Heritage, identity and the politics of representation in tribal spaces: an examination of architectural approaches in Mochudi, Botswana and Moruleng, South Africa[1]

Abstract

This paper examines the politics of developing and conserving cultural heritage in key tribal community spaces of the Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela in Mochudi, Botswana and Moruleng, South Africa. In Mochudi, colonial architecture and traditional tribal spaces are valued as architectural heritage. In Moruleng, only colonial architecture is recognised in this way. Our research suggests that the significance of tribal architectural heritage is conveyed primarily through the use of space, rather than in its material properties. Communities maintain a sense of continuity, and 'traditional' tribal spaces derive continued meaning, through the repetition of social and cultural practices embodied within the everyday. This delicate intersection of intangible and tangible heritage has resulted in a loss of tangible 'traditional' heritage in both villages. Simultaneously, a trend to re-create precolonial archaeological heritage and vernacular forms as a way of articulating Bakgatla cultural identity has emerged in Moruleng. Analysing the heritage precincts in each village using documentary materials, stakeholder interviews and our reading of place, we illustrate how identity politics have shifted local architectural conservation approaches towards representations of identities/identity construction, which on the one hand serves the purpose of articulating identity difference and on the other attempts to address an 'authentic representation' of the Bakgatla identity.

Keywords: *politics, identity, tribal, heritage, architecture*

Introduction

The Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela (Bakgatla) tribal communities[2] are found in South Africa and Botswana and share historical and cultural ties having originated from Moruleng near Saulspoort, South Africa. Some Bakgatla fled from present-day Moruleng into Botswana (then Bechuanaland Protectorate) in 1870 owing to a strained relationship with the South African government[3] (Mbenga and Morton 1997a) and settled in Mochudi in the Kgatleng region. Despite their physical separation, the communities have continued to maintain ties through their shared cultural heritage, illustrated in the recent development of a Cultural Heritage Precinct in Moruleng and the proposed Cultural Heritage Precinct in Mochudi.

Mochudi presents a complex layering of Bakgatla tangible and intangible heritage in the oldest part of the village, known as the *kgotla* in *Tswana* language. In 2008, traditional initiation schools that mark the rite of passage from teenager to adult were briefly resumed (Grant 1984; Mosothwane 2001; Setlhabi 2014a), and this was immediately followed by the

ceremony to install paramount chief-*kgosi,* Kgafela Kgafela. Both ephemeral practices made use of the central open space of the *kgotla*, which is used regularly for political and cultural gatherings. The space is defined by culturally significant buildings, some of which are formally designated as heritage. These buildings are not necessarily of architectural merit, but maintain cultural meaning as relics associated with Bakgatla traditions, history and cultural identity. The *kgotla* is thus valued as a place of both living and built heritage.

In contrast, the heritage of Moruleng initially comprised designated Cape Dutch colonial-style community buildings - a former community school, now a museum, and a Dutch Reformed Church. Seeking to construct an 'authentic Bakgatla cultural identity' distinct from this colonial architecture, the recently completed heritage precinct features a re-created Bakgatla settlement layout, based on the selective interpretation of archaeological research into an abandoned nearby precolonial settlement. Other new-built structures reflect local vernacular architecture. This juxtaposition of identities extends inside the colonial heritage buildings, now decorated with Bakgatla cultural symbols, and in the exhibited artefacts in the museum. There has been a deliberate attempt within this precinct to re-create the tangible material culture associated with Bakgatla cultural identity; a process described in postcolonial literature as 'the negotiation of identity.' Yet in architectural conservation terms, these practices are viewed as problematic because they involve re-creation, invention, appropriation and instrumental curation of the historical (and archaeological) record.

Drawing on heritage studies and postcolonial theory, this paper explores the processes employed in the conservation and interpretation of Bakgatla architectural heritage and contributes new insights on heritage and identity in tribal spaces within a postcolonial context. We focus on how identity is politicised and negotiated in the physical development of heritage sites and the spatial consequences of this process. Beginning with Mochudi, we examine the significance of its *kgotla* explaining its historical development, use and official heritage status as outlined in current heritage policy documents. We suggest that its heritage value is rooted in the negotiation of cultural identity, everyday social practices and the symbolic value of space. We argue that architectural heritage in Mochudi is directly linked to traditional spatial forms and the intrinsic cultural values that these embody. Next, we examine Moruleng to illustrate the politics of identity and meanings associated with the desire to create tangible cultural forms. Here, the cultural heritage precinct was conceived as an inclusive representation of Bakgatla identities, but we argue that it both expresses cultural difference and responds to a cultural nostalgia for the material culture that the community in Moruleng has lost.

Our research analyses primary sources from public and private archives, including planning reports, client design briefs, architectural drawings and specifications. These articulate the conservation practices in both heritage precincts and we use them to establish how heritage values and the significance of buildings have been defined. Our material analysis of each site provides an architectural 'reading of place', using structured site visits and photographic documentation of as-built architecture to understand the spatial organisation and bodily experience at each location. Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders previously involved in Bakgatla heritage conservation (professionals involved with either precinct and with Bakgatla local people) were conducted. These included a heritage specialist (and former member of the museum board) who has lived and worked in Mochudi since the 1970s, the current museum director in Mochudi, the architect of previous proposals in Mochudi, the architect, the archaeologist and the heritage precinct project director at Moruleng, a cultural heritage filmmaker, a curator and a historian. Interviews with professionals[4] addressed heritage and architectural conservation approaches. Interviews with the local community provided a useful oral history record and were also used by us to examine localised interpretations of traditional heritage and place, and the differences in the meaning, significance and value of tribal heritage stated by the local people and heritage professionals. In Mochudi, five local people who identified as Bakgatla and were born and lived in the village were interviewed. In Moruleng, two village residents, involved in the design conceptualisation of the precinct and later employed as tour guides, provided a narrative of the precinct site and their interpretation of it.[5]

Our examination of the curation of architectural space and the process of identity construction in both precincts bridges a gap between scholarship which focuses on either the material authenticity or the experiential authenticity of cultural spaces. For example, in examining heritage at Bahurutshe Cultural Village, Botswana, Moswete Saarinen, and Monare (2015) focused on local people's perception of the village but largely ignored its architectural spaces. We focus on the role of architecture (as both practice and built forms) at play in heritage processes and identity construction; in the tension between preserving traditional spatial practices and preserving extant architectural forms, and in the creation of new architectures that acknowledge both the past and the present through their particular design and material considerations. We show that multi-layered interpretations of history as heritage resolve into different architectural approaches and that these highlight the relative values ascribed to the material, spatial and cultural histories of built form.

We conclude in the case of the Bakgatla that the conservation of their fragile tangible traditional heritage, along with their traditional cultural practices, is clearly important. However, when driven by identity politics, conservation practices have promoted a new simulacrum of traditional built heritage that tends also to operate as a simulacrum of Bakgatla ethnic identity. This is one concrete example of the agency of community-centred heritage-becoming processes informing architectural decision-making, influencing both the ongoing production of the built environment and our built heritage.

The politics of heritage and identity

Academic discourse within heritage studies has long established that heritage is contested; therefore, it resists a simplistic theorisation. As David Lowenthal (2013) has stated, 'the past is everywhere' as tradition, memory and myth, but our use of heritage in relating past to present has supplanted these other forms and 'what was once termed history or tradition is now heritage' (Lowenthal 2013, 3). Various scholars have examined heritage as a process (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Smith 2006; Harrison 2010), theorised as 'heritageisation' by David Harvey (Harvey 2001, 320). Extending this notion, Laurajane Smith (2006) challenges Western notions of heritage as fundamentally a material culture, a position she unsettles to describe heritage as a 'cultural and social process' (Smith 2006, 2). Within these expanding ideas, a common view is that heritage is not only about the past but also about how we use the material past to inform our contemporary condition (Lowenthal 1998, 3; Harvey 2001, 320; Graham et al. 2008, 2). Addressing tribal heritage inevitably compels us to consider both its tangible and intangible aspects. This approach is credited to UNESCO policy on heritage, and was emphasised in a Craterre-ENSAG convention in 2006 held in France for the promotion of heritages in rural and local communities in Africa, which contended that this diverse cultural heritage was at the risk of 'disappearing with its traditional custodians' (Convention and France-UNESCO 2006). One reason cited was that this heritage is less tangible as it includes rituals, traditions and the veneration or symbolism of the spaces or territories where these take place – which together contribute to a community's heritage and identity. It is also driven by continued calls for the democratisation of heritage as evident in debate leading to the declaration of the Nara Document on Authenticity in 1994. The Document opens up architectural heritage conservation approaches and the assessment of authenticity taking into consideration context and culture.

Identity is a socio-cultural construct, which is articulated, contested and debated (Rutherford 1990; Jacobs 1996; Hall 1996; Graham and Howard 2008) to define 'position' or

express a sense of 'difference' in society. It is considered here in terms of postcolonial theory, which provides valuable insights into identity politics and post-colonialism. Emerging initially as a critical response to colonialism, post-colonial theory stimulated an increase in studies from architecture exploring colonial architecture and urbanism in relation to the construction of national identity (Vale 1992; Bozdogan 2001), representation of the power of the coloniser (Myers 2003) and negotiation of space by the colonised (Kusno 2000; Yeoh 2003). Other studies have opened up debate on the relevance of colonial heritage in the postcolonial world from different lenses; the management perspective, agency of the once-colonised people (Harrison 2010) and in defining a new postcolonial identity (Marschall 2008). Less explored, but slowly evolving, is how these colonial buildings are interpreted as part of a heritage landscape and representation of colonial identity, and how this process is shaped by identity politics.

In postcolonial theory, identity is not 'God-given' but socially and culturally constituted (Bhabha 2004). Stuart Hall (1996) has dismissed the traditional view of identity as an evocation of 'all-inclusiveness, sameness, seamless, without internal differentiation' such that identity is a process of 'becoming' rather than 'being' (Hall 1996, 4). This entails recognising that identities are 'never singular but multiply constructed', often involving opposing views, ultimately to address the 'questions of using resources of history, language and culture' (Hall 1996, 4). The use of heritage in this way has recently evolved in tribal communities whose culture was not only impacted upon by colonialism, but continues to be threatened by urbanisation, thus contributing to the current impetus for conservation.

Drawing upon Hall, we are interested in how identity is used to negotiate meaning in the representation of architectural heritage in both precincts and the material consequences of this process. Where, for example, 'colonial-style' buildings are ascribed overlaid meanings such as the representation of colonial identity and the local community's built heritage, such interpretations reveal the articulation of difference. Thus, 'colonial' engenders memories associated with the colonial cultural and political domination, yet this style has been appropriated for public buildings that are now heritage buildings with local cultural supporters. We therefore go beyond the interpretation of these buildings as representative of power, arguing that they exemplify negotiated practices within a community and a politics of identity that ascribes new meanings. Part of this process in tribal communities is the employment of open-air museums to create new representations of identity, as is the case for the Bakgatla.

Scholarship on heritage in southern Africa has focused on heritage management practices, particularly concerning archaeological sites such as at Great Zimbabwe, and has

highlighted how precolonial sites used locally for religious rituals became sites of scientific enquiry during the colonial period. Ndoro and Pwitti have argued that these enquiries overlooked the meanings created through continuous community use and reinterpretation (Ndoro and Pwitti 1997). Heritage sites reconstituted as open-air museums or cultural villages in southern Africa have generally focused on the commodification of culture for tourism purposes. Cultural villages, such as at the Shakaland[6] in South Africa and Shana village at the Great Zimbabwe have been constructed as 'living' heritage sites, which in most cases present a constructed view of culture and heritage curated as commercial ventures. Here hired actors take part in cultural performances and practices and new homesteads re-create past traditional architectures (Marschall 2003). These spaces have been criticised for presenting a static, inauthentic and sanitised view of the past (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Wang 1999), for contributing to the exoticism of culture of the 'other' (Van Veuren 2004) and for exploiting communities whose cultures they seek to represent. How identity construction informs their interpretation as heritage has not been addressed.

The heritage precincts at Moruleng and Mochudi presented here require a more nuanced reading that considers the negotiated process of heritage-making. We argue that heritage-making is integral to postcolonial identity construction and that reinterpreting history as part of heritage-making enables communities to re-evaluate their relationships with place and architecture in their identification with and continuing use of space and material forms. Recent postcolonial scholarship from Africa has departed from traditional methods of material and spatial analysis within the field of conservation management to emphasise a less material-centric view of heritage and addresses how heritage is a process of becoming. Postcolonial theorists Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall suggest we should not speak of space in an essentialist manner because this overlooks the process of mobilising it as heritage (Mbembe and Nuttall 2004). Our judgement of authenticity should therefore consider how spatial meanings are created in ongoing social and cultural discourses, how space is appropriated and used in everyday practices and the material consequences of shifting identity constructions. Highlighting the difference between history and heritage, cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove has argued that what we consider heritage 'is rather curated and conserved, possessed and performed' (Cosgrove 2003, 114) whereas history is textual and its credibility depends on the writer staying close to the narrative. We argue that heritage is an evolving historiography and that there has always been a need both to re-ascribe and curate it. For architectural conservation practice, this process entails rigour and reimagining, taking into consideration the historic and

contemporary patterns of use and meaning that define individual and community relationships with space and fabric.

The *kgotla* as a place of culture and continuity with the past: Mochudi

The *kgotla* in Mochudi dates to 1871 when the village was established. It was constructed as the central space in the village around which the *kgosi's* house and his wives' households (or ward) were organised and was where tribal meetings were held (Schapera 1984). The spatial layout is typical of a traditional Bakgatla village, based on the values of a patriarchal society where the *kgosi* was the head of the community and responsible for conducting political, cultural and judicial affairs (Figure 1). The rest of the village was also organised in smaller social wards around shared circular spaces.

The village was described as built in the traditional vernacular of circular thatched huts, interrupted by the white-washed church, school, houses and shops 'of the colonial encounter' (Comaroff, Comaroff, and James 2007, 61) that date to the arrival of traders and missionaries in the early 1900s.[7] Their architecture is an adaptation of Cape Dutch characterised by white rendered walls, red-painted gable-end roofs and deep verandas.

The village has changed significantly through modernisation and urbanisation, and the current form is a mix of modern grid planning and the traditional ward layout. Open spaces between wards have been infilled and there are new grid-planned areas on its outskirts. However, most of its traditional features are preserved *in-situ* and the *kgotla* holds heritage significance both for its ability to convey the settlement as a historical layering of colonial and Bakgatla traditional vernacular architecture and for its ongoing function as a governance space.

In Botswana, tribal leadership roles have diminished in response to post-independence democratic institutions, and Tribal Administration now operates under a system of local governance (Gulbrandsen 2012: Pörsel 2014). The *kgosi*'s role is limited to presiding over a customary court, advising government on tribal and cultural affairs, and conducting traditional ceremonies in the *kgotla*. However, as a cultural administrative centre, the *kgotla* functions symbolically as a place of belonging for the Bakgatla community and conveys continuity with the past through its architecture and culture.

Colonial heritage buildings in Mochudi include the Phuthadikobo museum, built in 1921 as the Bakgatla National School (Figure 2). This became a national monument in 2005 following enactment of the 2001 *Monuments and Relics Act No. 12 of 2001* that extended protection to historic buildings built after 1902, owing to their architectural, historical or social

value. Its listing description notes that it was the first school building in the Kgatleng region (Government of Botswana 2006) and emphasises its historical significance.

Several key buildings and structures continue to define the central space of the *kgotla*. These include the *kgosi's* compound (*kgosi* Kgamanyane's house) comprising a dilapidated traditional dwelling hut, a traditional granary, the main Cape Dutch-style house and two concrete cylindrical grain silos, all listed for their historical value. A Tribal Police building, also Cape Dutch, is opposite Kgamanyane's house. Built in 1872, it is not on the national heritage list but nonetheless is locally recognised as community heritage.

A listed communal *kraal,* part of Mochudi's vernacular heritage, is located at the entrance to the *kgotla*. Its designation reflects recognition at national level of less monumental spaces and an appreciation for cultural landscapes associated with intangible cultural heritage.[8] It is noted for its symbolic traditional use as the burial site of royal family members (Schapera 1984), and because 'the locale signifies the symbolism of the ancestral belief system and cosmology' (Government of Botswana 2006, 8). Two vernacular huts owned and preserved by the Phuthadikobo museum[9] are located next to the foundations of an unfinished *kgotla* arena (Figure 3). These were purchased in the 1980s to house offices for the museum, and subsequently preserved to reduce continued decline of the tribal space (Interview, Grant, June 2015). They are not listed, but as part of the original composition of the 1870 *kgotla* are representative of an 'authentic' traditional Bakgatla homestead layout, with low traditional walls that define external cooking and social gathering areas.

In 2008, this area was designated a 'historic centre' following a campaign by Phuthadikobo museum after community pressure to protect the area from falling into disrepair (Interview, Grant, June 2015). The aim was to develop a wider area conservation plan to 'address the issues of preservation, restoration, adaptive reuse and tourism development' (Council October 2008, 74). However, to date, no official conservation plan has been prepared, in contrast to the evident heritage value, and the *kgotla* is in disrepair. Some of these buildings are no longer used in a traditional sense but are valued as relics that maintain a sense of cultural continuity. It was customary for the *kgosi* to maintain his residence in the *kgotla*, but after 1965 *kgosi* Linchwe II abandoned the now listed *kgosi* Kgamanyanye's house to build a new residence on the other side of Phuthadikobo Hill and successive tribal chiefs have followed his example. The abandonment of traditional practices such as polygamy, the growing size of houses, and the adoption of new architectural technologies and materials have also meant that the former residences of royal wives have disappeared from the *kgotla*, and the burial of chiefs

in the *kraal* has also been abandoned. The *kgotla* is now used primarily as the tribal administration centre for the Bakgatla with offices for the *kgosi,* and for public gatherings.

Despite these changes, the *kgotla* has maintained its role as a centre of culture and heritage, albeit in a reduced way. Most of its buildings assume symbolic status and interviewed community members expressed the need to maintain connections with their cultural identity and past traditions, identifying with the *kgosi's* house as an essential component of the *kgotla* (Interview, resident R1, June 2015). These views emphasise that the cultural value of these buildings goes beyond their material properties and is rooted in their association with the spatial organisation of the *kgotla*, its historic customs and traditions (Interview, resident R2, June 2015; Interview, Grant, June 2015). Local residents explained the *kgotla's* territorial continuity, stating that 'in the *kgotla* there are a couple of structures that are important such as the *kgosi's* houses,' and that 'we also identify with our chief as the custodian of [our] culture and traditions' (Interview, R3, June 2015). This constitutes a local understanding of heritage and helps in the construction of Bakgatla cultural identity (Figure 4).

In addition to the listed structures, the open space of the *kgotla* provides a setting for a representation of Bakgatla living traditions and everyday life. Culturally specific practices include the revived initiation schools and the coronation of the tribal paramount chief. Initiation rituals take place outside the village and afterwards the regiment gathers inside the *kgotla* to be presented to the community (Figure 5). Both ceremonies, attended by Bakgatla from Moruleng and Mochudi, are used to reinforce tribal unity (Grant 1984; Setlhabi 2014b). Other more regular activities include judicial hearings, and political and administrative gatherings. A few remaining homes surrounding the *kgotla* are still maintained. Thus intangible heritage supported by a palimpsestic tangible heritage is inscribed spatially in the *kgotla*. However, the national listing framework still favours national significance over local significance, and monumental over vernacular heritage.[10]

Heritage conservation in the *kgotla* is primarily a tribal community concern, and this takes place against a national government impetus for rapid urbanisation. Proposals to redevelop the *kgotla* have recently been contested between the Bakgatla community and national government and these reveal the delicate intersection of tangible and intangible heritage in deriving and defining identity and meaning within the *kgotla*.

The *kgotla* as a place of contestation

Since 2002, two proposals for building in the *kgotla* have been put forward by the Tribal Authorities. The first, for offices to support Tribal Administration and Customary Court functions in 2002, was to be funded by the Ministry of Local Government. The designers – Sectaf Architects - emphasised the need to modernise the tribal space whilst incorporating some cultural symbols in its architecture. The scheme was conceived as an enlarged version of a vernacular hut and a reinterpreted *kgotla.* The architectural design report states that the design should 'aim to achieve regionalism in an African renaissance context' and this would be achieved by 'incorporating stylistic elements from the Botswana culture' (Sectaf Architects 2008) in an effort to make the building fit its historic character and context. It required demolition of the extant historic residences and colonial heritage buildings in the *kgotla*.

A second proposal in 2004 planned a new amphitheatre in the centre of the existing *kgotla*. This structure was also imagined as an enlarged vernacular hut and a symbolic representation of Bakgatla culture and traditions. The architect emphasised that the amphitheatre would be culturally representative through its use of materials and in a seating arrangement that echoed traditional configurations in tribal addresses (Interview, Phaladze, June 2015). Rather than conserve extant cultural heritage, the proposal focused on inventing a representative cultural form conceived through a top-down approach that overlooked views from the local community.

Both proposed designs comprised a reductive interpretation of culture and vernacular architecture that amounts to an invented cultural iconography. Less monumental 'authentic' heritage was to be replaced by larger buildings bearing symbols that implied a connection between culture and tradition. The museum board argued against these buildings citing the destruction of the historic character and a lack of heritage conservation. Significantly, one community leader said that the proposals overlooked their historic context because they did not preserve the social, cultural and historic significance of the Cape Dutch *kgosi* Kgamanyane's house and the Tribal Police Station buildings (Grant 9 February 2004). Other heritage specialists also argued that the structures did not suit the traditionally open character of the *kgotla* (Grant 2016). As one architect puts it, '…in Mochudi I will be much more sensitive of what I insert because there is already a sensitive texture of place' (Interview, Essa, June 2015). The offices were not realised, and, at the time of writing, the *kgotla* arena is incomplete after the community's intervention to protect its heritage.

More recently, in 2010, the Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela Tribal Authority in Moruleng in collaboration with the tribal authorities in Mochudi proposed to develop the Mochudi *kgotla* into a heritage precinct (Interview, Gerard, June 2015). The design and conservation proposals were prepared by Totem Media - a team of heritage specialists, architects, historians, artists and a museum specialist, experienced in working with politically contested heritage in South Africa. The precinct is envisaged as an in-situ open-air museum inspired by Mochudi's extant tangible heritage and reflects current awareness of tribal heritage, particularly vernacular architecture in constructing cultural identity. All of the heritage buildings and structures are to be restored and used as either exhibition spaces, artefacts or a visitors' information centre, and are to form part of a life-size outdoor exhibition of a traditional settlement with a focus on vernacular construction, the history of the traditional settlement and its living heritage. The main house in *kgosi* Kgamanyane's compound is to become an exhibition space, while the compound with its traditional granary and round hut is to exhibit 'a connection between traditional dwelling and landscape' (Totem Media November 2010). The buildings are thus presented as artefacts in a landscape to be viewed by visitors participating in organised tours.

Despite the genuine intention of saving these architecturally modest buildings and spaces, the risk here is that the *kgotla* will become a spectacle for tourism consumption, similar to the example of Lesedi Cultural Village in Pretoria, where 'reconstructed' tribal spaces have been transformed into exhibits or stage-sets devoid of everyday life. As we have shown, current activities in the *kgotla* are mostly not cultural simulations but are part of a lived tradition of ritual and everyday activities, and its few surrounding historic residences are still inhabited and provide a balance between real and staged activities in and around the *kgotla.* The proposal nevertheless addresses local concerns, respecting the layered history of Mochudi by restoring its Cape Dutch buildings and preserving traditional skills for vernacular building repairs including thatching and *lekgapho* - the traditional decoration for Bakgatla huts. The desire to conserve techniques was captured during interviews with community members who argued that 'our culture and some skills such as how to build a *kraal* are disappearing' (Interview, resident R1, June 2015), and they are keen to ensure that these are transmitted from one generation to the next, orally and practically. This proposal is favoured by the community as positively reinforcing the tangible and intangible heritage of the community-focused *kgotla*, but has stalled due to ongoing chieftainship succession debates between *kgosi* Nyalala Pilane of Moruleng and *kgosi* Kgafela Kgafela of Mochudi. However, the museum is currently being renovated and the precinct will be completed in the future.

The desire to create tangible forms of identification: Moruleng

The case of Moruleng village differs from Mochudi in terms of its spatial context for historical and cultural reasons. Moruleng village is as a semi-urban settlement that does not demonstrate traces of a typical traditional settlement in its layout.[11] The heritage precinct is located next to the Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela Tribal Authority offices. Unlike Mochudi, this site is not a *kgotla* and it was never established as one. It previously comprised colonial heritage buildings only. These include the former Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) built in 1889 (Mbenga and Morton 1997a) and a former community school building built in 1937 by the Bakgatla initiation regiment, now Mphebatho museum. The community in Moruleng lived under colonialism and apartheid, which resulted in land dispossession and the interruption of oral traditions and histories.[12] The height of apartheid also contributed to the marginalisation of Bakgatla culture and customs. Consequently, the Moruleng Cultural Precinct, completed in 2015, does not display the diversity of material culture and identities illustrating the continuous occupation that Mochudi does. As the precinct's architect, Nabeel Essa, states, emphasising the relevance of Bakgatla ethnic material culture at Moruleng:

> …the fact is that we have very little material culture remaining in Moruleng. In Mochudi you can walk and stumble on stone walling sites and people were building these things up to recently. (Interview with Essa, June 2015)

The precinct is designed around its existing colonial heritage buildings and has been described as '*sediba sa ngwao*' (Totem Media November 2010)**,** which loosely translates as 'a well of culture.' It situates the restored Mphebatho museum at its entrance. This is repainted white with a red corrugated roof to emphasise its Cape Dutch colonial aesthetic, but its interior is adorned with decorative *lekgapho* and other art that references extant material Bakgatla culture at Mochudi. Its forecourt is also articulated with low walls decorated with traditional vernacular *lekgapho*. The space between the museum and church building is now a landscaped courtyard and displays the organic forms and low stone walls of the re-created Bakgatla 'archaeological' precolonial settlement (Figure 6). These new cultural elements evoke a nostalgic image of the 'traditional' village.

The re-created landscape leads to the church building, which has also been restored to emphasise its Cape Dutch colonial aesthetic and reused as an exhibition space. Its reconstructed bell tower is located next to the church and is used as a viewing tower to oversee the settlement pattern. Other re-created cultural symbols include a *kgotla* pavilion structure and a traditional

vernacular hut. The precinct is conceived by its designers as a 'heritage conservation project' that presents an 'inclusive representation of Bakgatla culture,' guided by the conservation principles outlined in the Burra Charter (Totem Media November 2010, 63). Its conservation approach entails restoration, re-creation and invention.

Precolonial heritage making: the politics of cultural authenticity and identity

The most significant addition in the cultural precinct is the re-creation of the 'Iron Age' settlement complete with traditional medicinal gardens, the vernacular hut and other symbols of precolonial crafts and practices. Iron Age settlements in Southern Africa date from c. AD 1060 to c. AD 1830 and are linked to the arrival of the Sotho, Tswana and Ndebele descendants who spread throughout southern Africa (Huffman 1982). The original archaeological settlement it copies is located twenty minutes from Moruleng. It was surveyed by archaeologist Francois Coetzee, who, through a synthesis of ethnography and archaeological evidence, has concluded that this was the first Bakgatla capital under *kgosi* Pilane dated circa 1820 (Interview with Coetzee, October, 2016).

This discovery was significant and was used to substantiate the re-creation, but the copied settlement differs in a number of ways and does not follow 'authentic' historic construction techniques. The original site contains historic fragments of 'huts, walls and midden material' (Interview with Coetzee, October, 2016) and from these an organic settlement pattern extending over an area circa 750 metres by 550 metres was deduced. These remains articulate different aspects of a traditional settlement, incorporating the central ward with the *kgosi's* house and royal wives' households, cattle kraals and other smaller wards. The re-created settlement pattern is not an exact replica, smaller than the original in both size and scale. Only a few 'selective' aspects viewed as symbolic to Bakgatla precolonial traditions have been built. These include the central part of the *kgosi's* ward, with a cattle kraal and walls for the huts. The walls were built to give an impression of the traditional dry stone construction common to precolonial settlements, but are bonded with cement for reinforcement and longevity. Evidence from the archaeological study on the construction of traditional dry stone walls was not followed; indeed, the community had lost such construction skills 200 to 300 years previously (Coetzee and Kusel 2008).

The new hut was built based on archaeological evidence of construction techniques to create an 'authentic' Bakgatla precolonial hut, and at first sight it resembles traditional huts widely found in *Tswan*a villages, but it is not a strict replica (Figure 7). The front walls, for example, were originally built of timber and plastered with mud and cow dung, but recreated

in bricks and plaster to give an appearance of a 'traditional hut' akin to the one in Mochudi. As Coetzee explained, the hut is a 'metaphor' and combines some findings from his archaeological research and some features derived from the community's collective and living memory (Interview with Coetzee, October, 2016). Archaeological evidence showed that a hut in the Iron Age settlement had foundations built on larger upright stones, with lower doorways, no windows and a sliding door on a slate runner. In the reconstruction, the local community disputed this evidence as it differed from their collective memory of inhabited dwellings.

Arguably, this approach (although an invention of an imagined precolonial past) allowed for an opportunity to curate and interpret less-accessible heritage at the archaeological site. Rather than reproducing a complete stage-set of a precolonial village, the reconstruction acknowledges the need to represent precolonial village architecture. Its authenticity does not lie in staying 'true' to materiality but in connecting Bakgatla past architectural traditions and history with contemporary Bakgatla society. David Lowenthal (1998) has highlighted the difficulty of conserving the past in its totality: its fragmented nature requires us to reinterpret it. At Moruleng, structures are introduced as symbols of Bakgatla' precolonial identity - an assemblage that for the community represents a tangible material heritage looking forwards.

Although it is made clear on information boards that the re-created settlement does not follow archaeological construction techniques, it does construct a new 'history' on the site by creating buildings and structures that were never present. The new additions thus respond to a nostalgic desire to become 'immerse[d] in Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela culture as it was back then' (Totem Media November 2010, 5), and the visitor is encouraged to mediate the past and the present through 'the wonderful opportunity to explore the symbolic spaces of the Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela ancestors', while enjoying the pattern of 'settlements that are beautiful and mesmerising in and of themselves' (Totem Media November 2010, 42). It is perhaps understandable that spaces not constrained by *in-situ* conservation requirements can be re-imagined as a way of critically engaging with the past and with identity construction through the explicit involvement of the local community.

For the heritage professionals, these additions also articulate a sense of difference with an already existing 'colonial' identity. They are described as a way to subvert the symbolic power of the extant colonial buildings (Totem Media, Architect interview). Thus, both Cape Dutch buildings are described by the project team as an embodiment of colonial domination, representative of the negative impact colonialism had on Bakgatla culture and traditions. Yet, interestingly, these buildings are part of the community heritage and were not necessarily conceived as power-radiating monuments locally.

Negotiating identity and its conflicting interpretations

The re-creations at Moruleng are used as symbols of Bakgatla cultural identity to draw a clear distinction from the extant architecture on site based on a reading of these structures as colonial symbols. The visible reassertion of Bakgatla identity as an ongoing process of postcolonial and post-apartheid identity construction is clearly demarcated in this new historical layer on site, yet the colonial heritage buildings in the precinct can be interpreted as both symbols of colonial identity and the local community's tangible heritage. These were buildings that primarily appropriated Cape Dutch colonial architecture and were built pragmatically to respond to local needs rather than as a tangible representation of colonial power. Nonetheless, they are regarded by the architectural team as a tangible reminder of the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, and associated with negative political memories.

The DRC church building is the oldest heritage building in Moruleng. It was built by missionary, Henry Gonin, with the assistance of the Bakgatla who provided voluntary labour. The Mphebatho museum building was formerly the community school, built next to the DRC building, again by the Bakgatla. Although most of Gonin's Christian teachings were against traditional, cultural practices such as rainmaking, polygamy and traditional initiation schools, the local community saw value in schooling and increasingly identified with Christianity (Mbenga and Morton 1997a, 150). The church is architecturally modest. Its long façades have pointed-arched windows and buttresses at each corner. Walls are brick and white-washed render, and the roof is covered with red-painted corrugated sheets (Figure 8). The school has an H-shaped plan with verandas to front and back, a ubiquitous regional Cape Dutch vernacular feature. Built without professional input, the Cape Dutch architectural details, common in community public buildings, are significantly reduced suggesting that neither building was intended as an elaborated emblem of power.

The project team emphasised that both buildings dominate the heritage precinct and evoke an image of colonial submission akin to 'Cape Town' (Interview, Essa, June 2015). This narrative reflects the material and political losses of the Bakgatla in Pilanesberg under the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) in 1852 (Maylam 1980), addressing local collective memory that the Bakgatla became tenants and paid rent by providing free labour. Nevertheless, for the community, these buildings simultaneously narrate a tangible record of local daily life historically and therefore a local heritage worth conserving.

To reflect this, externally, each has been repaired and restored, with the identity of the church negotiated internally. The interior has been stripped back exposing brick walls and appropriated for a permanent exhibition about the impact of colonialism, missionaries and Christianity on Bakgatla culture and identity. In so doing, the building has been given a new meaning, while, externally, its heritage value as the oldest building in the precinct, and the importance of Christin faith in the Bakgatla community, is highlighted. Similarly, the Mphebatho museum building was painted white, reversing a previous conservation attempt from 1998, which had applied vernacular decoration to the external walls. The *lekgapho* inside, referencing the vernacular decorations found at Mochudi, provide a deliberate contrast to the sanitised exterior. This continues in the first exhibition room, which focuses on traditional knowledge systems and beliefs including rainmaking practices, traditional medicine, pottery and initiation schools.

Bakgatla symbols and traditions are also utilised as cultural iconography in the new *kgotla* pavilion. This is a deliberate re-imagining of Bakgatla culture as contemporary architecture by its designers. The design report emphasises the idea that the structure reinforces 'the cultural brand that even manifests in the shadow patterns cast' (Essa 2015). Materially, it invokes a traditional village feel and aesthetic, using patterned slender timbers on the roof. However, in contrast to Mochudi, the structure does not function as a *kgotla* and therefore embodies no traditional social meaning. Instead it can be interpreted primarily as a gathering space that draws its inspiration from the vernacular while presenting culture as dynamic not static.

These cultural symbols serve as identity-making tools, to connect to notions of 'Bakgatla ethnic cultural identity and the inference of intangible and tangible heritage' (Essa 2015). Indeed, detailed descriptions of how these symbols relate to Bakgatla practices are described in the museum. For example, the *lekgapho* decoration is described as emphasising the role of women as the 'architect, builder and artistic designer,' while the exhibition program extends this, stating that it celebrates previously marginalised Bakgatla culture through re-creation, 'making these ideas material, accessible and immersive' (Essa 2015). Their display forms part of the visual experience of the museum spaces for tourists but also contributes to postcolonial identity construction in an overall architectural approach that critically explores the curation of history and heritage to present a more dynamic understanding of Bakgatla identity. This presents an alternative to the full-scale architectural stage-sets common in cultural villages such as at Lesedi. Throughout the precinct, attempts to resolve seemingly binary opposite viewpoints from community and expert perspectives have clearly been made. The re-

created hut is one such an example where conflicting interpretations were negotiated through community participation and yet this negotiation of heritage knowledge does still raise questions about whose identity constructions (professional or local) are prioritised.

The impact of identity practices on tribal spaces

These case studies illustrate distinct practices of approaching architectural heritage. In Mochudi there is desire from the community to restore traditional spaces as a way of maintaining continuity with the past, respecting extant built heritage and ongoing cultural traditions. In Moruleng, the re-created precolonial structures articulate a sense of difference as to what represents colonial and precolonial identity, and could be viewed as a simulacrum of precolonial architectural culture. Cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard (1994) suggests that a simulacrum is an image or copy that replaces reality through its representation. For Baudrillard, the representation of reality in postmodern culture is such that the image can no longer be viewed as unreal but 'it is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real' (Baudrillard 1994, 2). The emphasis on re-creating a precolonial settlement pattern at Moruleng is therefore not about imitation, but about making a distinction between colonial and precolonial architecture. However, Moruleng also represents an attempt to inclusively interpret an 'authentic' Bakgatla heritage and identity, where multiple narratives and approaches have emerged using tangible and intangible heritage.

We argue that there is value in both approaches to conserving architectural heritage in these cultural precincts for two main reasons. First, there is a need to conserve a physical sense of continuity with the past, particularly when done in consideration of existing lived traditions enacted in space. Second, cultural heritage cannot be confined to tangible aspects only: heritage value in tribal spaces is community-defined and it includes both intangible and tangible heritage. When framed through postcolonial theory, as with identity, heritage can be seen as a process of becoming that entails reinterpretation, curation and presentation based on contemporary viewpoints. Conservation practices may therefore operate across a spectrum, ranging from the rigorous preservation of unique artefacts or buildings to more creative appropriations of space that foreground experiences or actions and reveal the fragmented nature of heritage. This latter treatment of heritage, we argue, requires local community authentication rather than imposition from outside.

In terms of historic and architectural value, the *kgotla* at Mochudi illustrates, through its built fabric, this continuity with the past, despite changes in traditions and culture. Spatially,

it still plays a key role in the Bakgatla sense of identity through lived experience. Yet, because of the intricate intersection between space and function, the conservation of heritage in the *kgotla* remains a challenge, due in part to a poor understanding of tribal heritage externally, inconsistencies in heritage listing policy and through pressure for new spatial development. Built heritage has continued to dilapidate where buildings have become redundant. In particular, vernacular elements such as the traditional granary and *kraal* are no longer used for their original purpose. Other *kgotla* buildings have been appropriated as offices, while the cylindrical concrete silos are simply impractical for re-use. They are now symbolic elements of Bakgatla culture and past traditions only that nevertheless exist in what is otherwise Bakgatla lived space, and consequently retain historical and cultural relevance as part of a palimpsestic record of use and meaning within the community. Alterations to this architectural space require careful consideration to preserve its symbolic and functional significance for the Mochudi Bakgatla community.

Moruleng illustrates a complex case, where new architecture, curated as heritage, is interleaved with an extant architecture that narrates a more nuanced history of heritage appropriation. Some history is inevitably overwritten through the use of re-creations and the contemporary curation of the site as a museum. For example, an earlier restoration of the Mphebatho museum in 1998 introduced *lekgapho* decorative patterns to the external walls, but this historical phase of the building's history was viewed by the Precinct architect as 'unintentional' and erased to restore the building exterior to its colonial appearance. Architectural judgements about the building fabric are thus framed around a particular identity narrative that rejects an earlier curatorial approach to overlaying cultural identities on the building exterior as inappropriate yet employs a similar approach in the contemporary treatment of internal decoration within the exhibition spaces. Clearly, how the past is curated and re-created is dependent upon a contemporary postcolonial interpretation of this past and certain narratives are prioritised over others. As the postcolonial search for 'common identity' is driven by contemporary conditions as well as historical developments and practices, these impact on how communities represent themselves in relation to their past representation (Rutherford 1990; Hall 1996). Architectural conservation in Moruleng is thus an ongoing effort to inscribe tribal identities on post-colonial and post-apartheid space in the absence of extant traditional settlement forms within the village. Implicit in this approach is whether these re-creations will retain heritage significance in the future, given that they are not fully faithful to traditional construction (evidencing intangible heritage) and, in the absence of lived traditions on the site, present a simulacrum of Bakgatla domestic culture for exhibition purposes.

Conclusion

It is clear that heritage development in tribal spaces has increasingly become an identity-driven, rather than conservation-driven, practice. This approach has merit because it presents an attempt to address an inclusive interpretation of heritage and engages with the community's own interpretation of its heritage. Drawing on the concept of identity as a negotiated practice to articulate status or difference (Jacobs 1996; Hall 1996; Hall et al. 2004), we have argued that in both Mochudi and Moruleng heritage is employed both to convey continuity and to express competing constructs of precolonial, colonial and post-colonial identities. Such an approach is not without problem. In Mochudi there is a desire to sustain the symbolic meaning of place and the values the community continues to ascribe to the *kgotla*. Here, notions of identity are embodied through extant forms and structures that remind of past customs and represent the traditional settlement layout and its architecture. In the current climate of urbanisation, the objective of maintaining connection to the precolonial past has increasingly become important, but as proposals for a new *kgotla* arena showed, continuity through practice and continuity through forms may come into increasing conflict.

As Lowenthal suggests, 'the heritage of rural life is exalted because everywhere is at risk, if not already lost' (Lowenthal 1998). Moruleng provides an important case study where the link to this 'rural life' was lost historically through political dispossession and urbanisation Here, identity construction is driven by the Bakgatla Tribal Authority as part of reclaiming their culture and they have sought to mitigate this loss by reinstating traditional cultural forms at the previous colonial heart of the village. This has entailed the re-creation of (new) cultural elements, using cultural symbols to signify intangible heritage, despite the fact that these elements do not conform to the archaeological record. These newly introduced narratives on the site, risk creating what could be read as a cultural identity theme park, yet they also offer a critical reinterpretation of the extant 'colonial' context.

Hence, the Moruleng cultural heritage precinct should be read as an identity-making practice associated with a cultural nostalgia for cultural material facts and cultural iconography, which on the one hand serves the purpose of saving tribal heritage, but on other hand, creates a new simulacrum. This is an important process, applicable more widely where local communities are engaged in identity construction to mitigate traditional architectural heritage lost through colonial and modernising practices. Yet, extant material histories that present a less-curated interpretation of identity and identities at Mochudi are at risk of being eroded or

debased in the face of more polemical 'conservation' practices at Moruleng, and heritage-becoming processes therefore require careful consideration of the material, spatial and cultural histories of extant built form.

Notes

1 This research was ethically reviewed and approved by the University of Sheffield.
2 Although the word "tribe" has colonial connotations, we use the term *tribal* in the sense that it has been appropriated by different communities in southern Africa to differentiate themselves from other communities. For example, the Bakgatla-ba-Kgafela Tribal Authorities in Moruleng intentionally use the term as part of their identity.
3 This was the Boer white minority government of the period.
4 Interviewed professionals consented to their names being used in the article except for those anonymised.
5 In Moruleng the Bakgatla community live in the village and attend cultural activities in the adjacent precinct. The community leader is the tribal chief and is the custodian of culture for the Bakgatla community. Moruleng Heritage Precinct was built as a community-owned centre and the local community were invited to take part in the interpretation of their heritage.
6 Shakaland is located in South Africa and was created as a film stage set for the Shaka Zulu television series.
7 Although anthropological sources are often criticised for representing the culture of indigenous communities as backwards, these sources are valuable for their documentation of spaces.
8 Prior to 2001, heritage listing in Botswana reflected interest in ancient monuments and colonial heritage, rather than less-monumental vernacular heritage spaces such as the *kraal*.
9 Phuthadikobo museum is a Bakgatla community organisation which acts as custodian for Bakgatla heritage.
10 The Monuments and Relics Act of 2001 (Botswana) gives preference to heritage with national, rather than communal and regional, value.
11 There are plans underway to develop Moruleng village into a city by the Tribal Authorities.
12 During the ZAR period, local tribes were not allowed to own land. They lived as tenants, paying rent to the ruling power see (Mbenga and Morton 1997).

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