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1 **Are we any closer to sustainable development? Listening to active stakeholder**
2 **discourses of tourism development in the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa**

3

4 **Abstract**

5 'Biosphere reserve' is a United Nations (UN) designation stipulating that a region should
6 attempt to follow the principles of sustainable development (SD). This paper adopts a
7 stakeholder analysis framework to analyse the discourses of those tourism stakeholders who
8 can actively affect SD in the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (WBR), South Africa. Adopting
9 an inductive qualitative methodology generated multiple research themes which were
10 subsequently analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA) techniques. These themes
11 indicate that seeking SD in biosphere reserves is problematical when there are distinct
12 ideological differences between active stakeholder groups and power relations are unequal.
13 Adopting CDA allows us to make some sense of why this is the case as the technique
14 appreciates not only *how* tourism development occurs, but also *why* it occurs in a particular
15 way. This paper adds to the literature on stakeholder analysis in tourism specifically and also
16 has wider implications for SD more generally.

17

18 Keywords: Sustainable Development, Active Stakeholders, Critical Discourse Analysis,
19 South Africa

20

21 **1. Introduction**

22 The background to, and need for, sustainable development (SD) is well documented (see for
23 instance Barbier, 1987; Redclift, 1987; Lele, 1991; Reid, 1995; Moffatt, 1996; Clark et al.
24 1987; Mebratu, 1998; Robinson, 2004; Redclift, 2005), and putting the principles of SD into
25 practice is essential if we are to move down a more sustainable pathway. What these
26 principles are, and what this pathway might include, is illustrated through the work of both
27 Palmer et al. (1997) and the subsequent literature synthesis by Sharpley (2000). They explain
28 SD through four inter-related themes: *futurity* – a concern for future generations; *the*
29 *environment* – a concern to protect the integrity of ecosystems; *public participation* – a
30 concern to ensure that individuals participate in decisions which affect them; and *equity* – a
31 concern for the poor and disadvantaged within society. There are various approaches and
32 positions that can be taken by stakeholders in responding to the implications of these themes
33 (Daly & Cobb, 1989; Haughton & Hunter, 1994). However, stakeholders are not homogenous

1 (Friedman & Miles, 2002) so differentiating between values and perceptions of different
2 stakeholder types is important in understanding how tourism can contribute to SD.

3
4 The primary aim of this paper is to analyse active stakeholder discourses of tourism
5 development in the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa, in order to better understand
6 how the principles of SD might be most effectively put into practice more generally. Active
7 stakeholders are those who affect decisions or actions, while passive stakeholders are those
8 who are affected (either positively or negatively) by those decisions (Grimble & Wellard,
9 1997). Our underlying premise is that if stakeholders can affect decisions or actions in
10 relation to sustainability concerns, then gaining an understanding of how they view
11 ‘development’ can provide further insights into the tourism development process.

12
13 The United Nations (UN), through its Man and Biosphere (MaB) programme, seeks to put the
14 principles of SD into practice in specific locales (UNESCO, 2008). This paper utilises a
15 specific UN biosphere reserve in South Africa (SA) as the focus of investigation. Biosphere
16 reserves are “areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the
17 conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use”
18 (<http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/faq/brs.pdf>). The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (WBR) was
19 created in Limpopo Province, SA, in 2001. The main economic and land-use sector in the
20 WBR is tourism, and therefore how this industry is developed has SD implications for the
21 wider region, which are influenced by a variety of stakeholders (Waterberg District
22 Municipality, 2010). This paper uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) (see for instance van
23 Dijk, 2001 and Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) to better understand these stakeholders, and in so
24 doing, uncovers interconnected notions of context, power and ideology. The notion of
25 ‘active’ stakeholders and their views of tourism and sustainable development in the WBR are
26 central to this discussion.

27
28 The paper is developed as follows. First, stakeholders and stakeholder analysis techniques are
29 examined, linking these with concerns regarding power, as understanding notions of power
30 are essential in the development process, determining how and why development occurs
31 (Crush, 1995). This is followed by a review of the tourism stakeholder literature. Second, the
32 case study is introduced and the methodological approach to its analysis, CDA, is reviewed in
33 detail. Here we explain what CDA is and how we utilize it in this research. In essence, this
34 critical, analytical approach attempts to uncover the ideological assumptions that are hidden

1 in discourse in order to resist and overcome various forms of ‘power over’ or to gain an
2 appreciation of how power is exercised, which may not always be apparent (Fairclough,
3 1989). The paper then analyses the emergent discourses of the active stakeholders in tourism
4 development in the WBR, focusing on sustainability issues in relation to the tourism industry
5 in the region. The paper focuses not only on what is said (the discourses), but also *why*
6 particular stakeholders may say the things they do. This is a key component of CDA (Wodak
7 & Meyer, 2009).

9 **2. Understanding Stakeholders**

10 Attempting to understand what and who constitutes a ‘stakeholder’ is complicated. Different
11 researchers apply different definitions to their research. Grimble & Wellard (1997, p.175-6)
12 for instance define stakeholders as “any group of people, organized or unorganized, who
13 share a common interest or stake in a particular issue or system; they can be at any level or
14 position in society, from global, national and regional concerns down to the level of
15 household or intra household, and be groups of any size or aggregation”. There are multiple
16 ways in which stakeholders can be classified. Albeit in a different spatial context, a useful
17 summary can be found in Le Feuvre et al. (2016) who make reference to the power,
18 legitimacy and urgency classification of Mitchell et al. (1997) and the primary and secondary,
19 voluntary and involuntary distinctions of Clarkson (1995). Also covered are the four key
20 stakeholder types of Savage et al. (1991) i.e. the supportive stakeholder; the marginal
21 stakeholder; the non-supportive stakeholder; and the mixed blessing stakeholder, and the
22 social typology of urban entrepreneurs proposed by Logan & Molotch (1987) i.e.
23 serendipitous; active; and structural entrepreneurs. The three levels of interaction between
24 stakeholders and organizations have been previously classified by Podnar & Jancic (2006) i.e.
25 inevitable; necessary; and desirable, whilst Wheeler & Sillanpaa (1997) classify stakeholders
26 by a two dimensional, primary-secondary and social-non-social classification system.
27 Collectively it is evident that influence; power; and saliency are recurring themes within each
28 of these studies analyzing stakeholders.

30 *2.1 Influence*

31 The idea of how different stakeholders either have influence or seek to gain influence over
32 issues plays an important part in the stakeholder literature. For Woods (2003, p2-3)
33 “influence refers to the capacity of one actor to modify the behaviour of another”. Just as
34 stakeholder groups can be mapped, so too can their influences. Stakeholder influence

1 mapping has been used as a tool in development studies to examine and visually display the
2 relative influence that different stakeholders have over decision-making (International
3 Institute for Environment and Development, 2005), to enable a better understanding and
4 explicit discussion of who influences policy. The approach involves identifying various
5 stakeholders in any chosen policy issue or policy arena according to how much influence they
6 may hold over the policy, and also the relationships they have with each other (ibid). In order
7 to have influence over an organisation or concern, stakeholders should have a deep
8 commitment to the issues and actively pursue interests, actions, and values that relate to the
9 concern (Dunham et al. 2006). However, whilst stakeholder influence mapping is useful for
10 examining snapshots of stakeholders influence, it is best suited to examine the direction of
11 changes in policies or issues over time (International Institute for Environment and
12 Development, 2005).

13

14 *2.2 Power*

15 Theories relating to power predominantly fall into two categories – ‘power to’ and ‘power
16 over’ (Wartenberg, 1990). ‘Power to’ refers to the ability of individuals to do something on
17 their own and relates to an individual’s traits. ‘Power over’ can be traced to Machiavellian
18 notions of power, to Weber (1986) and Bourdieu (1983), and highlights issues of social
19 conflict, control, and coercion. It relates to ‘power as domination’ (Foucault, 1980). The
20 notion of ‘power over’ is of most relevance to this paper as it involves issues of inequality,
21 which are central to the study of development: “...a theory of power has, as a first priority,
22 the articulation of the meaning of the concept of power-over because social theory employs
23 this concept as a primary means of conceptualizing the nature of the fundamental inequalities
24 in society” (Wartenberg, 1990, p5).

25

26 Of relevance to this work are Foucault’s notions of power and also space. Foucault (1980)
27 regards power as a relational force that permeates the whole of society that connects all social
28 groups in a web of mutual influence. Through power, this relational force constructs social
29 organisation and hierarchy by producing discourses and truth. Order and discipline are
30 therefore enforced, shaping human desires and subjectivities. For Foucault, power is both
31 simultaneously productive and repressive, meaning any social body cannot function without
32 it, even though power may result in oppression. Acknowledging the role of ‘power as
33 domination’, his work is one of resistance to this form of power. As Foucault (1980, p. 102)
34 states: “We should direct our researches on the nature of power” and we should “base our

1 analyses of power on the study of the techniques and tactics of domination”. Only by
2 understanding these underlying factors will a dismantling, or reduction in dominance, be
3 possible. Foucault’s work on space, particularly heterotopias, is also applicable. Heterotopias
4 are places of Otherness, and their study can be used as a tool to examine *inter alia* space,
5 politics, place and power (Foucault, 1997). This work examines contradictions and
6 juxtapositions which may not be readily perceived at first, and has been applied to a number
7 of examples (see Draper, 2000; Wright, 2005; Howell, 2013).

8

9 One method of analyzing the influence that stakeholders have over policies, organizations,
10 developments or other concerns relates to the power and the interest that stakeholders have or
11 accrue relating to such concerns. The work of Mendelow (1991) on power and dynamism
12 was adapted by Johnson & Scholes (1993) and resulted in the power/interest matrix, which
13 classifies stakeholders in relation to the power they hold and the extent to which they show
14 interest in the development, proposal or issue (see Figure 1). The matrix is designed to
15 produce a clearer understanding of how communication and relationships between
16 stakeholders affect the issue being studied. It seeks to answer two questions: How interested
17 is each stakeholder group to impress its expectations or objectives on the concern and do they
18 have the power to do so? They also help in identifying and highlighting potential stakeholder
19 coalitions which can either be encouraged or discouraged, what behaviour should be nurtured
20 and whose buy-in should be sought or who should be co-opted (Bryson et al. 2002).

21

22 (Insert Figure 1 about here)

23

24 In stakeholder analysis, power is an important concern and can come from status, the ability
25 to claim resources and also the symbols of power (Johnson et al. 2011). These authors also
26 examine how stakeholder mapping can help to understand whether it is desirable to move
27 particular stakeholders from one area to another. For example, powerful investors may be in
28 quadrant C, but it may be beneficial to attempt to move them to quadrant D to gain support
29 for initiatives. Community groups may be in quadrant B, but often they have connections to
30 people in quadrant D, and therefore, may need to be carefully managed. The knowledge
31 gained from the use of such a matrix can also be useful in identifying the powerless and
32 potentially advancing their interests. This can sometimes be the case with stakeholder
33 analyses relating to environmental management and development work, whereby commonly

1 known stakeholders are included in analyses at the expense of more marginalised or
2 powerless groups (Grimble et al. 1995).

3

4 *2.3 Saliency*

5 As the power/interest matrix shows, power is not equally shared among stakeholders in either
6 formal or informal structures, nor is it equal between different stakeholder groups. As power
7 implies the coercion of others to follow certain courses of action, the extent to which this
8 happens is dependent on the source of that power (Marwick, 2000). This links to how power
9 is legitimized, and the work of Mitchell et al. (1997), who examine not only stakeholder
10 power, but also the legitimacy of stakeholder relationships, and also the urgency of
11 stakeholder claims. They define stakeholder salience as: “the degree to which managers give
12 priority to competing stakeholder claims” (ibid, p854). Their work is predominantly
13 concerned with organizational stakeholder theory, but can be related to the field of
14 development studies, tourism development and Foucauldian notions of power discussed
15 earlier. They also state that legitimacy, which refers to socially accepted and expected
16 structures or behaviors, is often combined implicitly with power to create authority, which is
17 seen by Weber (1947) as the legitimate use of power. Power and legitimacy can also be
18 viewed as independent variables, but according to Mitchell et al. (1997) it does not capture
19 the dynamics of the interactions between stakeholders. They propose that adding the
20 stakeholder attribute of urgency helps move the model from static to dynamic. The attribute
21 of urgency has synonyms including ‘compelling,’ ‘driving’ and ‘imperative’ (ibid). They also
22 argue that:

23 “... urgency is based on the following two attributes: (1) time sensitivity-
24 the degree to which managerial delay in attending to the claim or
25 relationship is unacceptable to the stakeholder, and (2) criticality - the
26 importance of the claim or the relationship to the stakeholder. We define
27 urgency as the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate
28 attention.” (ibid, p867)

29 When legitimacy is combined with urgency, it enhances access to decision-making channels,
30 and when combined with power, it encourages one-sided stakeholder action. When
31 legitimacy is combined with both, urgency causes shared acknowledgment and action
32 between stakeholder groups.

33

1 All the techniques identified above: stakeholder identification and mapping; influence;
2 power; and saliency are used in the WBR case study stakeholder analysis which follows.
3 However, it is not our intention to undertake a full stakeholder analysis of all tourism
4 stakeholders in the WBR, but rather to investigate those who are active within the WBR and
5 to consider what they say about development, SD and tourism development and why they
6 say the things they do.

7

8 **3. Tourism Stakeholders**

9 Multiple studies (see for instance Balaguer & Cantavella-Jorda, 2002; Vanegas & Croes,
10 2003; Durberry, 2004; Dritsakis, 2004; and Steiner, 2006) demonstrate that tourism can be an
11 engine of economic growth. The main aspects of tourism as a strategy for development relate
12 to its ability to generate income and employment, its linkages with other economic sectors
13 and business development opportunities for small and medium-sized companies (SMEs),
14 especially at the regional and local levels (Stabler et al. 2010). But development often
15 impacts upon people and societies in very different ways, and analysing what this means to
16 different stakeholder groups in particular is complex (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010).

17

18 Research into stakeholders and their interests regarding tourism development has had
19 considerable coverage in the literature (see for example Lankford, 1994; Hardy, 2005;
20 Andriotis, 2005; Getz & Timur, 2005; Byrd et al. 2009; Holden, 2010; Waligo et al. 2013;
21 Hung Lee, 2013; and Farmaki et al. 2015). The rationale for examining stakeholders in
22 tourism is put forward by Hall & Jenkins (1995, p31) who state that “to study inter-
23 organizational relationships, students of tourism must, among other things, identify and
24 access the relevant key actors and agencies, examine the values, perceptions, and interests of
25 significant individuals and organizations, and isolate the relationships within and between
26 stakeholders.”

27

28 Examining the literature on stakeholders and tourism uncovers four main stakeholder groups
29 (Byrd et al. 2009; Stylidis et al. 2014): tourists; residents; entrepreneurs and local government
30 or management officials. Andriotis (2005) focuses on residents and entrepreneurs, Holden
31 (2010) on tourists, entrepreneurs and officials, Lankford (1994) on residents, entrepreneurs
32 and officials, Hung Lee (2013) on residents, while Hardy (2005), Byrd et al. (2009) and
33 Waligo et al. (2013) examine all four. While the four stakeholder groups are a useful guide
34 for categorizing research, the role of civil society/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is

1 often omitted. As Reid (2003) notes, this latter group of stakeholders is becoming
2 increasingly important in sustainable tourism development as more inclusive (Bryson, 2003)
3 stakeholder perspectives are required.

4
5 The literature on tourism development has called for an emphasis on participatory approaches
6 to be undertaken (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002; Spenceley, 2008; Tosun, 2005). This has meant a
7 movement towards more inclusive stakeholder analyses to understand *all* stakeholder
8 behaviours, interests, agendas, and influences on the decision-making processes. In
9 particular, this has included the opinions of civil society and community groups (Brugha &
10 Varvasovszky, 2000). As multiple authors observe (see for instance Murphy 1985; Sautter &
11 Leissen, 1999; Getz & Timur, 2005; Buckley, 2012; and Hung Lee, 2013), as communities
12 are key stakeholders within the tourism development process, how they view their own
13 environment is important, as they are not only part of the tourism product, but they feel the
14 effects of tourism development more than any other stakeholder. To examine this in more
15 detail, this paper now moves to focusing upon the WBR case study. The context is provided,
16 methodological considerations are detailed, and subsequently, the empirical findings
17 presented. These findings examine the less understood discourses from the public, private and
18 not-for-profit sectors and a number of individuals from civil society operational within the
19 WBR.

21 **4. Research Context: The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, SA**

22 The WBR was formed in 2001 and is located in the predominantly rural Waterberg District in
23 Limpopo Province of South Africa. Table 1 summarizes 2011 census data for the Province.
24 Around 100,000 people live in the WBR which covers an area of about 650,000 hectares, or
25 around three quarters the size of the Kruger National Park. The Province has a number of
26 important industries, of which mining is the largest, contributing around a quarter of the
27 economic output. Tourism accounted for over 8% of economic output in 2008, although it is
28 a growth industry (LEDET, 2009). The legacy of apartheid has left numerous challenges in
29 South Africa. The challenges identified by Limpopo Provincial government in their 15 year
30 post-apartheid review are summarized in Table 2. These challenges are in no way unique to
31 this Province, but are typical of many rural areas in South Africa. They also mirror issues
32 central to those at the heart of the SD agenda discussed earlier in the paper.

33
34 (Insert Table 1 about here)

1 (Insert Table 2 about here)

2
3 The WBR cuts across six local municipalities: Magalakwena, Modimolle, Lephalale, Bela-
4 Bela, Mookgopong, and Thabazimbi. There is only one small town in the WBR, Vaalwater
5 which has an adjoining township, Leseding. There are other small settlements and villages,
6 but the area is predominantly rural with the main economic activities being tourism and
7 agriculture (Taylor et al. 2003). The population within the Waterberg District is around
8 600,000, 90% of whom are African, 9% white and 1% other ethnic groups. There are nine
9 languages spoken, with 58% speaking Sepidi, 9% Afrikaans and 1% English (Waterberg
10 District Municipality, 2010). The area is malaria-free, has a mild climate, is around two and a
11 half hours drive from the urban conurbations of Gauteng Province, and provides numerous
12 opportunities for the development of outdoors, recreational-based tourism (Taylor et al. 2003;
13 Limpopo Provincial Government, 2009). The type of tourism in the WBR revolves around
14 the natural environment and is predominantly game viewing, hunting or outdoor recreation in
15 the African ‘bush’.

16
17 Within the Waterberg region there has been a shift in land-use away from agriculture to the
18 tourism sector. This has resulted in increases in both consumptive (hunting) and non-
19 consumptive (game viewing) forms of tourism. There is a growing conservation community
20 that is involved in the sustainable utilization of wildlife, from both consumptive and non-
21 consumptive perspectives (Waterberg District Municipality, 2010). Waterberg’s tourism
22 model is therefore built on the restoration of the natural environment from agricultural use,
23 and also natural areas which have been left untouched. The natural environment is unique and
24 it is this uniqueness which was fundamental to the creation of the biosphere reserve within
25 the WBR: the vegetation is predominantly savanna containing a high level of biological
26 diversity including a number of species of conservation concern including wild dog, brown
27 hyena, honey badger, and servals to name but a few. There are over two thousand plant
28 species, four hundred bird species, and a rich diversity of butterflies, insects and reptiles in
29 the region. The low human density ensures large areas of unspoiled wilderness and open
30 spaces are a main characteristic of the WBR. There has been human inhabitation for hundreds
31 of thousand years and WBR is one of the most important San Rock Art areas in South Africa.

32
33 The region’s topography can be described as an ‘inverted saucer’ stretching from Modimolle
34 and Mokopane in the east to Lephalale and Thabazimbi in the west. The core of the region is

1 a plateau which is dissected by a number of rivers, the main rocks are ancient conglomerates
2 and sandstones. The area is also characterised by low mountain ranges and escarpments with
3 unique rock formations. There are some major landowners in the WBR, with two game
4 reserves owning around 35,000 ha. The majority of game farms however are relatively small,
5 with over 60% being under 5000 ha. There are numerous rare and endangered carnivore
6 species. The ‘big five’, of elephant, lion, buffalo, rhinoceros and leopard can be found on a
7 number of game reserves along with varieties of buck, zebra and giraffe. (Waterberg
8 Biosphere Reserve, 2013).

9

10 *4.1 WBR Stakeholder Mapping*

11 There are numerous stakeholders that influence and are influenced by tourism development in
12 the WBR. These stakeholders exist at various levels ranging from the international (through
13 UNESCO’s MaB programme), national (for example through the Department of
14 Environment and Tourism (DEAT)), regional (exemplified by provincial government), to the
15 local level, where public, private and civil society organizations exist along with local
16 communities.

17

18 Within the WBR there are a number of small businesses which are either directly or
19 indirectly related to the tourism industry. In Vaalwater for instance, there are a few cafes and
20 retail outlets that cater to locals and tourists alike. There are no major retail chains in the
21 WBR, with the exception of supermarkets. Instead, most businesses in the retail/hospitality
22 area are locally owned/managed and are SMEs. As hunting plays a large part in the tourism
23 offer in the WBR, there are a number of businesses which relate to this sector, such as
24 taxidermy, game capture and auction. Stakeholders in the accommodation sector, who own
25 land within the WBR and use it for tourism-related activities, can influence what happens on
26 the land, thereby affecting environmental sustainability in the area.

27

28 Landowners have the ability to influence income and employment levels, thereby affecting
29 economic sustainability. They can also affect some societal aspects relating to STD which
30 include: quality of life concerns; empowerment; stakeholder equity; community participation;
31 protection of cultural heritage and authenticity; support for and continuation of identity;
32 culture, local values and interests of indigenous peoples. Those involved in civil society
33 organisations such as the Waterberg Nature Conservancy (WNC) are all landowners and act
34 as a lobby group to local government, particularly with regard to environmental concerns.

1 The chair of the WNC, inputs into WBR management plans and acts as a spokesperson for
2 the organisation on planning concerns in the region. The director of Timothy House, a Visitor
3 Centre operated by the Waterberg Welfare Society (WWS), has the ability to affect both
4 economic and social aspects relating to quality of life and empowerment concerns within the
5 Leseding Township.

6

7 Public sector employees have the ability to affect the three aspects of sustainable tourism
8 development (STD), through the development and implementation of regional/local planning
9 initiatives. They have all been involved in the environmental management framework (EMF)
10 and the biosphere management plan (BMP) for the WBR. Specifically, they can ultimately
11 affect planning decisions regarding what is developed, where, in what style, and at what pace,
12 under the aegis of planning legislation guidelines. These guidelines incorporate: land use
13 types; density of tourism beds; footprints for lodges (height, parking); impacts upon rivers
14 and dams; vehicle densities; subdivisions; building lines and guidelines relating to heritage
15 resources; pollution and environmental impact assessment (EIA) issues. These guidelines
16 have been adopted by the local and district municipalities who deal with planning matters.
17 All of these planning concerns affect STD in the WBR, hence those in the public sector can
18 be said to be active in all areas that affect STD.

19

20 Land claimants have (albeit limited) ability to affect the various aspects of sustainability.
21 They are passive participants in the development process in many ways. However, those
22 claimants who have had their claim processed and who now have ownership of the land have
23 the ability to affect what happens on that land, thereby affecting environmental aspects
24 relating to STD. Other claimants whose claims are on-going, while working very closely with
25 the current landowners, cannot actively influence how the land is used, thus limiting their
26 abilities as active stakeholders.

27

28 **5. Research Methods**

29 The primary aim of this paper is to analyse stakeholder discourses of tourism development in
30 the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa, in order to better understand how the
31 principles of sustainable development might be most effectively put into practice. As our
32 earlier review of Grimble & Wellard (1997) informs us, stakeholders represent a diverse
33 group of people, at both an individual, household and community level. For the purpose of

1 this paper we focus upon active stakeholders (i.e. stakeholders who affect decisions or
2 actions), those in formal or informal leadership positions within their communities.

3 4 *5.1 Research Design*

5 May (2001) asserts that interviews yield rich insights into people’s experiences, opinions,
6 values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings. They can also generate a significant amount of
7 discourse on a variety of topics. The study adopted semi-structured interviews akin to what
8 Alvesson (2002) calls ‘localist’ in nature, whereby the interview produces a situated account,
9 drawing upon cultural resources, in order to produce morally adequate descriptions.
10 Interviewees all had information sheets given to them prior to the interview and they all
11 signed a consent form stating that they understood the nature of the research and that all
12 information was confidential. Interviews lasted between thirty and seventy five minutes and
13 were all face-to-face, digitally recorded and later transcribed.

14
15 The broad question areas were determined through the thematic analysis of the STD literature
16 along with information gathered during a scoping visit to the WBR. Table 3 details the main
17 themes and sub-themes which were covered during the interviews. The interview questioning
18 centred on tourism as a sustainable development tool in the WBR, focusing on the three main
19 pillars of STD – economy, society and environment. Respondents were also asked about their
20 knowledge of STD and also the biosphere reserve. The interviews started by asking for some
21 background to the interviewee. The question “Can you tell me about yourself?” was used
22 with appropriate follow-up questions to get background information on the respondents. This
23 is an important aspect of CDA as who the stakeholders are affects what they say (their
24 discourses). Stakeholder mapping and profiling were the first tasks in this process. Profiles
25 and backgrounds of the stakeholders are important in CDA and this was carried out,
26 examining their status, stakeholder group, socio-cultural and other relevant information. This
27 information included family history and length of residency in the Waterberg, collected in
28 order to build up a picture of who they are and where they are positioned within the region.

29
30 (Insert Table 3 about here)

31 32 *5.2 Sample*

33 The question of who to interview was complex, governed by the primary aim (i.e. to ascertain
34 the opinions of active stakeholders). The criteria of deciding whether stakeholders were

1 active or passive were based on their ability to affect the three pillars of STD - namely
2 economic, environmental and social objectives - through involvement with tourism. For
3 example: economic criteria involve the ability to be active regarding job creation or income
4 generation; social sustainability incorporates quality of life issues and empowerment; while
5 environmental sustainability involves such issues as affecting land-use. From initial
6 stakeholder mapping (see section 4.1), thirty-four stakeholders perceived to be potentially
7 active at provincial and local level were identified for inclusion in the study (see Table 4).
8 They were chosen to represent the tourism operational landscape: public sector officials (n=6,
9 respondents PS1-PS5); accommodation providers (n=13, respondents AC1-AC13); other
10 tourism business owners (n=5, respondents BS1-BS5); civil society individuals or
11 representatives (n=8, respondents CS1-CS8); and land claimants (n=2, respondents LC1-
12 LC2).

13
14 (Insert Table 4 about here)
15

16 *5.3 Data Analysis*

17 Whilst there are numerous ways to analyse text (see Titscher et al. 2002 for an overview),
18 critical discourse analysis (CDA) was selected as the preferred method of textual analysis.
19 CDA implies that science and scholarly discourse are not value free and are part of, and
20 influenced by, social structure and produced in social interaction (van Dijk, 2001). CDA
21 seeks to describe, interpret, analyse, and critique social life reflected in discourse. It is
22 concerned with studying and analysing discourses to reveal the discursive sources of power,
23 dominance, inequality, and bias. Whilst there are numerous approaches to CDA (Fairclough
24 & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 1985; Bloor & Bloor, 2007; Wodak & Meyer, 2009), context is
25 critical in each as it examines how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and
26 transformed within various political social, economic and historical contexts (van Dijk,
27 1988).

28
29 CDA was selected as the preferred method of textual analysis as it is a linguistic method
30 examining both the coherence of the text as well as the cohesion (the textual-syntactic
31 connectedness) and involves ideologies associated with power (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Not
32 only does CDA examine what people say, it also examines why they say these things. Non-
33 linguistic methods such as grounded theory and content analysis only examine coherence and

1 it is through incorporating and analysing syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels (cohesion)
2 that a deeper understanding of the language used can be gained.

3

4 The discourses of the stakeholders were examined through a number of stages. First, the text
5 was examined as a whole and discourse strands and sub-strands identified. Discourse strands
6 are “flows of discourse that centre on a common topic... and are conceived of at the level of
7 concrete utterances” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p46). This was carried out using NVivo which
8 can be used as a tool to link ideas, search for and explore patterns of data and ideas (Richards
9 1999). The discourses were grouped into a number of thematic areas. The data themes are an
10 important element in organising data for subsequent analysis. Discourses on tourism were
11 categorised under numerous themes and cross-referenced with SD themes. Second, the sub-
12 strands under each strand were identified using the same technique. The entanglements of
13 discourse strands were also identified. This is where one strand refers to a number of inter-
14 related topics. For example when discussing Waterberg as a place, notions of development
15 including politics, economics or the environment may also be referred to.

16

17 Still looking at the text as a whole, Huckin (1997) recommends, examining the perspective
18 that is being presented. This involves angles, slants, or points of view, and is called ‘framing.’
19 For example, how one section of society sees other sections can be seen as a ‘frame’. Third,
20 discourse positions are also examined. These describe the ideological position from which
21 subjects participate in and encompass their worldviews (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This
22 involves discourse positions on the environment, economics and development. For example,
23 the neoliberal view of economics is a discourse position, as is a radical view of
24 environmentalism. Having examined discourse strands, frames and discourse positions, the
25 next stage is to examine the more minute levels of analysis: sentence, phrases, and words.
26 There are numerous CDA techniques to facilitate this level of analysis and Gee (2011) likens
27 these to tools in a toolkit. The analyst uses various tools to examine the discourse depending
28 on what is being analysed. The tools used include: topicalisation; connotation; modality;
29 intertextuality; lexical analysis; semantic contrast and identity and ideology construction
30 through pronoun use.

31

32 Overall, this research generated in excess of 100,000 words of data. With, intentionally, no *a*
33 *priori* template in place, the material presented in the next section (findings) is selected on the
34 grounds that it is illustrative of the main themes emerging through the data. Inevitably not all

1 themes will therefore be covered. Quotations are selected in a similar vein, i.e. that they are
2 illustrative of the key points emergent through the data.

3

4 **6. Findings and Discussion**

5 *6.1 Tourism as an Economic Driver*

6 STD is supposed to balance economic, societal and environmental concerns, but economic
7 aspects often prevail. The WBR is no different. The economic aspects of tourism were
8 mentioned by all the active stakeholders at some point during their interview, with the main
9 discourse surrounding tourism as an economic driver for the area through income generation
10 and job creation. However, the ability of the industry to alleviate many of the economic
11 problems in the area is potentially limited:

12 “I think tourism is probably the only industry within the biosphere that
13 **could be** sustainable (...) it **needs to be** high-value tourism, so the numbers
14 of people, while they **might be** small, **might be** high-paying visitors. It then
15 generates economic wealth, and the people who work in the area, **need to**
16 **be** remunerated accordingly and they **need to be** more highly skilled than in
17 other places, because I believe that mass tourism, the sort you have down
18 the coast of Spain and Portugal, would very quickly spoil the area.”

19 (AC2)

20

21 “I as a Waterberger, think we’re at a crossroads, where we **can** either
22 through effective intervention if it **can be** possible move towards being a
23 serious conservation area, which with a greater profile which **could** then
24 assist the ecotourism potential and that **can** then absorb some of the jobs
25 which were lost through agriculture before... (CS6)

26 The two discourses above highlight how tourism has the potential to be a key sustainable
27 economic sector within the WBR. The modal verbs (in bold) also highlight some of the issues
28 concerned with tourism. The discourse of AC2 states that it needs to be small-scale, high
29 value tourism, while CS6 extols the virtues of ecotourism, and calls for ‘effective
30 intervention’. The development of these forms of tourism does not address the fundamental
31 development concern of mass unemployment in the region. The primarily lodge-based
32 tourism activity evident is indicative of a high value, low volume approach, but also has
33 limited opportunity for linkages with other sectors of the economy, especially SME

1 development. Rural tourism generally has limited opportunity for economic development,
2 particularly as many local people lack capital and knowledge to start businesses (Sharpley,
3 2002). The forms of tourism present in the WBR reflect this and also an inability to access
4 tourism markets.

5
6 Duffy (2006) questions whether luxury resorts have a place in ecotourism, especially those
7 owned by large corporations, as is the case in the WBR. The up-market tourism product in
8 the WBR would appear to have implications for SME development in the area, as one public
9 sector tourism official notes:

10 “...there is **this wall that separates** the market for the rich and the market
11 for the lower class. At the same time it also **discourages local tourism**, so
12 people from around here **lose a sense of what tourism is** and what is the
13 benefit of participating in tourism and the necessity of desiring to establish
14 a business that is tourism related.” (PS5)

15 This is quite a negative discourse (negative words in bold). One of the main benefits of
16 tourism is that as an industry it offers numerous opportunities for SME development, either
17 selling products directly to tourists or providing other products and services to the industry.
18 This is recognised by Evans & Cleverdon (2000), who also assert that it can be problematical
19 for SMEs to grow in developing countries as locals have limited resources, and power often
20 lies with elites who control the industry. With regards to this case study, the discourses
21 support this view, but also from a Foucauldian perspective, show that knowledge and power
22 go hand in hand. It is this knowledge of the industry that perpetuates the dominance of certain
23 sectors of society, in this case those who are economically dominant. PS5 also states that
24 local tourism is not encouraged or understood, inferring that the dominant up-market, lodge-
25 based tourism *is* the tourism industry, and access to other forms is limited.

26
27 While it is recognised that tourism is an important industry for employment generation, one
28 discourse which emerges relates to the lack of skills of many of the local workers. Related to
29 this is the issue concerning the employment of people from outside the area, particularly from
30 Zimbabwe, who are seen by the private sector (i.e. respondents BS1; BS2; AC2; AC7; AC9;
31 AC10) as having the requisite skills for working in tourism. If private sector businesses are to
32 be economically sustainable, skilled staff are required in all areas of the business. Nearly all
33 respondents in the private sector declared that they have problems in recruiting sufficiently

1 trained employees and they have to invest considerable resources into training and
2 development.

3

4 One of the discourses which emerges from the public sector officials is that they understand
5 the importance of the tourism industry as an economic driver in the region. They also
6 recognise that the industry in the region is predominantly created and driven by the private
7 sector, and the public sector only has a minor role to play in its development as it is not seen
8 as a government priority. The tourism planning literature advocates that particularly at local
9 level, governments need to take the lead in tourism development, although it is also
10 recognised that stakeholder engagement, community-based, bottom-up approaches and
11 tourism can be integrated into broader SD plans (Murphy 1985; Inskeep 1991; Gunn 1994;
12 Jamal & Getz 1995; Twining-Ward & Butler, 2002; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Within the
13 WBR, there is a sense of frustration at the district level of government from the public sector
14 officials that these initiatives do not occur, thereby creating a barrier towards a more
15 sustainable industry (modal verbs in bold):

16 “The municipality is **supposed to** drive this thing, but they don't. Tourism
17 is very, very low in the municipality's priority list and that's basically where
18 the funding **should** come from. If our roads aren't maintained, you **won't**
19 reach your end destination, you **won't** be able to continue with sustainable
20 development in the destination, if there is no water, it **won't** continue.
21 There are very big challenges in this country especially to do with tourism,
22 because it's not a priority. (PS4)

23 The modal verbs from PS4 emphasise what the district municipality should be doing as
24 regards tourism. There is little involvement in the industry lower down the government
25 hierarchy. The public sector officials recognise not only the developmental concerns over
26 infrastructure, but also those related to tourism structures, how tourism is delivered and the
27 problems in doing this. Hall & Jenkins (1995) assert that for destinations to develop in a
28 sustainable way, adequate structures from the public sector need to be in place and within this
29 case-study region, this is patently not the case.

30

31 *6.2 The Tourism Product in the WBR*

32 The type and level of tourism determines the scale and direction of tourism impacts, and
33 hence sustainability. The tourism product in the WBR is based around consumptive and non-
34 consumptive wildlife tourism and other nature-related activities such as horse-riding,

1 mountain biking and walking. The tourist type is predominantly a nature-based, or ecotourist,
2 who wishes to make use of the natural environment for sightseeing, relaxation, hunting,
3 game-viewing or other outdoor activities. They tend to stay in up-market lodges, mid-market
4 lodges, timeshares or second homes. The tourists are either international, mainly from Europe
5 or North America or domestic South African. While it is acknowledged that hunting is a
6 controversial subject with numerous intertwined ethical, conservation and economic issues, a
7 full discussion falls outside the scope of this paper. The reader is directed to the work of
8 Novelli et al. (2006) who examine the ethical issues surrounding hunting, and Nelson et al.
9 (2016) who discuss the link between conservation, ethics and hunting, post the ‘Cecil the
10 Lion’ incident.

11
12 The tourism product is continually evolving and as new entrants come into the market this
13 affects the type of tourism in the area. A move towards more up-market or exclusive products
14 which focus more on the affluent international tourist has become evident. This up-market
15 movement, combined with how private sector tourism stakeholders regard the area, has
16 implications for STD in the WBR. For example, one public sector tourism official was very
17 critical of the exclusive tourism product and the power of these up-market operators as they
18 fundamentally change the nature of what is being offered. Moving up-market requires
19 significant funding and this often comes from large corporations or wealthy individuals, often
20 from overseas (PS4; AC5). Reflecting the tourism development literature on who often has
21 power and control of the tourism industry, this exemplifies that it is big business and wealthy
22 elites and to some extent this reaffirms notions of dependency (Britton, 1982). PS4 states that
23 this type of tourism takes away the sense of place of the ‘bush’ and a false, man-made
24 product is being developed by the private sector that attracts the mainly international tourist
25 and the domestic tourist is being priced out of the market:

26 *“So you see it as quite an exclusive destination?”*

27 Yes, there are a few places where the *ordinary man* can still go, but they are
28 not that well advertised. So the Waterberg is becoming **exclusive**, it's the
29 playground of the **rich people** and that's bad.

30 *And who is responsible for that?*

31 I think like your big places such Game Reserves 4 and 5. They've got
32 investment, so they bring people from overseas to invest and that they
33 expand. And immediately they've got golf estates. If you have a **golf estate**
34 **it is exclusive**, the *ordinary man* will never get into. If you don't have a

1 pass to say that you are booked in there, it's very **difficult even just to go**
2 **into**, for a coffee or for a Coke or something of a lunch or whatever and get
3 out, so **it's become exclusive**. There are smaller places yes, but they are
4 three star and they are planning to become four-star. And as soon as they go
5 up a level they **put up their prices**.

6 *And do you see that as sustainable?*

7 No. Now it's just getting these people from places like Los Angeles or
8 wherever and it attracts a certain type of tourist and basically that will be
9 people from outside the country (...) **it's become artificial**, everything is
10 becoming artificial. Its **reproduction of luxury** into the Waterberg which is
11 taking away the atmosphere of the bush, of what the Waterberg is really
12 about and has to offer.” (PS4)

13
14 When analysing discourses, speakers use semantic strategies to achieve their communicative
15 goals (van Dijk, 1985). For example, in the discourse above there is a semantic contrast
16 expressed between subsequent propositions; in this case up-market tourism (in bold) and mid-
17 market or lower end tourism (in italics). The semantic contrast operates as a rhetorical
18 antithesis so as to make more effective (and therefore more defensible) the negative opinion
19 about the alternative (ibid). Luxury tourism is seen by PS4 as the opposite of what she sees as
20 the real ‘bush experience’ that the ‘ordinary man’ has, while in the Waterberg the private
21 sector has the power to change the type of tourism being offered as there is no control over
22 how tourism activity and accommodation is graded or classified in the region. As PS5 states:

23 “First everyone has a freedom to develop themselves to whatever level,
24 everyone has the latitude of attracting sponsors without any interference
25 from the government and that to me has resulted in the existence of these
26 big, expensive facilities that we have around here.” (PS5)

27 The above discourse represents a very hands-off, market-oriented, neoliberal approach to the
28 private sector from the public sector, allowing them a considerable amount of leeway and
29 power to develop their establishments as they see fit. One accommodation owner whose
30 market is mainly international tourists from Europe and North America, states that an
31 increasing number of these tourists are booking packages through tour operators in their
32 country of residence (AC1). Another states that he is constantly having to upgrade his
33 facilities to compete for visitors (AC8), while others state that it is becoming a very hard
34 place to make money from tourism (AC9; AC10; AC11; AC12). This movement to a more

1 upmarket destination has implications for the sustainability of the industry. It places
2 increasing pressure on the accommodation sector to upgrade their products and thus consume
3 more resources. Upmarket establishments generally consume more resources, than do lower
4 graded ones, particularly water (Birkin, 2003) and in an area where water is scarce, this has
5 implications for the sustainability of these establishments and the region. Competition in the
6 private sector in tourism can be intense and it can be a fickle industry with demand
7 influenced by a number of external factors meaning that only the fittest and most adaptable
8 survive.

9

10 The development of the tourism product has primarily focused on the activities related to the
11 natural environment. However, cultural tourism has been marginal to this process. The WBR
12 did receive funding from the European Union to develop Telekishi, a black community-based
13 initiative in a remote part of the region. There is a recognition from the black respondents that
14 they have lost much of their culture and it has become Westernised (CS8; PS3; PS5; LC1).
15 The legacy of apartheid is never far from the surface.

16 “Yes you are right they have lost their own culture. When I started thinking
17 of initiating this [Telekishi], then it was coming to me that's why can't we
18 go back to our own culture because I can see the vendors used to wear their
19 own traditional clothes, the Zulus wear their own traditional clothes, but
20 ourselves, the Pedi we don't wear other culture's clothes. Yes, they have
21 lost their own culture, it is not completely lost, but they have deviated from
22 that.

23 *How does that make you feel?*

24 I'm a little bit scared, I'm not feeling all right about that because if you don't
25 know where you are coming from you won't know where you are going.
26 That's why I have initiated this. I could have just gone for some motels or
27 other fancy things but we blacks sometimes we think of culture it is
28 something barbaric, primitive, whereas culture it is your roots and if you
29 don't have your roots, then how can you get some flowers.”

30 There is a semantic contrast in this discourse between the Zulu and the local Pedi culture. The
31 inference being that the Zulus are more open and proud of their cultural roots, whereas the
32 Pedi's culture has been diluted and is seen as unworthy of display. The view that the black
33 population have of their own culture of being 'barbaric' or 'primitive' is a discourse that has

1 its roots in colonialist discourse. As Levett et al. (1997) indicate, it is a representation of
2 institutionalised power relations in both pre- and post-apartheid South Africa.

3

4 This idea is developed by PS3, a black, senior manager in LEDET, who states that there has
5 been a negative connotation from the black population in that cultural tourism is about
6 performing a dance for white tourists at an upmarket white-owned lodge for some food and a
7 small payment. He does recognise that cultural tourism does have value if it can be
8 developed, controlled and managed by people from the local, black culture and the benefits
9 accrue to the local population. He sees that culture is a part of the tourism product and that
10 the local black population need educating regarding this and performing for tourists is not
11 demeaning, but it is about cultural appreciation.

12 “Look I wouldn't say, of course there has been a feeling that they only
13 wanted to dance and get a few shillings, that has developed a bit of a
14 negative attitude, but I wouldn't say that people are not willing to show their
15 culture, it is more about understanding and exposure and massive
16 beneficiation out of this. (PS3)

17

18 The tourism industry is perceived predominantly as a white controlled industry. The
19 discourses centre on a racial divide in the industry whereby tourists and businesses dealing
20 with tourists are seen as white, while the black population are seen as the workforce, PS3
21 continues:

22 “The farm managers are white, the land owners are white, the tourists are
23 white, **we** don't have the money to come and spend, the only money **we** get
24 is to spend on food for children, so that's not mainly **our** field, it's been
25 there always.” (PS3)

26 The connotation in the discourse is that whites have economic control over the industry, that
27 they have surplus money to spend on luxuries such as tourism, while the blacks can only
28 satisfy their basic needs. The respondent's use of the personal and possessive pronouns ‘we’
29 and ‘our’ (in bold) relates to the black population, even though his personal circumstances are
30 different from the majority of the black population. The fact that he states ‘it's been there
31 always’ correlates with the historical and political contexts in this case study and highlight
32 how power has been and is still in the hands of the whites, whether they be the consumers or
33 the producers of the tourism product. This concurs with the findings of Briedenhann &
34 Wickens (2004, p177): “Whilst integration has occurred in many other areas of South African

1 business and society, tourism remains predominantly a ‘white man’s thing’.” There is a view
2 from another black public sector tourism official that ‘township tourism’, generally
3 recognised as organised trips to areas of urban poverty known as townships in South Africa
4 (Steinbrink, 2012), could be developed:

5 “There is a lot of significant history and beautiful stories about the
6 development of this township, about a lot of things around that we would
7 love to expose our visitors to, but we don't have enough capacity to draw
8 them in ourselves.”(PS5)

9 There is an inference in this discourse that help is needed. PS5 continues, stating that in order
10 for the industry to really benefit the black population, SME development assistance is
11 required. The mention of the township, its stories, development and history reflects a
12 potential knowledge of ‘township tourism’ which has become popular across the country.
13

14 *6.3 Appropriate and Inappropriate Development*

15 The type of tourism in the region affects sustainability concerns in the WBR. Discourses
16 around what constitutes appropriate/inappropriate tourist types, levels, activities and
17 developments emerge, invoking notions of power and knowledge. Views on such subjects
18 require knowledge about the land, the economy and how the tourism industry functions.
19 Certain types of tourism considered inappropriate by some respondents involve golf course
20 developments, large-scale resorts and certain tourist attractions such as the small-scale zoos
21 in the area (BS5; AC3; AC8; AC9; AC10). All these types of tourism are not seen as either
22 economically or environmentally beneficial to the area. Specifically, second homes are
23 criticised by a number of respondents, with the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve Management
24 Committee chair and a former Waterberg Nature Conservancy (WNC) chair summarising
25 these views:

26 “...we’ve seen a change in land use and from a conservationist’s point of
27 view that’s not always positive. From an economic point of view, it
28 imposes great challenges because **hardly any employment** has been
29 created in this area and we estimate that about **40% of the leisure**
30 **properties are without any economic driver** at all. We’re talking about
31 retirement homes or second homes.” (CS6)

32

33 “... we have a very high percentage of absentee landowners that just use
34 this for their personal recreation over the weekends. They **contribute**

1 **nothing** to the area, their **land is not accessible for tourism**, it **stands in**
2 **the way** of creating bigger blocks of land, they are **not part of the**
3 **community**, they are **not interested in any kind of branding** of the
4 Waterberg or promotion of the Waterberg, they are a real drag, they, by and
5 large they **don't contribute to the schools, the churches, the sports clubs,**
6 **the local economy**, they **contribute nothing to the local economy**, they
7 **employ very few people, there's no economic activity taking place on**
8 **their properties** and they are a **drag on the whole area.**" (AC8)

9
10 The language in bold in the above discourses frames the retirement/second home
11 phenomenon in a particularly negative light. These concerns reflect the literature on second
12 home developments. For example, Hoogendoorn et al. (2005) find that the tourism second
13 home developments in South Africa do not offer a sufficient range or permanency of
14 employment opportunities for the local poor populations and that these developments can
15 have serious environmental impact if not appropriately planned. They also assert that they
16 tend to be a reflection of the wider race-class issue in South Africa, with most second homes
17 being owned by whites. While no empirical data is available, the second homes in the
18 Waterberg are, according to a real estate agent interviewed, predominantly owned by whites
19 (BS3).

20
21 The economic linkages between the tourism sector and other economic sectors are also
22 limited for this market. AC9, an ecotourism lodge owner and local land owner, states that
23 most weekender tourists buy almost everything in Gauteng, bring it with them, consume what
24 they have bought, and return, spending very little in the local area. This also has implications
25 for STD in the region as weak economic linkages do little for income and employment
26 opportunities generating low multiplier levels, which as authors such as Dearden (2010) have
27 previously shown, are often a cause for concern in peripheral areas. The real estate agent and
28 a number of others expressed severe reservations about overdevelopment of second homes
29 from both economic and environmental perspectives, with water being a specific problem
30 (BS4; BS5, CS2; AC2; AC3; AC8; AC9; AC10; AC12; AC13).

31 32 *6.4 Government Control of Tourism Development*

33 A particular concern in this study is that nearly all the active stakeholders interviewed
34 mentioned the lack of control over development within the WBR. Multiple reasons are cited

1 for the lack of control, including political will, corruption, and a lack of capacity and
2 resources in government. The common discourse is summed up by AC3:

3 “I think the critical thing is the political will and that's something we've
4 really struggled with, because what we need is planning control and when
5 we need it is now.” (AC3)

6 There was a sense that landowners can effectively build what they want on their land with
7 relatively little interference and developers can get around EIA issues through either a lack of
8 enforcement from government or them hiring expensive lawyers and going through the
9 courts:

10 “We’ve seen any number of those where glib, short-termist highly
11 mercenary property developers come in, buy up some land from a
12 distressed farmer, that’s how it tends to work, and then they parcel the land
13 into small pieces, using smart lawyers to get around the poorly enforced
14 legislation that’s available, so they can sneak their divisions through quasi-
15 legally. Government doesn’t have the capacity to enforce the very good
16 legislation and environmental protection – it has state-of-the-art legislation,
17 but no enforceability and the developers know that and their agents and
18 attorneys know that.” (AC2)

19 This highlights power positions in development. The WNC and the WBR as civil society
20 organizations have tried to fight these developments, but as AC2 and a number of other
21 respondents state (CS6; AC8, AC12), whilst environmental legislation is generally very good
22 in South Africa, it is the implementation of legislation at local level that is problematic, a
23 finding also upheld in the earlier work of Wilhelm-Reichmann & Cowling (2013).

24

25 Concerns over the capacity and resources of government, particularly at district level, to
26 deliver the requisite services required to aid development are a common theme across all
27 stakeholder groups. In terms of capacity, the primary discourse surrounds the ability of
28 officials to fulfill their responsibilities. This is due to a lack of skills from public sector
29 employees regarding what the position demands (PS1; BS3; CS1, CS5) and a lack of
30 resources. Another accommodation owner is highly critical of both the type of development
31 and the planning process:

32 “We're having pepper pot development all over the Waterberg. Game
33 Reserve 3 was a classic example as it's right in the core area of the
34 biosphere, and what they are doing there in terms of water is completely

1 unsustainable. Water consumption, traffic, they have 150 units on an area
2 which is much too small for 150 units and there is legislation to control that
3 at the moment. AC6 is pulling his hair out as the politician at the last minute
4 just hasn't done it and he suspects that there is money changing hands
5 between the developers and the politicians.” (AC3)

6 The aspect of corruption in South Africa was highlighted by a number of respondents (BS3;
7 AC3; AC5; AC8; AC10). It is seen as endemic when dealing with the public sector at all
8 levels and particularly with regard to politicians. Politicians are also particularly criticized by
9 public sector officials as focusing on the short-term and on interfering in the planning
10 process:

11 “The main challenges are *political challenges*, because **as a planner** we
12 will receive the application. For example if someone wants to develop
13 something in the biosphere, and **as a planner** I object to something in the
14 application and we don't want to have that type of developments in the
15 biosphere, but because of *political influences*, but the president of some
16 organisation says you must build these things, but **as a planner** we are not
17 allowed to do that. So because of the *political influences* we are forced to
18 do something that we are not allowed to do in terms of the plans.” (PS2)

19
20 The above discourse from a planner who is responsible for determining the outcome of
21 planning applications emphasizes his role (in bold) and also what affects his role (in italics).
22 These sentiments are also echoed by other public sector officials who see politicians’ self-
23 interest as over-riding planners’ decisions. Politicians need to be seen as being pro-
24 development as this enables re-election (PS3; PS4). PS2 also articulates how the public sector
25 has been very poor at enforcing planning law and developers have realized this and have
26 either been able to use the courts, bribe politicians or just flout the law and develop without
27 consent, knowing that there will be few or no consequences. Church (2004) argues that power
28 structures shape tourism development and the broader economic and political concerns need
29 to be taken into consideration, with corruption and power abuses being a part of this. The
30 sentiments regarding planning are also expressed by a number of landowners who have seen
31 developments being erected on neighbouring farms that have no planning consent (AC1;
32 AC8; AC9; AC13). The public sector officials themselves recognize governmental
33 limitations in terms of enforcement, with one being very critical of their ineffectiveness:

34 “As a planner we are trying to develop a strategy to control those

1 developments in the Waterberg. But not now, now we don't really control
2 things.” (PS2)

3
4 Biospheres do not have any legal authority regarding planning law in South Africa. While
5 biosphere reserves do use zoning techniques, these are not embedded in planning law and
6 therefore are open to interpretation. An environmental legal review including key national
7 and provincial environmental legislation was carried out as part of the WBR’s expansion
8 plans in 2011. This included the Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 which covers special nature
9 reserves, national parks and protected environments. This legislation along with a host of
10 others (see Contour & Associates (2011) for a complete list) affects planning and
11 management of natural areas. Planners should adhere to the zoning characteristics as laid out
12 by UNESCO – core, buffer and transition, however this has not occurred in practice.
13 Planning matters are further complicated by the responsibilities of the various levels of
14 government. PS3, who is a senior manager for LEDET at the provincial level, highlights
15 these issues, stating that there is a lack of clarity in terms of who must do what at which level,
16 causing planning inertia and poor decision-making resulting in opportunities for exploitation
17 by developers. As Raymond & Brown (2007) argue, land use planning at local levels affects
18 resident quality of life and tourism planning decisions need to be integrated into local land
19 use planning and political decision-making bodies. This is patently problematic in the WBR
20 and has serious implications for the sustainable development of not just the tourism industry,
21 but the WBR as a whole.

22
23 There is also a perception that the result of lack of development control is essentially a type
24 of free-for-all for the private sector in terms of what they can do to land. This has
25 implications for the carrying capacity of the area, which as Telfer & Sharpley (2008) remind
26 us, is one of the principles of STD. While a number of respondents mentioned carrying
27 capacities (PS3; PS4; BS4; BS5; CS2; AC10), the general feeling was that tourism levels
28 could still increase, although certain types of tourism needed controlling. This inevitably has
29 implications for the type and level of tourism development, which determines the impacts of
30 tourism (Mason, 2008).

31 32 **7. Conclusion**

33 The aim of this study was to analyse active stakeholder discourses of tourism development in
34 the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa, in order to better understand how the

1 principles of sustainable development (SD) might be most effectively put into practice more
2 generally. We suggest that the paper makes multiple contributions to existing literature on the
3 subject. First, the biosphere reserve in the Waterberg is a relatively new phenomenon, and
4 research into this geographical area is limited. This paper adds to the body of knowledge on
5 the region, particularly relating to how tourism is perceived by local stakeholders active in
6 STD.

7

8 Facilitated by CDA, this paper demonstrates that using techniques such as stakeholder
9 analysis helps to uncover not only *how* tourism development occurs, but also *why* it occurs in
10 a particular way. CDA is a somewhat neglected methodological approach in studies that
11 examine tourism as a strategy for SD. Through examining themes of context, knowledge,
12 ideology and power inherent in CDA (Hjortso et al. 2005), we contend that this paper makes
13 a second, methodologically-oriented contribution, in analysing both *what* people say and *why*
14 they say what they say.

15

16 Our analysis suggests that seeking SD in biosphere reserves is problematical when there are
17 distinct ideological differences between active stakeholder groups, and power relations are
18 unequal. There is a distinct conservation ethos and a desire to see better ‘top-down’ planning
19 control within the WBR to maintain the ‘sense of place’, which centres on the natural
20 environment and communities. However, the analysis of the active stakeholder discourses
21 also highlights a number of community related matters that include power, conflict and post-
22 colonial perspectives. The theory on STD calls for more ‘bottom-up’ and ‘community-based’
23 approaches to development (Getz & Timur, 2005; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008; Hung Lee, 2013),
24 and the paper makes a further contribution through examining those stakeholders who can
25 affect sustainability concerns in various ways, and therefore have some power in tourism
26 development. In so doing, it adds to the work of Waligo et al. (2013) who reviewed
27 sustainable tourism from a multi-stakeholder perspective; however, in this study the focus is
28 specifically upon *active* stakeholders, and their considerable influence over development
29 outcomes. Moreover, there are policy implications at a broader spatial scale. For example, as
30 tourism is one of South Africa’s growth industries, how it is developed will have implications
31 for the economy, society and the environment - the three pillars of SD (Goodland & Daly,
32 1996). Thus, there are implications for how tourism moves along a more sustainable pathway
33 not only within the WBR, and SA, but also within other biosphere reserves and protected
34 areas more generally.

1

2 Whether tourism can be an appropriate option for SD here, or indeed more generally, is
3 debatable and, as Wheeler (2004) would argue, depends on which perspective is taken. SD
4 and STD are value laden concepts and this study has shown that the discourses that relate to
5 concepts such as development, tourism, SD, STD are underpinned by ideologies and involve
6 notions relating to knowledge and power. The dominant economic-based neoliberal paradigm
7 that is emphasized in the literature on development is also evident in the active stakeholder
8 discourses studied. Sustaining tourism, neoliberal views of the environment, tourism's
9 inability to generate significant employment, a private sector-led tourism industry, weak
10 government and unequal power distribution are all critical SD concerns. The biosphere, with
11 its associated problems has been a mechanism to push discourses of a version of SD. It is,
12 however, one that has quite a weak and mildly reformist approach. As has been shown,
13 discourses lead to material realities. Stakeholders have an emotional attachment to the area,
14 particularly the natural environment and its various communities. While the evidence points
15 to tourism being unable to fulfill many of the principles and objectives relating to SD/STD, it
16 is still early days in the WBR and tourism is still in its infancy in the region. The discourses
17 from the active stakeholders point to the numerous, difficult problems within the area,
18 however as SD/STD are journeys (Kates & Clark, 1999), material realities, in this case the
19 formation of the WBR has meant that the journey has been started, initiated with discourses
20 around these concepts.

21

22 *7.1 Limitations and Future Research*

23 This study has focused intentionally upon the feedback of active stakeholders. The distinction
24 between active and passive stakeholders is not clear cut, however, as stakeholders can have
25 multiple roles (Heikkila & Gerlak, 2005). It may not be absolute, as some groups (e.g. certain
26 local people) may be involved in natural resource management in both active and passive
27 ways. Seeking the views of those less able to influence, yet still affected by, SD activities will
28 provide an equally important dimension to the topic area. Furthermore, when examining any
29 concern involving stakeholders, it needs to be recognized that the area of study is not static.
30 For example, influences may change, stakeholder groups may gain more knowledge about a
31 subject, have changing levels of interest and power structures may evolve. This means that
32 the stakeholder analysis should be updated during the entire period of the issue being
33 analysed in order to gain knowledge about the potential influence various stakeholders have

1 at different stages (Olander & Landin, 2005). SD is an ongoing process, and considerable
2 work remains to be done in this area.

3

4

1 **LEVEL OF INTEREST**

2

LOW

HIGH

3

4

5

LOW

A
Minimal Effort

B
Keep Informed

6

7

POWER

8

9

HIGH

C
Keep Satisfied

D
Key Players

10

11

12

13

14

Figure 1: Stakeholder mapping: the power/interest matrix (Johnson and Scholes, 1993)

15

16

1 Table 1: Limpopo Province Census Data, 2011

- Population - 5.4 million
- Black African population - 5.2 million
- White population - 140,000
- Percentage under 40 years old - 70%
- Number with no formal schooling - 500,000
- Percentage age 20+ with no schooling – 17%
- Unemployment rate – 49%
- Percentage with no toilet – 7%
- Percentage using wood for heating – 40%

2 Source: (Statistics South Africa, 2012)

3

4

1 Table 2: Challenges facing Limpopo Province

- Economic – high unemployment, poverty, lack of opportunity, lack of sectoral communication, HIV infection rate of 22%
- Land-use – access, tenure, restitution, administration
- Infrastructure – a) Water – scarcity and provision, sanitation, service maintenance, losses; b) Waste – unlicensed landfill sites, illegal dumping, recycling; c) Electricity – capacity, ageing infrastructure, illegal connections; d) Roads and Transport – road degradation, upgrading, poor public transport
- Education and Training – poorly skilled labor force, training opportunities, low skill base.
- Biodiversity – habitat destruction, pollution, urban development, habitat management, alien species invasion.
- Tourism – white controlled, lack of SME opportunities, lack of community involvement in value chain.
- Regional and Local Government – capacity, skills, poor systems, debt, high staff turnover, staff commitment, poor monitoring and auditing procedures, lack of finance and financial management.

2 Source: (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2009)

3

4

1 Table 3 Sample of questions asked to interviewees

2

Line of Questioning	Sample Questions
Introductory Questions	<p>Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and what you do here in the Waterberg?</p> <p>What does the Waterberg mean to you?</p> <p>What adjectives would you use to describe the Waterberg?</p>
Development and Sustainable Development	<p>What do you see as the main development concerns in the area?</p> <p>What are the roles of government in addressing development concerns?</p> <p>Can these issues be addressed? How?</p> <p>When you hear those words sustainable development or sustainability, does this mean anything to you?</p> <p>Do you feel as though you participate in making this area more sustainable?</p> <p>What do you think about the distribution of resources in the area?</p> <p>What is your view of environmental conservation in the area?</p> <p>Are you optimistic for the future of the Waterberg?</p>
Tourism Development	<p>Do you see the type and levels of tourism as appropriate? Would you like to see more tourism here?</p> <p>Are there any other forms of tourism that you would or would not like to see here?</p> <p>Do local communities play a role in tourism development?</p> <p>Can tourism address the development concerns you identified earlier?</p> <p>There is a lot of unemployment in the area. Do you see tourism as an industry that can help to solve some of these problems?</p> <p>How do you see the role of the local government in tourism development?</p>
Micro Context - WBR	<p>Does the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve mean anything to you?</p> <p>What about the role of the local government, do you see them as having a role in this?</p> <p>Have you had any involvement with the biosphere? Why/why not?</p>
Questions Relating to Stakeholders (Accommodation Provider)	<p>How many people does your business employ and are they all local people?</p> <p>Do you have to do your own training? Is it difficult to find people who are sufficiently skilled?</p> <p>Has the training that you've given people allowed them to progress with you?</p> <p>Do you work with any community groups, NGOs?</p> <p>What about suppliers, do you use local ones?</p> <p>Do you do anything green or environmental?</p> <p>Has running a business here changed over the years?</p> <p>Has the recession affected you, do things go in cycles?</p> <p>Have guests changed over the years?</p> <p>Are you optimistic for the future of your business and of the Waterberg?</p>

3 Source: Primary Data

1 Table 4: Stakeholders in the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve

Level of Involvement	Stakeholder Group or Organization	Sector
1. International	UNESCO European Union Wilderness Trust of Southern Africa	Not-for-profit/civil society (cs) Public Not-for-profit/cs
2. National	South African Government, particularly: - Department of Environment & Tourism - Department of Higher Education & Training - Department of Agriculture - Department of Water Affairs Land Claims Committee SanParks, National Parks Board Agricultural Union Transvaal Agricultural Union South African Universities (Particularly Universities of Venda and Pretoria) DBSA (Development Bank of Southern Africa)	Public Public Not-for-profit/cs Not-for-profit/cs Private
3. Regional	Polokwane Provincial Government - Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET). Department of Agriculture Department of Education Limpopo Parks & Tourism Board	Public Public Public Public
4. Local	Waterberg Biosphere Reserve Management Committee Waterberg District Municipality Other Municipalities which have jurisdiction in the WBR - Thabazimbi, Modimolle, Mogalakwena & Lephalale local municipalities.	Not-for-profit/cs Public Public

	Marakele National Park	Public
	Moepel Farms	Not-for-profit/cs
	Clive Walker Foundation	Not-for-profit/cs
	The Matabane community	Not-for-profit/cs
	Lapalala Wilderness School	Not-for-profit/cs
	Waterberg Nature Conservancy (WNC)	Not-for-profit/cs
	Farmer representative bodies,	Not-for-profit/cs
	Bakenberg Tribal Authority,	Not-for-profit/cs
	Land Claims Committees	Not-for-profit/cs
	Lephalale CTA	Not-for-profit/cs
	Telekishi Community Tourism Project (TCTP)	Not-for-profit/cs
	The Waterberg Academy & other educational institutions	Not-for-profit/cs
	Traditional leaders	Not-for-profit/cs
	South African Police Service (SAPS – local representation)	Public
	Khutso Foundation (Environmental Consultancy)	Not-for-profit/cs
	Rural community representatives	Not-for-profit/cs
	Waterberg Institute of Sociology and Ecology & (WISE)	Not-for-profit/cs
	Waterberg Welfare Society (WWS)	Not-for-profit/cs
	Other NGOs/Charities (e.g. Komotsogo Crafts)	Not-for-profit/cs
	Business Community	Private
	Private Game Farms incorporated in the Biosphere	Private
	Educational Establishments	Public/Private

1 Source: Primary Data

2

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