

Critical Discourse Analysis and the questioning of dominant, hegemonic discourses of sustainable tourism in the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, South Africa

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how critical discourse analysis (CDA), an under-utilised methodological approach, can be used to critically question the dominant, hegemonic discourses surrounding sustainable development and sustainable tourism development. The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve in South Africa provides the study context. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the framework for review, sustainable development an integral part of this framework. This research study examines three SDGs in particular: discourses surrounding SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 15 (life on land). Interviews (n=35) were conducted, in South Africa, with multiple stakeholder groups. CDA techniques were applied to data analysis to examine the sustainable development/sustainable tourism discourses attached to the SDGs under review. Neoliberal discourses linked to the economy, the environment, and a sustaining of the tourism industry through top-down planning and unequal power distributions emerged. Conclusions reflect both upon the opportunities utilising a tool such as CDA presents, along with the limitations to take account of in applying it. CDA applications which explore SDGs by listening to the voices of the poor are suggested as one avenue for further research.

Key Words: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Power, Ideology, Biosphere Reserves, United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how critical discourse analysis (CDA), an under-utilised methodological approach founded in critical thinking (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), can be used to critically question the dominant, hegemonic discourses surrounding sustainable development (SD), and, in turn, sustainable tourism development (STD). The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve (WBR), South Africa (SA), provides the study context (see Table 1 for a full list of abbreviations).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

SD, an integral part of the United Nations (UN) agenda, is currently underpinned by seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which collectively seek an end to poverty, protection of the planet along with peace and prosperity by 2030 (UN, 2017). Partnership and pragmatism are positioned as central tenets (UNDP, 2017). A case study of the UN WBR, SA, provides a working application of SD and allows us to interrogate stakeholder perceptions of three SDGs at a destination level: SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 15 (life on land). Biospheres, with a conservation, development and logistical support remit, are one way of putting SD into practice. Tourism is one of the main economic and land-use sectors within the WBR. How tourism is developed, or seen to be developed, has implications for SD.

Case studies are carried out within the boundaries of one social system, monitoring a phenomenon over a specific time period (Swanborn, 2010). This case study is located within a polarised society, SA, which remains one of the most unequal societies in the world (World Bank, 2018). SA still bears the scars of apartheid and, while socio-economic change is

occurring, it is often done in the context of colonialism and white privilege experienced during apartheid (Boluk, 2011a). This in turn inhibits African entrepreneurship, credit and infrastructural development, contributing also to information and skills deficits (Booyesen, 2007). Access to employment, education, land, housing, health services are still predominantly divided along the lines of race (Neves & du Toit, 2013).

Formed in 2001, the WBR sits in the Waterberg District in Limpopo Province in SA. It cuts across six predominantly rural settlements and small villages, Magalakwena, Modimolle, Lephalale, Bela-Bela, Mookgopong, and Thabazimbi, all marked by enduring racial and spatial legacies of poverty. Vaalwater is the only town in the area, itself connected to the adjoining township (i.e. an urban area designated during apartheid and predominantly occupied by the black population) of Leseding. There are other rural settlements and small villages, but the area is predominantly a wilderness, with a very low population density. The main economic activities are tourism and agriculture (Taylor, Holt-Biddle & Walker, 2003). The rural poor's livelihoods since the apartheid days have been characterised by oscillatory migration to distant urban cities. Informal labour in rural areas is a key source of income as formal labour is limited (Neves & du Toit 2013).

The concept of biosphere reserves was initiated by the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MaB) programme in 1974. The first biospheres were inaugurated in 1976 and by 2017 there were 669 reserves in 120 countries (UNESCO, 2018). In 1995, the Seville Strategy was adopted by UNESCO. This was a statutory framework which paved the way for future biosphere reserve developments (UNESCO, 2002). Biospheres are one way of the UN putting SD into practice. The Madrid Action Plan (MAP) of 2008 builds on the Seville Strategy, examining how biospheres can effectively respond to, and help to, address global issues and problems which

have emerged or intensified since 1995. According to UNESCO (2008), these major challenges further exacerbate poverty and inequality and include: accelerated climate change; accelerated loss of biological and cultural diversity and rapid urbanization which has major effects on environmental change.

The case study at the heart of this paper adopts what Swanborn (2010) describes as a holistic approach whereby the discourses of people and social phenomenon within the boundaries of the WBR system are examined. By analysing the discourses of a number of active stakeholders in tourism in the WBR, the paper offers a number of contributions to knowledge. As tourism is one of the main economic sectors in the Waterberg, how this industry develops will have implications for the environment, society and the economy of the region. The WBR is a relatively recent phenomenon. Research on tourism development in the biosphere is similarly in its infancy.

The WBR also represents a microcosm of the larger debate on SD, involving issues about what to develop, where, how, from whose perspective and under which contexts. It is well placed to interrogate the UNs current round of development goals, SDGs, providing insights into the efficacy of such at a local level. Consequently, a study such as this not only adds to the body of knowledge on SD/STD within the case study area, but is of importance to the wider research community too. In line with the work of Kuhn (2007), this paper is not about how we ‘ought’ to manage tourism, rather it is an attempt to comprehend wider perspectives of ‘what is’ and to treat sustainability and tourism as an evolving, dynamic discourse.

The paper is developed as follows. First, the meaning of discourse, CDA, and discourses associated with SD, ST and STD in SA are reviewed in order to provide a theoretical backdrop

to the study. Reference to the current SDG agenda is included in this review. Next the WBR case study is introduced with contextual material necessary for CDA provided. The methods follow which explain more fully the approach adopted in executing CDA. Case study findings illustrate the challenges some of the SDGs, linked to quality education (SDG 4), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) and life on land (SDG 15) face. Conclusions are drawn regarding the implications of the case study for the SDGs. Limitations acknowledge the shortfalls of CDA suggesting also associated opportunities for future research.

Discourse, Power, Ideology and Knowledge

The term ‘discourse’ has a variety of meanings and interpretations. It involves the use of language, but it is also a form of social practice (Mayr, 2008). A discourse or a communicative interaction can be a policy, a political strategy, a speech, conversations or a historical monument (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). It involves language-in-action, but also thoughts, words, objects, events, actions and interaction (Gee, 2011). In this paper discourse refers to: “all the phenomena of symbolic interaction and communication between people, usually through spoken or written language or visual representation” (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p. 6).

Discourse comprises all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity which is connected to social, cultural and historical patterns and developments (Blommaert, 2005). In development, those with knowledge of how systems operate, the rules of those systems and how to utilise knowledge, will have influence and power over decision-making. This is evidenced in the work of Grimwood et al., (2015). Drawing upon discursive and postcolonial perspectives, Grimwood et al., (2015, p. 22) explore critiques associated with responsibility in Artic tourism. Exemplifying the power of responsibility to “normalize particular versions of truth”, these authors go on to illustrate how not all knowledge is equal with some discourses having the

capacity to supersede, disenfranchise or even silence others (for insights into indigenous knowledge see for instance Semali & Kincheloe, 1999 and Sillitoe, Dixon & Barr, 2005).

Discourse reproduces both power and knowledge and affects what is put into practice. In terms of development, organisations such as the multi-lateral agencies, the World Bank and UN for instance, created post Second World War, are symbolic of the “development and realisation of a discourse as a legitimate reality in a bounded network of action” (Emirbayer & Goodwin 1994, p. 1438). They are illustrative of the capacity of discourses to result in material realities such as institutions, policies and development projects.

Discourse also mediates ideology and there are various historical and social reasons how and why discourses gain prominence (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Societal discourses are ideologically based (Bakhtin, 1986). Ideology refers to “a set of beliefs or attitudes shared by members of a particular social group.” (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p. 10). Ideologies are strongly linked to language (Fairclough, 1989). An ideology can be carried by a word such as ‘development’ or ‘sustainability’ and appropriated by stakeholder groups to achieve their ends. Thus understanding notions of power are essential in the development process with the main arguments summarized by Crush (1995, p. 7): “Power in the context of development is power exercised, power over. It has origins, objects, purposes, consequences, agents and contra Foucault, much of this seems to be quite patently within the realm of the economic and the political”. The UN and its SDGs have emanated out of a legitimisation of a particular version of SD, one associated with a particular ideology.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Multiple approaches to analysing discourse exist (see for instance the review by Titscher et al., 2002). Critical discourse analysis (CDA), selected in this study as the preferred method of textual analysis, is a linguistic method examining both the coherence and cohesion of the text. Coherence is linked to semantic meaning. Cohesion is linked to the textual-syntactic connectedness and the recognisable relationship between words. It involves ideologies associated with power (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Not only does CDA examine what people say, it also examines why they say these things. Non-linguistic methods such as grounded theory and content analysis only examine coherence. It is through incorporating and analysing syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels (cohesion) that a deeper understanding of the language used can be gained. CDA recognises that all discourse is not value free and is part of, and influenced by, social structure and produced in social interaction (van Dijk, 2001).

CDA stems from the work of Habermas (1971) and seeks to understand social problems that are mediated by mainstream ideology and power relationships, which are perpetuated by discourse. Its objective is to uncover the ideological assumptions that are hidden in discourse in order to resist and overcome various forms of “power over” or to gain an appreciation of how power is exercised which may not always be apparent (Fairclough, 1989). CDA seeks to describe, interpret, analyse, and critique social life reflected in discourse. It is concerned with studying and analysing discourses to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias.

Context is critical in CDA as it examines how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within various political social, economic and historical contexts (van Dijk, 1988). Fairclough & Wodak (1997) summarise the foremost principles of CDA to be: CDA addresses social problems; power relations are discursive; discourse constitutes both

society and culture; discourse does ideological work; discourse is historical; discourse is knowledge based; the link between text and society is mediated; discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory; and discourse is a form of social action. These principles position CDA as an appropriate tool to study issues associated with development. Indeed the recent work by Cummings et al., (2018) adopts this approach specifically within the context of examining SDGs. CDA has also been previously successfully applied within the context of SA to explore the tensions between consumer virtue and the hedonistic behaviours of ethical consumers (Boluk, 2011b). This research study provides a fresh application, using CDA to drill into SDGs within the context of tourism development.

There are numerous approaches to CDA, from inductive to deductive (see Wodak & Meyer, 2009 for a useful analysis of a number of different approaches). This research study links critical theory and CDA. It uses an inductive critical theory approach, cognisant that discourse is socially consequential and involves issues of power, ideology and epistemological considerations relating to knowledge (van Dijk, 2001). Such thinking correlates with the Derridean and Foucauldian approaches to CDA. Derrida is credited with introducing ‘deconstruction’, a mechanism for critiquing the complex interplay between language and meaning (see Derrida, Butler & Spivak, 2016). Complexity is central to Foucault (1972) too, whereby a discourse is not a communicative exchange, but an interchange of ideology, strategy, language and practice. This assumes a co-existence of discourse, objects and material realities. The relationship between these three can be labelled a *dispositif* (see Figure 1). In this paper it is discourses linked to sustainable development and sustainable tourism development which contribute to the WBR *dispositif*.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Sustainable Development Discourse

The background to SD is well documented with SD discourse historically embedded in literature linked to population growth, resource use, economic development and environmental concerns (Hopwood, Mellor & O'Brien, 2005). Multiple publications and events have been influential in the evolution of this discourse including the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) publication, the 'Brundtland Report' (1987) along with two major events in 2002, the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE) and the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD). The IYE and WSSD included tourism in the implementation agenda placing it firmly on the international development map. Along with priorities shifting from 'eco' to 'social' (Tepelus, 2008), the value-laden development of sustainability (see Hall, 2000), continues to evolve.

The current SD discourse is encapsulated in the new sustainable development agenda adopted in 2015, which seeks to pragmatically move towards SD by 2030 (UN, 2017). Five themes dominate this agenda: people; planet; prosperity; peace; and partnerships. The agenda is articulated via seventeen individually identified Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and one hundred and sixty-nine targets (UN, 2017). Themes, goals and targets are all inter-related and integrated. Achieving progress with SDG 10, 'Reduce inequality within and among countries' for instance, will also move society closer to realizing SDG 1, 'End poverty in all its forms everywhere'. Achieving progress with SDG 8, 'Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all', can only be realized if SDG 5, 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' is advanced too. Collectively SDGs have much in common with the earlier SD literature. Both chart concerns that the dominant, mainly economic development paradigms of modernization

and neoliberalism are having damaging effects on environments and people (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2017).

Sustainable Development Discourse in South Africa

SA's approach to SD during the apartheid era was based on maintaining pristine environments through biodiversity and conservation for whites' only game parks. Thousands of black Africans were forcibly removed from these elitist enclaves (McDonald, 2002). Scant regard was given to the well-being of the majority of the population or to other aspects of the environment. According to the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD, 2004), the Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP), with a strong focus on addressing the inequalities of apartheid, was the first stage in attempting to redress this imbalance. The SA government encouraged integration of sustainable development principles into the government planning cycle. Examples of these varied policies, programmes and laws include: land tenure reform; industrial strategies; regional peace and security; poverty reduction strategies; and integrated sustainable rural development strategies (IISD, 2004).

However, implementation has been variable with economic developments generally prevailing over environmental concerns (Lyon, Hunter-Jones & Warnaby, 2017). Planning is based around neoliberal aspects of development and trickle-down economics. The environment is seen as an economic resource and economic development is seen as a priority for government (Patel & Graham, 2012). Moving towards environmental sustainability is therefore problematic when economic issues are given precedence. Despite constitutional commitments to environmental sustainability in SA, evidence indicates that the poor and the natural environment continue to be marginalised in decision-making. A gap therefore exists between policy rhetoric embracing SD and uneven implementation in practice (Patel, 2009). The result

has been that while social deprivation has reduced since 1994, inequality has worsened since the end of apartheid (World Bank, 2018). Environmental stress is increasing and numerous challenges exist in meeting the SDGs (Cole, Bailey & New, 2014; Lyon, Hunter-Jones and Warnaby, 2017).

The Case Study Context: The Waterberg Biosphere Reserve

The WBR is one of six biosphere reserves in SA and is only one of two savanna biospheres in the world, the other being in Tanzania (UNESCO, 2013). It was officially designated by UNESCO in March 2001. The designation is underpinned by a number of unique features. The WBR is a large, contiguous environment of around 10,000 sq. km. with a wilderness quality, in close proximity to SA's economic heartland of Gauteng. The lack of any significant mining, industries or forestry has allowed the natural environment of the area to remain largely intact. Historically, there has been a low population density, but one rich in cultural assets. There is only one town in the area - Vaalwater, one hamlet (Alma) and some 30 rural settlements on the periphery. It has a rich and diverse archaeological heritage. It is home to a critically important water catchment area in a largely water scarce province.

For many in rural SA life has not changed significantly since apartheid ended. Numerous problems still exist in rural areas. In Limpopo Province for instance this includes high unemployment rates, poor education, lack of opportunity, poor infrastructure and service provision, and regional and local governments which have capacity, funding and management problems (LEDET, 2009). Corruption and maladministration issues are also documented (see Auditor General of South Africa, 2011), with money diverted away from socio-economic and environmental projects.

The diverse flora (two thousand plant species), fauna (bird, butterflies, insects and reptiles) and the topography are the main drivers for tourism in the district. Estimates suggest game farms account for nearly 80% of current land use with agriculture around 17% (Boonzaaier & Baber, 2011, p. 155). Major landowners in the WBR, Game Reserve 1 and 2, own 35,000 and 36,000 hectares respectively. The majority of game farms however are relatively small, with over 60% being under 5000 ha. Employment levels in agriculture and tourism are estimated to be at similar levels, employing just over 2000 people. Tourism related jobs are generally more highly skilled and remunerated. The population is around 100,000 in the WBR. Employment in both these sectors, combined with the limited number of service sector jobs in Vaalwater, are inadequate to support the workforce of the Leseding Township, let alone the other rural settlements in the Waterberg (Boonzaaier & Baber, 2011).

Formal recognition as a biosphere brings with it a number of advantages to the country and local area. These include: significant increases in land value; increased job creation; local involvement in planning and management of biodiversity and private sector involvement in conservation, health, research and education (Live Diverse, 2007). However, there are also a number of particular challenges in the WBR including: the control of development in residential estates; getting government to move past the rhetoric of sustainability to concrete spatial development frameworks; development planning; and the land claims process (Lyon, Hunter-Jones & Warnaby, 2017). Land claimants particularly present a challenge in terms of how they use their newly acquired land. Land claimants are groups of individuals/families who had land restored to them through the 1994 Restitution of Land Rights Act. This Act sought to rectify the land conquest of the white population. This started after European colonization in 1652 and was institutionalized by apartheid, resulting in 3.5 million people being forcibly removed from their homes to the Bantustan homelands (Walker, 2008). Land claimants now

control large areas of conservation land, although often without land management experience (Waterberg Biosphere Reserve, 2013).

Methods

Research Design

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how CDA, an under-utilised methodological approach, can be used to critically question the dominant, hegemonic discourses surrounding SD and STD in the WBR, SA. This paper examines how tourism development has an effect on three SDGs which have specific relevance to tourism development in the WBR. The UN SDGs play a major part in the SD agenda. Specifically, discourses surrounding SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 15 (life on land) are examined.

Despite the criticisms levelled at case studies, particularly the issues of bias, rigour and objectivity (Yin, 2003), adoption of this approach can be justified when an in-depth understanding of a unique phenomenon is required (Ellinger, Watkins & Marsick 2005). The WBR has been recognised by UNESCO as a unique area (UNESCO, 2002). The case study was built by two researchers, in three phases, over a four year period. One researcher led the development of the work, making site visits to collect data. The other acted in a secondary role. The process was also cross-checked by a peer researcher who independently reviewed the data collected and emergent themes.

Phase one included thematic analysis of an in-depth literature review followed by a scoping visit to WBR to undertake pilot interviews. Reference to three SDGs (4, 8 and 15) emerge from this initial dataset and are integral to the phase two dataset too. Phase two, the main data collection stage, involved an extended stay in the WBR with data collected via twenty-eight

semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Phase three involved a final return to the WBR to complete the remaining interviews designed to follow-up any emerging themes dominant within stages one and two.

Sample

Case studies incorporate the idea that the researcher deals with several stakeholders each with perceptions, interpretations, arguments, explanations and prejudices, (Elinger, Watkins & Marsick, 2005). Consequently sample selection was complex. The work of Grimble & Wellard (1997, p. 176) added direction: “the most fundamental division between stakeholders is likely to be between those who *affect* (determine) a decision or action, and those *affected* by this decision or action (whether positively or negatively); these groups may be termed *active* and *passive* stakeholders”.

Active stakeholders within the WBR area were targeted on the premise that if they can actively affect sustainability concerns in the WBR, then gaining an understanding of how they see development can help to gain an understanding of the tourism development process. Semi-structured interviews were completed with representatives of multiple stakeholder groups including: public sector (PS) (n=7), accommodation providers (AC) (n=13), other tourism-related businesses (BS) (n=5), civil society individuals or representatives (CS) (n=8) and land claimants (LC) (n=2). The criteria for inclusion in the study was linked to their ability to influence economic, social and environmental issues within the WBR. This implies some position of power either through business ownership, land ownership, ability to affect planning decisions and/or influence over community development. Of the 35 people interviewed, 9 were black SA and 26 were white SA (17 SA nationals and 9 from overseas). Tourists were not interviewed as they cannot directly affect tourism development in the region.

The interviews were semi-structured, designed to take account of the guidance by King and Horrocks (2010). They were what Alvesson (2002) calls 'localist' in nature, whereby the interview produces a situated account, drawing upon cultural resources in order to produce morally adequate descriptions. All were face-to-face, the most convenient location as selected by the respondent. To settle respondents into the study initial contextual questions were addressed. These included: can you tell me a little bit about yourself and what you do here in the Waterberg? What does the Waterberg mean to you? What adjectives would you use to describe the Waterberg? When you hear the words sustainable development or sustainability, do they mean anything to you? Once settled, questions probed three core themes; development and sustainable development, tourism development and the WBR. These themes correlate with the three SDGs identified previously. Example questions include: What do you see as the main development concerns in the area? What do you understand about the biosphere (links to SDG 4)? How has tourism development affected the economy for different groups in the WBR (links to SDG 8)? How do you perceive the biosphere (links to SDG 15)?

Ethical clearance for the research was given after scrutiny at a university research ethics committee and ethical protocols were followed throughout the research process. Interviews lasted between thirty and seventy five minutes and were all digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed using CDA.

Data Analysis

As CDA involves an analysis of the coherence and cohesion of text (discourses), producing verbatim transcripts is a necessary first step in the analytical process. Data was subsequently transferred to the NVivo software package. In excess of 100,000 words of data were generated.

In order to examine the discourses of STD in the WBR a post structural Foucauldian analysis, consistent with the staged approach explained by Wodak & Meyer (2009) was used. The first stage involved stakeholder mapping and profiling by status, stakeholder group, socio-cultural, racial and other relevant information. Next, an analysis of whether the stakeholders are seen as active or passive in STD in the WBR was undertaken and finally the discourses of the stakeholders were examined. As Foucault argues, it is who controls not only the discourse of development, but the associated actions that determine outcomes (Foucault, 1980). Complementing Foucauldian thinking, for post-structuralists, there is a relationship between knowledge, power and discourse (Fletcher, 2000). This leads to outcomes or material realities, in this case the biosphere reserve.

In CDA the text needs to be examined as a whole and the discourse strands and sub-strands identified. This examination was undertaken, independently, by three researchers. Two of these researchers were directly attached to the project. The third was an independent peer researcher. Discourse strands are “flows of discourse that centre on a common topic (...) and are conceived of at the level of concrete utterances” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 46). Within NVivo, and using a thematic analysis, the discourses were grouped into a number of broad thematic areas linked to the macro and micro contexts and consequently coded (for example, development paradigms, SD, tourism and development, power and STD). The sub-strands under each strand were then identified and coded using the same technique, i.e. a more granular thematic analysis occurred to identify a greater level of depth (e.g. identity, culture and development, appropriate/inappropriate tourism, individuals and power).

The entanglements of discourse strands were also identified. This is where one strand refers to a number of inter-related topics. For example when discussing the Waterberg as a place,

notions of development including politics, economics or the environment may also be referred to. Still looking at the text as a whole, Huckin (1997) recommends, examining the perspective that is being presented. This involves angles, slants, or points of view and is called ‘framing.’ For example, how one section of society sees other sections can be seen as a ‘frame’. Discourse positions are also examined. These describe the ideological position from which subjects participate in and encompass their worldviews (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This involves discourse positions on the environment, economics and development. For example, the neoliberal view of economics is a discourse position, as is a radical view of environmentalism.

Having examined discourse strands, frames and discourse positions, the next stage is to examine the more minute levels of analysis: sentence, phrases, and words. There are numerous CDA techniques to facilitate this level of analysis (see Gee, 2011) including: topicalization; connotation; modality; intertextuality; lexical analysis; semantic contrast and identity and ideology construction through pronoun use.

Topicalization refers to the framing of a sentence and is essentially what the discourse is referring to. It can also involve omission and what is not being said. Insinuations can carry double meanings and again can lead to power in discourse as it involves the ability to deny any intention to mislead. Connotations can be assigned on the basis of the cultural knowledge of the respondents and can be associated with one word, or through metaphors and figures of speech.

Modality refers to what should or ought to be done and again involves connotations of power, ideology and knowledge. The tone of the text is set with the use of specific words to convey the degree of certainty and authority (called modality). Intertextuality refers to the way a text

relies on previous texts for its form and reference points (Bloor & Bloor, 2007). For example discourse on biospheres may refer to texts from the UN or the WCED as they involve SD. A lexical analysis refers to the actual words used and uncovers not only the subject of the discourse, but also the intended meaning. Related to this is semantic contrast. When analysing discourses, speakers use semantic contrast to distinguish between different propositions or concepts, for example, rich/poor, black/ white etc. (van Dijk, 1985). The use of pronouns involves the construction of identity and ideology (Bloor & Bloor, 2007). How individuals refer to themselves, and to others, through pronouns can identify social groupings and distinct views of 'the Other'.

Context is also an essential component of CDA as it helps to uncover not just what is said, but how and why discourses emerge. This is where the background of not only those being researched is important, but that of the researcher. For example, when analysing the discourses, who is speaking is relevant, their background, race, education etc. This was taken into account in the analysis and is relevant to the results outlined below. Discourses always involves power and ideologies, and are connected to the past and the current context. They can be interpreted differently because they have different backgrounds and thus positionality and reflexivity of the researcher are important (Thomas, 2009).

As Visser (2000) notes, western academics, when undertaking research in SA, need to do so with respect to cultural, economic, social, racial and gender sensibilities. This was pivotal to framing the reflexive approach applied in this study. Careful consideration of the researcher's biases and values was explored at all stages of the research process. In turn this influenced how the project was designed, which questions were asked to whom and why. As with all social

constructionist approaches, it was recognised that the ‘correct’ interpretation does not exist, whereas a more, or less, plausible or adequate interpretation is likely (Fairclough, 1989).

Validity is also imperative in qualitative research. Whittemore, Chase and Mandle (2001) identify numerous cross-checking techniques for demonstrating validity. The ones which are relevant to this study include: developing a self-conscious research design sampling decisions (i.e. sampling adequacy); articulating data collection decisions; demonstrating prolonged engagement; providing verbatim transcription; exploring rival explanations; performing a literature review; reflexive journaling; providing evidence that support interpretations; acknowledging the researcher perspective; and providing thick descriptions. Decisions and actions linked to each technique were embedded throughout the research process. Validity was ‘crystallized’ through the inclusion of multiple data sources and the input of an independent peer researcher who assisted in validating the emergent discourse themes.

Results

The primary focus of this section is to exemplify the application of CDA techniques, by using the context of SD and STD discourses associated with the WBR as a means of illustration. Consequently, the material and quotations included in this section are selected on the grounds that they are illustrative of the dominant discourses emerging. For ease of reference they are linked to a primary SDG in each instance. Seldom in reality do they relate to only one SDG. Table 2 provides the key to respondents

[Insert Table 2 about here]

SDG 15: Life on Land

SDG 15 is intent upon protecting natural habitats and biodiversity. This is particularly important to the WBR as it is the flora, fauna and topography which are the main drivers for tourism in the region. In interpreting responses linked to this SDG it is important to acknowledge that land is particularly contested in this region, both in terms of ownership and also meanings associated with it. According to Koch (1997), during apartheid, conservation and land use systems significantly favoured the white ruling minority, with the protectionist attitudes to wildlife reflecting the country's political economy. Black Africans associated conservation with loss of land, forced labour and poll taxes. Seldom were any of the benefits derived from tourism in the area, be it linked to game reserves or casino developments, enjoyed within the wider community (Boonzaaier, 2012).

Interviewees were all asked as to how they perceived the WBR. Their responses have a strong environmental discourse and sense of place, habitat protection an integral part of emergent discourses:

I've seen some really pretty places, and more pretty than the Waterberg, but there's a rugged beauty about here, there's a kind of a, superficially you know, you get this sense of time having, I don't know, being here, it's been a hell of a process of evolution to get it to where it is, and it's got that written into its stone if you like.

(AC9)

While framing is one useful CDA tool, modality is another. On examining the language of the respondents it can be seen that modality is more prevalent in the discourses of those who have direct influence in STD in the WBR. This emphasises the relationship between language and

power, which is also an aspect of modality (Winter & Gärdenfors, 1995). For example, the public sector respondents use modality in their discourses:

As well as being a planner, I am also an environmentalist. As an environmentalist **we must** preserve the natural environment and we **must** protect flora and fauna. If we lose those things as a district then we will not attract tourists to the region. We **must** protect the environment within this district.

(PS2)

From a CDA perspective, the use of the pronoun 'we' in the quote above is insightful. It is not clear from the context of who the 'we' refers to. It could be the wider community, environmentalists or the municipal government for who he works, but there is a sense of community and a recognition of the link between the environment and tourism which has long been recognised in the wider literature (Hall & Page, 2000). As Kerstetter and Bricker (2009) argue, sustainability concerns are embedded in a sense of place when the natural environment plays a central part in how the residents identify with a destination. This identity emerges over time:

Especially after the World Summit on Sustainable Development, I think this sustainability word it somehow became a buzzword (...), there might be conservation, but also conservation of natural resources **must not be closed off** from the fact that there are people who **must benefit** from the same resources (...). Of course when we do that we **must take note of** the fact we

need to be very responsible in our behaviour in terms of utilising what we have now, so that which remains can still be utilised by the people after us.

(PS3)

There is a distinct framing at the start of his dialogue, relating the concept of sustainability to the Rio summit on SD (WCED, 1987). This denotes a level of knowledge relating to sustainable development, the origins of the concept and a link to poverty reduction and greater social equity. This knowledge is also evidenced from modality in the discourse (in bold). While not stating specifically the subject in this discourse, there is an inference that it is the black, majority who have not had (economic) benefit from resource access. The ‘natural resources’ is an all-encompassing term, however, it has land-ownership connotations and that it is those with the land who have received the ‘benefits’ at the expense of those who have not. There are economic undertones to the discourse, dictating the nature of life on land.

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

The aspirations of SDG 8 are to achieve full and productive employment, and decent work, for all women and men by 2030. As a growth industry, widely acknowledged as labour intensive and entrepreneurial, on the surface, tourism has the capacity to realise this goal. Game reserves, hotels, food and beverage outlets and transport operators all require managers, operational staff, staff with expertise in people, money and communications to succeed. The spectrum of job opportunities, at different career levels, suitable for women and men is considerable. However, the legacy of apartheid has left numerous challenges to overcome in achieving this. These include a poorly skilled labour force, a lack of training and development opportunities, a lack of small-medium sized business opportunities and a lack of community involvement in the value chain (LEDET, 2009).

CDA corroborates this in unravelling discourses which question whether this SDG is even aspirational in the WBR. There is little evidence of participatory planning, called for within the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987), involving those from disadvantaged communities. The poor are seen as being the recipients of development and not part of the process, a shortfall common to various development approaches, particularly modernisation and neo-colonialism (Long, 2001). While the biosphere is one aspect of participation within the region, the discourses of the active stakeholders point to there being a number of community-related problems that affect more active community participation. Cooperation is seen as problematic with the contextual issues relating to the divisions across SA society a cause of this:

There is a **divide** between the Afrikaans community, the African community and the English community. Apartheid is still very much in existence, obviously not a legislation any more, but certainly there is a **massive divide**.

This is something that one notices and there is **no integration** as such.

(CS3)

In a lexical analysis of the above text, the words relating to societal divisions are highlighted in bold, showing that obtaining cooperation is problematic due to the historical, political societal legacies of apartheid. The vestiges of apartheid, have not only left predominantly divided communities, but entrenched views of 'the Other' that are difficult to break down, and evident in other discourses too (see for instance AC3; AC7).

If SA and its various regions are to move down a SD pathway then the legacy of apartheid needs to be addressed. In relation to one aspect of equity, without empowerment, tourism

development at the community level has little hope of moving down a sustainable pathway (Sofield, 2003). Empowerment emerges as a particular discourse for a number of respondents (BS4; CS3; CS4; LC1). This resonates with the findings of Berkes (2004) that empowerment is seen by the rural poor as part of equitable development. For example the owner of one NGO states:

I see an **impotence**, an **impotent group of people** and I look at apartheid and I see what they have created is that one is **used to hand-outs**, one is **used to being disempowered** and one is used to saying because I need to do this. And one has to say no, because, you have to teach these people how, not to give them hand-outs ... that's what sustainability is about.

(CS3)

The discourse frames the negative aspects associated with a lack of empowerment and for this NGO owner, changing attitudes is part of the empowerment process. There is also a power element to this as empowerment only comes from being taught and it is a white, wealthy, educated NGO owner who is doing this.

Community divisions are accentuated by land ownership problems. Even though some land has gone back to black Africans through the land reclamations process, access to land is not enough to generate decent work and economic benefits as the land claimants testify:

We cannot do anything, because even now when they give the land to people they don't give the development grant or the skills to develop the land. How

are the investors going to invest in the land while we don't have the skills to develop?

(LC2)

Other resources such as knowledge, business skills and access to capital are required to make a living from the land, particularly in the Waterberg region where there are limited land-use options. The above reaffirms earlier research regarding the land reclamation process, particularly a lack of support for claimants and exclusion and marginality of the poor not being addressed in rural areas (Walker, 2008). This illustrates the need to inter-connect SDGs too. Even where environmental resources are in place, this does not lead to an automatic solution to sustainable development. If anything, returning land to communities has led to a more disenfranchised community as they realise the extent to which marginalisation, and a lack of voice, power and influence exists.

SDG 4: Quality Education

SDG 4 seeks to enhance quality of life through a more inclusive educational offering which better equips local communities to contribute to developmental solutions. Considering experiences elsewhere, there are multiple ways Tourism might reasonably facilitate a more inclusive educational offering in the WBR. Formal training and development programmes attached to working in the Tourism Industry can enable a local population to enhance their education and skillsets. This might be achieved through studying in an educational setting, completing qualifications, or engaging in company development programmes for instance. Informal interaction with tourists can broaden the mind and horizons of the local population, not just vice versa as more commonly appreciated. Yet equally, simply developing a Tourism Industry does not automatically mean that a more inclusive educational offering will emerge.

Exclusivity is often an unpalatable consequence of Tourism which must not be overlooked. The discourses of the accommodation providers show that while there are some enlightened employers who do develop staff, and recognise formal and informal training, the extent to which this is available to large numbers of the population in the area who are in need of education is limited.

Interestingly, exploring the multiple discourses linked to SDG 4 exposes the theme of skills deficits eluded to in SDG 8 discourses too. Such again echoes the earlier work of Bond (2004) who argues that new land owners in SA do not have the knowledge, skills or finance to develop the land. Both sets of land claimants recognised this (LC1; L2). The land claimants are in sharp contrast to those who could express much greater understanding of the biosphere. For example two of the interviewees who communicated a high level of understanding had PhDs (AC3, CS6), at least another three were educated to Masters Level (AC2, AC12, CS7) and the rest either to degree level or they had many years of experience in their relative careers (PS3, AC8, CS1, CS2). Those with previous opportunities often expressed an embarrassment in not knowing more as they are either business owners, landowners, long-term residents, in the accommodation industry or a combination of all of these (negative lexical terms in bold):

Unfortunately, it [the biosphere] **doesn't mean enough to me. I don't truly understand** what the biosphere is doing and I should, I am one of those people who really should know what's going on.

(AC1)

As active stakeholders in STD, these individuals have the ability to affect decisions regarding the sustainability of the tourism industry in the WBR. The biosphere is meant to be one way of

implementing SD/STD, however a lack of knowledge of the concept challenges the likely realisation of SDGs. As knowledge levels of the biosphere are often limited from those not directly involved in the biosphere, the concept can evoke emotive discourses:

There's still quite a jaundiced opinion about what is this biosphere actually doing?

Is that a common opinion?

Certainly in the white community. Certainly in the white community it is and probably in the black community there is a lot of ignorance about it, a lot of people won't even know that there is a biosphere. (AC2)

The power position is that the black community are ignorant and the whites have an opinion, albeit a negative one. The concerns over the power regarding the biosphere relates to how individuals buy into the concept of the biosphere:

This community has **never worked well together** and I don't know why that is but it will happen, it will come eventually but I think people in this, they're also very **wary to stick their necks out** to be the one that **caused the change** because it's a small community, people talk, it's a very small town so you don't want to upset people too much but then again **people are getting upset** so (*laughs*). (AC11)

The discourse highlights the issues or concerns with trying to affect change (negative lexical aspects of discourse in bold) and how buy-in is problematic. There is a connotation that all is not well with the management of the biosphere. Here, the notion of buying in to the biosphere

concept is a prominent discourse as it is from a number of those interviewed (PS3; CS2; CS4; CS6; CS7; AC2; AC5; AC8; AC11; AC12; AC13). Without knowledge, information, communication, and communities and individuals working together, the problems of buying in to the concept will continue to be jeopardized and any appetite for SD will inevitably remain compromised. Building relationships across a racially divided community is pivotal to moving forward. Inclusivity through information dissemination and learning processes offers mechanisms for realizing this.

Conclusions

This paper has taken a critical approach to examining discourses of SD and STD in the WBR, SA. Adopting CDA, an under-utilized methodological approach, has helped to unravel the dominant, hegemonic discourses in the region.

CDA involves not only what is said, but what is not stated in discourses (Wetherall, Taylor and Yates, 2001). Discourses emergent in this study resonate with the dominant modernisation and neoliberal paradigms, however there are also dependency and post-colonial discourses evident. The poor are positioned as in need of development and empowerment through a post-colonial, apartheid influenced discourse of contrast between whites and blacks. Those in power use mechanisms to perpetuate the socio-economic status quo. Seemingly altruistic motives of powerful stakeholders are more about preserving a way of life and protecting/enhancing land values than wider SD concerns. The poor are positioned as not being involved in determining their own future, and discourses pertaining to communicating with them to find out their needs were absent from the stakeholder discourses. Their discourses are silenced and this invokes the notion put forward by Spivak (1985), that the subaltern has no voice.

Discourses are underpinned by ideological beliefs and affect how 'the Other' is positioned. The dominant, Western, neoliberal view of development predominates in the WBR and this has effects on the discourses of SD. Emergent discourses point to a very weak position of sustainability with an approach that has much to do with mild reform, business as usual. Environmental concerns and a conservation discourse do emerge, but they are couched in neoliberal terms. Participation in development and SD is limited which invokes both issues of group and individual power. Social objectives are couched more in economic terms and, although upliftment, empowerment and social mobility are present in the discourses, they are not prominent. Social cohesion as an objective is mentioned. But conflicts, racial positioning, ideological beliefs and the historical context of apartheid all mitigate against this in either the short or medium terms.

This illustrates the power of discourse and what discourse can do. It can create material realities such as biospheres which have distinct (and in this case) neoliberal approaches to development. Yet discourses are not value free and this is where applying CDA to the data offers a contribution to the literature. Exploring not only what people say is important, but where discourses emanate from and the ideological background behind is important to consider too. For example, the discourses of SD stem from a specific version of the concept as espoused by the UN and the increasing neoliberalization of the concept. This work therefore has implications for how SD/STD is conceptualised. That SD/STD are contestable concepts are prevalent in the literature (Bek, Binns & Nel, 2004; Butler, 1999; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2017; Liu, 2003). The literature also points to very weak positions of sustainability being adopted and with the dominant neoliberal economic paradigm dictating development concerns. These findings are consistent with those in this case study, where despite the emergence of a strong conservation discourse from all sectors, the environment is couched mainly as an economic

resource. Alternative discourses are therefore overshadowed and there is a perpetuation of business as usual for those holding the power and knowledge.

There are a number of policy implications which result from this work. If tourism in SA is to move down a more sustainable pathway, then tourism needs to be not only an economic driver, but a social and environmental one. Arguments have long been presented to substantiate the value of such an orientation (see for instance Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). The wider aspects of SD, aligned to SDGs relating to basic needs, poverty reduction and new social paradigms for sustainable living, need to be incorporated into development planning. Business as usual will yield limited results. Instead more radical change is needed if SDGs are to be realised and the wider elements of SD are to occur.

Tourism has the capacity to realise more radical change, but there remains some way to go here. For instance, whilst the study has shown SDG 15, protecting natural habitats and biodiversity, to be integral to the development of a tourism offering, work is needed to tackle the legacy of apartheid which will inevitably raise community questions over whether all will benefit from this protective activity when historically only the white minority did. Similarly, pursuing a tourism strategy has the capacity to realise SDG 8, decent work and economic security, but only if planned activity is able to accommodate deficiencies in the skillset and training of the existing workforce, whilst also opening doors to new enterprises and giving communities a voice in developments. What is particularly interesting in the WBR is that even where quality education has been realised (SDG 4), and educational attainment has been achieved, this has not necessarily resulted in anything meaningful from a Tourism Industry, economic development, or individual perspective. Tracking whether widening educational opportunities to a previously excluded black population changes this presents an important

opportunity for further research. Such would add to our understanding of the contribution of educational attainment to tourism economic development along with the capacity of tourism economic development to facilitate educational attainment.

SA has come a long way since Mandela was released in 1990, however the tourism industry is still predominantly a white controlled industry from both demand and supply perspectives. This work has shown that greater attention to involving the black population in tourism is required and that they need to be positioned as equals in the development discourse. In the short-term, this is problematic due to issues with land reform and distinct racial positioning, however other economic sectors have achieved this to some extent and policy-makers need to recognise this and build on what has been achieved in other areas. Framing strategies around the pursuit of SDGs offers a clear route forward.

Biospheres are ways of attempting to move places down a pathway of SD. Consequently, this case study, and the approach adopted, is of relevance in other parts of the world, particularly in developing countries where many of the poor have unsustainable lives and poverty reduction is inextricably linked to environmental sustainability (WCED, 1987). Tourism is used as an economic development option in many protected areas, but as knowledge grows on how to manage tourism from both social and environmental perspectives, then how to move down a more sustainable pathway can be better understood. This work has shown that in one biosphere reserve in SA, there are strong environmental discourses and these have resulted in material realities such as biosphere reserves, management plans and spatial development frameworks. Understanding how discourses function in society can be used by policy makers or other interested parties who wish to create or develop biosphere reserves or other protected areas.

Making greater use of methodological approaches such as CDA, will enable a wider appreciation of how tourism can contribute to SD to be realised.

Kuhn (2007) states that sustainable tourism should be treated more as an aspiring, evolving discourse, rather than something which is static and achievable. CDA has enabled this paper to take a Kuhn's approach, examining not only the actual discourses, but from where they emanate, the ideologies that support them and the knowledge that underpins them. Consistent with the earlier work of Boluk (2011a, p. 204), it has allowed an in-depth analysis of sustainable discourses in a complex community, and helped to "...elucidate some contradictions inherent in informants' discourses" in the process. It is a methodology which has its critics (see for instance Widdowson, 1995). Common concerns include that it is a methodology which is framed and filtered within the researcher's purview. It does not attempt objectivity, but rather is dependent upon the transparency and reflexivity of the researcher applying it. Consequently, researcher bias and positioning needs to be a central consideration in any associated research design process.

Nevertheless, this approach is transferable to a variety of development contexts and has implications for how SD/STD are put into practice. It could be applied to better understand discourses attached to different kinds of stakeholders. The voices of the poor were not part of this study, except for how they were viewed by those interviewed. The poor are therefore framed in certain ways and further research could seek to directly uncover the discourses of this group regarding development concerns and tourism in the WBR. Applying CDA to such data would be important in better understanding not only the WBR, but also in widening our appreciation of SD/STD discourses, whilst giving a voice to those so often overlooked in research.

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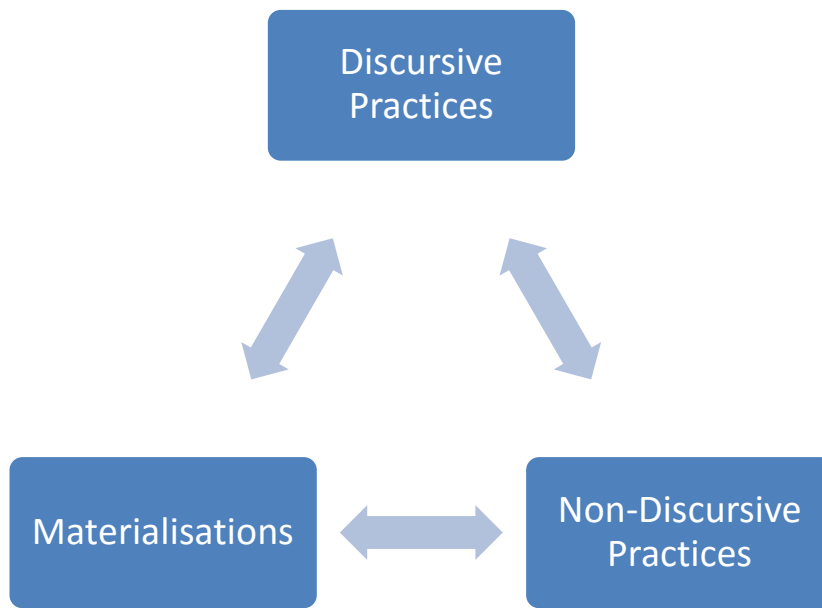
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Figure 1: WBR Dispositif



Source: adapted from Wodak & Meyer (2009)

Table 1: Key Abbreviations

Abbreviation	In Full
AC	Accommodation Provider
BS	Business Stakeholders
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CS	Civil Society
IYE	International Year of Ecotourism
LC	Land Claimants
MaB	Man and the Biosphere Programme
MAP	The Madrid Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PS	Public Sector
SA	South Africa
SD	Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ST	Sustainable Tourism
STD	Sustainable Tourism Development
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WBR	Waterberg Biosphere Reserve
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development
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Table 2: Profile of Respondents

Category	Black SA National	White SA National	White SA Overseas
Public Sector (PS)	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	4	7
Accommodation Provider (AC)	N/A	2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13	1, 3, 5, 9
Tourism Related Business (BS)	N/A	2, 3, 4, 5	1
Civil Society (CS)	4, 8	2, 3, 7	1, 5, 6
Land Claimants (LC)	1, 2	N/A	N/A
Total	9	17	9

Source: Primary Data