camp in Schmidtsdrift, some 90 km away from their current home. A decade later, considering their precarious living conditions and a land claim process forcing them to leave Schmidtsdrift, land was purchased for them by the South African government (Robbins, 2004). In 1999, Platfontein Farm, which includes the Wildebeest Kuil rock art site, was acquired by the !Xun and Khwe. Again, they were grouped together on the basis of assumed common San ethnicity (den Hertog, 2013). The purchase of this farm was financed by government funds under Nelson Mandela's presidency as part of the national housing subsidy programme to redress part of the legacy of the apartheid period. Materialising the development promises of a hopeful government, this acquisition received significant media attention (nationwide - *SABC, Mail & Guardian ...* - and regionally - *Diamond Fields Advertiser...*). Although the presence of this rock art site was apparently not the reason for the selection of this farm by the government (Salakhedinov, 2022), its acquisition by two San groups was to find a particular meaning in the context of the African Renaissance Project. The historical anteriority of the San people and their harsh treatment during previous centuries justified the construction of a South African identity partly structured around a shared heritage and African ancestor common to the various ethnic identities (Okumu, 2002 ; Smith, 2006). The purchase, thus, acquired the image of a place of possibilities and underscored the promise of a restored dignity for the !Xun and Khwe community.

Between 1999 and 2003, the few thousand inhabitants of Platfontein gradually settled five kilometres from Wildebeest Kuil, in a settlement built on either side of a central cluster of amenities (including school, clinic, shop, radio station) and spread out along a roadway that serves as an internal thoroughfare (Figure 1). !Xun and Khwe speak in their respective languages, with Afrikaans as lingua franca (for older generations born in Angola, it was Portuguese). With more than nine out of ten residents without paid employment, most live on state aid or military-related pension funds. During this difficult time, a tourism development project was launched. Achieved in 12 months and inaugurated in December 2001 (when the bulk of the community was still in Schmidtsdrift), the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre was labelled a "self-sustaining poverty-alleviation project" (Morris, 2014:189).

Figure 1: Wildebeest Kuil, Platfontein, and the surrounding area. January 2023. H.Quemin.



This project took place in a more general context of the government's mobilisation of cultural tourism to redress past inequalities. Under the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (1994-1996), and with the adoption of the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Programme (GEAR), tourism was identified as a key economic sector capable of redressing past inequalities and promoting the empowerment of previously disadvantaged groups (DEAT, 1997; Rogerson & Visser, 2004). One of the objectives of the RDP and GEAR was to transfer capital and skills into projects for previously disadvantaged groups in order to help redress socio-economic gaps. Among the available tourism resources, cultural heritage was seen to contribute to the construction of the 'rainbow nation' and to the encouragement of the African Renaissance Project (DEAT, 2004). The aim was to develop a range of tourism resources beyond wildlife and landscape attractions, appealing to new markets and generating new sources of revenue. This new political dynamic gradually gained momentum within the national social reconstruction programmes, and the country's provinces introduced several tourism action plans with dedicated funding sources (DEAT, 2004). The funding for the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre came from the Poverty Alleviation Fund, a grant fund for rural job creation projects. The use of this fund required the involvement of previously disadvantaged communities. Therefore, a combination of cultural tourism opportunities (rock art sites) and previously disadvantaged populations (the !Xun and Khwe community) explains the choice of this type of funding for Wildebeest Kuil.

Fully funded by the Poverty Alleviation Fund, designed by a group of researchers and implemented in collaboration between !Xun and Khwe representatives and several public and governmental constituencies and institutions, the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Tourism Centre project was developed as a CBA. From the very beginning of consultations with community representatives, several project instigators were "negotiating on a daily basis with the !Xun and Khwe", ensuring that "they were fundamentally involved" (interview B. Smith, April 2022).

Designed to create employment opportunities through the sale of local handicrafts, guided tours, as well as the establishment of a small restaurant, the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre offers a museum experience of the rock engravings (Figure 2) and the !Xun and Khwe San culture in the foreground-background. In addition to supporting economic and social development, this project aims to provide a cultural resource for both San groups. Included in the site management committee along with researchers, government institutions and a provincial museum (McGregor Museum), the !Xun and Khwe representatives argued for what they wanted to see achieved in such a project. A large number of aspects seem to have been discussed with them, from the museological aspects to the selection and training of guides. To ensure the organisation and sustainability of the site, a Trust, a participatory management structure based on the private model, was created in the long term, "because the government did not want to be responsible" (interview B. Smith, April 2022). It allowed a wide range of actors and institutions "to have a role [...] a voice in the management of the Centre" (interview B. Smith, 2022). With the creation of the Centre, a servitude managed for public access was negotiated over an area incorporating the rock engravings in order to ensure the physical conservation of the site.

Figure 2 : A guide at Wildebeest Kuil presenting engraved rocks. 7 April, 2022. H.Quemin.



In a short space of time, the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre turned out to be much less popular than the estimates of visitor numbers on which its construction was based, and the initial expectations had to be reconsidered. The various managers "projected viability [of the Centre] with about 3,000 or 4,000 visitors a year" (interview B. Smith, April 2022). In the early months "Wildebeest Kuil soon achieved a measure of success but, over a decade on, successes have been tempered by shortcomings and low visitor numbers" (Morris, 2014:189). Despite the disappointment of the early years and disillusionment with the hoped-for opportunities, several recruitment sessions (2002-2003 and 2007-2008) were held in the community to train members for permanent positions. Yet, many of them "proved unreliable,

working for a few months and later absconding leaving their training unfinished” (Barnabas, 2014:118). Others left their positions and went to work elsewhere. Also, “one member of staff, considered an excellent guide and the community member longest in the employ of Wildebeest Kuil, would not adhere to the official opening and closing times, sometimes leaving the centre closed to the public for most of the day” (Barnabas, 2014:118). Moreover, continuously since its introduction of tourism in 2001, the site has been subject to a long series of degradations and vandalism (see Barnabas, 2014; Quemin, 2022). Regularly, the Trust’s limited funds were used for rescue repairs, which placed it in a tricky situation. In 2006, an extraordinary session (NCRAT, 2006) brought together the majority of the Trust’s members to organise the transfer of management responsibilities to the McGregor Museum, a provincial museum and a research institution located in Kimberley with historical and symbolic weight in heritage management and archaeological research. Thus, even if Wildebeest Kuil started being run by a Trust composed of institutions, scientists and Platfontein representatives, it became managed by the McGregor Museum in conjunction with two other institutions which were already a part of the Trust: the South African San Institute (the then largest San institution in South Africa) and the Platfontein Communal Property Association (the institution administering Platfontein’s land). Several measures significantly changed the site’s circumstances. With the creation of a permanent position for a site manager in 2006, a contract position subsidised by the McGregor Museum, and the subsidisation of the site’s running costs, the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre found a state of “subsidised sustainability” (Morris, 2014:194). However, it was only “with overheads reduced [that] it has been possible to keep the doors open” (Morris, 2012:234). While maintaining relations with the !Xun and Khwe community, several modalities were prescribed. “It was unanimously agreed that it was unacceptable to continue employing staff who were not doing their work properly” (Art. 2.2, NCRAT, 2006). According to the then representative of the South African San Institute, Meryl-Joy Wildschut, ‘the Wildebeest Kuil rock art site represents the culture of all San people and if the current staff do not do justice to the site and contribute to the community, [the McGregor Museum] was under no obligation to employ them. [...] A clear message should be sent to staff regarding the unacceptability of absenteeism and theft’ (Art. 3, NCRAT, 2006).

A few years after the transfer of management of the site to the McGregor Museum, Shanade Bianca Barnabas (2014:142) reports that, “early in 2011, the community leaders were approached by a company with the request to put up solar panels on [their] land”. Since initial indications were that a solar array would be quite close to the site, the McGregor Museum raised concerns. While the latter had no authority to block development projects, approval being postponed due to governmental renewable energy development delays (and possibly by South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) processes), there was concern for safeguarding “sense of place” (Morris, 2021:52) and land use compatibility adjacent to the rock art site – even though the project did not involve, *sensu stricto*, either ‘damage’ or ‘alteration’ (NHRA, 1999, 35(5)). The solar farm project was reconsidered for a smaller area before being eventually shelved. Wentzel Katjarra (Archeomaps, 2012:37), representative of the Platfontein Communal Property Association, commented: “how could we know when we supported the development of the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre that it would mean that we San would have to live forever invisible in the landscape, or at the discretion of the McGregor Museum, existing again in the periphery [referring specifically to the San’s history of marginalisation], this time only on our own land?”. The constraining presence of several institutions outside the community was no longer strictly limited to the management of the Wildebeest Kuil servitude. It extended to the landscape – and thus to the surrounding spaces. This moment in the history of Wildebeest Kuil illustrates the complexities of the governmentality of this territory, diverging senses of place, and the actors’ antagonisms.

In 2022, it has been reported that some members of the community have been coming to the site regularly for several years, usually in late autumn, with the idea of cutting down trees on the site, as firewood. This activity was not confirmed in discussions in Platfontein. However, regardless of the importance of the engraved hill, the site may be significant to community members for other reasons and resources (Ndoro & Chirikure, 2009). There have been further instances of contestation in the management of the site, particularly “over anticipated commercial benefits” (Morris, 2012:234). For example, a rumour was spreading in the community a few years ago that the site was making a large amount of money, whereas in reality it has never approached breaking even, let alone deriving any profit. The historical legacy of being dispossessed of what the community thinks it has can perpetuate a sense of marginalisation and widespread distrust of the institutions involved in the governance of the site. In 2019, with fires, thefts, break-ins and vandalism, several discussions took place between the McGregor Museum and community representatives to build an electrified fence around the site, which the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) insisted should be installed. This fence was funded by DEDAT and justified in accordance with regulations (NHRA, 1999, 21(b)) on the basis of economic and preservation interests. From then on, the supposed cessation of vandalism ensured a more sustainable maintenance of the site. However, a few weeks after its installation, the fence – incorrectly erected and hence non-functioning – was ripped open and looted. The thefts (pipes, electrical wiring, wooden boardwalk) and damage continued, and the considerable financial outlays persisted. In 2021, a replacement electrified fence – linked by an alarm to a security company, as the first was to have been – was built at the McGregor Museum and DEDAT’s own expense (because of the Covid shut-down, no meetings had taken place since the first fence was installed). Even this fence has been breached by intruders, who dug their way in under the fence in early 2023 – though there were no thefts. These fences may be seen as symptomatic of troubled relations between community and the managing institutions. On the one hand, governmental institutions see fencing as a success from an economic and preservationist point of view. On the other hand, although some !Xun and Khwe still approve of the fence, it underscores the collapse of the CBA.

The flawed ideal of participation

A dialectical approach to participation.

The CBA experience at Wildebeest Kuil provides a sharp questioning of some aspects of this model in terms of community participation and heritage management. Several authors (e.g., Dodds et al., 2016) determine the quality of a CBA by using a product/market fit analysis. In doing so, they ignore relational contexts, determine the success of a project on the importance of factors external to communities and elaborate a doubtful parallel between profitability and sustainability. Certainly, failure in terms of profitability is one of the things that might happen to a CBA and sometimes occurs. However, this does not mean that the vulnerability of a project is solely related to it. Since this type of analysis rejects a number of parameters, because it perpetuates a decontextualised and apolitical perspective, we believe that it is necessary to move away from this type of analysis, based solely on an economic grid.

If a CBA without profitability is conceivable, a CBA without participation is nonsense and a masquerade. Just as the quality of participation is closely linked to the configuration of a CBA, the quality of a CBA is closely linked to the participation it enables. This interrelation can be analysed by placing three elements in perspective: 1) the effectivity of participation, 2) the objectives that underpinned the making of participation, and 3) the conditions under which the CBA was built. The first two elements are linked to the way in which a project unfolds in relation

to the specific trajectory in which it was initiated. The third element constrains the way in which participation is made possible: it shapes the *frame of participation*. This is where the stakes for us are. Each CBA project defines a frame of participation by laying down a series of *conditions* without necessarily perceiving their restrictive dimension regarding the initial ideal. Therefore, this frame is an arrangement of conditions whose analysis is decisive, since they are the modalities by which individuals or groups can become involved in a given participatory process.. In a dialectical movement, the frame represents both the conditions of participation and what conditions the participation. As this field of research on CBA undertakes to think and work our way out of the present – in part through theoretical adaptation of models – the dialectical dimension of the frame of participation is a matter worth discussing.

Meanwhile, this frame is perpetually deconstructed and reconstructed over the course of the project, which means that communities' reactions to it cannot be defined a priori. If the construction of participation is thus linked to certain criteria, in that they are the conditions for the emergence and development of a CBA, the act of participating is not reducible to this dialectic of participation. Indeed, “to participate is to take part, and as such to influence the conditions and ends of the association of which one is a member” (Zask, 2010:5). Therefore, the analysis of this frame can in no way claim to describe the invariable and determinate causes of participation failures. What it does describe are the different conditions in relation to which the act of participation emerges. Because the act of participating is always an entanglement of interacting contextualised elements, a general understanding of the conditions imposed by a CBA is necessary for any study of the participation it makes possible at a given moment.

On the possibility of participating

Functional conditions

No act of participation can be understood without understanding the context in which it takes place. We would like to suggest from the outset that this context is permeated by the problem of social inequality, as well as by certain ideas about the meaning that the deployment of a tourist activity should take over time. In Wildebeest Kuil, this initiative developed in a context marked by institutional subordination (1), where community members found themselves largely excluded from the decision-making process despite their role as beneficiaries and justifiers of the project. Secondly, this approach is based on institutional models designed to shape a professional ethic in line with customer expectations (2), without necessarily taking into account local socio-economic realities. Finally, the management methods favoured a preservationist approach focused on the archaeological value of the site (3), thus limiting the possibilities of economic development for the local community. In this first step, the analysis of the functional conditions taken by the CBA highlights the way in which its regime of activity hinders its ideal of participation.

This experience of CBA was built on the existence of an unequal status that interferes with the relations between community members and institutions. At Wildebeest Kuil, it was built on a **condition of institutional subordination**. Although community members were invited to become beneficiaries, motivators, and justifiers of this tourism venture, the governance of the site was largely outside their control. As they became increasingly subordinated to institutions, the hierarchical asymmetry inside the community increased; having come out of a military context, it was already markedly hierarchical. Only the leaders and a few individuals capable of mastering the technical language of the administration could really participate and interact with the systems and structures that determine their territory. This 'creates a chasm between community leaders, and the rest of the community, who do not speak the language of

bureaucracy, and who have very little possibility of engaging with the decisions that impact their lives' (Soskolne, 2007:33). With the role community representatives have played in restricting the use of the site (including the construction of an electrified fence), the CBA allows them to exercise a form of control over the daily lives of people. In that sense, this CBA has reinforced the existing hierarchy within the community by developing an asymmetry between the governmentality of the site by representatives and the local receptions and expectations of that governmentality.

This CBA configured the daily functioning of the offering through specific expected working postures. The way in which a community member acted on the site and interacted with tourists was controlled and could be sanctioned by the managers. This sanction could (though it never did) culminate in dismissal. By following institutional models in pursuit of a posture and ethics for the employee in which various training mandates and obligations dictate how one should be, both in her/his behaviour (no alcoholism), in her/his speech (well-polished to satisfy the expectations of tourists) and in the frequently unstable schedule assigned to them (maintaining a precarious situation), this CBA sets the objective of satisfying a clientele by honouring values that are potentially irrelevant to employees. Thus, despite widespread harsh poverty in the community (see e.g., Soskolne, 2007) – which guides are encouraged to communicate with tourists in order to break down stereotypes – the day-to-day work of employees was shaped by extra-community standards. This **condition of performance** raises two important questions about the ideal of participation; one practical: What honesty of opinion can be expected from participation expressed in a constrained environment; and one ethical: Can a community be expected to be the elegant keeper of a site when it is in turmoil?

Also, the management modalities were established on the basis of a preservationist management model of the site mainly focused on its archaeological value and acting in view of its inalterability. In a context of interactions between actors from different cultural backgrounds, it does not reflect the plurality of relationships and expectations. Though community buy-in was expected in the day-to-day running of Wildebeest Kuil, a **condition of subscription to particular management modalities** configured the range of possibilities. Over a large area, it has neutralised uses that have a potential material/visual impact on the site, even – as was the case with the solar farm project – when this may have possibly allowed for better economic development opportunities for the community.

Structural conditions

It is tempting to think that the CBA invites a return to community management of heritage. Over the past few centuries, community management has proven to be effective in preserving sites, particularly in southern Africa where, as in other parts of the world, “the fact that the Europeans found so many heritage places intact means that these sites had survived due to some form of management” (Taruvinga & Ndoro, 2003:4). However, the historical circumstances are no longer the same. Relations to heritage have evolved, and other management models have been implemented, transforming previous systems of thought through the imposition of a new institutional rationality and engaging communities in often inappropriate institutional functioning (Chirikure et al., 2010). Just as a territory is never a vast blank page left open to writing, a CBA is never established on virgin ground, but always within an already formatted framework where certain structuring conditions delimit the historically situated domains of possibility. Constituting its own temporality, establishing a difference between a before which it inherits and an after which it constitutes, a CBA is in no way a return to a model of organisation of heritage that is both local, decentralised, and affinity-based, which may have existed in the past. Thus, in the Wildebeest Kuil project, a number of conditions quickly became apparent: the articulation of visitor targets exerted a significant influence on community participation (1), illustrating an inherent tension between economic

imperatives and local aspirations. Moreover, community participation, although central to the project's rhetoric, was reduced to the expression of institutional intermediaries (2), thus eroding the plurality of voices and perspectives within the community. Finally, the project instigators' idealized approach to cultural continuity - despite its laudable aim - resulted in a complexity reduction (3) that obscured complex historical and social realities, profoundly influencing implementation strategies and expected outcomes. These various conditions, nested within a constraining framework of relationships, constitute the conceptual pivots around which our analysis is articulated, offering a critical perspective on the structural issues encountered in the development of this project. During this second phase, an analysis of the structural conditions established by the CBA at Wildebeest Kuil highlights the way in which its orientations have hindered the ideal of participation that justified this model.

From the early years of post-opening disillusionment, when revenues failed to live up to expectations, the attendance targets on which the CBA was founded gradually impacted on community participation at Wildebeest Kuil. From the start, the CBA was articulated with a long-term objective that went beyond the intentions towards the community (cultural revitalisation, acquisition of citizenship and social empowerment). These aspirations were contingent upon tourism metrics that failed to materialize, thus undermining the viability of the entire participatory framework of the site. Consequently, there existed scant impetus for community members to endorse, participate in, criticize, or reconcile divergent viewpoints and perspectives vis-à-vis the venture. While the distancing of the community was in some ways associated with the vulnerability of the project, it had more to do with a **condition of durability** which, from the outset, oriented the attention paid to the participation of the community and narrowed the range of management possibilities for the site. Therefore, the strong economic dependence of Wildebeest Kuil was only one factor in the failure of the CBA, while an overall preservation programme, with or without the community, was the condition for developing the project.

Other conditions also guided the CBA at Wildebeest Kuil. Among institutions operating exclusively in a representative mode, 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 (limits on wider participation were exacerbated by most of the community still living at Schmidtsdrift until after the site was opened). Through these approximate intermediaries, from which the ideal of participation is deemed to be satisfactory despite a reduction of plural and divergent opinions, community members had to dig their way under a **condition of community representation**. Also, as an institutional action on communities, a CBA project follows the tortuous path of identity politics. At Wildebeest Kuil, the legitimacy of “the community” to be part of the project emerged from the joint representation of proximity and 'affinity' to the site. In this South African context, it was by having an idealistic or speculative approach to community that the instigators of this project could, after decades of colonisation and negation of cultures, approach them with demands to 'take back' affinities to a site – if affinities there were – even though any affinity is always situated in its social and historical context. In this way, this CBA was carried out from assumptions of shared facts simulating cultural continuity. Thus, the implementation of this approach induced, to varying degrees, a **condition of complexity reduction**. As such, from a marketing perspective, it is imperative that a CBA is not simply considered as a mode of organising a product but as a part of that product itself.

Conditions of intelligibility

The use of the term 'community' is widespread, including in tourism literature. Although the literature has extensively questioned the CBA, it rarely acknowledges the conceptual difficulties of the term (Ndlovu, 2016). The development of a CBA requires the selection of community(ies) in order to respond to their voices, which raises various issues related to the meaning of the term 'community' and the normalisation of its use. In fact, as the term 'community' is often presented and used, whether as a referential framework for minority identities, as an awaiting pre-political social structure, as the final scale of analytical relevance for societal questioning, it is, for a significant part of its statements, "an ideal masquerading as social fact" (Blackstock, 2005:42). Various issues are intrinsically linked to the conceptualization of "community" by project initiators. As in Wildebeest Kuil, many CBAs are based on the idea of a homogeneous community sharing a common affinity for a site (1). However, this simplified vision frequently ignores the diversity of community members, reducing the community's multiplicity to a simplified unicity. Added to this is the fact that, upstream of any CBA project, a selection phase for the community members associated with the site raises questions of legitimacy and designation, and therefore ethical issues (2). During this selection phase, the modalities of recognition of what is "community" and what is not "community" play a major role, revealing the profoundly unequal nature of the CBA model (3). This ability to recognize a "community", a prerequisite for any project of this kind, then conditions any selection phase, and reflects the importance of considering pre-existing social norms of recognizability of the "community". These three points forms the basis for a questioning of the conditions of intelligibility on which a CBA is developed, both at Wildebeest Kuil and elsewhere.

Several issues related to the construction of a CBA stem from what could be named a **condition of homogenisation of a plurality**. By conceiving the community as a set of individuals sharing common traits from which they can be categorised together, a CBA project postulates a shared affinity of the community towards a site. However, the critical quality of this assumption is often lacking, and the community is frequently revealed as nothing more than a multiplicity simplified on the basis of often hypothetical common characteristics. At Wildebeest Kuil, during the consultation processes, the evidence of a multiplicity motivated its fractioning. While it was impossible to consult an entire community, it would still be possible to speak on its behalf to justify a decision. This procedure shows a differentiated attention between 'the community' and what it refers to during consultation processes: a CBA relates to an indivisible community during the time of its construction, retains its rhetorical and justificatory quality throughout the project, but rejects this indivisibility during consultation times. Rather than granting decision-making capacities to a community, to what extent does this homogenisation allow the institutions in charge of a site to strategically select voices by excluding those whose opinions run against their expectations? As such, the community was an 'imaginary' form, when several thousand people were gathered under the idealised banner of a single expectation. Therefore, 'community' should not be analysed as a substantial pre-discursive fact (Jensen, 2004:201; Morris, 2012:238) but as a performance carried out regularly by various actors: community representatives, NGOs, journalists, researchers, governmental institutions and "as the operation would never meet with anything but temporary success, they have to perform, discursively and in practice, the virtues of community again and again" (Jensen, 2004:200). In this respect, institutional actors of CBAs should pay renewed attention to 'community' by adopting a pragmatic posture questioning the reality of the references to which their conception of this particular object refers.

Other conditions can also be found upstream, at the earliest stages of projects. Before approaching the issues and technical constraints of participation, all CBA involve a selection phase. Selecting and associating a set of individuals with a site raises a variety of issues

concerning their legitimacy. 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 (from Galeshewe, Roodepan, Colville, Barkly West), even though some of these individuals had claimed an affinity with the site from the outset and thus greater legitimacy to be included (however, the Trust did attempt to embrace this wide constituency through one of its trustees). By imposing the circumscription of one set of individuals to the detriment of others, a **condition of segmentation** leaves the door open to the imagined affinities and representations of project instigators, often debatable in the ethnographic present. In this respect, this condition of segmentation is contingent on the way in which the concept of "community" is apprehended during the selection process. It is therefore preceded by a **condition of recognition**. Segmentation and recognition are intimately linked, the latter being the condition for the feasibility of the former. 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, i.e., having the capacity to find it recognisable as such beyond its singularity. This act of recognition does not simply refer to the psychological mechanisms of the individual performing the act of segmentation. To recognise is always to proceed within a framework circumscribed by a socially situated norm of recognizability (Butler, 2009). If recognition characterises an act, a norm of recognizability characterises the more general conditions that prepare or form an individual for this act. In perpetual reconfiguration, this norm precedes and influences the act of recognition. At Wildebeest Kuil, in order to understand the selection of the !Xun and Khwe for the CBA, it is necessary to return to a long tradition interweaving archaeology and ethnography in order to provide an account of the meaning of rock art (Monney, 2015) – a recent example being the theory of the archaeologist Lewis-Williams (1981) based on the famous ethnographic work of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd, archiving !Xam San folklore. These works produced a new state of social representation about the San people and thus influenced political action towards them. Besides the fact that they owned the site, the selection of the !Xun and Khwe at Wildebeest Kuil is linked to nothing more than a more general recognition of a particular status of the San in relation to rock art, as well as the ethnic category San inheriting a largely exogenous mode of identification and classification: that of the 'bushman' (Voss, 1987; Gordon & Douglas, 2000). From this perspective, the challenge is not to resolve the profoundly inegalitarian nature of acts of recognition and segmentation, but rather to perceive the mechanisms that underlie them. As Butler (2009) argues, the complex issue surrounding this condition of recognition is not so much to understand how to include more people in an existing norm of recognizability, but to consider how norms distribute recognition in a differential mode.

Discussion

In many ways, the postulate of conceiving community integration as a panacea that would allow economic development while preserving culture (Carr et al., 2016) must be questioned. To posit this is both to substantialise the notions of culture and economy, which poses a significant methodological problem, and to ignore the analysis of the conditions within which community participation is made possible. Based on the Wildebeest Kuil case study, this analytical framework has made it possible to highlight some of the conditions through which a CBA undermines the ideal of participation which paradoxically justifies it. Thus, although this project built participation among the !Xun and the Khwe at Wildebeest Kuil, it operated in partial contradiction to the objectives that made it act on them. Our analysis has shown how a differential treatment of community occurred in the temporality of the project, between its substantiation-idealisation during its construction stage and its conformation during its functioning. Thus, the way in which the instigators of the project acted with regard to what the term "community" refers to seems to have changed according to its situation of enunciation. Why does the term "community" used in the term *community-based approach* seem identical to what we mean by the term "community" when we talk about *building a community's capacity*

for *autonomy*, and at the same time that these two terms seem to imply different policies or modes of action?

We believe that if the CBA is considered as a simple programme to bring together different institutional actors in order to overcome the life conditions of communities, it is a dead end. The history of the CBA model is not the history of overcoming, whether this overcoming is conceived as a radical break with old models or whether it is linked to a return to other forms of management that have survived into the present. The theoretical challenge of suggesting a solution lies in a question: Is it possible to overcome conditions that are largely linked to the enactment of institutional norms external to the community by engaging in a project with institutions that, in order to find their interests and fulfil their objectives, must enact a normative framework? Is it possible that a project construction could be, in a practical way, a co-construction, i.e., the positive result of a respectable encounter between actors? To some extent, these issues seem to be surmountable, provided that it is possible to develop a CBA with institutions that find their interests beyond the imposition of standards that the “community” could revoke at will. *Since participation is the keystone of their interests, it is imperative that the type and level of participation be defined and continually redefined by those who are the subjects of it.*

Such a configuration would be a tour de force. In itself, addressing the complex links between CBAs and participation from this angle is challenging enough. Moreover, even if such a configuration could be found, its elaboration would still be based on the deeply unequal act of choosing a specific community. By making it possible for some groups to participate at the expense of others, the conditions of intelligibility of CBAs seem, at first sight, to be unsurpassable. However, in our view, these limits can be overcome if we examine the particular context in which groups are admitted as 'community'. The term 'community' is a substantive distributed in a differential mode. The !Xun and the Khwe were perceived differently from other groups because they were already configured in law as a 'community'. The dogmatic language of law weighs like a grid over reality: there would be communities *per se* by virtue of their legal existence. Through the sense in which the latter are subjects of law, it exerts its influence on an anthropological understanding of communities. The effect of law is not to stifle what it refers to, but to channel it in a desired direction. It is the ultimate stage that a society can reach in terms of reification and hypostasis (Humphreys, 1998; Morris 2012:238).

To overcome these limitations we believe that it would be both useful and relevant to dissociate the presupposed synonymy of the anthropological concept of community and the legal concept of community (Viveiro de Castro, 2021:219) – and not only because these concepts differ in extension (which persons or peoples are not part of communities according to the legal and anthropological concept?), but also because they differ in comprehension (what does it mean to be a community from the legal and anthropological point of view?). Which communities does the law aim at when it claims to address them, and what effects does this have on the manner in which CBAs are constructed? On this point, we cannot simply enumerate the problems and social expectations to which the legal construction of the CBA model aimed to respond. The *context* of this legal construction must be questioned. It would be necessary to identify the context of the issues to which this legal construction seeks to respond and from which specific groups may have been selected.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the !Xun and Khwe Platfontein communities for their welcoming support and their time, the McGregor Museum in Kimberley, and all other stakeholders that helped carry out our research. The views expressed in this paper are our own and may not reflect the views of those who have supported our research.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work has been supported by Agence National de la Recherche – The french national scientific agency - under COSMO ART Project (Projet-ANR-21-CE27-0011).

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Kimberley, South Africa

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