

**UTRECHT,  
A TOWN WITHIN A GAME PARK: TOURISM POTENTIAL,  
PERSPECTIVES AND PERCEPTIONS**

**BY**

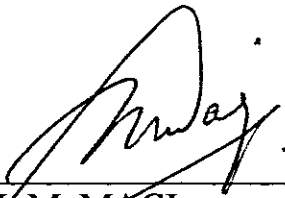
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**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Recreation and Tourism in the  
Centre for Recreation and Tourism at the University of Zululand**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this research study: *Utrecht a Town within a Game Park: Tourism Potential, Perspectives and Perceptions*, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my own work both in conception and execution. All the sources that have been used or quoted have been duly acknowledged by means of complete references

Submitted by:

Azaria Themba A Zikhali

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is written and dedicated to my both parents, my father and my mother, who have always been a pillar of my strength and a source of unceasing inspiration. They were the first and main persons who planted the seed of wanting to learn in me.

This dissertation is also dedicated to Nompumelelo. I want to say to you, my lady: This is the beginning of great things to come. I love you.

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- The respondents who patiently took some time off their daily, busy schedules and programmes to respond to the questionnaires thus making this study a possible success.
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## ABSTRACT

### UTRECHT, A TOWN WITHIN A GAME PARK: TOURISM POTENTIAL, PERSPECTIVES AND PERCEPTIONS

There has not been a good understanding between the complex nature of the environment and tourism couple with the single degree of administrative fragmentation. Environmental conservation has been perceived as a threat to social and economic development, a threat that has only recently subsided as a result of effort towards the classification of sustainable development. It therefore, goes without saying that without due regard to the appropriate development guideline, the integrity of public and private lands within communities has often been at risk owing to the sacrificing of socio-ecological values at the expense of profit.

National parks will be useful, not only as preserves for indigenous plants and animals, but also as recreation grounds for the people. It is well to consider how comparatively few and small are the areas of this description which will be permanently available for the residents of Adelaide Plains ...there must come at a time when these plains will be thickly populated from hills to sea, and then, if not now, the need for more breathing space will be recognized. The Mt Lofty range is gradually passing more and more into private hands, and before many years have elapsed it will be difficult to find a place where one may enjoy the beauties of nature without fear of trespassing (Nance1986, in Butler and Boyd 2000).

The image of national parks and their acceptability appears to be generally high in this era, with a few exceptions where local populations have been or feel disadvantaged by the establishment of parks. That is why the study was interested in establishing the perceptions of the local communities towards the Balele game park, within which a town lies.

The fundamental objectives of the study are:

- a) To establish the perceptions of the communities towards the game park, within which a town lies.
- b) To determine the level of awareness and participation of local communities of and in Balele Game Park.
- c) To assess how the host community benefit from Balele Game Park.
- d) To investigate the number of local, domestic and international tourists who visit Balele Game Park.
- e) To discover the types of natural resources and cultural resources which are found within a Balele Game Park.

These objectives were formulated in order to find out the potential the Utrecht Balele game park has to tourism and the perspectives and perceptions the local communities have towards it.

In achieving properly focused analysis and interpretation of data, which could lead to effective conclusions, some hypotheses were devised. The hypothesis that were postulated for the study are:

- a) That the communities see the park as the business industry for whites



- b) That there is a low level of awareness and participation of local communities in tourism activities in the game park
- c) That the local communities are not benefiting from Balele Game Park.
- d) That the Balele Game Park attracts a bigger number of domestic and international tourists than local tourists.
- e) That there is a lack of natural and cultural resources to meet the needs of the tourists

The most findings of the study are that (i) the game park is seen as the business industry for whites; (ii) there is a high level of awareness and low level of participation by local communities of and in tourism activities; (iii) the communities are not benefiting from tourism activities of the game park, since they are not fully involved; (iv) the Utrecht Balele game park attracts most of its tourists from local area as against domestic and international tourists; and (v) there are natural and cultural resources and facilities in the park, but they are not meeting the needs of the tourists.

Tourism is considered as one of the significant ways to enhance positive relationship between parks and local people. There are several studies indicating that programmes based on revenue generated by or through park-based tourism have had positive impacts on local communities, which not only offer employment opportunities but also develop in them positive feelings towards protected areas.

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# CHAPTER 1

## ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, travel and tourism has become the world's largest industry, Price (1996). He further asserts that tourism is a service industry whose primary resource is environments and cultures which differ from those where the tourists usually live and can therefore be marketed by the industry. As the population of the world becomes increasingly urbanized, it is more evident that the environments that are less suitable for dense human colonization become increasingly attractive as tourists destinations. This environmental change is not only because the earth's biophysical characteristics contrast with those where most tourists live, but because these environments which may be found in most industrialized and developing countries, are often the homes of long-established populations of people whose cultures are very different from current westernised urban norms. This statement, therefore, suggests that tourism is an economic activity that is imposed, or at least grafted, on a pre-existing set of economic activities and traditional ways of life.

Price (1996) asserts we are moving beyond the simple conservation notion that tourism should take nothing but photographs and have nothing but footprints. He further asserts that new-age tourism, under labels such as benevolent; sustainable; or guilt-free, demands that due regard is given to local populations.



Therefore, the tourist enterprise should accommodate locals' economic interests, cultural sensibilities and pre-existing social order. It is common and possible that some sectors of populations look at tourism as involving negative consequences. But these negative consequences are to be offset by positive effects of development associated with tourism. These positive effects of development are job creation, injection of cash, improvement of infrastructure and generalized economic advancement of the region.

The local people of Utrecht once had an opportunity to generate income through the coal mining industry. The problem began when these mines were closed down. The development on tourism industry in this area have started to bring back such opportunities, if and only if the local communities, as stakeholders are highly involved in all tourism activities in this area.

Utrecht, a town within a game park should appear to be a fulfilment of the low-impact or high-value dream for the community of its area. It is of common knowledge that many mistakes have been made in the name of economic development and there are many examples of ill effects of tourism development. Therefore, the communities that are just beginning to consider tourism development as creation of jobs opportunities are at an advantage, in that they can learn from the experience of negative examples in order to prevent unsustainable tourism development practices.

The idea of developing Utrecht Town within a game park should be seen as the addressing these negative consequences brought in by the closing down of mines. This implies that such tourist destination is a neighbour to the community of Utrecht. It goes without saying, therefore, that this destination

should contribute positively to prevent unsustainable development of tourism industry and meet the expectations and perceptions of its local communities. It is for this reason that Utrecht a town within a game park is investigated in this study to determine its potential and existing perspectives of communities, and perceptions associated with tourism and game park, the level of participation of local, domestic and international tourists in tourism related activities and services.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Although quite a considerable number of Blacks in the KwaZulu-Natal [KZN] stay adjacent to the game parks, their usage of resources and facilities in these destinations for tourism and recreation, is far below optimum. Blacks were made not to benefit from tourism activities and services in the era before the new millennium. During this era, Blacks were not considered as one of stakeholders in tourism development. Such practices had developed an attitude in the Blacks that tourists are to be robbed of their belongings and sometimes killed in some areas that are dominated by black population. This behaviour is an indication that tourism had never go down well in the local black communities. It has been perceived as an industry that is developed to boost the economy of the advantaged white populations of the country mostly on the expense of the disadvantaged black populations. The underlying factor is believed to be the lack of awareness and knowledge about tourism as a business industry by the large majority of the black people.

The light begins to shine brighter and brighter at the end of the tunnel as the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) is encouraging the

participation of Blacks in tourism, since the born of the new era (DEAT, 1996). The community of Utrecht is to benefit from tourism, since a town within a game park has been established, and the Mangosuthu arts and crafts centre has been established. This is one of the indications that the tourism industry in Utrecht is beginning to introduce the concept of tourism in trying to make its community understand what tourism is, how it works and what benefits it holds for local community, for individuals and how everyone can participate in tourism. Bennett (1995) asserts that tourism is seen primarily as an income generator because is strongly linked to employment.

The establishment of Utrecht, a town within a game park, has developed the researcher's interest in this tourism destination. Khan (1990) states that people's perception and attitudes lie in their historical and political factors. This study, therefore, is aimed at understanding and addressing the community's perspectives and perceptions towards Balele Game Park (within which Utrecht town lies), in this new democratic South Africa. In support for this statement, Mkhize (1999) maintains that in the apartheid era local people did not support tourism and conservation due to the land re-allocation and forceful removal of black people to townships by the government.

### **1.3 PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM**

As in most rural communities, the traditional vocations in Utrecht were or are agriculture and ranching. People work the land for family consumption and small-scale production, dedicating themselves to keeping livestock like cattle, goats and sheep, or cultivation of vegetables and fruits. Some crops like maize and peanuts are more intensively cultivated. Industry and technology were not

important productive sectors of the economy so that, with the exception of the livestock and planting of maize, no experience has been gained in these sectors. The growth and development of tourism we believed came at a right time in this new era. The communities of this area had been left wanting since the closing down of the mines that were extracting coals. They were left crying jobless. Tourism in this regard should be giving answer to such crying.

It goes without saying, therefore, that the local communities of Utrecht were not involved in tourism during the apartheid era. Tourism during this era has been looked at as if it is concerned with the protection and conservation of the environment on the expense of the local black communities. Butler and Boyd (2000) support by asserting that while national parks creates many benefits, they can also incur considerable economic and social costs. They further say social costs can be enormous. For example many African national parks were created through the forced resettlement of established communities.

The creation of the 170-square-mile Ranamafano National Park in Madagascar in 1991 resulted in the displacement of 72 000 people from the areas in and around the park (Butler and Boyd, 2000). These local communities live under poor life conditions, unemployment and grief for their fathers land. This has driven them to resenting tourism, destroying and degrading protected areas like game parks, which are important elements for tourism industry. The attitudes of such local communities can only be improved by involving them in activities such as tourism, because tourism will benefit them by creating job opportunities, thus generating their income.

There could be a likelihood that Balele Game Park within which Utrecht lies, is not used to fulfil the needs of the local communities. Tourism is one of the largest industries and a generator of quality jobs (McIntosh *et al*, 2000). This implies that tourism plays an important role in the economic development of the country. There is therefore an imperative need to investigate if Balele Game Park does meet such expectations of tourism as tourist destination.

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The Balele Game Park as a tourist destination is assumed that it has potential in benefiting the local communities and it has further developed certain perspectives and perceptions in the community towards itself. In trying to find out the potential this game park has to tourism and the perspectives and perceptions of the local communities towards the park, the following objectives are formulated.

- a). To establish the perceptions of the communities towards the game park, within which a town lies.
- b). To determine the level of awareness and participation of local communities of and in Balele Game Park.
- c). To assess the extent to which the host community benefit from Balele Game Park.
- d). To investigate the number of local, domestic and international tourists who visit Balele Game Park.
- e). To discover the types of natural resources and cultural resources which are found within a Balele Game Park.

The objectives stated above are precursors for the construction and postulation of the research hypotheses. In this research inquiry the objectives are presented in such a manner that they are symmetrical to individual hypotheses.

## **1.5 POSTULATED HYPOTHESES**

If we are to achieve properly focused analyses and interpretation of data, which lead to effective conclusions, it is necessary to devise some hypotheses. These are intended to offer a systematic and practical way of asking questions and providing some tentative solutions. In this regard, the following statements of hypotheses are designed in order to make an educated foundation for the analysis and conclusive interpretation of data under this study. It is hypothesised:

- a) That the communities see the park as the business industry for whites.
- b) That there is a low level of awareness and participation of local communities in tourism activities in the game park.
- c) That the local communities are not benefiting from Balele Game Park.
- d) That the Balele Game Park attracts a bigger number of domestic and international tourists than local tourists.
- e) That there is a lack of natural and cultural resources to meet the needs of the tourists.

It is anticipated that these hypotheses, as educated guesses, will facilitate the analysis, interpretation and drawing of conclusions emanating from the various

objectives. These hypotheses will also facilitate the making of informed judgements pertaining to the various questions posed about the Balele Game Park as a major tourist destination.

## **1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Some terms can have different definitions and meanings when are used in different contexts and by different people. In short, with some terms a variety of definitions exist and have been used, for example, for the following terms: tourism, potential perspective and so on. In order to avoid uncertainty and ambiguity, the researcher in this section of the study aims at giving clear operational definitions of terms that are employed in this study. The terms are therefore defined in this study in a manner that facilitates their precise and unambiguous meaning.

### **1.6.1 Tourism**

According to Keyser, (2002), tourism is the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the place where they normally live and work, and their activities during their stay at these destinations, as well as the facilities [and services] created to cater for their needs. Keyser, (2000) further emphases that this definition not only refers to the travel component of tourism, but also includes the activities that take place during the visit to the destination. Bennett, (1995) is more or less sounding the same definition in his book: *Managing Tourism Services*.

On the other hand, McIntosh *et al.* (2000) defines tourism as the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host government and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors and residents. According to Butler and Boyd (2000), tourism in general, can be regarded as vacation or holiday travel, where the primary motivation is pleasure or enjoyment. Butler and Boyd (2000), indicate that tourism is not seen only as a valid and appropriate use of the park, but also as a significant source of revenue for the parks themselves and infrastructures involved in visiting them, including railroads and hotels.

Tourism is defined for this study because it is related to parks, a subject matter this study is all about. On the other hand, it is worth noting that tourism development brings certain changes ranging from physical, economic, cultural and to social change. The changes that occur when the area becomes a tourist destination are not always recognized (Gumede, 1998).

In these above definitions, movement (travelling) seems to be a common factor. Therefore, tourism in this study means movement of tourists to and staying in places outside their usual environments for not more than one consecutive year, and the relationships and benefits arising from interactions of local and domestic and international tourists amongst themselves and neighbouring communities.

### **1.6.2 Perception**

Perception is the ability to look at the world around us and make certain judgements (Zimolzak and Stansfield, 1983). They further say in economic terms, we might conclude that they are certain possibilities for making a living



in a given area because of the combination of what we perceive to be the physical environment and our inherited cultural attitudes. This means therefore our learned values and our concept of our place in the world (and what we expect from the world) combine to act as a filter between the real world and us.

On the other hand, perception refers to the subjective information, image, impressions; experiences that that people have about or give to various parts of their environment (Moore and Golledge, 1976; Downs, 1981; Magi, 1986).

Perception in this study is to mean the process whereby an individual (especially local communities) receives information about social environments and looks at physical environments (game parks) and makes certain judgements in the light of his experience and attitudes.

### **1.6.3 Tourism Potential**

According to Butler and Boyd (2000:5), “tourism should be taken to include recreation use of parks”. On the other hand potential in general, means that can be or may come to existence and can be developed. Tourism potential is defined because the first and foremost focus of the study is on tourism in Game Park, (Balele Game Park).

Butler and Boyd (2000) assert that purposes behind parks creation have included protection, preservation, conservation, economic potential, regional development and being places for recreation. Butler and Boyd (2000), further assert that while all these reasons were present, to varying degrees, in the

establishment of the first parks, emphasis is placed on the influence played by tourism on the establishment of the first parks.

This is justified on the basis that while preservation and romantic notions of safeguarding wilderness places were often stated as the driving forces behind early parks establishment, many of the parks would not have been established if they offered no potential for tourism, [Butler and Boyd, 2000]

In this study tourism potential is to mean the ability of the game park to offer tourism activities that benefit local communities and tourists themselves.

#### **1.6.4 Tourism Perspective**

Perspective, in general, means apparent relation between visible objects as to position, distance, etc. Tourism industry is regarded as the world's largest industry with a continuously growing potential and economic growth index, (Magi and Nzama, 2002). The growth is concentrated in many segments amongst others is tourism attractions, which are the game parks in the case of this study. Tourism perspective in this study is to mean mental view of relative importance of the tourism destination (game park) to communities and tourism, themselves.

#### **1.6.5 Tourist**

According to McIntosh *et al* (2000), a tourist is a person who travels from place to place for non-work reasons. On the other hand the United Nations (UN, 1993) defines a tourist as someone who stays for more than one night and less

than a year. The tourists are divided into local, domestic and international tourists, and for the purpose of the study, the following definitions are used.

#### **1.6.5.1 Local Tourist**

According to Keyser (2002) local tourists are visitors who travel within the geographical borders of a region or province. A local tourist, in this study, is a person who travels within the borders of the area under study or from neighbourhood of the tourist destination and does or does not stay for more than 24 hours in the destination.

#### **1.6.5.2 Domestic Tourist**

Domestic tourist is defined as domestic visitors staying for at least 24 hours, but not more than one year, in the place visited, Bennett (1995). Whereas on the other hand, he defines domestic visitors as residents of a country who travel to a place within the same country for no longer than one year and whose main purpose in visiting is not the pursuit of an occupation remunerated from within the place visited.

Keyser (2002:40) defines a domestic tourist or visitor as 'any person residing in a country, who travels to a place within the country, outside his usual environment for a period not exceeding twelve months and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited'. Domestic tourists in this study mean people who travel within their home country; e.g. a South African travelling within the borders of South Africa.

### **1.6.5.3 International Tourist**

There is a need to look at different definitions of international tourist by different authors so as to come up with a suitable definition for the study. An international tourist is:

Any person who travels to a country other than that of in which he has his usual residence but outside his usual environment for a period not exceeding twelve months and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited (WTO, 1994; Keyser, 2002).

International tourists in this study mean the people who travel outside their country of residence; for instance an Italian travelling in South Africa. This definition is in line with the one of Bennett (1995) who asserted that international tourists are the visitors who travel from one country to another across national borders or through immigration control points at an airport.

### **1.6.6 Game Park**

In order to benefit this study, in defining what a game park is, it is wise to start by defining a national park. According to Butler and Boyd (2000:95), a national park is an area of natural and usually unenclosed country, which has been protected by law against spoliation, and in which facilities have been provided for its enjoyment by the public.

On the other hand, Dower (1945) in Butler and Boyd (2000) describes the “vision of national parks as an extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation’s benefit ...characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved ... while established farming use is effectively maintained” (1945:44).

In Balele Game Park, there are fauna and flora, recreation facilities that are protected for the enjoyment and the benefit of the tourists. Therefore, a game park in this study is to mean a natural attraction that is more or less possessing the characteristics of a national park.

## **1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

Geographically, the study is delimited to the area of Balele Game Park in Utrecht, which is tucked away in the corner of the picturesque Balele Mountains. Balele Game Park, which has a town within it, is found on the Northern part of KZN about 308km from Johannesburg and 341km from Durban. The communities that will be considered for the study is the one in residents inside the game park and also the residential area outside the game park, stretching from Madlangeni Mountains down the borders of uMhrosane River to Izimbuthu Mountains, White City and Bensdorp areas.

## **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study forms the basis for further research about tourism development in Utrecht a town within a game park (Balele Game Park). It expected to make contribution to the development of tourism in Utrecht and to Balele Game Park

as a tourism destination. It is further expected to benefit the local communities by making them to contribute in decision-making by Utrecht Tourism Authority (UTA). The study will make local population to be aware of the role they are to play in tourism development and the benefits they have in the tourism development in terms of job creation and opening of business opportunities. A copy of the study will be made available to the local game park and tourism authorities for their consumption of the recommendations put forward by this study

The completion of the study is also expected to provide scientific facts pertaining conservation problems and utilization of all tourism facilities to the benefit of all the parties concerned and communities at large. Recommendations will be made towards the sustainable development in the area of study. Lastly it is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute in educating the local communities about tourism industry in all levels of in the area of study.

## **1.9 METHODOLOGY**

The research orientation, methodology, sample size, collection of data and the methods of data analysis that the researcher adopted may influence the understanding of the roles that certain concepts play in the social set-up. The methods that were used to collect and to analyse data in this study have been selected with the view of yielding valuable, reliable and valid results. The methods of collecting and analysing information were specifically selected and designed to meet the needs of finding answers to the hypotheses postulated.

### **1.9.1 Sample Size**

The geographic setting influenced the choice of the local community participants as Utrecht Balele Game Park is within easy access for the researcher. The sample included age groups from 15 years up, all races, educational levels and both genders. This sample was drawn randomly in a stratified manner from various communities consisting of blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians respondents within the study area. The sample size consisted of one hundred and twelve (112) respondents. The sample was divided into 50 percent of respondents from residents within the park and 50 percent of respondents from surroundings, outside the game park. The respondents were also stratified by age, personal income, sex, level of education and their occupations.

Inclusive in the sample mentioned above, ten (10) officials from Utrecht municipality and Balele Game Park were equally selected for interviews as they form part of community under study.

### **1.9.2 Instrumentation and Data Collection**

It is important that the instrument for collecting data must be designed to be able to collect the right form of data. The designed instrument must have qualities that would be able to support the notions of validity and reliability in the collection of data. As indicated, the data collection techniques used in this inquiry were the person-to-person interviews, interviewing both communities and officials from Balele game park and Utrecht municipality. Interviews are principally seen as useful techniques, which are principal means of gathering data to be combined

with other methods in research undertaking. The questionnaires had open-ended question and closed-ended questions. These questions were written in English, but an isiZulu translation was given in case the respondents were not able to understand and read English as the medium used in this research study.

Observations were used as another data collection technique. According Gumedde (1998:20), “the purpose of observation is to give the researcher the direct first hand experiences, with the phenomena under study”. Masuku (1998:20) supports this argument when she says: “We, all have been doing participation in certain issues and observation in certain degree to various extent all our lives”. According to her, all people tend to use their observation skills when they encounter an unfamiliar social situation. Observation used in this study was more of observing facial expressions of respondents during interviews, their houses, dress codes, number of children and food they eat.

### **1.9.3 Method of Data Analysis**

After data had been collected, it had to be analysed using all forms of statistical techniques at our disposal. According to Anzul in Gumedde (1998:21) data analysis is to:

Tease out what we consider to be essential meaning in the raw data, to reduce and re-organise and combine so that readers share the researcher’s findings in the most economical interesting fashion

The challenge was to try and make the data the researcher had collected useable. A Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for windows available in



Recreation and Tourism Centre at University of Zululand was used to analyse the collected data, to construct the graphs, tables and other statistical diagrams.

## **1.10 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH**

The study has been structured in such a way that chapter 1 deals with the orientation of the study by presenting the background to the problem, the problem per se, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, delimitation of the study, assumptions, and definition of terms.

Chapter 2 outlines the philosophical and theoretical framework of the study, which is regarded as the basis for geographical, tourism, recreational, and theoretical knowledge for the understanding of the study as a whole.

Chapter 3 covers the physical setting of Utrecht Balele Game Park found in Utrecht town within the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This chapter is outlining the relevant theoretical and empirical dimensions together with the geographical element of the tourism destination under study.

The introduction of field research methodology is catered for in chapter 4. This chapter is describing how data is analysed and interpreted after collection. Chapter 4 also gives the computer-run analysis of data. This is followed by sketching out the observable trends emerged in the responses obtained from the respondents.

Finally, Chapter 5 presents the interpretation of data, which involves the summary, implications of the research study, and the recommendations about the state of Balele game park within which a town lies.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

Research is a necessary instrument for matching theory with spatial reality for the improvement of the society. It is the foundation of discovery ready to provide answers and basics for initiating change (Magi 1998:18). This research investigation is attempting to investigate the perspectives and perceptions of the communities of Utrecht, a town within a game park towards the game park. It is also attempting to establish the potential of the game park to tourism industry. It is hoped that by understanding the perceptions of the local communities and tourists, we can be able to develop this game park as tourist destination, in order to benefit the local communities.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been defined as the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the place where they normally live and work, and their activities during the stay at these destinations, as well as the facilities (and services) created to cater for their needs (Keyser, 2002:19). Furthermore, Keyser (2002) emphasises that this definition not only refers to the travel component of tourism, but includes the activities that take place during the visit to the destination.

Today many tourism industry officials are concerned with determining what can be done to increase the number of international tourist arrivals that contribute to the improvement in the country's economic situation (UNESCO, 1976). The only way to achieve this is to understand that success depends on the recognition of cultural differences between tourists' and host's background.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize findings of the existing theoretical framework, and literature related to the concept of tourism, and game parks (national parks), and shows its relevance and importance to the local communities and to the cross-cultural tourist-host contact.

Fennel (1999) feels that there has not been a good understanding between the complex nature of the environment and tourism couple with the single degree of administrative fragmentation. In addition, he wrote that environmental conservation was perceived as a threat to social and economic development, a threat that has only recently subsided as a result of our effort toward the classification of sustainable development. It therefore, goes without saying that without due regard to the appropriate development guideline, the integrity of public and private lands within communities has often been at risk owing to the sacrificing of socio-ecological values at the expense of profit.

The local communities of Utrecht for farming and keeping the livestock, previously used the land that has been put aside for the establishment of the game park. The use of this land for recreation and tourism activities would mean that the tourism managers would be stealing the land from the local communities in Utrecht area.

On the basis of environmental conservation being looked at as under threat, it is for such reason that there is always a need for the host communities of any tourism destination to be aware, and understand the benefits that the tourist destination can breed. It is important to establish a balance between environmental conservation and tourism development.

The purpose of this chapter therefore is to review the tourism potential, social impacts of tourism, game parks and conservation, community involvement in tourism, tourist-host interrelationships, perspectives on recreation and tourism, domestic tourism and benefits of tourism to the local community.

## **2.2 STUDIES OF RELATED INTERNATIONAL TOURISM**

This chapter examines international tourism in Australia and New Zealand, where tourism has been an important element in natural and economic development. The subject of international tourism is not discussed in depth in this study but a summary is presented to give us a clear picture of what happened so that we could relate it to our study area or South Africa.

In both countries, analysis focuses on tourism and the establishment of national parks; tourism, recreation and leisure in national parks; and the role of tourism in benefiting the local populations and national economic growth.

### **2.2.1 The Australia's First National Parks**

According to Butler and Boyd (2000), the reasons for establishment of Australia's first national park resemble those operating in North America. That is, firstly, there was no cost to government in the reservation of land, as it was already, held by the Crown. Secondly, the land was regarded as worthless with no value for agriculture, although timber cutting and grazing were allowed, continuing in the park until well in the 20th Century. Thirdly, a railroad line enabled Sydney's inhabitants to travel to the park. The land on which Utrecht game park was established was used for mining, before they were closed down.

In contrast to America's situation, the park in Australia was established to provide for mass recreation rather than the elite commercial recreation that characterized the early days of Yellowstone, although hotels were built in the park soon after it was established (Hall, 1992, Butler and Boyd, 2000)

It goes without saying that the reasons behind establishment of Utrecht, a town within a game park, were that the land was regarded worthless with no value to agriculture in the area after the coal-mines were closed down. The park was created for the benefit of the local communities through job creation by tourism after they were retrenched from mines and for the fact that the main-road between Johannesburg and Richard's Bay North Coast in KZN passes by Utrecht Game Park.

Butler and Boyd (2000) further assert that as in America, in Australia the area was improved with suitable types of development such as military parade grounds; picnic areas; bandstands; and zoology displays. This was in line with one of the objectives of this study, which was to discover the types of natural and cultural resources, which were found within the Balele game park.

In supporting Butler and Boyd (2000), Hall (1992) asserts that the general perception of national parks in South Australia at that time was summed up in a far-sighted letter that appeared in *The Register* newspaper in October 1884:

National parks will be useful, not only as preserves for indigenous plants and animals, but also as recreation grounds for the people. It is well to consider how comparatively few and small are the areas of this description which will be permanently available for the residents of Adelaide Plains ...there must come at a time when these plains will be thickly populated from hills to sea, and then, if not now, the need for more breathing space will be recognized. The Mt Lofty range is gradually passing more and more into private

hands, and before many years have elapsed it will be difficult to find a place where one may enjoy the beauties of nature without fear of trespassing (Butler and Boyd, 2000:33).

Among the objectives of the study was to determine the level of awareness and participation of local communities of and in Balele Game Park. With this objective, the study intended to find out if the Balele game park is useful, as both preserves for indigenous plants and animals and recreation grounds for the people. Above this the study intended to assess how the Balele game park benefits the host community.

According to Butler and Boyd (2000), the image of national parks and their acceptability appears to be generally high, with a few exceptions where local populations have been or feel disadvantaged by the establishment of parks. That is why the study was interested in establishing the perceptions of the local communities towards the Balele game park, within which a town lies.

### **2.2.2 Tourism and National Parks in New Zealand**

With establishment of Tongariro National Park in 1894, New Zealand was among one of the first countries in the world to establish national parks: the nature of parks and reserves in New Zealand has been influenced both by the park establishments within North America, and British heritage. Booth (1993) and Simmons (1980) assert that the geographic, social, cultural and economic characteristics of the 'new' countries were instrumental in the nature of the parks established.

Utrecht is one of the towns that are within the game parks. The big questions that are to be answered are: Does the park have tourism potential? Is the game park being perceived as the generator of income for the local communities? These were the main focus areas of the study.

### **2.2.3 Perceptions of Tourism and National Parks**

Using examples from Australia and New Zealand, it has been demonstrated how the early philosophy and thoughts on national parks and attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples resulted in the complex situations which exist in these two countries today.

The land to be put aside for parks was often viewed as worthless except possibly for its potential for tourism. Hall (1992) shows how radically changed attitudes towards and by Aboriginal peoples have resulted in incorporation of Aboriginal views in park management and tourism development, as well as greater appreciation of the fact that the landscape contained in many parks is not untouched but represents the effects of Aboriginal use over many centuries. The study was also interested in establishing if the communities of Utrecht had the same perceptions towards Balele Game Park, within which Utrecht lies.

In these two studies on Australia and New Zealand, the sensitive question of Aboriginal rights and changes in the perception of aboriginal involvement in determining the setting for tourism in national parks in specific locations is explored. Aboriginal in both countries have been poorly served by the tourism promotion images in the past and significant differences in the portrayal of aboriginal settings have now taken place.



This study had to establish the perceptions of the communities of Utrecht towards the game park and the tourism potential of the park in benefiting the local communities, and the level of participation of the community of Utrecht in tourism activities of the game park. The researcher can anticipate that the local communities perceive the game as an industry that benefits the white farmers only. This is because this tourism destination was initially known as 'Farmers Community Park'.

#### **2.2.4 Tourism, National Parks and Local Communities**

Certain studies (Simmons, 1980; Hall, 1992; Booth, 1993;) consider tourism as one of the significant ways to enhance positive relationship between parks and local people. According to Nepal (1997), indeed, there are several studies indicating that programmes are based on revenue generated by or through parks-based tourism have had positive impacts on local people, which not only offer employment opportunities but also develop in them positive feelings towards protected areas.

What is asserted by Nepal (1997) is the subject matter of the study. The study aimed to determine if the game park-based tourism activities do generate income by creating job opportunities; do have positive impacts on local people and also do develop in them positive feelings (perceptions) towards Balele game park.

Nepal (1997) asserts that the most desirable state of park-based tourism is the one, which envisages a symbiotic relationship between tourism, parks and local communities. He further asserts that such a relationship guarantees satisfactory

benefits for all three components. Such a statement concurs with the objectives of the study. Yes, it is acknowledged in the hypotheses of the study that tourism without negative impacts can be hardly be the reality.

According to Nepal (1997), in the nexus formed by tourism, parks and local communities, at least, seven different processes and interactions can be identified, which decide the overall fate of the three factors. The processes are largely dictated by inputs, which include institutional framework; planning mechanism; human and financial resources; and technological interventions.

On the other hand, the outputs from the interactions include the diversity of activities (each having its own range and scale of impacts), benefits, involvement, and stakes and interests of the three major actors. This is deeply discussed in the work of Butler and Boyd (2000): *Tourism and National Parks: Issues and Implications*.

According Butler and Boyd (2000), tourism is one of the major actors, which deals primarily with the development processes within the tourism sector. Its four most important components include visitors, tourism services and facilities, investors and entrepreneurs, and institutions and policies, which together shape the state of tourism development in any destination.

The second main actor is park and its various resources, which drive the demand for tourism and recreation. In other words tourism development in a park context depends significantly on what it has to offer for tourists and tourism operators.

The third component includes local communities and organizations, which play a crucial role in matters related to tourism development and conservation. Their knowledge, skills, priorities and attitudes greatly influence the overall tourism and conservation strategy in a given destination.

Nepal (1997) in Butler and Boyd (2000) goes to assert that the interactions between the three actors result in the four different outcomes, which may be positive, negative or neutral:

- Interaction between tourism and parks (park resources being developed for tourism) result in human-influenced changes in landscapes;
- Interaction between tourism and local communities mainly relate to local involvement, benefits and multipliers;
- Interactions between parks and local communities relate to the partnership in conservation, and influence in policy and decision-making, actions resulting in modified landscapes, and
- Interactions between tourism, parks and local communities, which are relating to the various forms of development, stakes, interests, and benefits.

It is expected that a balanced interactions between the three actors will provide mutual benefits for all. The same interactions as indicated by Nepal (1997) are expected in Utrecht, a town within a game park. The interactions between tourism, park and local communities in this destination (Balele game park) should provide mutual benefits for all.

Based on the observation of Butler and Boyd (2000:75), three different scenarios can be anticipated:

- **Win-win-win scenario:** All three players mutually benefit. In this scenario tourism enhances the management capability of a park. In return, favourable conditions for tourism or recreation opportunities are created.
- **Win-win-loose scenario:** Only one or two players benefit at the expense of the third. In this scenario several situations are possible. Tourism benefits the local communities but the park suffers from tourism impacts; tourism receives support from the park without having to support the latter. Similarly, tourism may benefit conservation efforts of the park but impacts on local communities may be negative (i.e. cultural impacts); visitor or tourism enjoy the opportunities provided by the park but do not contribute locally. Tourism benefits but both the park and the local communities lose. Local communities do not benefit from the tourism, and tourism does not enhance but rather degrades the management capability of the park.
- **Lose-lose-lose scenario:** All three players are affected negatively. In this scenario, the environmental conditions degrade, tourists are discouraged from visiting the park, and local communities do not receive any economic benefits. Neither the tourism nor the park is capable of fulfilling the needs of local communities. Local communities become hostile to tourists and cause severe impacts on the park by engaging in unsustainable activities.

These scenarios cover the core of the subject matter of the study on Balele Game Park, within which Utrecht town lies. It is anticipated that such literary and theoretical foundations will facilitate a better understanding of the responses that will emerge from the respondents regarding the Balele Game Park study.

### **2.3 TOURISM INVESTMENT FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES**

Significant research (Detoitte and Touche, 1999; Ashley and Jones, 2001, Roe *et al*, 2001a, 2001b) locally and internationally, has been undertaken on tourism development and its impacts on the empowerment of rural communities. Mahony and van Zyl (2002) analyse the extent to which three tourism projects in South Africa have improved the livelihood of rural communities and contributed to rural economic development.

The projects on Makuleke tourism initiative, Umngazi River Bungalow's and the commercialisation of Manyeleti Game Reserve are analysed in terms of both their economic and non-economic benefits, as well as their contribution towards the attainment of certain key policy objectives of the South African government.

This study looked at the analyses on the above-mentioned grounds in order to understand the impacts of tourism investment on communities of Utrecht and further relate them to Utrecht community Game Park. The case studies were assessed according to their development and policy impacts.

The development impacts in these three studies were assessed according to economic and financial impacts of investments, as to:

- Impacts on local employment,
- Impacts on small business development,
- Collective economic benefits generated by initiatives, and
- The economic participation of Previously Disadvantaged Individuals (PDI's), (Mahony and Van Zyl, 2002)

Mahony and Van Zyl (2002) further asserted that secondly, the non-economic and non-financial developmental impacts were assessed according to:

- The extent of capacity building and training,
- The extent to which the local community is involved in decision-making and
- The social and cultural impacts of the initiative.

The study gives the picture (summary) on the results of these assessments so as to anticipate the benefits that are to be yielded by Utrecht Community Game Park.

### **2.3.1 Economic and Financial Benefits**

According to Mahony and van Zyl (2002), there had been no direct tourism employment resulted from these projects. There are indications that the local small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) will have contract available on a commercial basis. To ensure that the local community is able to take up such SMME opportunities, various technical training programmes have been initiated.

From the assessment in these studies, there has also been a collective economic benefit from the revenue generated from hunting. The assessment also revealed that the community is given opportunities to participate economically, though the control over assets is shared with the South African National Parks.

There is a great possibility that the findings on these projects can suggest more or less the same results in Utrecht Community Game Park. The findings on these projects are supported by the objectives of Utrecht local municipality behind the establishment of the park.

### **2.3.2 Non- economic and Non-financial Benefits**

Mahony and Van Zyl (2002) assert that government view capacity building and training, as a key element of empowerment. The assessment in these projects indicates that tourism projects benefited staff members and neighbouring communities through this key element. There is also an indication that the local communities benefit by participation in decision-making and management.

Utrecht Community Game Park would be anticipated to provide such benefits to its local community if its tourism projects are properly managed.

## **2.4 TOURISM POTENTIAL IN SOUTH AFRICA**

South Africa's tourism resource base is phenomenal. The country's tourism attractiveness lies in its diversity. Some of the features which make South Africa an incredible tourism proposition include accessible wildlife, varied and impressive scenery, unspoiled wilderness areas, diverse culture (in particular traditional and township African culture), general sunny and hot climate, no jet lag from Europe, a well developed infrastructure and ritually unlimited opportunities for special interest activities such as whale watching, wild water rafting, hiking and diving (DEAT, 1996).

Tucked away in the corner of the picturesque Balele Mountains lies Utrecht. A rare gem that is as unique as it lies within a game park. The town of Utrecht lies within the confines of Balele Game Park and the Utrecht community game farm, with a total game park area of 2500ha. All the mountains that surround the town are part of the game park and have been stocked with no fewer than eleven (11) species of game. It is for this reason that Utrecht might have tourism potential, as it is a town within such a game park.

## **2.5. TOURISM, GAME PARK AND NATURE CONSERVATION**

Parks and protected areas have a certain mystique to travellers interested in some of the best representative natural regions or countries (Fennel, 1999). Fennel (1999) further asserts that the game parks were set up to prevent the exploitation of wildlife and the environment, for the purpose of recreation, and finally as a means of scientific studies. The Balele game park is established in an area that was left unoccupied after the coal mining industries left the area. This area in a sense is prevented from exploitation by establishing a game park.

Canada's first national park, Banff, was established for political and economic reason, including the generation of tourism dollars for the transcontinental railway. It therefore remains to be investigated, as in actual fact, the reason behind why the Utrecht a town within a game park is investigated on grounds, if it benefits the local communities, economically.

Many studies indicate that in Canada, and many countries around the world, national parks are broadly mandated with dual purpose of protecting representative natural areas of significance, and encouraging public



understanding, appreciation and enjoyment. The debate surrounding the threats to parks and parks management has prompted some researchers to acknowledge a situation of crisis in the national parks in the United State due to the internal and external factors, and even that national parks in their current form are not sufficient to remain effective in the future (Chase, 1987 and Fennell, 1999).

Chase (1987) illustrates, using the African game parks as an example that the establishment of wilderness land has been, in many cases, self-defeating in that poaching and adjacent farmers slowly consume them. To him a preferable approach would be to view the national parks as an agent of social change, where local people would be stakeholders within the park and their social and economic activities (tourism and farming) would be ecologically sustainable. The tourism managers of Utrecht are involved the local communities as the stakeholders so as to develop the same view as asserted by Fennel (1999). The local communities from this perspective will also view the park as of benefit them.

Lovejoy (1992) writes that today, parks serve a variety of purposes but also face a number of pressures. He cited fertilizers use, infiltrating the parks environment from adjacent lands, the temptation of local people use parks resources, self-servicing political interests that influence parks management, overpopulation and habitat fragmentation as frequent dilemmas challenging parks managers.

Lovejoy (1992) suggested that increased tourism visitation stands as one of the most persistent problems facing parks and protected areas. It is an undeniable fact that game parks have come to rely on tourism as means by which to generate income from a growing world population with increasing disposable

time, financial well-being, and personal mobility. The most common problem between parks and local population are restriction of access to traditionally used resources, and the disruption of local culture and economies by tourists, etc. The problems have led to hostility, resentment, and damage to parks property.

Hough (1988) identifies eight obstacles to effective management of park-people relationships, namely

- The institutional structure of national parks,
- The lack of trust between the local people and park authorities,
- The lack of communication between parks and local people,
- The large number of different stakeholders in the park,
- The polarization of power between the government and local populations,
- The risk and uncertainty in entering into discussions aimed at reducing conflicts,
- The enforcement of agreement between the park and local people, and
- The lack of opportunity for all to participate in decision-making process

Utrecht a town within a game park is no exception as to be confronted by such obstacles. It is therefore for such reason that this study focused on tourism potential of the park, perspectives and perceptions of its local communities towards it and if the host community benefits from the park. It is believed that the reduction or prevention of such obstacles in Balele Game Park would provide better job opportunities to local communities and economic growth of the town through tourism.

Fennel (1999), when he is looking at economic of eco-tourism under the value of land, asserts that in valuing places like parks and protected areas (and tourism within such areas), it must be realized that there is a significant degree of grey areas between the ideologies of business and those of conservation. He further asserts that profit and preservation, therefore, are often construed as a partnership. That is, analogous to an arranged marriage, not one base on love. For example, he asserts that it has been noted that:

The tourism customary goal of quick, optimum profit is indirect conflict with long-range goals of protection and conservation. This does not mean that the only, or even primarily, relationship between the tourism must be adversarial. But, it does mean that whatever laudable, environmentally sound policies and goals the industry articulates, they will remain subsidiary to the demand for profit... (Fennell, 1999: 33)

A key to such an example is that more tourists (local, domestic and international) are to visit a tourism destination so as to generate more profit. The Balele game park has to attract more tourists to generate its profit toward the development of this area (town) and tourism activities in such a destination. This research paper's area of focus is on the participation of local, domestic and the international tourists and the benefits of the local communities from such interactions and intersections

In conclusion, it must be mentioned that tourism as experienced in South Africa, is a young field of study and entrepreneurship. It has recently come to being with the birth of the new democratic order, and is expected to grow considerably

within the next few decades. Many a community is looking towards tourism as a field with great potential for reducing the scourge of poverty and unemployment.

## **2.6 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TOURISM**

In South Africa, the idea that communities should be involved in tourism planning and management is seen as crucial issue in the future of tourism (DEAT, 1996). At another level Keyser (2002) adds that tourism has the ability to rapidly change the social and economic situation with both negative and positive impacts.

Some studies (Brandon, 1993; Hall and Page, 1999 Keyser; 2002) say that community managed projects attempt to let communities decide what type of growth they would like to see and then help them to implement their plans. If tourism therefore brings no positive changes in the social and economic situation facing communities, there is little incentive for residents to change their attitude toward the utilization of tourism resources. Most of the tourism projects, therefore, need to open opportunities for the local communities to be involved in tourism activities, and thus for them to perceive tourism as of benefit to them.

Positive changes can come about if communities exercise control over their own growth and development (Keyser, 2002). There is ample evidence, in certain studies, that projects that focus on generation economic benefit, without effectively addressing local participation are less likely to have wide-spread community benefits

Dissatisfaction about local involvement can threaten the success of a tourism initiative or project (Brandon; 1993; Keyser; 2002). The level of involvement in tourism by local people ranges from consultation, where people are told about plans for tourism and given an opportunity to voice their comments, to partnerships where local people share responsibility for the development and management of tourism operations, to projects completely controlled by local residents (Brandon; 1993)

The above spectrum highlights the important difference between consultation and participation in tourism. This indicates that without true participation of local communities, communities are left with the perception that tourism happens to us and that we do not make tourism happen. The management of tourism in Utrecht should therefore make the local communities to see themselves as making tourism happen.

## **2.7 SOCIAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM**

The social impact of tourism refers to the manner in which tourism and travel effects changes in collective and individual value system, lifestyle and the quality of life (Hall and Page, 1999). They further assert that the major focus of research on social impact of tourism is on population of the tourist destination, rather than the tourist generating area and tourist, themselves, although significant work is also done in this area particularly with respect to outdoor recreationists

The variables that contribute to resident perceptions of tourism may be categorized as either intrinsic or extrinsic (Faulkner and Tideswell, 1996 and Hall and Page; 1999). Among extrinsic variable is a stage of tourism development, the ratio between tourists and residents, and seasonality whereas the intrinsic factor are associated with variations in the characteristics of individuals in a given population.

The above ideas on social impacts of tourism are indicating that the local communities and even tourists (local, domestic and international) have different perspective and perceptions on any tourist destination. This is also an indication that the local communities of Utrecht a town within a game park have different perceptions and perspectives towards tourism in this tourist destination. In an attempt to draw some theoretical supporting argument and elucidation of such existing perception within the study area, Bennett (1995:56) maintains that:

The existing ecological balance is altered and the survival of particular animal, birds, reptile or floral species has sometimes been put in jeopardy by tourism...

The implication is that the establishment of any tourism destination would have either negative or positive impacts on both fauna and flora. The study is investigating on the impacts that are caused by tourism activities on the community of Utrecht.

## **2.8 TOURIST-HOST INTERRELATIONSHIPS**

Contact or interaction between tourists and host communities typically takes place in the social context. Such interaction takes place while the tourists and

hosts share resources and facilities available to both tourists and hosts such as beaches, restaurants, public transport, etc. (Keyser, 2002)

The second type of interaction is in economic context, where tourists and hosts engage in the buying and selling of goods and services, such as arts and crafts, guiding services and accommodation. Often, but not exclusively, these interactions occur within the confines of facilities created for the tourist.

The third type of interaction is in cultural or educational contexts, which entails organized displays and performances of indigenous culture, or offer opportunities of cultural exchange, such as visits to local villages; places of cultural significance; and meeting with community members. Such interactions need tourists to venture beyond the range of tourist facilities, and into the spheres of living of the host community.

The Balele game park within which Utrecht lies has such contexts, such as Mangosuthu arts and crafts centre, which is right at the entrance of the road branching from the main road between Vryheid and Newcastle. Next to the entrance is the Publicity office, which is the tourism information centre. Behind Mangosuthu arts and crafts centre are woodpecker accommodations in neat, comfortable four bed huts.

Such contexts make it possible for interactions between tourists and hosts communities and can further bring up the possibility of some benefits to the local communities. The fact that the town is also within the game park is another possible context that can bring in the tourists, to places like filing

stations, shops etc. The tourists in this manner are automatically interacting with the local communities.

According to Price (1996) in answering the question how to involve the community, asserts that the issue is whether the impact of the tourists on the communities they visit can be reduced, and benefits be increased. He further asserts that to do this requires engaging the attention of the local community in an activity so that they see it as ultimately to their benefit and adding to the quality of life through the interchange with the tourists.

The big question in this research paper was the participation of the of the host community in tourism activities in the Balele game park so as to interact with tourists and benefit from such interactions. The areas like this in Balele Game Park are part of the objectives of this research paper, which were investigated.

The nature of interaction increases in formality and intensity from social to the cultural contexts. However, most interactions between tourists and hosts are characterized by an 'at arms-length' attitude, and remain at a superficial level. Tourism takes people away from their familiar surroundings, and the people and activities they know. Majority of tourists are strangers at the destination, (Keyser, 2002). Some researchers say the following about the characteristics of tourists;

Pi-Sunyer, (1989) asserts that virtually every tourist proclaims his alienation through dress, speech and manner...the tourist enjoyed leisure at the very moment when the local inhabitants had to work the hardest. Furthermore,



physical differences (blonde hair, blue eyes, light complexion) spelled money. Finally most tourists are city people, again a very different world.

The implication is therefore that the interaction of people of different cultures and lifestyles inevitably introduces changes, and affects the perceptions, attitude, and perspectives of each participant. Some studies say that the locals often respond to tourists' requirements by adapting cultural practices and traditions to enhance their commercial value, and tourists enter a society to view the aspect that attracted them, and they inevitably bring the cultural change in that society. On the other hand, the attitude of the local resident will be influenced by the context in which the contact with the tourist typically takes place.

## **2.9 PERSPECTIVES ON TOURISM AND RECREATION**

Perspective in this research paper means mental view of relative importance of the tourist destination to communities and to tourists themselves. Tourism and recreation industry is regarded as the world's largest industry with a continuously growing potential and economic growth index, (Magi and Nzama, 2002). They continue saying that this growth is concentrated in many segments, the principle ones being recreation and tourism attractions, tourism destinations, transportation and accommodation, food services (gastronomy), safety and security, education and training service excellence and domestic tourism.

As in other countries of the world, recreation and tourism in South Africa has come to be identified with growth and development of the economy. It therefore goes without saying that they are certain perspectives that are

associated with some of these segments that are important for promotion and development of recreation and tourism. The local community of Utrecht should look at recreation and tourism as developing the economy of the town.

### **2.9.1 Recreation and Tourism Attractions**

The tourists attractions in their diversity, such as in outdoor recreation and indoor recreation facilities, amusement parks and theme parks, gaming casinos, sporting activities and shop-entertainment complexes are a major source of tourism activity and revenue, (Magi and Nzama, 2002). Amongst the examples they mentioned, is the Kruger national park, Shakaland, Sun City and Wild Coast gaming casinos.

These attractions constitute a major point of tourism and economic development and growth in both the developed and developing countries. Most countries endowed with nature-based resources tend to use these as the core of tourist attractions.

South Africa prides itself on attractive natural resources such as nature reserves, mountains, island and water-bodies. These areas of attraction include: the Kruger and Hluhluwe game reserves, the Durban and Muizenberg beaches, Table Mountain and Drakensberg Giants Castle, Robben Island (where Mandela was incarcerated), the World Heritage Sites [the Cradle of Mankind, the Great St. Lucia Wetland park, and Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park].

Utrecht a town within a game park is found in KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. It is boasting of Balele Mountains, old Coal Mines, Mangosuthu arts and crafts, mountain climbing and horse-riding sites, Utrecht club and golf

course, inside the game park. These attractions in Balele Game Park have the potential of attracting local, domestic and international tourists.

It must be understood that the recreationist and tourist attractions, whether they be nature-based or man-made, can be viable and generate a good revenue-base for any country, if they are efficiently managed. Utrecht Balele Game Park with its tourism and recreation resources and facilities is capable of attracting the tourists. Halloway (1994) has suggested important site or attraction components that have to be considered for the attraction of tourists. The Utrecht game park is boasting of attractions like Bivane Wetland Reserve, old Parsonage, etc.

### **2.9.2 Tourist Destination Trends**

It has been argued by Cooper, *et al* (1999) that tourists in search of a superior tourism experience will go for the richness and a variety of destinations around the world. They further state that; “the new tourist is no longer satisfied with a passive experience, but is seeking instead authenticity at destinations with a view to understanding the indigenous culture, history and environment, and how local people live and work”.

According to Cook *et al* (1999) destinations can be classified on the basis of important features, their degree of seasonality and of commercial development. The ruling perspective is that many tourists tend to favour visiting most destinations that are less commercialised. Examples, in South Africa include Utrecht Balele game park, (in the case of this study), and rustic nature-areas, unspoilt wildlife areas and rugged coastal areas and beaches.

According to (Magi and Nzama, 2002), the modern perspective is to see, understand and highlight the common features of tourist destinations. It has been indicated or mentioned that destinations become viable and popular because of tourist satisfaction. According to Cook *et al* (1999) there are four common characteristics that can be associated with most destinations. These are:

- Destinations as amalgams
- Destinations are cultural appraisals
- Destinations are inseparable, and
- Destinations are used not just by the tourists, but also by other groups.

In South Africa, the emphasis on culture in attracting tourists has begun to thrive because of positive perceptions on culture by local communities. Utrecht a town within a game park and its local people is boasting of different cultural backgrounds due to different racial groups and different population groups, which were brought in and together by mainly the existence of mines. There is therefore a possibility that Balele Game Park alone can develop different perspectives and perceptions in local communities towards the game park itself and tourism.

### **2.9.3 Domestic Tourism**

Early research studies in this area of tourism have indicated that Africans essentially prefer to use their leisure time for visiting relatives and areas of sports and entertainment (Kies, 1982; Magi, 1986 and Schlemmer, 1988). A recent study by Magi (2000) supports similar notions. Magi (2000), states that it has been observed, however that the urban, modern and learned character of

respondents could be said to have contributed significantly to this notion. When respondents were asked, in these researches, to rank pre-selected elements of tourism they thought to be vital for domestic tourism development in Durban, KZN, economic functions such as marketing and promotion were thought to rate highly. Social development and government functions were ranked second and third best respectively, (Magi, 2000)

Other perspectives under the same study reflect that a two-third majority of respondents to see fiscal and infrastructure requirements as most important for domestic tourism development. This viewpoint, is also held by many decision-makers, since many believe that substantial fiscal inputs into tourism would assist in generating good returns for the country.

Furthermore it is important to note that two-thirds of the respondents also thought that education and training were vital for the development of tourism. This stems from the fact that the apartheid government did very little, for the introduction of formal tourism education and training, in African school. There is a therefore a great possibility that the local communities of Utrecht may see tourism in Balele game park as of no benefit to them and depriving them from using this land for keeping their livestock. Yet, it is continually argued that tourism is one of the most important revenue makers in South Africa.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Butler and Boyd (2000) assert that the image of national parks and their acceptability appears to be generally high, with a few exceptions where local populations have been or feel disadvantaged by the establishment of park.

This chapter has examined two international tourisms in Australia and New Zealand. Tourism in these countries has been an important element in natural and economic development.

The main purpose of this chapter was to review the tourism potential, social impacts of tourism, game parks and conservation, community involvement in tourism, tourist-host interrelationships, perspectives on recreation and tourism and benefits of tourism to local community.

Using examples from Australia and New Zealand, it has been demonstrated how the early philosophy and thoughts on national parks and attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples resulted in the complex situations which exist in these two countries today. The perception the local communities have about game parks was that the land to be put aside for parks was viewed as worthless except possibly for its potential for tourism.

It has been identified these literature reviews that changed attitudes towards and by Aboriginal peoples have resulted in incorporation of Aboriginal views in park management and tourism management. In these two studies on Australia and New Zealand, the sensitive question of Aboriginal rights and changes in the perception of Aboriginal involvement in determining the setting for tourism in national parks in specific locations has been explored.

It is anticipated that this chapter will therefore help this study in establishing the perceptions of the communities of Utrecht towards the game park and the tourism potential of the park in benefiting the local communities and the level of participation of the local communities in tourism activities of the game park.

## CHAPTER 3

### PHYSICAL SETTING OF THE STUDY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

KwaZulu-Natal [KZN] has a rich history of wildlife conservation. The KZN province also has the longest standing protected areas in Africa: Hluhluwe, Umfolozi and St. Lucia Wetland, which celebrated their centenary in 1995. History has shown that the protectionist approach to wildlife conservation of the past has been met with little success. Conservation can only succeed if it has the support of all people, particularly local communities who live within and adjustment to the protected areas. Previously, these communities resented protected areas from which they were denied access.

The game parks or reserves are now seen as the major attraction, bringing domestic and international tourists to rural areas, which would not otherwise attract tourists. It is an undeniable fact that there are plenty opportunities in tourism for local communities. Butler and Boyd (2000) assert that there are a number of ways in which parks managers; the tourism industry and local communities can work together to create more activities for domestic and international tourists in and around national parks. And by doing so increase the local economics benefits for the parks and other conserved areas, local communities, and the local tourism industry.

This chapter deals with the physical setting of Utrecht and its historical background. It also gives some details about tourism infrastructure and facilities found in the study area. The aim is to provide a comprehensive overview of what is available in the study area in terms of natural and man-made tourism features. The physical features can either make or break a particular area as a tourist destination (Khuzwayo, 2002). It is therefore of utmost importance to study and understand the physical setting of a place in tourism development.

The local communities, in the past saw game parks as elite playgrounds for the wealthy people and regarded them as the cause of the problem as animals were raiding their crops and killing their livestock. For several years KZN conservation agencies have implemented many ways in trying to redress past negative perceptions. These include the creation of linkages between tourism industry and the local economic; maximizing local employment through skills development of informal sector activities, infrastructure or planning again, and where common property ownership permits, local communities should be able to secure a stake in tourist development through leasehold and joint venture.

The success of these kind of initiatives is dependent upon the creation of locally managed tourism strategy where parks management, the industry and local communities work together to shape tourism to the advantage of local communities and conservation. Before we look at the resource utilisation in conservation areas, community conservation project, community conservation areas, conservation and community, the study will look at the history of Balele Game Park within which Utrecht town lies, its vegetation and fauna, tourist facilities and activities.



### **3.2 THE HISTORY OF BALELE GAME PARK**

Balele Game Park (a park within which Utrecht Town lies) is located on the edge of the town of Utrecht in Northern KZN. It is approximately 341 kilometres northwards of Durban and 308 kilometres in the south-eastern direction of Johannesburg. The game park measures 5500 hectares in area and is situated in Balele Mountain. Tucked away in the corner of the picturesque Balele mountain lies Utrecht, a rare gem, unique in that it lies within a game park (Refer to Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4).

Utrecht town was established in 1854, and is unique in terms of wildlife attraction being a town within a game park. During the later part of 1997 and the early party of 1998, the Utrecht Transitional Local Council (UTLC), realizing that the future of the town was in balance took a bold step. It started to create a new focus for the town away from coal mining industry, and towards the huge tourism potential of the Utrecht area. This move has been partly responsible for the survival of the town after the collapse of coal mining industry in the vicinity of town.

The collapsing of coal mining industry caused many people (local communities) to move away from the area and creating a huge loss in the economic viability of the town and a great increase in unemployment rate in Utrecht District. The UTLC together with Balele conservancy launched a project in 1997-1998 to game fence a large part of municipal land and started to stock this area with a variety of game species, thereby effectively creating a game park as an additional draw card to its caravan park and Utrecht country club.

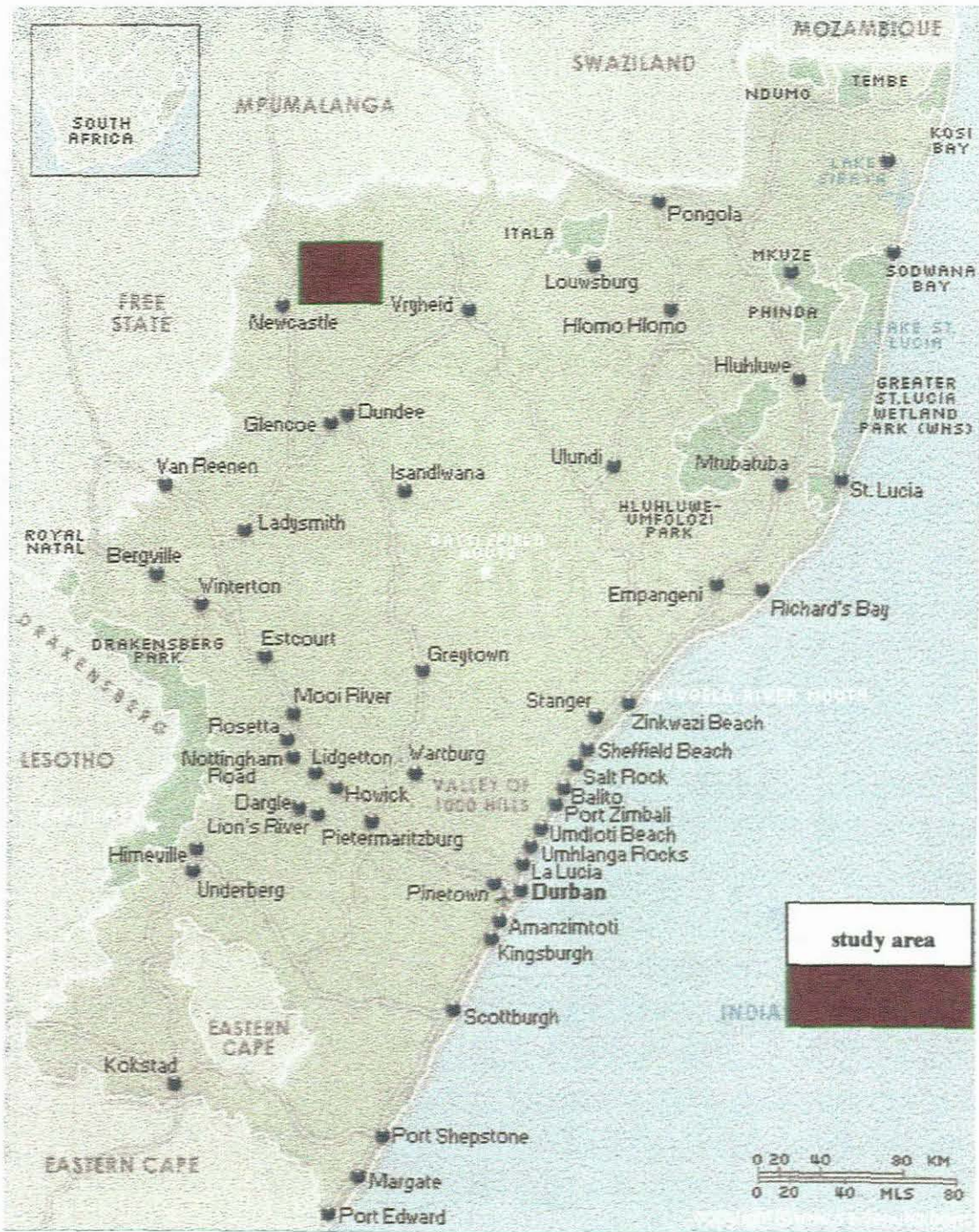
During the same time, the UTLC took a decision to game fence the whole town of Utrecht, with the aim of developing this area as community game park and thereby increasing the value of the individual houses and land within the town's border. The development of Utrecht to be a town within a game park led to a number of other community base tourism developments. This development has automatically changed the perception of the majority of communities as it has raised hopes to many in terms of job creation for most of the unemployed. The most tangible evidence is the Mangosuthu Arts and Crafts, which had opened many opportunities for community members who are skilful in craft and art.

The Utrecht district is the tribal domain of no fewer than 5 (five) Amakhosi (Zulu Chiefs) who play a key role in the development of the area. Utrecht has also an excellent agricultural potential and is the most important wool producing area in KwaZulu-Natal. It is also a major cattle and mixed farming region. In 1999, Mangosuthu Arts and Crafts Centre and Backpackers accommodation were added to the game park, which are situated at the main entrance to Utrecht. Local Economic Development Fund (LEDF) under the National Department of local and provincial government had funded the development of these projects. The Utrecht Balele Game Park was launched in 2003, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July.

### **3.3 SITE AND SITUATION**

For every tourist or travellers, it is important to know the destination he or she is going to, the actual site and situation of the place visited (See Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4). Therefore in this section of this chapter, the researcher gives an overview of the spatial dimensions of Balele Game Park, its relative and absolute location. In addition the location of surrounding areas is explained.

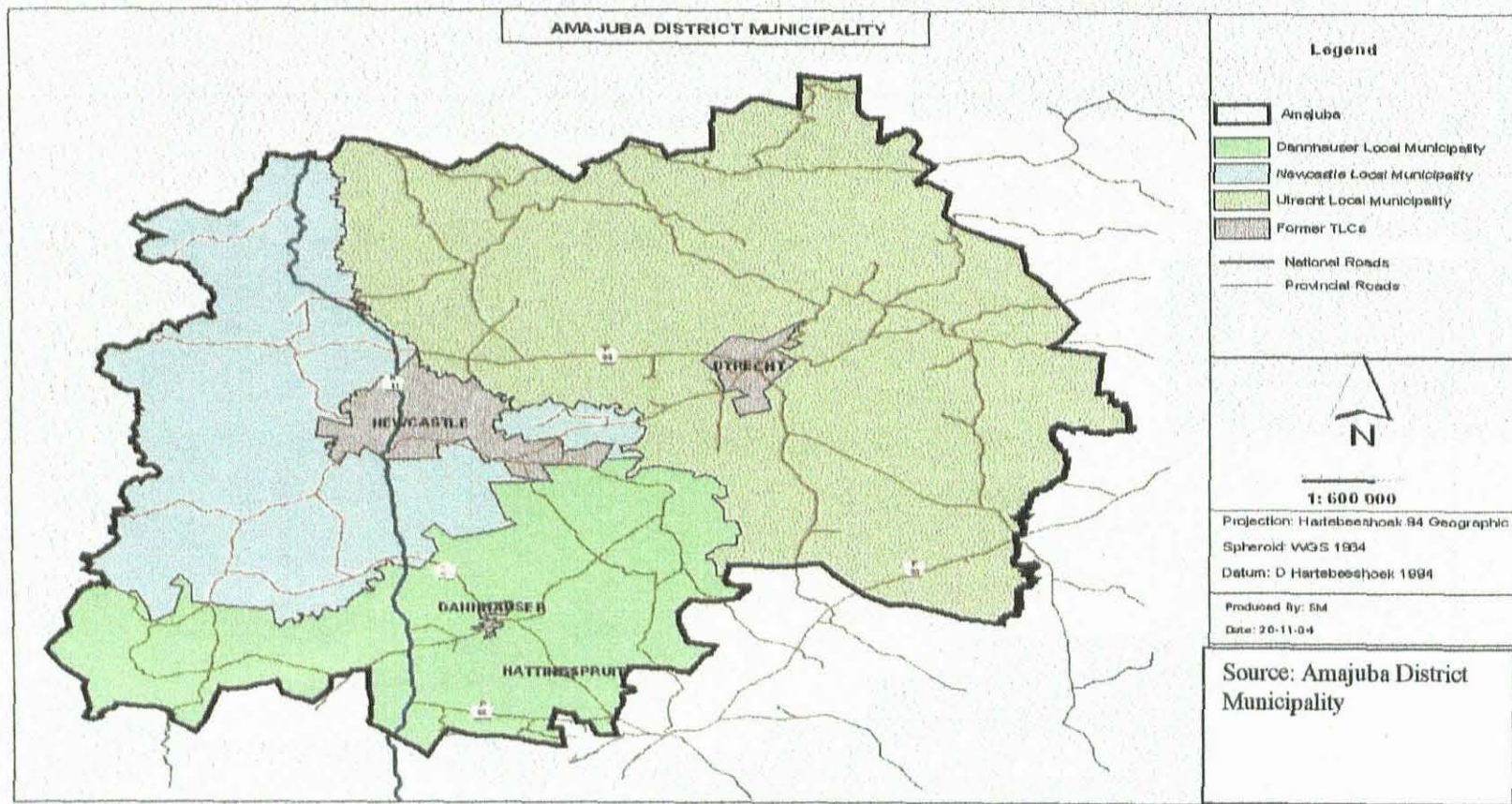
**FIGURE 3.1 THE RELATIVE LOCATION MAP OF THE STUDY AREA**



Source: Amajuba District Municipality

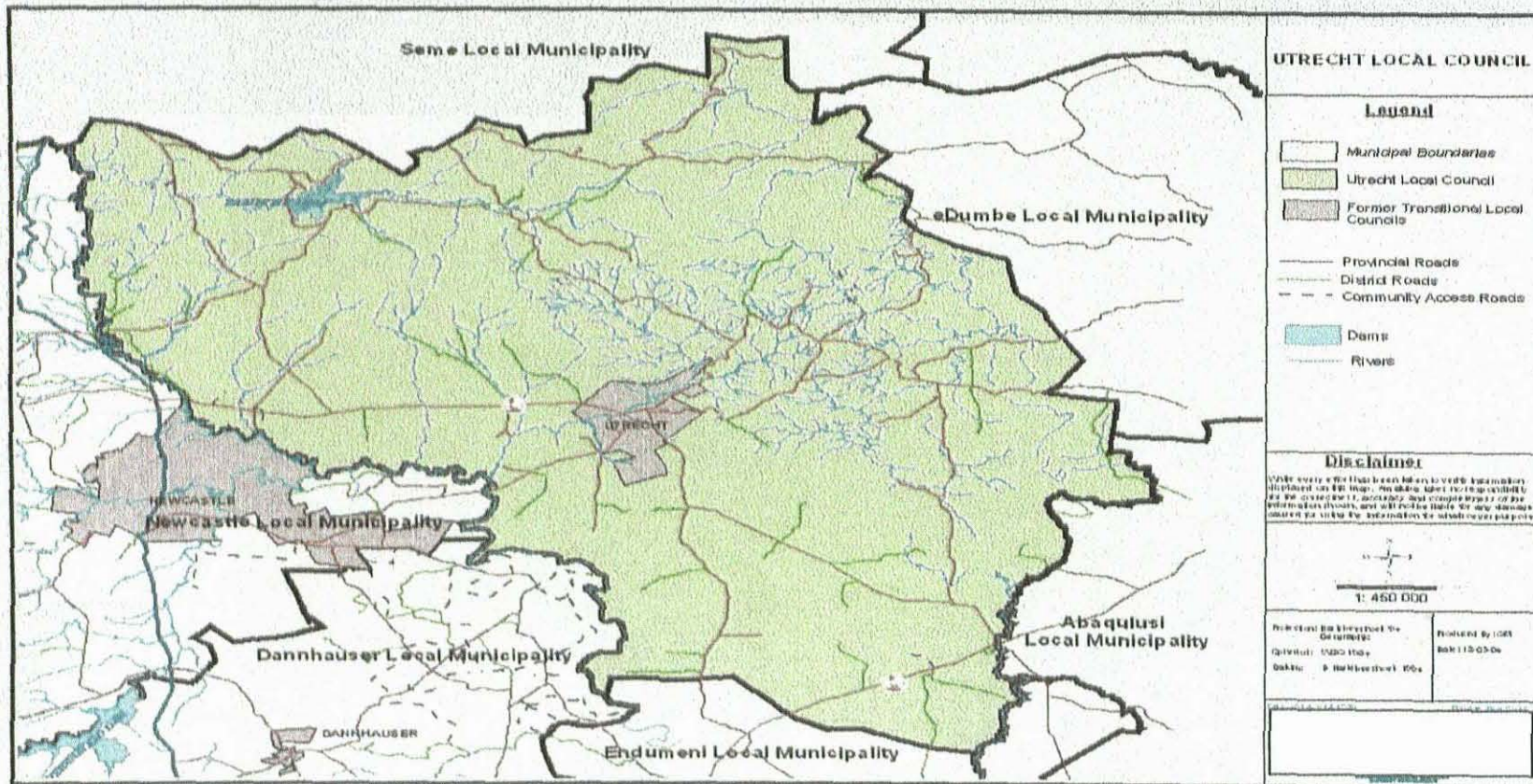


**FIGURE 3.2 UTRECHT LOCAL MUNICIPALITY SITUATION MAP**





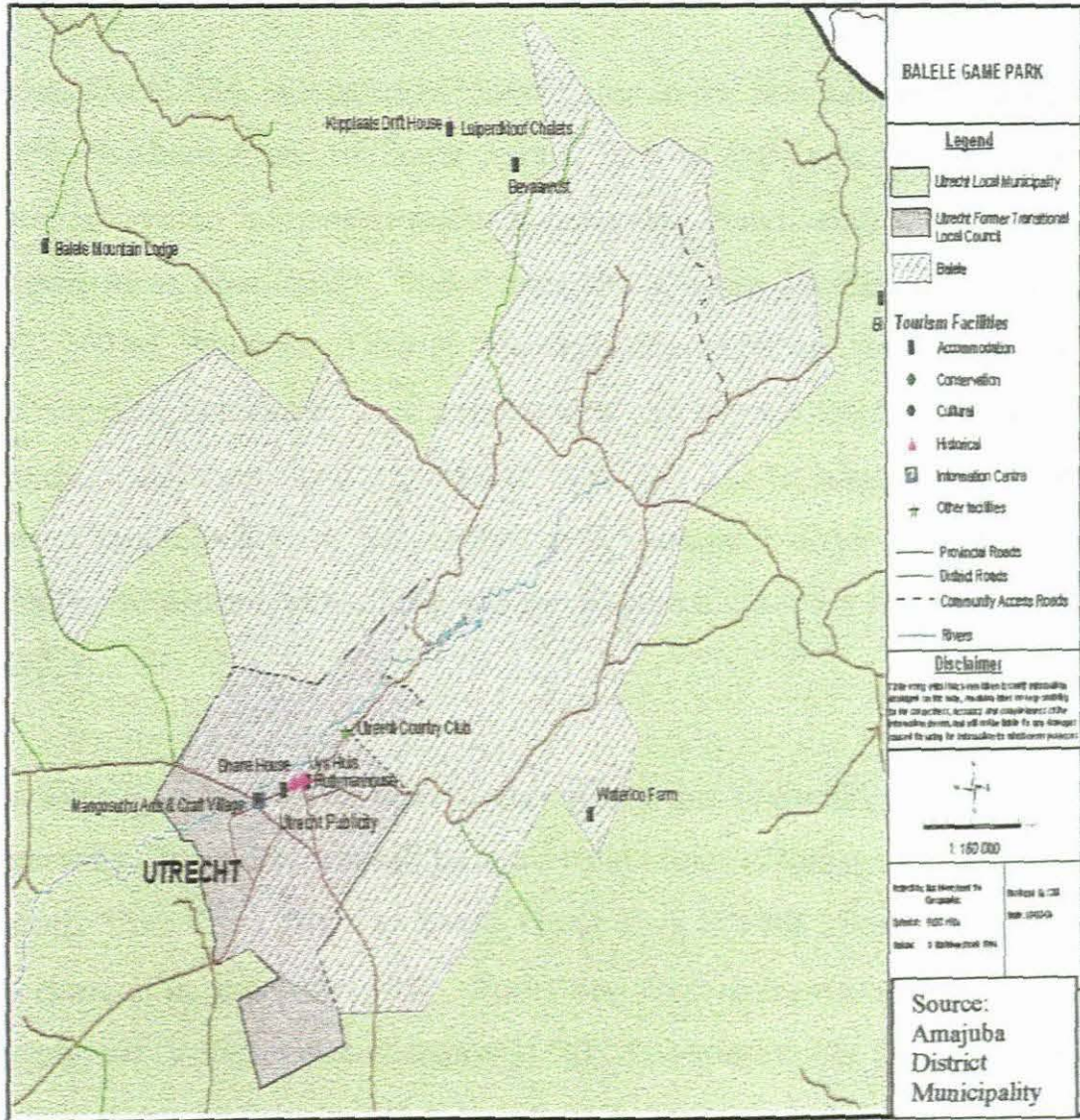
**FIGURE 3.3: UTRECHT LOCAL COUNCIL SITUATION MAP**



Source: Amajuba District Municipality



**FIGURE 3.4: LOCATION MAP OF BALELE GAME RESERVE**



A clear direction to Utrecht Balele Game Park is discussed under the location of Utrecht Balele Game Park. The location of Utrecht Balele Game Park gives us the major and provincial places and their features in relation to the game park. The discussion is based on outlining the absolute and relative location of the park, emphasizing major physical and related features to be found in the park.

### **3.3.1 Provincial Location of Balele Game Park**

Balele Game Park is located in Utrecht area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, in the Northern Coast of South Africa, East of Balele Mountain. KwaZulu-Natal is divided into seven regional councils. Balele Game Park is found in Utrecht local Municipality under Amajuba District Municipality (see Figure-3.1). The Amajuba District Municipality services the Newcastle local municipality, Danhauser local municipality and Utrecht local municipality. The Utrecht local municipality stretches relatively up to boundaries of Eastvaal district municipality on the eastern side, Zululand district municipality and Umzinyathi district municipality on the Northern side (see Figures -3.1, 3.2 3.3 and 3.4).

The Balele Game Park is located near R34 from Vryheid to Johannesburg and Newcastle. It is easy to reach because its entrance is just next to R34 road. The distance from Cape Town to Balele Game Park is 1466 kilometres if you travel via Harrismith and Newcastle. Travelling from Johannesburg to the town of Utrecht via Volkrust the distance is 308 kilometres. On the other hand, the distance from Durban is 341 kilometres to Utrecht via Eshowe, Melmoth and Vryheid (see Figure 3.5).

The Utrecht local area is surrounded by other relatively high profile recreation and tourist destinations. Adjacent to the Utrecht local area, towards the north are the Wakkerstroom wetlands, which are internationally known and attract large numbers of visitors on an annual basis. South of the Utrecht area, is the Amajuba Regional Council service areas, which promotes tourism as one of the primary functions of the Council. The combination of these tourist destinations creates more opportunities for the Utrecht Balele Game Park, as it is situated close to them (see Figures 3.2, 3.3, 3.4). The common utilisation of adjacent recreation facilities suggests that if tourists visit these related destinations there are great chances that they might end up visiting the Utrecht Balele Game Park. It would be a strategic move to create tourism packages involving tourists routes and trails to the vicinity of the Amajuba and Utrecht areas.

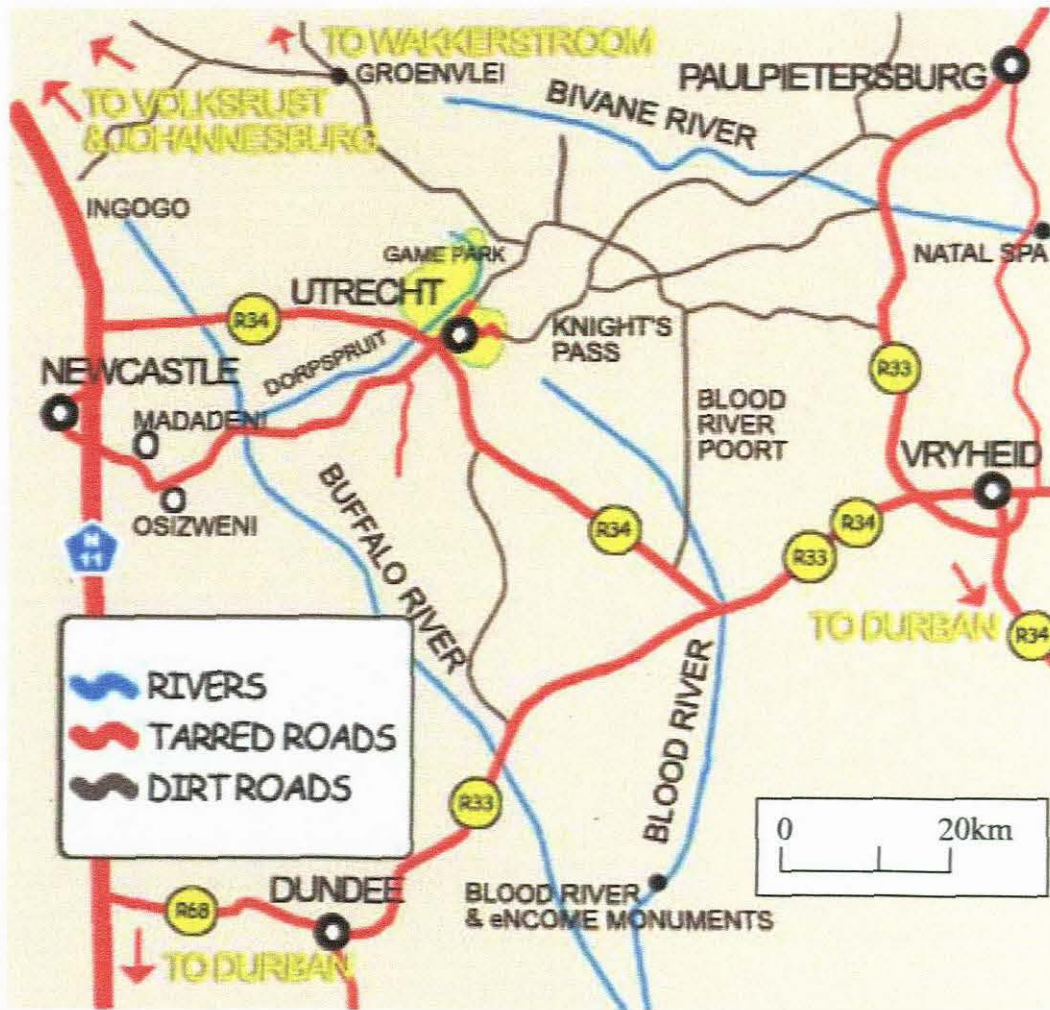
Regarding other similar natural resources, Balele Game Park is relatively close to the following destinations: Ncandu Nature Reserves; Chelmsford Nature Reserves, Khoboto Eco-trax; Bivane Wetland Reserve; Ithala Game Reserve, Mkhuze Game Reserve. The combination of the outdoor recreation resources and tourist destinations cited above, covers a much larger area of KwaZulu-Natal (see Figure 3.1). Most of these recreation facilities, game parks and nature reserves are largely managed by the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Services. They are run with a view of making self-sustaining profit.

It has been argued that the Utrecht Balele Game Park is located within one of KwaZulu-Natal's most naturally endowed outdoor recreation resources environment. Some of the important features include game parks with a variety of animals (herbivores and carnivores), nature reserves with exotic indigenous



flora, wetlands that play an important role in the ecosystem of the area, cultural and heritage facilities.

**FIGURE 3.5: RELATIVE LOCATION OF UTRECHT GAME PARK**

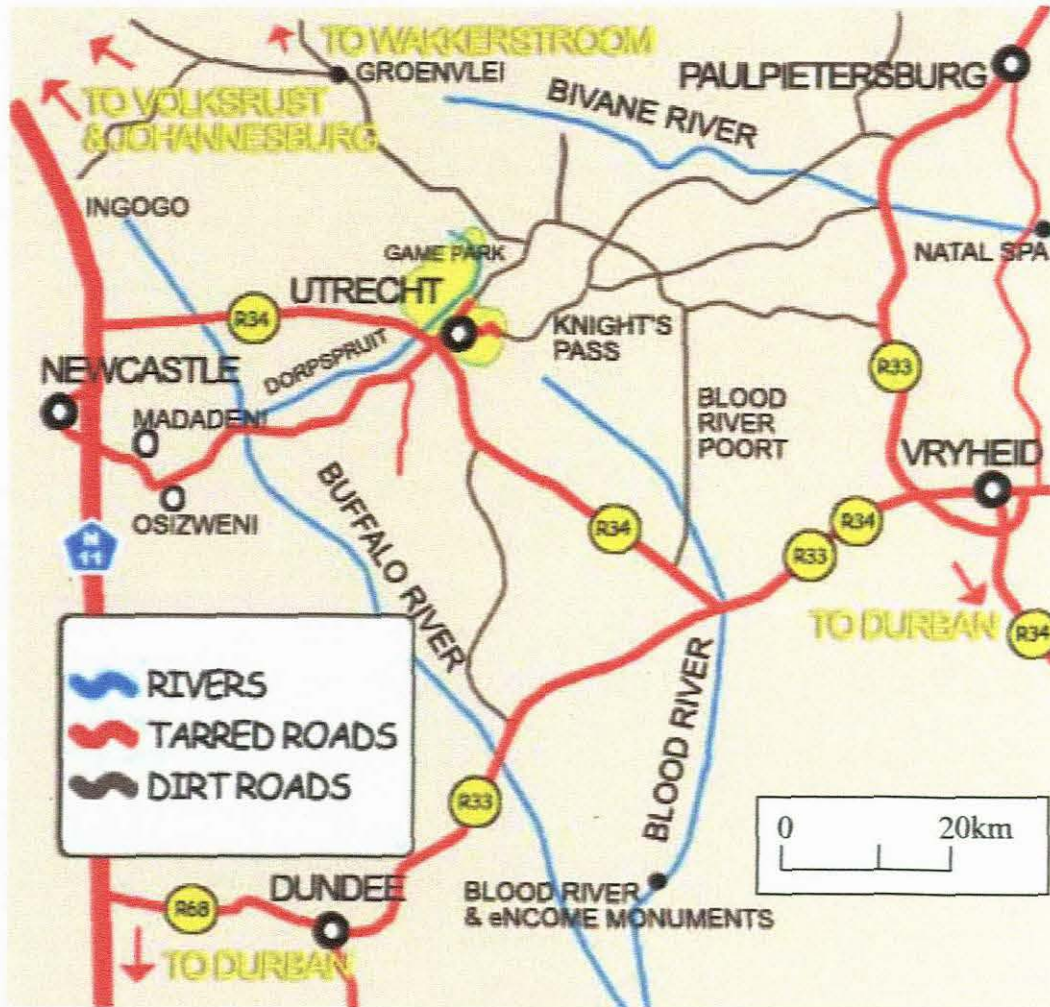


(Source: [http://www.utrecht.co.za/district map](http://www.utrecht.co.za/district%20map))

Surrounding the area, as well as, within are the major battlefields of KwaZulu-Natal. Battlefields such as Rorkes Drift and Isandlwana are situated to the south of the area. Many other battlefields are in the vicinity of the area, which also attract both international and domestic tourists.

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### **3.3.2 Major Tourism Facilities and Activities**

Utrecht town does not only offer an historical experience to the tourists. The conservancy and district offer a variety of experiences that include the following.

#### **3.3.2.1 Bivane Wetland Reserve**

In a secluded valley of the Baleleberg, halfway between Johannesburg and Durban, lies this destination. This leisure destination exudes its own unique charm and has been developed around the needs of small groups and families. The activities that are included in this reserve are trout fishing, mountain biking, horse riding, 4x4 driving, day walks, donkey carts rides and birding. It also known as Bevaanrust (see Figure 3.4)

#### **3.3.2.2 Balele Recreation Resort**

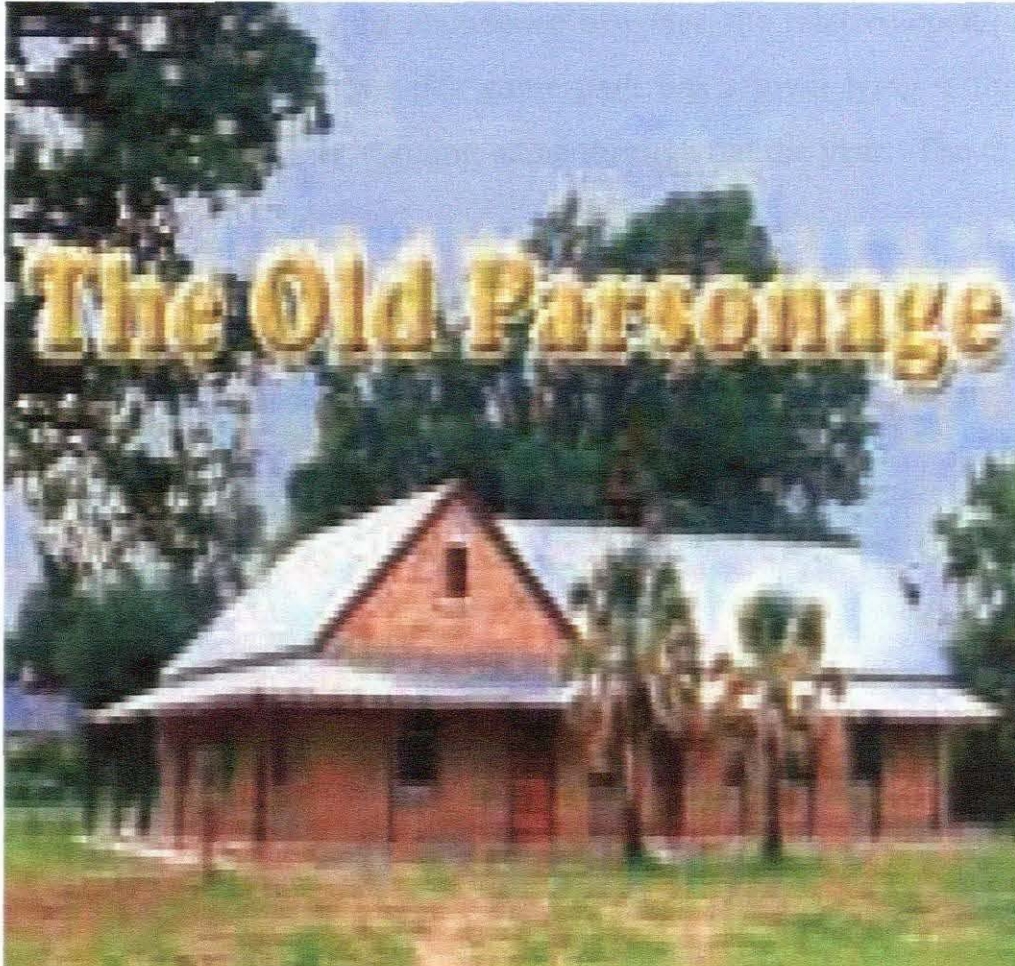
Balele Game Park is one favourite amongst visitors for many reasons other than game viewing and bird watching it has to offer. Within this park there are sport facilities (Utrecht Country Club in Figure 3.4), which include bowling greens; tennis courts; golf course; swimming pool; and squash court, which are addition to angling and water sports that are done in the dam. The other activity is two and three day hiking trail along Balele escarpment and in the scenic Ehlanzeni valley with several beautiful waterfalls along the way and one night accommodation in traditional huts.



### 3.3.2.3 The Old Parsonage and the Dutch Reformed Church

The Old Parsonage was built for Rev. and Mrs. H.L. Neethling. It was taken and use on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1888 and it is now used as museum (see Fig. 3.6).

**FIGURE 3.6: THE OLD PARSONAGE**



(Source: <http://battlefields.kzn.org.za/battlefields/about/20.html>)

### 3.3.2.4 Balele Mountain Lodge

This mountain lodge is situated at an altitude of 6 500ft, and in exclusive wild trout area with abundance of bird life. It also offers scenic trails for nature lovers and hikers, as well as horse riding, horse and equipment hiring from Sunset Riding Stables (see Figure. 3.4). Horse riding has become the most

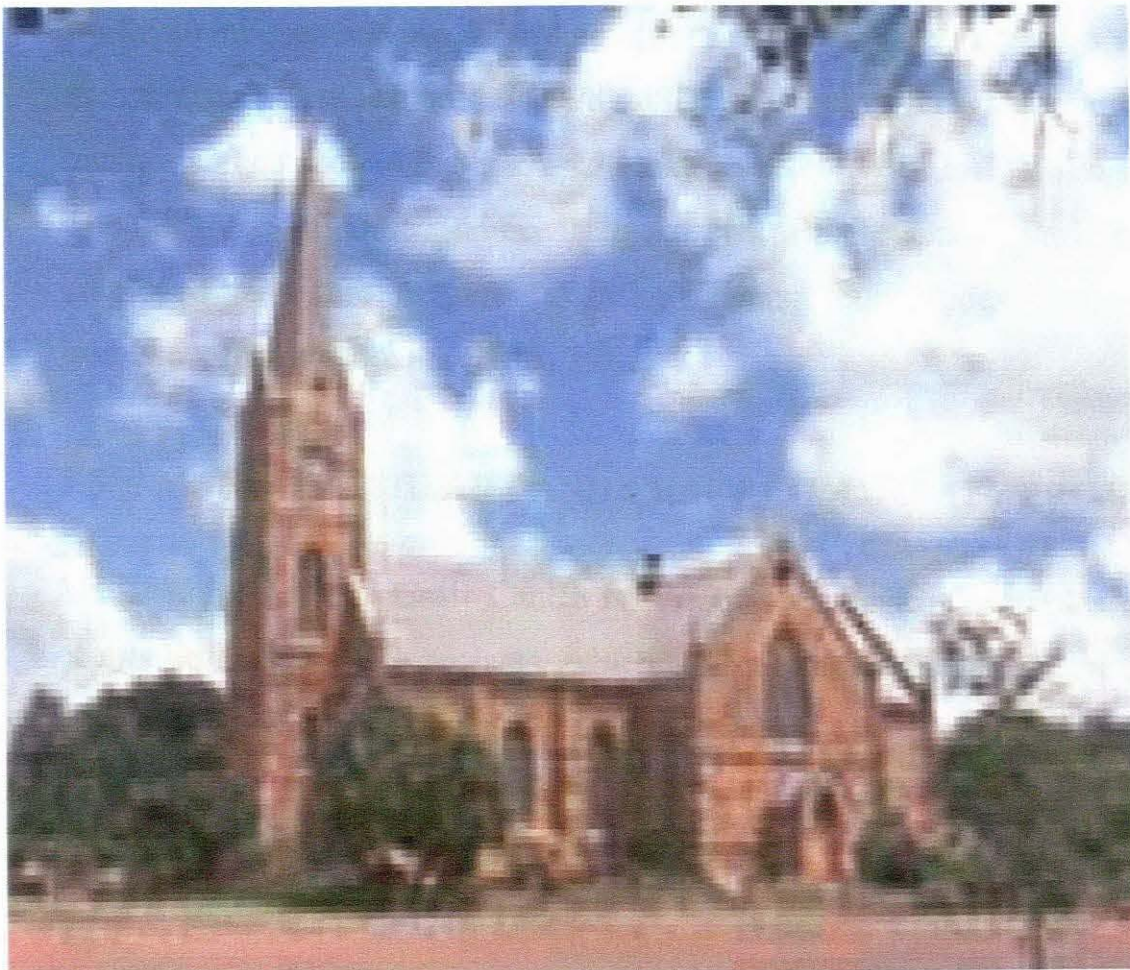


important activity in this place. Most of the tourists come from far away to ride horses for long hours. This indicates the high popularity of the experience.

### **3.3.2.5 Game viewing**

Although the distribution of game often depends on the season of the year and the availability and plus the abundance of water, the relative open nature of the vegetation and the fact that this game park has a town lying within it, makes Balele one of the best for viewing game through out the year. The drier winter

**FIGURE 3.7: THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH**



(Source: <http://www.utrecht.co.za/dutch-reformed-church>)

months generally offer the best game viewing as most trees shed their leaves and the herbivores tend to hide next to permanent water areas. Sightseeing of Big 5 is rare, as there are not yet introduced in the park. Some of the games are seen strolling in the streets of the Utrecht town in most early hours of the morning. It has though proven to be tough with some of them as they are human shy.

### **3.4 COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREAS**

A community conservation area is an area of particular resource significance to community that is voluntary set aside and managed by the community with professional conservation input and advice, to ensure the long-term viability of the resource base (Gumede, 1998). These areas offer game farming, eco-tourism and controlled hunting as alternatives to conventional farming activities. The local communities adjacent to Utrecht Balele Game Park have been employed as game rangers or field rangers, tour guides, tour operators, housekeepers and cooks (NPB, 1987)

### **3.5 MANGOSUTHU ART AND CRAFT COMMUNITY PROJECT**

Mangosuthu Art and Craft Centre is one of the classical examples of a local economic development projects, which attracts tourists in the Utrecht area and alleviate the levels of poverty by engaging skills and labour from local people. The upgrading of the battlefields sites, development of art craft brought about a change in the lives of the community of this area.

Natural resources are used on sustainable basis, thus benefiting the community. Community collect reeds, wood for carving and to sell this artwork in the

Mangosuthu Art and Craft Centre. There is also a wide range of crafts including terracotta pottery; ceramic with hand-painted ethnic designs; woven grass mats; traditional carved wooden dishes and spoons, which are hand-made by local crafters in Mangosuthu Arts and Crafts (see Figure 3.4).

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has attempted to describe as well as briefly discussed the physical setting of the study area in terms of various components ranging from historical background of the park, location elements to tourism facilities under the command of the community and authority structures. The history of the Balele Game Park has been presented in such a way as to give the readers an understanding of what happened in the past. It is expected and hoped that the findings drawn from the analysis of the physical setting, the researcher will be able to draw further interpretations and conclusions based on the empirical outcomes of this study area

The chapter has also described what tourist facilities and activities are to be found as well as what the tourist can do during their visit in the study area. The community conservation and community projects areas have given us an overview of the nature of community adjacent to the game park and the benefits these communities derive from the natural environment. On the whole, the findings in this chapter indicate that there is an important link between the game park and the local community. To further support this statement we have to look at the next chapter, which is about empirical analysis and interpretation of data.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to Mahaye (1996:66), it is generally accepted that in an attempt to make collected research data more understandable and easy to analyse or synthesize, it is essential to have it presented in a logical and systematic manner. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to reduce the data related to this research into intelligible and interpretable chunks or form. This chapter is intended in other words to presenting the responses of respondents who form a fraction of the population of the community of Utrecht, a town within a game park.

In this chapter, first and foremost, the choice of the key variables to be used in the testing the hypotheses is presented. These variables correspond closely with the theoretical concepts in the hypotheses. The meaning of variables is given numerical exposition, “so that they can be looked at more closely and in different ways”, Magi (2000:6)

In the second instance, this chapter adopts an approach that seeks to facilitate better analysis of data. It is often necessary to change the variable data to desired tables, figures, graphs, models and to various illustrations (Magi, 2000), so as to achieve better interpretation of data. Throughout the analysis stage of the chapter, various conclusions are drawn. These conclusions are evaluated in



Chapter Five to formulate guidelines and recommendations for the actual perspective and perception of the local community towards Utrecht Game Park.

## **4.2 RESTATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES**

In order to achieve better understanding and processing of the analysis and interpretation of data, it is necessary to re-look at the objectives and hypothesis of this investigation. These objectives and hypothesis are presented in an interlinked sequence so as to reveal any inherent relationship. These include the following:

- a) **Objective 1:** To establish the perceptions of the communities towards the game park, within which a town lies.

**Hypothesis 1:** That the community sees the Balele Game Park as the business industry for whites.

- b) **Objective 2:** To determine the level of awareness and participation of local communities of and in Balele Game Park.

**Hypothesis 2:** That there is low level of awareness and participation of local communities of and in tourism activities

- c) **Objective 3:** To assess the extent to which host community benefit from Balele Game Park.

**Hypothesis 3:** That the local communities are not benefiting from the game park.

d) **Objective 4:** To investigate the number of local, domestic and international tourists who visit Balele Game Park.

**Hypothesis 4:** That the Utrecht Balele Game Park attracts bigger number of domestic and international tourists than local tourists.

e) **Objective 5:** To discover the types of natural resources and cultural resources, which are found within a Balele Game Park.

**Hypothesis 5:** That there is a lack of natural and cultural resources to meet the needs of tourists

It is the purpose of this chapter to contextualise and integrate most of these objectives towards achieving clarification of issues regarding our subject of discussion. It is, therefore, expected that the data gathered, analysed and interpreted in this chapter will provide information about the following facets of the study which are summarized into:

- a) Demographic characteristics of the respondents
- b) Perceptions of the communities towards the game park
- c) Awareness and participation of local communities
- d) The tourism benefits for local communities
- e) The number of visit by local, domestic and international tourists
- f) Natural and cultural resources in the Balele Game Park

The analysis of data based on the facets that are mentioned above will help the researcher to make judgments and conclusions with regard to hypotheses that are postulated in Chapter 1

### **4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS**

The use of demographic characteristics of respondents such as gender; age; marital status; occupation and the like in this research is necessitated by the indispensable nature of these characteristics. Shiver (1987:53) asserted that demographic characteristics and changes “may radicalise conditions so that new approaches must be taken by agency”.

In this section of the study only gender; age; marital status; occupations; level of education; income and family size are considered as operating variables. These variables are empirically analysed and discussed in order to reveal the characteristics of the sample. These characteristics are important in determining the lifestyles of the local communities of Utrecht. They additionally tend to influence perceptions and motivations, and ultimately affect the decisions taken.

Tables 4.1 to 4.7 depict the selected seven demographic characteristics and the corresponding sub-variable with absolute frequency and percentage. The data from Table 4.1 shows an uneven gender split with males comprising of 44 percent and females 56 percent. Such a division might have an influence on the overall input of respondents if recreation needs and aspirations of particular gender are different in terms of rate, interest and perception of a particular tourism destination facility or resource.

The most important question could be: Does the gender of an individual exert some biological influence on recreation behaviour, which deters participation of women or men in certain outdoor recreation pursuits or change the perception of women or men towards a game park within which Utrecht town lies?

**TABLE 4.1: GENDER RELATED RESPONSES**

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>SUB-VARIABLE</b>	<b>ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Gender	Males	49	44%
	Females	63	56%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

In response, one can argue that it is social and cultural attachments made by a society to gender, which are mostly likely to account for the levels of male or female involvement in particular outdoor recreation pursuits. On the other hand, there is a common trend that males are always fewer than females in most societal set-ups, except in few cases. The other factor that can contribute to the number of females more than that of males is one of a male (father) being a breadwinner.

In the case of Utrecht most males, as breadwinners are out to Johannesburg; Durban and Richard's Bay and even to Newcastle, for employment. The majority of them come back quarterly or annually. Thus there is a high possibility that they were not around during the period of collection of data. The reason why, there are not working in Utrecht is that coal-mines were closed down as it had been indicated in the previous chapters. Coal-mines were only industries that could absorb local communities for employment.

The second variable is 'age' which shows the large majority of respondents (67%) between 15 and 29 years for both males and females. This age-segment is regarded by the researcher as the most eligible in terms of offering personal

opinions, perspective and perceptions towards the game park and the benefits that might be inherited by the local community from the game park and Utrecht town as it is within a game park because they are mostly literate and understand democracy.

**TABLE 4.2:           RESPONSES ON AGE OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>SUB-VARIABLE</b>	<b>ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Age	15 – 19 years	38	34%
	20 – 29 years	37	33%
	30 – 39 years	12	11%
	40 – 49 years	17	15%
	50 and above	8	7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

The small number of respondents between 30 and 49 years is an indication that during that period of time (apartheid era) the majority of the community in this area was depended on coal-mines for employment and there was no game park. There is therefore a great possibility that their perspectives and perceptions might differ from that of the fore group. This is because mines were seen as important factor in terms of job opportunities and as a source of income, but not tourism (game park)

The third variable in the Table 4.3 is ‘occupation’ of the respondents. From the sample, it is apparent that a substantial majority (46%) ‘other’ respondents, which includes learners and unemployed. This percent of the ‘other’ respondents is high because the learners were the people who showed interest in answering the questionnaires, as tourism is one of their subjects.

The better 20 percent is for professionals who are from one and only high school for the black community in the study area. The domination of learners and unemployed in the sample relates to some of the objectives of the study that are to do with awareness and participation, and perceptions of the local communities towards the game park. One should always bear in mind that tourism is yester-thing in most of the schools from rural and black community backgrounds. The semi-skilled (10%) and skilled (6%) respondents include working persons who are labourers, technicians, and trades-people etcetera.

The unskilled respondents (5%) are mainly from rural part of the game park whose recreation background is derived from traditional mode of living such as hunting, fishing, and numerous duties, which give them pleasure. This background might have influence on their perspectives and perceptions towards the game park. However recreation perception and experience of these segments of respondents is somehow influenced by such variables as material wealth, disposable income, education, industrialization or urbanization (Elson, 1976; Butler-Adam, 1978; 1981; Cloete, 1992; Magi, 1992; Mwandla, 2002).

The self-employed (13%) are the members of the communities who are running tuck-shops and keeping cattle. These respondents use these means of business enterprises as their source of income to earn a living. The Table 4.3 shows that they form a small percentage. This is because it is also tough for them as space of land is needed for grazing of cattle and licenses are needed for tuck-shops. All this means money to possess.

The findings support Hypothesis 3 stating that *local communities are not benefiting from Balele Game Park*. The 46 percent of absolute frequency (22) of the professional is for the ten municipal officials. The 56 percent difference with bigger percentage of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled together with the 46 percent (other) is a significantly large percent of the members of the community who are not employed by the park. The possible reason for that is that tourism is yet seen as the generator of income and creator of job opportunities. Their average 56 percent represents almost more than half the sample under study. Therefore we may conclude that hypothesis 3 is confirmed at an almost satisfactory level of (56%) of the sample.

**TABLE 4.3: OCCUPATION LEVELS OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>SUB-VARIABLE</b>	<b>ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Occupation	Professional	22	20%
	Skilled	7	6%
	Semi-skilled	11	10%
	Unskilled	6	5%
	Self-employed	14	13%
	Other	52	46%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

The fourth variable in Table 4.4 is 'level of education' whose responses are: less than standard six (4%), between standard 6 and standard 10 (52%), standard 10 with Diploma (28%), standard 10 with degree (12%) and those who did not want to disclose their status in terms of education (4%). The level of education of the respondents has an impact in level of awareness and participation of the respondents in any tourism activity.

Hypothesis 2 states that *there is low level of awareness and participation of local community of and in tourism activities* is therefore supported. The 52 percent of respondents shows that the majority of the community members as per sample have lowest level of education and lowest income, and therefore a relatively low level of tourism awareness.

**TABLE 4.4: LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>SUB-VARIABLE</b>	<b>ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Level of Education	Less than std 6	4	4%
	Std 6 – std 10	58	52%
	Std 10 + Diploma	31	28%
	Std 10 + Degree	14	12%
	Discreet*	5	4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

The fifth variable is ‘income’ where the sample shows highest percentage (55%) of respondents earning less than R2000. Taking into consideration the percentage of respondents who are unemployed and learners and this one, one could observe a pattern here. The pattern is that most of the respondents are without income due to their lowest level of education. This pattern could be telling the study that they’re no industries in and around Utrecht as a town that can absorb big numbers, with the game park as a tourism destination inclusive. Are the local communities benefiting from this tourism destination?

The second highest earning percentage (10%) is of respondents who are earning R5 001 and above. These could probably be the professionals who are forming a better percentage (32%) of the occupation segment. The other income-



segments are R2 001 to R3 000 (8%), R4 001to R5 000 (7%) and the lowest is between R3 001 and R4 000 (5%). The income has a bearing in visiting the tourism attractions. Thus low income suggests less participation.

Discreet forms about 15 percent of the sample. This is the group of respondents in a sample who could not disclose their income.

**TABLE 4.5: THE INCOME OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>SUB- VARIABLE</b>	<b>ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Income	Less R2000	61	55%
	R2001 – R3000	9	8%
	R3001 – R4000	6	5%
	R4001 – R5000	8	7%
	R5001 and above	11	10%
	Discreet*	17	15%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

In South Africa, the idea that communities should be involved in tourism planning and management is seen as a crucial issue in the future of tourism (DEAT, 1996; Department of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Tourism, 2001). Tourism has the ability to rapidly change the social and economic situations of communities, with both positive and negative impacts. If tourism development brings no positive changes in social and economic situation facing communities, there is little incentive for residents to change their attitude towards the utilization of tourism resources. There is ample evidence that projects that focus on generating economic benefits, without effectively

addressing local participation, are less likely to have widespread community benefits (Keyser, 2002).

The third objective of this study was to assess how host community benefit from Utrecht Balele Game Park by checking their level of involvement in the tourism activities. The findings of the study support hypothesis 3 stating *that the local communities are not benefiting from the game park*. Table 4.5 shows that the communities have not been sufficiently involved in tourism of the study area; have no sense of shared ownership and are not involved in planning and decision-making in tourism in the area of study.

The sixth variable in Table 4.6 is the ‘family size’. The responses show four segments of this category ranging from small family (0 – 2 members), medium family (3 – 4 members), the large family (5 – 6 members) and the largest of them all (7 and above members) whose frequency percentages are 12, 16, 31 and 41, respectively.

**TABLE 4.6: FAMILY SIZES OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>SUB-VARIABLE</b>	<b>ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Family Size	0 – 2 members	13	12%
	3 – 4 members	18	16%
	5 – 6 members	33	31%
	7 and above	46	41%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

It is an unpreventable expectation that the size of the family will influence the overall patterns of recreation perception and activities provided by resources and

facilities found in the game park. For example, a small family can afford paying entrance fees to a game park, whereas on the other hand a large family is less likely to take advantage of such a resources due to financial constraints or other inhibitory factors. In case of Utrecht, most members are unemployed or earn low income. Hypothesis 2 is stating that *there is low level of awareness and participation of local communities of and in tourism activities*. Thus 46 percent in Table 4.6 support this hypothesis and that there is a great likelihood that the members of big families might see the game park as a tourism destination not benefiting them. This can also influence their perception and participation.

The seventh variable that is depicted by Table 4.7 is 'employment'. About 19 percent of the sample population was employed by government as educators, administration clerks, managers, polices and general workers in the government institutions.

**TABLE 4.7: THE EMPLOYMENT RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS**

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>SUB- VARIABLE</b>	<b>ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Employment	Government	22	19%
	Private Sector	13	12%
	Self – employed	12	11%
	Unemployed	62	55%
	Discreet*	03	3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

It must be noted that the respondents are the indigenous members of the local communities, thus the communities stressed that some of their family members who are government officials are not staying with them in their area. These

respondents in question are mostly residing in Newcastle areas, which are more urbanized than Utrecht.

The private sector as in Table 4.7 has only absorbed 12 percent of respondents for employment and 11 percent of respondents are self-employed. The 55 percent of respondents in the sample is of unemployed respondents. This is the indication that the Balele Game Park has done no effort in creating job opportunities for the local communities. The findings are therefore in support of Hypothesis 3 which states that *the local communities are not benefiting from the Balele Game Park*. Only 3 percent of the respondents did not indicate their employment status.

#### **4.4 COMMUNITIES' PERCEPTION OF THE GAME PARK**

The key question regarded as the most central theme of the study pertaining to the perceptions of the communities towards Utrecht, a town within a game park was: "Is tourism in Utrecht perceived as catering for the local communities? The response given by the interviewees depicts an uneven-split between those who perceive that 'yes' the tourism (game park) caters for the local communities of Utrecht and those who say 'no' it does not. The responses are 26 percent and 17 percent, respectively. But the largest percentage of response of the respondents indicated that they were not sure which amounted to 57 percent.

They further respond to other question that they are satisfied with the location of Utrecht town within a game park. The Table 4.8 shows some of the responses of the respondents in this section of the study. In Table 4.8, the first variable indicates that there was a very low percentage of 'yes' response. The argument

here could be that the majority of local communities do not understand what tourism is. This had been observed in their failure in answering the first question in this section: What do you understand about tourism? It was only 20 percent of the sample that could give meaningful responses.

In the other two variables there is a very big contrast as to the first one. This shows that they failed to identify the relationships between tourism and Game Park. The fact that the responses are 64 percent and 78 percent, respectively show that they understand what does the game park mean to the local community.

**TABLE 4.8: COMMUNITIES' PERCEPTIONS OF GAME PARK**

VARIABLE	YES		NO		Not Sure		TOTAL	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1. Is tourism in Utrecht perceived as catering for the local communities?	29	26	19	17	64	57	112	100
2. Are you satisfied with conservation of Balele Game Park for tourism?	71	64	35	31	6	5	112	100
3. Do you think this tourism destination contribute to the development of the town and local community?	87	78	19	17	6	5	112	100

Though there were those who could not make clear-cut choices but they form a very small percentage, which was 5 percent in each case. What does this tell

about the perception of the local community towards the game park within which a town lies?

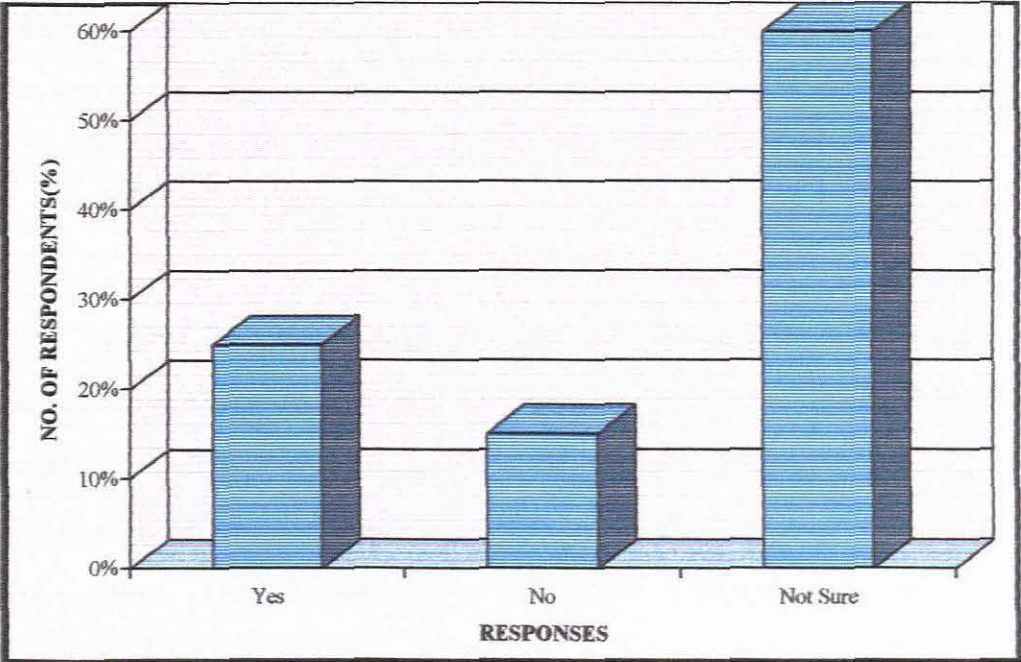
Table 4.8 and Figure 3.8 depict the perception of local communities towards the game park. The majority of respondents (57%) according to Table 4.8 and Figure 3.8 are not sure whether the game park does cater for the local communities of Utrecht. One possible reason could be that they are not aware of the role of tourism and the benefits of tourism to local communities. The other segment of the population (26%) is certain that the Balele Game Park as a tourism destination caters for the local communities of Utrecht.

With regard to local communities' perception of the Balele Game Park, a modicum 17 percent of the respondents saw the game park as not adequately catering for the local communities. This notion is also supported in Table 4.8 where only 10 percent of the respondents who did not bother at all to make clear-cut decision about their perception towards the game park. The most common remark such respondents could sound was, "Am I going to get a job or money if I respond to this questionnaire?"

Others would even went further saying, "You want to get money through us", and they ended up not giving any response. This might affect the final results though the percentage may seem so small. On the other hand the data cannot be a true reflection of the perception of the local communities of Utrecht. The first objective of the study was to establish the perception of the communities towards the Balele Game Park, within which a town lies. About 26 percent responses of respondents showed that the game park is perceived by local

communities as having tourism potential and catering for them as against 17 percent responses who say 'no'.

**FIGURE 4.1: LOCAL COMMUNITIES' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BALELE GAME PARK [%]**



Interestingly, the remaining 57 percent of respondents indicated that they were not sure. This finding is therefore telling us that there is doubt in most of the community members that the Balele Game Park is catering for them. The anticipated reasons are that most of management and senior positions are still in the hands of whites.

The findings therefore support Hypothesis 1, which states *that community sees the Balele Game Park as the business industry for whites*. Yes it is true that initially the white farmers for their own farming interest established the game

park. Robert Stannard who is director of P and N Environmental Development Consultants also supported this statement.

The majority of the community forming the population of Utrecht area is black. The fact that 57 percent of the sample is 'not sure' and 17 percent is denying that the game park caters for the local community supports the hypothesis that the game park is seen as the business industry for whites.

#### **4.5 AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

In this section the study considers the awareness and the participation of the local communities in tourism activities, which is imperative for tourism development of the region to be meaningful. The involvement of the local communities makes them to learn about the importance of tourism in their social development. The involvement of local communities brings about the development of sense of ownership of tourism facilities and thus tourists are protected. The involvement of local communities can be looked at as an easy exercise to do, whereas there are many factors, which can stop their involvement.

The responses of the respondents in the following questions relate to the Hypothesis 4, which states *that there is a low level of awareness and participation of local communities in tourism activities in the game park*. The findings on their level of awareness and participation in the tourism activities are considered and presented in terms of four basic questions:



- What is the name of the game park within which Utrecht is located?
- Are you aware of the tourists who visit the park?
- Are you aware of the activities that these tourists participate in, and
- Were you told of the launch of the game park?

The respondents tried their best to give responses on the above-mentioned questions, which helped in the analysis of data and drawing of the conclusions about the study area. They are also going to help in finding out if the objectives and hypotheses of the study are achieved.

#### **4.5.1 The Meaning Attached to the Game Park?**

The response for this question was almost hundred percent correct. The name of the game park is Utrecht Balele Game Park. Such a response tells the researcher that the sample as well as the entire population of the communities of Utrecht is aware of the park within which Utrecht town lies. It is of common knowledge that a person can participate active and passively in any activity. This could be telling the study that the communities are also participating in either of the two ways.

The awareness and participation would assist in achieving the objectives of the study as indicated in objective (b), which seeks *“To determine the level of awareness and participation of local communities of and in Balele Game Park”*. This objective is fundamental in support of the research hypothesis number two. The study therefore wanted to know the level of awareness and participation of local communities in tourism activities.

The respondents on being asked the other questions, they responded as summarized in Table 4.9. It is doubtless that these responses are strongly dependent and related to demographic characteristics presented earlier. In the first two variables the difference between 'yes' (53%) and 'no' (46%) responses is so small that it brings about hesitation if these respondents had a clear understanding about these questions.

**TABLE 4.9: LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

VARIABLE	YES		NO		DISCREET		TOTAL	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1. Are you aware of the tourists who visit the park?	59	53	52	46	1	1	112	100
2. Are you aware of the activities that these tourists participate in?	55	49	56	50	1	1	112	100
3. Were you told of the launch of the game park?	88	79	24	21	0	0	112	100

Referring to the third variable in Table 4.9, there is a big difference (yes, 79% and no, 21%), which indicates in one way or other that the communities are

aware and did participated in the launch of the game park. It had been indicated that the launch was staged at an entrance to the game park and next to stop for public transports. There is therefore no doubt that the communities found it easy, to know of and to attend the launch function. Thus the responses are carrying the weight for such an argument. The findings therefore disagree with the Hypothesis stating *that there is a low level of awareness and participation of local communities in tourism activities* in this variable.

#### **4.5.2 Levels of Awareness and Education Levels**

It is of common knowledge that the various levels of community awareness and participation in tourism would in many cases depend on level of education, employment status, family sizes and total income per month.

In the first instance, the level of education plays an important role in the local community understanding and participation in tourism. Most people interviewed about their level of education are shown in Table 4.1. The significance of probing about the level of education is that it affects other variables, which are central to community participation in tourism. These variables are amongst others level of employment and income per month and the money available to spend on tourism activities per month.

Table 4.10 shows that Utrecht a town within a game park has a greater percentage of educated people interviewed. Fifty three percent (53%) of the respondents in the local community have a positive perception of Utrecht Balele Game Park as tourism destination with tourism potential.

The greater percentage of these respondents who have Standard 6 to Standard 10 level of education is 33 percent and 6 percent with Standard 10 plus certificate. The other respondents are 3 percent with Standard 10 plus Diploma, 7 percent with Standard 10 plus Degree and only 2 percent for those whose education levels are less than std. 6 and another 2 percent for who could not disclose their education status.

**TABLE 4.10: COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION**

VARIABLES	RESPONSES				TOTAL	
	Yes		No		Freq.	%
Education Level	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Less than std.6	02	02	01	01	03	03
Std.6 - std.10	37	33	26	23	63	56
Std. 10 with Diploma	10	09	19	17	29	26
Std. 10 with Degree	08	07	06	05	14	12
Discreet*	02	02	01	01	03	03
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

The other 47 percent are for those who have negative perception of the game park as tourism destination. The difference between the two categories of responses is 8 percent. This means therefore that Utrecht Game Park has potential as a tourist destination. This implies therefore that the local community is aware tourism practices but does not fully participate in the game park tourism activities. The finding therefore supports the Hypothesis 1, which states that the communities see the park as the business industry for whites and

Hypothesis 2, which *states lack of participation of local communities in tourism activities in the game park.*

#### **4.6 THE TOURISM BENEFITS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY**

The tourism officers at Utrecht Balele Game Park were asked if the local communities were benefiting from recreation and leisure opportunities created by tourism. It should be noted that the local communities could benefit in many different ways from tourism, *inter alia* through active participation in tourism activities, being sufficiently involved in tourism matters, having a sense of shared ownership and through being involved in decision-makings pertaining tourism industry.

The questions that were asked in order to reveal whether the local communities are involved in tourism activities or not are shown in Table 4.11. Also shown in the Table is the extent to which respondents are benefiting from tourism within the study area.

In Table 4.11 the community involvement and benefits thereof were looked at from angle of variables as shown in it. The Table 4.11 shows that 65 percent of respondents indicated that the local communities are not sufficiently involved against 32 percent of respondents who agreed. The 3 percent of the respondent did not disclose their responses. This adds up to a total of 68 percent (65% +3%) of respondents, who are saying that the communities are not involved in tourism activities in Utrecht as an area of study.

These responses therefore show that the local communities are not benefiting from tourism activities, as they are not involved. The findings in this variable support the Hypothesis 3 stating that *the communities are not benefiting from Balele Game Park.*

**TABLE 4.11: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND BENEFITS**

VARIABLES	RESPONSES						TOTAL	
	Yes		No		Discreet		Freq.	%
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Sufficiently involvement	36	32	73	65	03	03	112	100
Sense of shared ownership	31	28	74	66	07	06	112	100
Involvement in decision-making	41	37	65	58	06	05	112	100
<b>Mean Values</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.11 in the second variable pertaining 'shared sense of ownership' shows that 66 percent of respondents denied that the communities have a sense of shared ownership. The other 28 percent agreed that there is a sense of shared ownership between local communities and tourism managers. The 6 percent of the respondents could not disclose their feelings. There is a big difference between these two responses ( $66\% - 28\% = 38\%$ ), which indicates therefore that the local communities are not as yet involved. The findings also support hypothesis 3 stating that *the communities are not benefiting from Balele Game Park.*

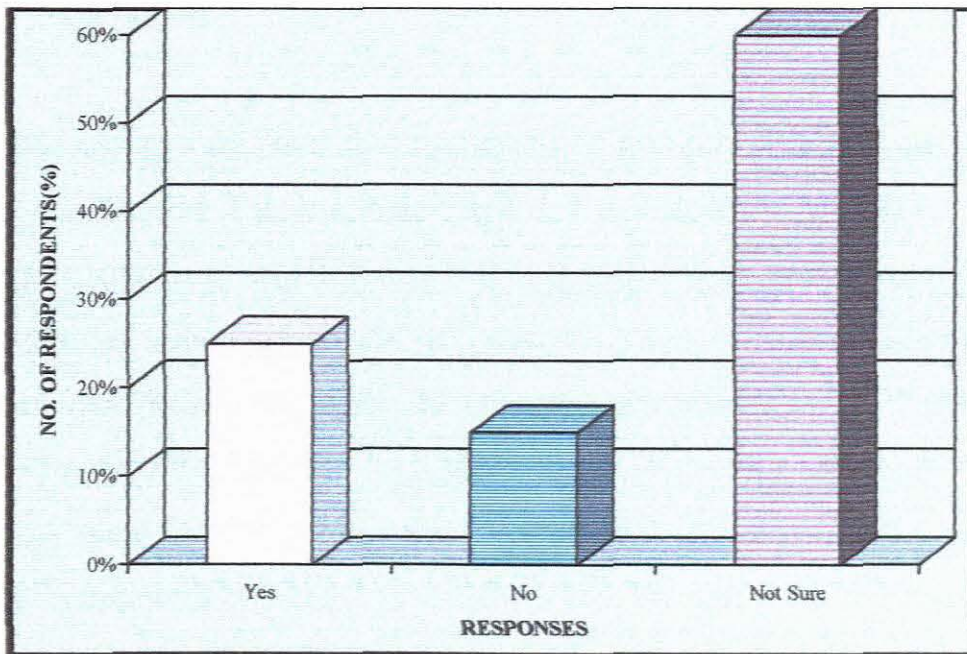
The third variable in Table 4.11 shows the responses on the basis of involvement of local communities in decision-makings. The 58 percent of the respondent in this case denied any involvement of local communities in decision-makings by tourism industry. The 37 percent of respondents on the other hand agree that tourism officials involve the local communities in decision-makings, with 5 percent of respondents who could not disclose.

The difference between the mean values of 'yes' and 'no' responses is very much significant, thus implying that the communities are not involved in tourism activities. The mean values are 32 percent and 63 percent for yes and no responses respectively. The findings in these variables also support Hypothesis 3 *stating that the communities are not benefiting from tourism industry.*

Amongst the questions that were used in finding out whether tourism industry in Utrecht (a town within a game park) is benefiting the local communities is: Are the local communities benefiting from the tourism practices in their environment? The responses of the respondents in this question are shown in the Figure 4.2, below.

The number of responses disagreeing that the local communities are not benefiting is 13 percent and 62 percent is of those who are not sure. The number of responses that are sure is only 25 percent. This implies therefore that there is a total of 75 percent of respondents who doubt if there are any benefits for the local communities. This is big percentage as against 25 percent. One of the objectives of the study is to assess if the local communities benefit from Utrecht Balele Game Park. The findings are supporting the Hypothesis 3 *stating that the communities are not benefiting.*

**FIGURE 4.2: COMMUNITY'S RESPONSES ON TOURISM BENEFITS**



The expectations of the local communities in term of benefits were to see the local community members employed as tour guides, field rangers, farm aids, general assistants, cooks and housekeepers. According to their observation is that they are very few of the blacks that are employed in these positions, whereas they command almost 95 percent of the population of Utrecht.

#### **4.7 VISITS BY LOCAL, DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS**

According to the study local tourists are the people who travel from neighbourhood (areas adjacent) of the tourist destination under study. The domestic tourists mean the people who travel within the borders of South



Africa. On the other hand, the international tourists are those who from outside the borders of South Africa. The aim of the study in this section is to find out how many of these tourists do visit Utrecht Game Park and for how many times in five years period.

The respondents were asked few questions on ground of finding out if they have visited the Utrecht Balele Game Park, how frequently have they visited the game park and from which part of the world did they come from. Responses were noted of which are shown in Table 4.12 Responding to 'number of times they had visited the game park', 79 percent had visited it for 0 - 2 times. Those who had visited the park for 3 - 4 times made 10 percent and those who visited the game park for 4 - 5 time and 5 times and above made 6 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

The responses on number of visits are telling the researcher that most visits are daily visits. This could be because of lack of facilities that are to meet the needs of the tourists, for example accommodation facilities and supermarkets, etc. Davidson (1993) asserts that when people are staying away from home, whether for leisure or on business, they need somewhere that provides all the comforts at home. They need a roof over their heads (accommodation) and they need food and drinks (catering). This is in support of Hypothesis Five *stating that there is a lack of natural and man-made resources*. The other reason is the climate of the study area, which is very cold for almost the greatest part of the year.

According to the Table 4.12, the number of visits for a short period of time is 79 percent, which is implying day visits. The most important factor that leads to this situation is lack of Bread and Breakfast (B&B) type of accommodation. It

is unbelievable that there are no B&B's in this town and let alone a hotel. There is a need for such facilities as the town is within a game park.

**TABLE 4.12: THE FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS' VISIT TO THE GAME PARK**

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
0-2 times	88	79
3-4 times	11	10
4-5 times	07	06
5 and more times	06	05
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

The lack of accommodation facilities could be main reason for tourists not to visit the area regularly and for a lengthy period of time. This implies therefore that the local tourists are the only people who can visit this tourism destination, as they will need no accommodation. This is not in support of Hypothesis 4 *stating that the game park attracts bigger number of domestic and international tourists than the local tourists*. This is because the findings of the study show that the greater number of visits is by local tourists

#### **4.8 PERCEPTIONS OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The perception of tourists on any tourism attraction differs from tourist to tourist. People travelling for pleasure – on holidays, day-trips or sort-breaks - look for facilities that will provide them with fun, entertainment, or interest (Davidson, 1993). He further asserted that most people choose their

destinations because of the facilities they expect to find there. It is one of the objectives of the study to find out the types of natural and cultural resources and facilities that are found in Utrecht Balele Game Park, which can lead to attraction of the tourists.

It has been indicated in Chapter Three that Utrecht game park does not only offer a historical experience to the tourists but also a variety of experiences from trout fishing, horse riding day walks, donkey carts rides and birding from Bivane Wetland Reserve. The other place is Balele Recreation Resort, which is boasting of sports facilities and Mangosuthu Art and Craft centre.

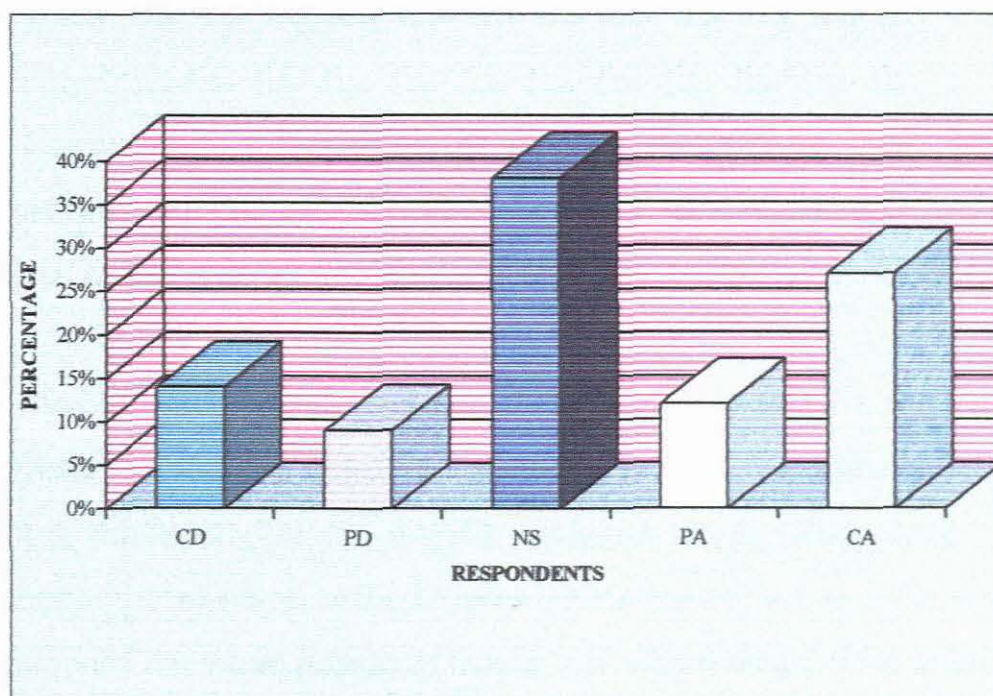
The objective of the study in this section is to find out if local communities are satisfied, benefit, aware and participate in these facilities found in this tourism destination. Table 4.13 shows the perception of the respondents towards Game Park and to the facilities and resources found in and around it. The main objective is to find out if the local communities are satisfied with available resources and benefit from them.

The 27 percent of respondents completely agree that the local communities are satisfied and benefit from these facilities and resources that are found in the game park. The 38 percent of the respondents is not sure if there are satisfied and if there are any benefits for the local communities. The 14 percent of respondents completely disagree if the local community is satisfied and do benefit.

The 61 percent is made of respondents who partially disagree (9%), not sure (38%) and completely disagree (14%). This percentage is telling the researcher

that the local communities are not satisfied with available resources in the game park and thus perceiving the game park as not having tourism potential, local communities are aware and not participating in tourism activities and not involved (benefiting) in tourism activities in this study area. These findings supported Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 5.

**FIGURE 4.3. COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM THE BALELE GAME PARP**



CD = Completely Disagree PD = Partially Disagree NS = Not Sure  
PA = Partially Agree CA = Completely Agree

#### 4.9 CONCLUSION

This Chapter has attempted to provide the analysis and interpretation of data collected in the field through the interviews with local community and tourism

stakeholders in Utrecht, a town within a game park. The Chapter also attempted to qualitatively test the hypotheses so as to address the objectives set at the beginning in Chapter One.

The study has successfully achieve the intended objectives through interviewing local community and tourism stakeholders by exposition of the tourism potential of the game park, awareness and participation of local communities, perception of local communities towards the Utrecht Balele Game Park, the involvement of local communities in tourism activities and their benefits thereof.

The Chapter further looked at the number of visits by local, domestic and international tourists and the availability of natural and cultural resources and facilities from this tourism destination and their impact in attraction of tourists.

The Utrecht Balele Game Park has been discovered to have tourism potential. The factor that impacts negatively on this is lack of awareness and participation of local community in the tourism activities of the study area. The local communities also perceive the Utrecht Balele Game Park as a business industry that supports the white people as they initially established it for them. This also indicated that there is a lack of awareness and participation of local communities in the tourism activities of this study area.

It has been noted that though there are natural and cultural resources and facilities, but they seem to be scarce thus impacting negatively on the side of attraction of tourists. The participation of local community in tourism development was found to be very limited. This was attributed to a number of factors, including lack of disposable income as most community members are

unemployed, ignorance about tourism, time available for tourism, perception among blacks that tourism is for the white people.

The lack of participation in the tourism industry within the study area, as well as in South African literature for other places, has been found to be detrimental to tourism development in the area. This finding is significant because the biggest percentage of the population that the victim of circumstances, is formed by blacks. It therefore stands to reason that the participation of the local community in tourism related activities should be encouraged since it will ensure the sustainability of tourism industry in the area and elsewhere.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The environment is the most fundamental ingredient of tourism product. As soon as tourism activities take place. The environment is changed or modified to provide quality experiences to the tourists. Tourism has the potential to enhance the environment and to protect the natural attractions. Tourism has also the power to destroy the natural environment. If tourism is not properly planned and implemented, it can destroy vegetation, create overcrowding, result in overbuilding, eliminate open spaces, cause housing problems, and ignore the needs and structure of the host community (Nzama, 2003). These are but a few of the many environmental and social degradation features, which need to be reconciled with responsible tourism.

The fundamental objectives of this study were to establish whether the Utrecht Balele Game Park has tourism potential and to investigate the perspectives and perceptions of the local communities towards Utrecht, a town within a game park. The study also sought to show awareness and participation of the community of and in tourism activities taking place in the study area and to assess if the existing tourism practices in the study area have any positive or negative impacts on natural environment and the host community. Responsible tourism requires that hosts and visitors should benefit equally from activities.

## 5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The summary and conclusions made in this study are based on the findings, observations and experiences gained in the field. The objectives set at the beginning of the study (Chapter 1) have been sufficiently achieved. The main findings of the study are summarised hereunder.

### 5.2.1 Perception of the Game Park by the Local Community

The first objective of the study was to establish the perception of the communities towards the Balele Game Park, within which a town lies. The 25 percent responses of respondents showed that the game park is perceived by local communities as having tourism potential and catering for them as against 15 percent responses who say 'no'. The remaining 60 percent of responses is not sure. This is telling the study that there is doubt in most of the community member if the Balele Game Park is catering for them.

Hypothesis 1, which states: *that Community sees the Balele Game Park as the business industry for whites*. This hypothesis is supported by the findings of the study. Yes it is true that initially the white farmers for their own farming interest established the game park. Robert Stannard who is director of P and N Environmental Development Consultants also supported this statement. The majority of the community forming the population of Utrecht area is black. The fact that 60 percent of the sample is 'not sure' and 15 percent is denying that the game park caters for the local community supports the hypothesis that the game park is seen as the business industry for whites.



### **5.2.2 Level of Awareness and Participation of Local Communities**

Second objective of the study was to determine the level of awareness and participation of local communities of and in tourism activities in the study area. The findings of the study showed that the local communities are aware of the tourism activities taking place in the study area. This was supported by 79 percent of respondents of the sample. The influential factor could be that there was a launch of the game park around the period of investigation. It was therefore possible for the community to be aware of such tourism practice.

The problem lies with the participation of communities in tourism activities. It is of common knowledge that to be aware does not mean one participates. This was also supported by 50 percent of respondents who have not participated in tourism activities.

The findings showed that the communities were aware of the tourism activities during the period of investigation. On the other hand the findings showed that there was a low level of participation on the side of the local communities. The hypothesis should therefore be: There is a high level of awareness and low level of participation by local communities of and in tourism activities.

### **5.2.3 Community Involvement**

In South Africa, the idea that communities should be involved in tourism planning and management is seen as a crucial issue in the future of tourism (DEAT, 1996; DEAAAT, 2001). Tourism has the ability to rapidly change the social and economic situations of communities, with both positive and negative

impacts. If tourism development brings no positive changes in social and economic situation facing communities, there is little incentive for residents to change their attitude towards the utilization of tourism resources. There is ample evidence that projects that focus on generating economic benefits, without effectively addressing local participation, are less likely to have widespread community benefits (Keyser, 2002).

The third objective of this study was to assess the extent to which host community benefit from Utrecht Balele Game Park by checking their level of involvement in the tourism activities. The findings of the study showed that the communities have not been sufficiently involved in tourism of the study area; have no sense of shared ownership and are not involved in planning and decision-making on tourism in the area of study.

According to Keyser (2002), community-managed projects attempt to let the communities to decide what type of growth they would like to see and then help them implement their plans. The findings showed that the communities are therefore not benefiting from tourism activities of the game park, since they are not involved.

#### **5.2.4 Visits of Local, Domestic and International Tourists to Balele**

The fourth objective of the study was to investigate the number of local, domestic and international tourists that visit the Utrecht Balele Game Park. The findings of the study showed that most respondents indicated that they had visited the study area for 0 - 2 times. The findings indicated that most of the respondents were from local area.

Hypothesis 4 states *that the Utrecht Balele Game Park attracts bigger number of domestic and international tourists than local tourists*. The findings of the study did not support this hypothesis. According to the researcher's observation and experiences of the area, the findings should be supporting this hypothesis. The anticipated reason could be that the investigation was conducted during awkward time of the year. A research based on the same guess statement should be conducted during festive season.

The findings indicated that the Utrecht Balele Game Park attracts most of its tourists from local area as against the hypothesis. This could be attributed to shortage of accommodation and catering facilities.

#### **5.2.5 Natural and Cultural Resources Found in the Study Area**

The fifth and the last objective of the study, was to discover the perceptions of the communities and tourists on types and nature of natural and cultural resources, which are found in the game park. The findings of the study showed that local communities and tourists are not satisfied with the types of natural and cultural resources available in this tourism destination. This implies therefore that there are resources and facilities in the park, but they are not meeting the needs of the tourists.

The findings of the study confirm Hypothesis 5, which states *that there is a lack of natural and cultural resources to meet the needs of tourists*. This can therefore impact negatively to destination.

According to Keyser (2002) an attraction is 'a designated resource which is controlled and managed for the enjoyment, amusement, entertainment, and education of the visiting public'. Keyser (2002) further asserted that attractions of a destination are the most powerful elements of supply side of tourism. This implies therefore that they make up the energizing power unit in the tourism system, enticing, luring, or 'attracting' tourists to the destination. In the Utrecht Balele Game Park, there is a lack of natural and cultural attractions (resources).

The purpose of this section (summary and conclusions) of the study was to tie up all findings of the study as exposed in different chapters. It has already appeared in this section that the study achieved what it set to achieve. The study was able achieve all the objectives set at the beginning. It has been found that the communities do not perceive the establishment of Utrecht town within a game park as the right decision that could lead to its development and thus benefit the community in terms of income and job creation. The main two reasons or factors that could be attached to these perceptions are:

- Lack of awareness and participation
- Lack of community involvement in planning and decision-making processes

The researcher believes that the establishment of Utrecht town to be within a game park has tourism potential on its own, if and only if, the Utrecht Tourism Authority (UTA) can address these two reasons or factors. The communities do not have to travel long distances to get to this destination and enjoy its attractions (nature and cultural based). The town in turn can create job opportunities.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations suggested below are both varied and specific, short termed and long termed, as informed by the findings of the study. These recommendations are not prescriptive in nature and as well as not formulae for substitution. They are intended as a food for thought to all tourism stakeholders, officials, authorities and local community in Utrecht municipality area and surroundings within Amajuba Municipality District.

This research inquiry therefore recommends as follows:

- a) The Municipality and Tourism authorities should put aside budget and formulate policies and strategies for marketing this destination to entire population of the country and internationally. This will help in attracting the tourists and communities to come and visit Balele Game Park, thus economically benefiting the study area.
- b) The tourism officials should run workshops for making the local communities aware and to participate in all tourism events and activities. This recommendation is motivated by the findings of the study that there is the lack of participation by local communities in tourism events.
- c) Local communities are consulted in due course in all stages of tourism development, planning and decision-making processes. This will develop in them a sense of shared ownership and promotes cooperation between local community and tourism developers.

- d) Tourism authorities should employ more local blacks in jobs created by tourism. This will make them understand the benefit of tourism and change their perspectives and perceptions.
- e) The Utrecht Municipality Officials should run workshops for their office-based managers in trying to develop their skills in planning, customer-service, administration and communication.
- f) The government should be committed to encourage the creation of opportunities at hotels and other establishments for advertising local attractions, certain products and services offered by local communities.
- g) The game park officials should introduce the 'Big Five' into Game Park. This would help in attracting more tourists to this destination.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have demonstrated the potential for the Utrecht Balele Game Park to develop into a viable tourism destination. It could be marketed as a halfway destination between Richards Bay and Johannesburg, offering an easy access to other towns and attractions such as the Ithala Game Reserve, Chelmsford Dam, Majuba, Newcastle, Wakkerstroom and Vryheid.

The study established that the local communities perceive the game park as business industry for whites and that local communities are not fully aware of tourism opportunities in the Utrecht Balele Game Park. The study also established that local communities are not participating fully in tourism activities in the study area. The study attributed this to a number of

demographic factors such level of education, unemployment, low salaries per month and amount of money available to spend on tourism.

The study also found that there are a variety of factors that hamper tourism developments. These factors included ignorance about tourism developments, poor management and planning, lack of community involvement and legacy of apartheid era. Tourism holds great economic benefits for the host communities. Unfortunately, unplanned and thoughtless tourism practices have a potential to destroy the industry by destroying the physical attraction base and through resentment of local communities.

It is a known fact that before the creation of the Utrecht Balele Game Park, people used the land for cattle grazing, for burial of ancestors, for agricultural purposes and so on. It should be noted therefore that many game parks and nature reserves have been created through removal of traditional farmers and local communities from the land. This was not pleasant and today our tourism destinations have to deal with problems caused by communities and traditional black farmers wanting to reclaim the land.

The protection of game parks in the past was done through fencing off areas and keeping local communities a distance away. Utrecht Balele Game Park is so unique that the Utrecht town and its residents are fenced inside the game park. This is calling for the conservationists managing the game park to develop new management systems that involve the cooperation and support of local communities living within the park and adjacent to it.

The study also suggested some recommendation. It is anticipated that these recommendations would in future lead to a better-planned, managed and appreciated natural environment in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, and particularly Utrecht Balele Game Park. It is also hoped that this research investigation has, at least succeeded to draw attention of local communities to be aware of the game park and to see the existence of the game park as of benefit to them in many ways.

It is expected therefore that the game park authorities will learn substantially from this study in preparation for the future development of the game park and the Utrecht town.



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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX – A

### TRANSMITTAL LETTER

August 2003

The Director  
Utrecht Municipality  
Utrecht

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I hereby request your kind permission to undertake research on tourism facilities and activities in your area. I also wish to establish how the establishment of a town within a game park and resources are perceived by some of your staff and local communities.

This research is undertaken mainly for academic purposes within the middle-northern region of KwaZulu-Natal. It is anticipated that its findings may become useful in planning or improving some of the facilities involved in this region.

The research is undertaken through the Centre for Recreation and Tourism of the University of Zululand, under the guidance of Prof. L.M. Magi. The title of my study is:

*Utrecht a town within a game park: Tourism potential, perspectives  
and perceptions*

All information collected from your area and various game parks and nature reserves will be kept as confidential as possible.

Your assistance in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

---

Azaria Themba Zikhali  
MRT - Research Student

## APPENDIX - B

### QUESTIONNAIRE TO LOCAL COMMUNITY OF UTRECHT

**TOPIC: UTRECHT A TOWN WITHIN A GAME PARK: TOURISM  
POTENTIAL, PERSPECTIVES AND PERCEPTIONS**

**NB:** All information that you give will be treated confidentially

Please make a tick [] in the box [] provided next to the most appropriate response.

#### A. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

##### 1. GENDER:

Male [] (01)      Female [] (02)

##### 2. AGE

15-19 [] (01)      20-24 [] (02)      25-29 [] (03)  
30-34 [] (04)      35-39 [] (05)      40 and above [] (06)

##### 3. MARITAL STATUS

Single [] (01)      Married [] (02)      Divorced [] (03)  
Separated [] (04)      Widow [] (05)      Widower [] (06)

##### 4. OCCUPATION

Professional [] (01)      Skilled [] (02)  
Semi-skilled [] (03)      Unskilled [] (04)

Self-employed [ ] (05)

Other [ ]

Specify..... (06)

5. WHO IS YOUR EMPLOYER?

Government [ ] (01)

Private sector [ ] (02)

Self employed [ ] (03)

None of the above [ ] (04)

6. LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Less than std 6 [ ] (01)

Std 6 - std 10 [ ] (02)

Std 10 with certificate [ ] (03)

Std 10 with Diploma [ ] (04)

Std 10 with Degree [ ] (05)

Other [ ]

Specify..... (06)

7. TOTAL INCOME

Less than R2 000 [ ] (01)

R2 001-R3 000 [ ] (02)

R4 000-R5 999 [ ] (03)

R4 001-R5 000 [ ] (04)

R5 001 and above [ ] (05)

8. FAMILY SIZE

0-2 members [ ] (01)

3-4 members [ ] (02)

5-6 members [ ] (03)

7 and above [ ] (04)

9. MEDIUM OF TRANSPORT

Walking [ ] (01)

Public transport [ ] (02)

Bicycle [ ] (03)

Own car [ ] (04)

10. WHO IS A BREADWINNER AT HOME?

Father [ ] (01)

Mother [ ] (02)

Self [ ] (03)

None [ ] (04)

**B. PERCEPTION OF THE COMMUNITIES TOWARDS THE GAME PARK**

11. What do you understand about tourism?

.....

.....

12. Are you satisfied with the location of Utrecht town within the game park?

Yes [ ] (01)                      No [ ] (02)

12(a) If Yes, why? .....

.....(03)

12(b) if No, why? .....

.....(04)

13. Is tourism in Utrecht perceived as catering for the local white population?

Yes [ ] (01)                      No [ ] (02)                      Not Sure [ ] (03)

14. Are satisfied with the conservation of Balele game park for tourism?

Yes [ ] (01)                      No [ ] (02)

15. Do you think this tourism destination contribute to the development of the town and the local community?

Yes [ ] (01)                      No [ ] (02)

**C. AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

16. What is the name of the game park within which Utrecht lies?

.....

17. Are you aware of the tourists who visit the park?

Yes [ ] (01)                      No [ ] (02)

18. Are you aware of the activities that these tourists participate in?

Yes [ ] (01)                      No [ ] (02)

19. Were you told about the launch of the park?

Yes [ ] (01)                      No [ ] (02)

20. If the answer in question 19 is YES, how were they told?

- a) Told at the meeting convened by local government official. [ ] (01)
  - b) Through local induna at the tribal meeting. [ ] (02)
  - c) Broadcast over media. [ ] (03)
  - d) Other [ ]
  - Specify..... [ ] (04)
21. If the answer in question 19 is NO, how did they know?
- a) Through hearsay in community gatherings. [ ] (01)
  - b) Told by a neighbour or a friend. [ ] (02)
  - c) Only knew when people were seen moving out of the area [ ] (03)
  - d) When they went to buy electricity prepaid cards from municipality offices. [ ] (04)
  - e) Any other related comment [ ] (05)
  - ..... [ ] (05)

**D COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

22. Are the local communities participating in tourism activities?  
 Yes [ ] (01) No [ ] (02)
23. Are the communities benefiting in tourism practices in their environment?  
 Yes [ ] (01) No [ ] (02)  
 Reason:.....
24. Do you feel that the local communities have been sufficiently involved in tourism?  
 Yes [ ] (01) No [ ] (02)  
 Reason:.....
25. Do the local communities have a sense of shared ownership?  
 Yes [ ] (01) No [ ] (02)  
 Reason:.....
26. Are the local communities involved in planning and decision-making in tourism in the area?  
 Yes [ ] (01) No [ ] (02)  
 Support:.....

**E NUMBER OF VISITS BY LOCAL, DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS**

27. Have you been to this game park in the last three (3) years?  
Yes [ ] (01) No [ ] (02)
28. How frequently have you visited this game park?  
0 – 2 times [ ] (01) 3 - 4 times [ ] (02)  
4 – 5 [ ] (03) 5 and over (04)
29. From which part of the world do you come?  
Overseas [ ] (01) Africa [ ] (02)  
S. Africa [ ] (03) Other. Specify (04)
30. During which season of the year do you visit this park?  
Summer [ ] (01) Autumn [ ] (02)  
Winter [ ] (03) Spring [ ] (04)

**F TYPES OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL (MAN-MADE) RESOURCES THAT ARE FOUND IN THIS GAME PARK**

31. Are you satisfied with the natural and cultural resources that are found within the game park?  
Yes [ ] (01) No [ ] (02)
32. Do you participate in outdoor recreation at all?  
Yes [ ] (01) No [ ] (02)
33. If yes, in what outdoor recreation activities do you engage in during your leisure time?  
a) camping [ ] (01) b) swimming [ ] (02)  
c) picnicking [ ] (03) d) sightseeing [ ] (04)  
e) horse-riding [ ] (05) f) game spotting [ ] (06)
34. How do you feel about recreation and tourism facilities in the game park?

Place a tick [ ✓ ] at the appropriate response level of the following.

**CD = completely disagree   PD = partially disagree   NS = not sure**  
**CA = completely agree   PA = partially agree**

	<b>CD</b>	<b>PD</b>	<b>NS</b>	<b>PA</b>	<b>CA</b>
	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>05</b>
a) I am satisfied with the facilities in this area.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
b) I benefit from the recreation facilities in our area	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
c) I am willing to pay more fees for the opening up of the use of such facilities.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
d) The community benefits from the establishment of the game park	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

35. General comments

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**THE END**