Chapter One

Situating Commemoration for Wars of Resistance in Limpopo Province

1.1 Introduction and rationale

Today, Sekhukhune, Makhado, Ngungunhane, Malebogo, Makgoba, and Mokopane are readily recalled as important figures of Limpopo province's history. They have become part of the province's collective memory. Through the Mandela government's legacy project that began in 1996, a select group of individual traditional leaders became recognised as historically significant and intrinsic to a conception of provincial, if not national identity. Their associative monumental imagery is essential to what Tony Bennett describes as 'nationing history' and 'historicizing the nation' (Bennett 1995: 1). By the end of 2006, either figurative or abstract monuments to each of these heroic pantheons were visible at various places in the Limpopo province.

In 2004, the Limpopo provincial government appropriated a sum of R6 000 000.00 to erect monuments in the province to the following traditional leaders: Sekhukhune, Makhado, Ngungunhane, Malebogo, Mokopane, and Makgoba. These were subsequently known as the Warrior Kings Monuments (WKM). The provincial Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture (DSAC) through its heritage sub-directorate, was empowered to select sites, commission sculptors to design and carry out the work, supervise the construction and installation of these monuments, and finally facilitate the formal dedication of each monument. The DSAC and its team approached sculptors Harry Johnson, Phil Minnaar, and Andre Otto based on the sculptors' previous work to design and construct the monuments (De Wet 2009).

Despite its cost, pre-eminent locations, and to some extent high artistic merits, the WKM have not been a subject of a detailed investigation until this same author studied it towards the completion of his doctoral studies in 2015. This work represents a version of that study converted into a book form. It considers an examination of the WKM by reconstructing the aesthetic, cultural, and political contexts in which the monuments were created. This study draws out

the war discourses hidden inside the monuments' material resources and written inscriptions, describing, and analysing the communicative resources used in the monument construction to reveal the discourses hidden within this public art form.

Using the monuments in Limpopo, this study explores the multiple ways by which public art was appropriated in the construction of a new public historical consciousness in the years following the first democratic elections in South Africa. The study will also raise questions about some inherent tensions that accompanied the project from its conception in the Limpopo provincial DSAC.

The location (placing) of the subsequent statues in honour of the selected traditional leaders in Limpopo province is also appreciated, as not only a place of social public action; it must be analysed also as a territory of groups. Limpopo's monuments to the traditional leaders are visible markings of such collectively stressed territory. The theory of the imagination of nationalistic ideology, holds that a territory specifically belongs to a certain ethnical group: the term "public space" relates to questions of affiliation and "othering". By all indications, these are political representations and staging in the area that belongs traditionally to the repertoire of (re) presentations of political power. Monuments, like road and place names, as well as "political" or "heroes" squares are important, since they are in principle the most durable media of identity-political markings of public areas. The main function of these markings is the manifestation and/or production of wanted forms of collective memory by material inscriptions into public space, the manufacturing of 'collective identity' and the markings of collectively claimed territory (J. Duncan and N. Duncan 1998: 118).

This study will also examine commemorations and commemorative meanings in Limpopo province. Christian Tileaga concedes that 'there is a struggle over what is the nature of the "object of commemoration" and meaning that is ascribed to it for, and in the name of the "nation" and collective memory' (Tileaga 2008: 359-382). Commemoration as such, has much to do with the field of preservation, especially the historic preservation of war "artefacts" in line with the "Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism" theme. Diane Barthel (1996) points out that, '[I]f war is politics continued by other means, preservation is also politics continued by other means. These "means" also revolve around the act of commemoration'. Barthel perceives the act of commemoration as significantly important for a society, especially since war calls for sacrifice in the interest of the nation or its people (Barthel 1996). Therefore, the commemoration of such sacrifices is meant to encourage future sacrifices to be made when the nation's leaders call for it in the interest of national survival and patriotism.

With the above exposition in mind, speeches of the Premier of the Limpopo province and others at the time of commemorations will also be analysed. Images of the past and recollected knowledge of the past (events) are conveyed and sustained within ritual performance of commemorative speeches. Commemorative political speeches are seen as being essential in bringing collective norms and values to a wider audience. The focus is on commemorative political speeches, commemorative addresses in particular. Such addresses are usually characterised as representative and epideictic.

1.2 Relationship between liberation struggles and commemorations

Commemorative monuments have been integral to the establishment of power in historical spheres. Visual displays have been part of the social practices of memory that created and reinforced political communities. In the nineteenth century political monuments were to play an increasingly important role in the construction of national traditions and as spectacles of governmental power (Nora 1996: 2).

After 1994, historians and several politicians argued for the rethinking of the traditional leader of South African history and the need to recognise black African heroes (Coombes 2003: 41; Duara 1995: 27; Henrard 2002; Marschall 2005b). Marschall wrote that around the time of the first general election, the Presidency and the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology were reportedly flooded with thousands of letters by individuals and organisations concerned about matters of heritage. They expressed a request for official forms of tribute to those who had made sacrifices for the fight against apartheid and encouraged the acknowledgement of significant sites and events reflecting the history and experiences of previously marginalised communities. The Government of National Unity (GNU) understood such broadly shared sentiments as a mandate to make an urgent, high-profile intervention aimed at facilitating the construction of new monuments, memorials, and museums, as well as encouraging the reinterpretation of existing commemorative markers and their associated historical narratives. In 1996 the Cabinet adopted the National Legacy Project, developed by the Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology (DACST) (Marschall 2009: 169).

The Legacy Project comprised of a selection of nine high-priority heritage developments spread throughout the country, namely: 1) The commemoration of the Zulu warriors at the battlefield of Blood River/Ncome near Dundee in KZN; 2) The Monument for the Women of South Africa at the Union Buildings in Pretoria; 3) The inclusive commemoration of the Centenary of the South African Anglo-Boer War; 4) Constitution Hill (the site of the Old Fort and the new Constitutional Court in Johannesburg); 5) The commemoration of Nelson Mandela's home and sites associated with his youth through the Qunu Museum in the Eastern Cape; 6) A memorial to former Mozambican president Samora Machel on the rural site where his plane crashed near the border town of Mbuzini; 7) The Albert Luthuli project focused on the restoration of his home in Groutville, KZN; 8) A Khoe/San heritage route situated mostly in the Western Cape; and 9) The ambitious Freedom Park outside Pretoria (Marschall 2009: 169).

After the 1997 Cabinet approval of the Legacy Project, a long list of names, of whom the overwhelming majority were those of black historical figures, was drawn with the intention of commemorating them as heroes. These heroes were involved in struggles against colonialism, imperialism, dispossession, segregation, apartheid, and other systems of racial and political or class inequalities. The meanings of their struggles were appropriated into grand, national narratives, which linked the rather relatively peaceful transition into democracy to other liberation struggles and positioned its national heroes as martyrs or fearless warriors upon which the South African nation was imagined (Marschall 2009: 170).

This construction of a national memory developed in tandem with the fashioning of a new cultural imagery based on a "folklorised" South African culture—the African Renaissance. As an addition to the new and modern models of achievement, the "ancestral" heroic figures—warrior traditional leaders and their attending monuments, served to instil a sense of pride and confidence in the South African national leadership. In addition, heroes provided an elongated genealogy of nationhood; each of their "choices" or "revolts" led to the present "condition" of democracy. Moreover, the selection of heroes allowed for an ordered narrative form in which a South African national history can be periodised and thematised (Dacres 2009: 2).

Two characteristics stand out; firstly, the collection of monuments in Limpopo reveals a material preference for bronze. Secondly, all the commissions for the designs of the monuments were won by white sculptors (Harry Johnson, Phil Minnaar, and Andre Otto). Their works allow the viewer to enter the memorial space, reflecting a specific modernist twentieth century approach to the monumental forms. Single figurative statues have been prescribed by the monument guidelines and encouraged the use of a realism or figuration as a prominent stylistic technique. Given Minnaar

and Johnson's statements regarding specific instructions received from government, which are discussed in this study, it can be argued that the preoccupation with discipline, order, and control which became evident in the government's circulars and speeches about the heroes and warriors to affect the consciousness of the new democracy, is built into the design of the monument.

Initially there were to be six sculptures/statues to mirror and portray the prominent black groups of the province: Kgošikgolo Sekhukhune of the BaPedi; Khosikhulu Makhado of the Venda; Hosinkulu Ngungunhane of the Tsonga/Shangaan; Kgoši Mokopane of the Kekana-Ndebele; Kgoši Malebogo of the BaHananwa; and Kgoši Makgoba of the BaTlhalerwa. However, factional fighting among the BaTlhalerwa BaMakgoba and the unavailability of a photo of Traditional leader Mokopane limited the number of monuments to only four. The focus of this study will mostly be on the four existing monuments only. This study notes the existence of the bust of Kgoši Makgoba at the Magoebaskloof Hotel at the top end of the Magoebaskloof Mountain Pass. This bust, however, unlike the other four statues was not commissioned by the Limpopo province; therefore, limited focus will be placed on it later in the study.

The modernist commemorative designs of these statues were promoted with a clear preference for the body in public sculptural form to be represented realistically. This had to do with a late emphasis of pure abstraction and a particular investment in realism as a mode of celebrating the previously marginalised, however, heroic black African body (Dacres 2009: 2).

The Limpopo monuments were part of several new monuments unveiled in the country after 1994 and were developed with more abstract monuments to other liberation struggle heroes (in other parts of the country). The nation was simultaneously projected to embody a modern present and future.

1.3 Monuments as social representations of Limpopo history

Increasingly, in recent years, scholars have recognised that "nation", and "national identity" are social constructions; that they do not just exist as essences, but also as political and cultural inventions and local tactics (Till 1999: 254). The case of Limpopo province of South Africa exemplifies this very well. On becoming a province in 1994, Limpopo (then Northern Transvaal province and later Northern province) found itself in a position of having to rally its people in the exercise of province or more specifically, community building at least as part of the South African nation building.

In 1994, the coming together of two former homelands (Gazankulu and Lebowa), of the former Republic of Venda and the Transvaal Administration threatened the fabric of provincial unity and highlighted the need for a "provincial community identity" to be developed that cut across racial and cultural lines. The scramble for provincial government leadership positions furthermore required that the people of Limpopo pulled together and worked as one "community". In his budget speech delivered at the Provincial Legislature in Lebowakgomo on 26 February 2004, the MEC for Finance and Economic Development, Mr Thaba Mufamadi, summed up this challenge:

> Limpopo inherited four administrations. Some of the provinces that inherited no such administrations envied us. We, at the time thought we inherited working civil service while other provinces had to build theirs from scratch. Later we discovered that the civil service inherited were founded on sand– quick sand at that–and had to be demolished. It was nothing but mirage. We had to demolish it and start building fast in order to catch up with those that started by building their public service (Mufamadi 2004).

In 1996, commentators could already foresee problems such as these. Commenting in an article on the relocation of the civil service from the parliamentary offices of the former Republic of Venda, Mary Braid of *The Independent* newspaper said:

> As regional government goes, the new Northern Province—encompassing Venda and the formerly quasi-autonomous homelands of Gazankulu and the heart-breaking poor Lebowa—faces one of the hardest tasks. Yet it is the province's removal of Venda's 20 000 civil servants to the new capital of Pietersburg that is killing Thohoyandou, for its economy was built on the civil service which mushroomed after Venda became "independent" (Braid 1996).

Sharing her sentiment, Ms Nicholson, an ANC member, said there was a real crisis in the concentration of power in Pietersburg.

> The new provincial premier boasts about the growth there, but it is relocated, stolen growth. The rest of the province is suffering. They are going to turn Pietersburg into another Johannesburg, with people desperate for work setting up squatter camps around the city (Braid 1996).

Till (1999: 254) concurs that in recent times, the broader 'annihilation of space by time' has further contributed to the need felt to assert a sense of the local and to construct a shared provincial community identity. Together, these examples illustrate how, at various points in its short history, the province of Limpopo has been confronted with different crises in which it has been necessary to develop and sustain a sense of provincial community identity and belonging. In circumstances such as in Limpopo province where heterogeneous groups are involved, where a shared history was lacking and where any nascent sense of province/nation and provincial/national identity was threatened by past experiences, the bonds between members of the community, and between people and place were at best tenuous, and required nurturing. Indeed, given that identities are conjectural and socially constructed rather than of the essence and natural, it follows that at times and under certain conditions and social contexts, the sense of provincial/national identity is especially threatened. In other words, the need to foster and assert the sense of identity may be stronger at some times than others (Till 1999: 254). Again, Mufamadi's (2004) speech sums it up:

> As democratically elected guardians, entrusted with the responsibility of guiding this baby in its period of deserved mentoring, of making the right choice of friends and associates, of choosing a path from which it has to fashion its future, we sought to, in the basket of choices for transformation, for adjustments and for development and growth, orient ourselves on three pillars of our philosophy for social human development. That being; to borrow from the Minister of Finance Mr Trevor Manuel in his 2004 budget speech, a) people-centred development, b) expansion of the frontiers of human fulfillment and c) rolling back the frontiers of poverty.

The making of 'right choices..., choosing of a path' in the above excerpt also meant that the province had to consider several available key interventions or forge new ones in the absence of any. Focus here is on how the province of Limpopo hoped to develop a sense of "province" or "nation" and "provincial"/ "national identity". The specific aim is to analyse the erection of monuments in Limpopo from 2004 to 2006 as evidence of the province's efforts at inventing social representations of history, creating public landscape spectacle to build up provincial/ national identity and develop an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983: 73). The idea of imagined community was popularised by Anderson (1983: 73), who held that the living generations of a nation feel a connection to the nation's dead, which thus secures the 'nation's imagined continuity and transcendence of time'. The symbolic value and national contribution of the dead traditional

leaders is marked by the monuments, which are an arresting emblem of the modern nation.

A broad consensus has developed across the social sciences that history is an essential ingredient in constructing the imagined community of nationhood (Anderson 1983: 73). Liu and Hilton (2005: 3) are of the view that social representations of history provide myths of origin for peoples. Malinowski is quoted stating that:

> *Myth* comes into play when rite, ceremony, or a social or moral rule demands justification, warrant of antiquity, reality and sanctity ... myth is not only looked upon as a comment of additional information, but it is a warrant, a charter, and even a practical guide to the activities with which it is connected (as cited by Liu and Hilton 2005: 3, 44).

Parts of social representations function as charters that are quasi-legal and confer legitimacy through normative and constitutive components (Hart 1961: 6). Charters are normative in that they establish rules, norms, moral codes, laws, 'dos', and 'don'ts' (Hart 1961: 6). Charters are also constitutive in that they endow groups with status and position. For example, being rulers in South Africa for over many years allowed whites to erect as many monuments in honour of their past as much as the current government allows for proliferation of monuments in honour of the previously marginalised black Africans.

Conceding that all people have a history, it is also a fact that not all peoples have a consensual social representation of their history, let alone a historical charter. Moscovici (1984: 67) notes that social representations of history may be hegemonic (consensual throughout society), emancipated (different, smoothly interacting versions in different segments of society), or polemical (conflicting representations across different groups). Liu and Hilton (2005: 6) posit that a charter, allowing people to think and act as one, through normative imperatives that provide justification for institutional practices, would seem to require a hegemonic social representation. Such depends on a resonance between historical representations, physical artefacts, and mass media, as well as the current political agenda.

In their view, the study of history places intergroup relations into diachronic perspective, where with the passage of time, the past experiences of groups join social representations that are mobilised as part and parcel of the content of a group's social identity. Historical representations can thus act as group narratives that shape responses to new challenges. Often social representations of history reflect real conflicts between groups. One concurs indeed, that

often ethnic and national identities are formed when disparate groups unify to achieve some shared goal, such as defending themselves against a shared opponent (Liu and Hilton 2005: 6). The attempt at the development or even realisation of provincial identity in the Limpopo province was accelerated by the recognition by government leaders of the years of experience of fighting against the South African Republic (ZAR) and other white governments by the different ethnic groups in the province. Against this background, the provincial government forged the rallying theme– "Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism"–a strategy through which the people of Limpopo would become conscious of themselves as "Limpopians".

To this extent, the warrior traditional leaders' monuments in Limpopo province as social representations of history, summarise realistic group conflicts. If popular representations of history are stories about politics and war, then they should function as group-based narratives to identify friends, foes, and the mission of the group. The roles of protagonists and antagonists in intergroup conflict appear to be exceptionally well-elaborated in historical narratives. For many organisations, assuming the mantle of liberator has exceptional historical currency for politicians and governments wanting to legitimise political actions.

Monuments as social representations of history, also function as resources for managing the interplay of social identities. This study also examines the impact of monuments through their analysis as historical representations. A hegemonic representation of history, shared by all groups within the Limpopo province, was aimed at facilitating a positive correlation between at least provincial, if not national identity and subgroup identities. Hegemonic representations exhibit properties of what Cinnirella (1996: 262) has termed 'positive networking'. That is, when all the subgroups within the province share the same representation of history, it is likely because the history offers an adequate position for each of them. The representation should contain narratives that allow for conflict resolution and subgroup reconciliation, so that the activation of provincial identity may simultaneously activate ethnic identity, and vice versa (Liu and Hilton 2005: 10). Research data from Limpopo is consistent with the notion that hegemonic representations of history are associated with positive correlations between ethnic and provincial/national identity. In this case, the overall representation appears to be a narrative about the emergence of a province as part of the South African nation from the forces of colonisation. This representation appears to be capable of smoothing over ethnic and provincial differences. Social representations, therefore, appear to be relevant to defining the content of what makes the Limpopo province positively distinct compared to other provinces.

The dynamics between managing internal relations (conflict) within the province while

asserting positive distinctiveness is central to the identity positioning fostered by historical charters in the province. This seems to have been particularly effective in line with the province's need to assert itself as "good" on that dimension. Thus, the desire to appear as a balanced province with harmonious race relations in the country has provided the province with leverage for social change. This reflects a combination of coaxing (paying homage to national and provincial ideals of positive distinctiveness) and reproach (referring to the past injustices) which became a particularly effective "carrot and stick" for engineering social change, since it invokes national/provincial identity with a particular agenda in mind.

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1.4 Public art as collective memory in Limpopo province

The creation of a collective memory is very important to the cohesion of the people of Limpopo province. The population of the province consists of several ethnic groups distinguished by culture, language, and race. Based on the 2011 census statistics, Sepedi (Northern Sotho) speakers make up the largest number, being nearly 53 per cent. The Xitsonga (Shangaan) speakers comprise 17 per cent, while the Venda speakers make up 16.7 per cent. Afrikaans speakers make up 2.6 per cent, while English-speaking whites account for less than half, 1.5 per cent (Limpopo Province Census 2011). Compressed within the borders of the province are the four previous administrations which were created during or even before the apartheid era: Lebowa, Gazankulu, Venda, and Transvaal Administration (Wikipedia n.d.). Given these demographics, the political leaders of the Limpopo province seem to have taken a leaf out of Renan's advice in his essay, *What is a nation?,* in which the author defines a nation's identity as 'centred on what people remember and what they forget, and some of the most powerful memories come from times of war, when nations were fighting to construct their identities' (Renan 1939: 190-191). This lies behind the choice of the war theme "Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism".

Arguing in support of Renan, both Halbwachs's works: *The Collective Memory* and *On Collective Memory* illuminate what is necessary for the construction of such a memory and how it is affected by the society that creates it. Every social group holds a certain sway over its members, and for all intents and purposes, a nation is just a large social group, within which there are many subdivisions. However, as a collective group, it must retain cohesion for it to be successful, and a very significant

way of keeping such cohesiveness, is to have members of the group sharing memories for them to connect with each other (Halbwachs 1980: 45).

The decision by the Limpopo provincial government to launch the "Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism" theme was meant not only to acknowledge the contribution of the selected traditional leaders that are being honoured, but also to bring about an element of cohesion and shared past out of the people of Limpopo. It is, therefore, interesting to note that only one traditional leader was selected from each of the more prominent groups of the Limpopo province: Kgošikgolo Sekhukhune I of the BaPedi, Khosinkhulu Makhado of the VhaVenda, Hosinkulu Ngungunhane of the VaTsonga/Shangaan, Kgoši Malebogo of the BaHananwa, Kgoši Mokopane of the AmaNdebele of Kekana and Kgoši Makgoba of the BaTlhalerwa. For Limpopo to succeed as a province, given its difficult historical past as reflected by the diverse character of its citizenry, it is essential to maintain such cohesiveness among these and other minority groups.

Halbwachs (1980: 45) maintains that national memory is a type of overarching umbrella covering an entire 'nation state' and is therefore, less connected to individuals. National memory instead, is based more on the remembrances of others. It borrows from certain sub-groups to create its own conceptions and symbols (Halbwachs 1980: 45). While Limpopo is just a province and cannot be a nation on its own, the same principles apply where the shared memories of the various sub-groups as shown above, were evoked to create the province's own conceptions and symbols. These were eventually passed on to the national government as evidence of the contribution of the Limpopo province to the South African national memory. These have since been acknowledged and endorsed by the erection of the cairn (stone monument) Ubuntu Memorial Monument (see photograph in Chapter Four, p. 95) honouring the same warrior traditional leaders in collaboration with the National Heritage Council (NHC) in Musina in September 2008.

Concurring with Halbwachs, Connerton questions how group memories are conveyed and sustained; a question that leads to a consideration of social memory as a dimension of political power. Connerton (1989: 2) therefore contends that:

> Our present experiences are largely dependent on our knowledge of the past. Therefore, our experiences of the present seem to be connected to the past events in a manner that places our present into a certain context, dependent on how we remember the past.

Connerton (1989: 18) concludes that this contextualisation is not necessarily one dimensional,

since the way in which the past is remembered does influence or even distort one's views of the present and vice versa. Indeed, some images of the past have been used to legitimise the present social order. In concurring with Halbwachs, Connerton (1989: 43) noted that any participation in social order presupposes a shared memory. The two authors also concur regarding the differences between historical and social memory. While history is itself impartial, societies can construct it to present a particular view of the past and thus, how the past affects the present.

With reference again to what Renan conceded earlier, that often such kinds of powerful images are related to war, perhaps it is not surprising that the monuments in Limpopo province honour heroes of the "Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism". In the past, major efforts in the creation of national identities have seen wars being used as defining events. It seemed simple and easy for a nation not only to define enemies and allies in war, but also to define its role within such conflicts as much as the Limpopo province seems to have successfully used the selected traditional leaders to define its role in the Wars of Resistance fought by black African chiefdoms during their subjugation in the nineteenth century South Africa. Wars elsewhere have provided enough opportunities for nations to come together as cohesive communities under the umbrella of political nationalisms (Connerton 1989: 17). Since the memory of war and a particular people's role in it can keep the thread of national unity running through the national community, the creation of a nation's memory, therefore, is as much a political process as a social one, which is exactly the case in Limpopo province. Connerton (1989: 17-18) also argues that the 'ruling group will use its knowledge of the past in a direct and active way', that is, manipulating the people/nation's memory to bring about certain events that can legitimise the way the incumbent ruling group is governing the province. How then, can the ruling group advocate certain memories and events without seeming to be too heavy handed? The goal is, without doubt, to create some sort of propaganda, but also to make it elegant and sophisticated enough so that it can be more easily accepted, but also treasured (Connerton 1989:18).

The most successful way of promoting such a memory as suggested by Connerton would be through commemorative monuments and ceremonies in honour of Limpopo's fallen traditional leaders, not only to remind the Limpopo province's people of events that took away their land and the heroics of their former leaders, but also to re-present them, to preserve a certain viewpoint of the situation (Connerton 1989: 43), through what Hobsbawn (1983: 11) calls 'invention of tradition'. The Limpopo provincial government, therefore sought to show and celebrate its provincial heroism, to stimulate certain emotive responses that promoted provincial if not nationalistic feelings. These feelings culminated in the response of the NHC, when the latter erected the

Ubuntu Memorial Monument (NHC 2010). By creating commemorative rituals and memorials, the South African government through the NHC, created 'emotionally and symbolically charged signs of club membership...' (Hobsbawm 1983: 11).

The theory of invented traditions as espoused by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their work *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) is a 'presentist' approach to social remembering (Hobsbawm 1983: 11). Barbara Misztal (2003: 56-61) noted that this perspective scrutinises how public notions of history are manipulated by 'dominant forces of society through public commemorations, education systems, mass media, and official records and chronologies. The 'invention of tradition perspective' or "theory of the politics of memory", as the "presentist" memory approach is also called, argues that the past is moulded to suit present dominant interests. Researchers (Confino 1997: 1386-1405; Gedi and Elam 1996: 30-50; Gerphart 1998: 127-136; Hutton 1988: 311-322) working within this paradigm have illustrated how new traditions and rituals are "invented" in the sense of being deliberately designed and produced with a view to creating new political realities, defining nations, and sustaining national communities. Defining social memories as inventions of the past, they study the institutionalisation of "remembrance" within national ritual and educational systems. Such investigations show how nationalist movements create a master commemorative narrative that highlights their members' common past and legitimises their aspiration for a shared destiny. While Hobsbawm and Ranger's work remains authoritative in this perspective, there are now several studies (Bartlett 1982; Gergen 1985: 266-275; Middleton and Edwards 1990; Shotter 1990: 120-138) concerned with the role played in modern societies by constructed versions of the past in establishing social cohesion, legitimising authority, and socialising populations in a common culture.

Three types of invented traditions espoused by Hobsbawm and Ranger exist:

> Those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour. While traditions of types b) and c) were certainly devised ..., it may be tentatively suggested that type a) was prevalent, the other functions being regarded as implicit in or flowing from a sense of identification with a "community" and/or the institutions representing, expressing or symbolizing it such as a "nation" (Hobsbawm 1983:9).

Hobsbawm (1983: 1) maintains that the construction of a collective memory through such "invented traditions" is crucial to the development of the provincial/national community. It is, therefore, important for leaders to create a past if there is not any for them to be able to legitimise certain views and to convince their people to follow them. To create such a cohesive community, Hobsbawm argues that a government needs to create a past or pasts for themselves, and to do that, they must invent traditions and practices that are of a ritual and symbolic nature in a way that instils certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition which automatically translates into continuity with the past. Marschall (2004: 78-95) writes that, monuments 'create an imagined, desired past, compensating for absences and shortcomings of the real past'. Whether the proliferation of commemorative monuments in the Limpopo province is a response toward the creation of such past, is tenable at this stage.

Grobler (2008: 165) noted that when the new government took over in South Africa in 1994—a mainly black government dominated by the African National Congress—the new leadership congratulated themselves, claiming victory over white supremacy and that they had brought freedom to the peoples of South Africa. Grobler observed that the new government needed a foundation myth which would give due credit to black South Africans. As the then minister of Arts and Culture, Pallo Jordan, explained to a journalist in 2004:

> If you came from Mars and you went on the evidence of what is there in these public spaces [in the line of statues, monuments, and memorials], you'd come away with the impression that whites were the original inhabitants [of South Africa] and Africans were the immigrants (Grobler 2008: 165).

In drawing conclusions on the above-mentioned opinions, it might be helpful to take note of Schwartz's (1991: 221) suggestions that two theoretical approaches are at play organising most twentieth-century studies in collective memory. Neither approach is narrow or dogmatic; however, they differ primarily in emphasis. The most widely accepted approach, Schwartz contends, sees the construction of the past shaped by the concerns and needs of the present. Classical statements include Mead's (1929) declaration that 'every conception of the past is construed from the standpoint of new problems of today', and Halbwachs's (1941: 221) assertion that 'collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past [that] adapts the image of ancient facts to the beliefs and spiritual needs of the present'. To this work, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983, as cited by Schwartz 1991: 221) added an important dimension by bringing together

accounts of the deliberate fabrication of rituals, emblems, and monuments, and by showing how these new symbolic and physical markings support new mental constructions of the past. In the process, tradition is reconceived. Commonly defined as a conception or practice sustained across generations, tradition becomes an "invention" consciously designed to deal with present problems (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, as cited by Schwartz 1991: 221). While these classic and contemporary writings pursue different research goals, the essential thrust of their arguments is the same: they see the past as precarious, its contents hostage to the conditions of the present. While empirically well-grounded, they seem to offer a one-sided perspective (Schwartz 1991: 222). As Schudson (1989, as cited by Schwartz 1991: 221) puts it: 'The present shapes our understanding of the past, yes. But this is half the truth, at best, and a particularly cynical half-truth, at that.'

The second approach notes that every society, whatever its ideological climate, requires a sense of continuity with the past, and its enduring memories maintain this continuity. If beliefs about the past failed to outlive changes in society (as in the case of black African beliefs in South Africa which have been disrupted by colonialism and apartheid), then society's unity and continuity would be undermined (Schwartz 1991: 222). Durkheim, a French sociologist commonly cited as one of the principal architects of modern science, commented on this link between unity and continuity. Conceptions of the past, Durkheim believed, are cultivated by periodic commemoration rites whose function is not to transform the past bending it to serve the present, but to produce the past, to make it live as it once did (Durkheim [1912] 1965, as cited by Schwartz 1991: 221). Shils's concept of tradition expresses this same idea. The image of an epoch or a historical figure, he observed, is not conceived and elaborated anew by each generation, but is transmitted following to a "guiding pattern" that endows subsequent generations with a common heritage. Stable memories strengthen society's "temporal integration" by creating links between the living and the dead and promoting consensus over time (Shils 1981: 31-32 as cited by Schwartz 1991: 222). This consensus is resilient since memories create the grounds for their own perpetuation. Memories are not credible unless they conform to an existing structure of assumptions about the past — an 'available past' that people accept as given and that possesses a self-sustaining inertia (Schudson 1989, as cited by Schwartz 1991: 222). Thus, a true community is a "community of memory", one whose past is retained by retelling the same "cognitive narrative" by recalling the people who have always embodied and exemplified its moral values (Bellah et al. 1991, as cited by Schwartz 1991: 222) and in this case, those are the traditional leaders of the Limpopo province.

1.5 Context

Any interest in post-apartheid reunion and reconciliation must explore the political and cultural content of commemorations. That South Africans would feel compelled to commemorate the freedom struggles was inevitable, however, the form and content of their commemorations was not known. In his State of the Province Address of 15 February 2007, the Premier of the Limpopo province announced to the fourth sitting of the third democratic legislature that the work of honouring all warrior traditional leaders who fell in the cause of the struggle against colonial dispossession has been completed (Limpopo Provincial Government 2007)..

This utilitarian act of erecting monuments in the public spaces in honour of those traditional leaders is the focal area of this study. The monuments have historical and commemorative significance. It is essential that a study be conducted on the reasons why only these traditional leaders were chosen as well as the specific historical and commemorative value of the statues in their honour.

The emergence of new South African provinces after 1994 was a historical contingency resulting from the division of the country into nine provinces following the first democratic elections in the country. The Limpopo province provides an interesting case study for socio-cultural memory, being a province currently populated by several cultural communities and ethnic groups that once lived within separated spaces. The two main communities—black and white—subsequently came to employ commemorations for the construction of competing histories of the now unified space.

The previous white government in South Africa created nationalistic narratives that celebrated the construction of racial hierarchies as symbolised in monuments and other memorials, including names of major towns and cities. The same government instituted the history of white self-determination as told by Afrikaners. The wars of independence Afrikaners fought and either won or lost against the British were memorialised extensively with statues erected in memory of those clashes. The built environment underscored the ideological message that defended white supremacy, but also complicated messages of black liberation and cultural independence. A symbolic culmination of Afrikaner nationalism in South Africa can be seen in the erection of the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria in 1937-1951. In South Africa, black people resisted these racially exclusive narratives, positing their own histories. Today the freedom struggle is embraced through the memorialisation process in provinces such as Limpopo.

Informed by memory studies, an analysis of the contested pasts of South Africa and of Limpopo province show how these two distinct cultures followed similar paths before intersecting at the crossroads of the freedom struggle. Where once memorials defended a racist past, today commemorations in Limpopo province proclaim the liberation of the people, the individual, and celebrate human rights.

After careful consideration of the history and character of the province, it may be postulated that the ethnic groups within the province do not necessarily have a history of closer relations and cooperation. Being aware of this situation and desperate to bring about unity and transformation in their towns and cities, provincial leaders recognised the power of monuments and names to move people and have since embarked on a mission to erect statues of prominent traditional leaders and to adopt new names with which most of the population can identify. It is interesting to note that the six traditional leaders who are commemorated represent six of the major ethnic groups, apart from the whites that comprise the Limpopo province.

The Limpopo provincial government prefers to commemorate the past in the ideal language of patriotism as reflected in the speeches of provincial leaders, for example, at unveilings, that are often instrumental both for partisan political activities and for fashioning a new public sphere. Commemorative gatherings in Limpopo often provide spaces for government and other community leaders to reach mass audiences of like-minded people to reinforce partisan ideals. Commemorations of wars and of freedom as chosen for this theme by the Limpopo provincial government seem to be part of the restructuring of public space and suggest how leaders are trying to persuade their constituencies, illuminating the practical concerns for power.

Having considered the above brief background of the history of the province, it will be the contention in this study that the Limpopo provincial government's political leaders saw in commemorations, public art (statues) in particular, as devices that would foster provincial and by implication, national unity, and patriotism. The central theme of this study would, therefore, be the invention of "Limpopo province" through strategies that have attempted to integrate a people separated by history and ethnicity by constructing an identity that is self-consciously aware of the past. Nationalising states have long made use of many devices and agencies to create an emotional bonding with certain histories and pasts. Many nations have had to confront the problems of incorporating peripheral domains and assimilating diverse peoples into the body politic and establishing a degree of national homogeneity—or at least a semblance of common central purpose. They attempted to create what Osborne (2001: 7) calls an 'awareness of belonging'. Reviewing the process by which some of these monuments in Limpopo province were

erected and adopted as well as an analysis of the ambiguous posting of these traditional leaders as patriotic heroes, may help to explain why these memorials tell the histories they tell. Of further concern is to make the connections between identity and the construction of these meaningful devices, which although inanimate objects, still evoke specific kinds of meanings and serve as spatial coordinates of identity (Entrikin 1991).

Limpopo is a contested landscape. People are shooting at and vandalising the monuments. Recently, vandals attempted to blow up the Sekhukhune monument at Tjate and Makhado's at Makhado (after a court battle, now called by its previous name Louis Trichardt) and in 2005 was defaced with paint using the colours of the flag of the government of South Africa in the era of apartheid (Van Zyl 2005). In short, what the landscape says about the past can still arouse strong feelings and sentiments today. Since these symbols are also associated with specific kinds of activities linked to the provincial community through repetitive prosaic practices, often-ritualised performances and institutionalised commemoration, those activities will also be subjected to scrutiny as part of this study.

1.6 Qualifications criteria

Commemoration of past wars has been an area of increasing public interest especially since World War I (Nora 1996: 2). Commemorative Warrior Traditional Leaders' Monuments are the physical points of collective remembrance and stand in the public spaces in Limpopo province as permanent reminders of the "Wars of Resistance against Colonialism and Imperialism". These monuments seem to serve multiple purposes as symbols that carry meaning about reasons for war and the nature of the role of the individual traditional leader's participation in the nations and province's wars. What then brought about the decisions to commemorate through public art and statues in particular?

These project initiatives were informed by the House of Traditional Leaders strategic priorities, such as the promotion of nation building, of a spirit of reconciliation, of the restoration of historically disadvantaged chieftainships, of redressing imbalances of the past in the portrayal of its history, and lastly of the promotion of social cohesion. In its implementation, the project would have been in line with national, provincial, and local growth strategies, such as the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP), which was in line with the national policy framework

for socio-economic planning at provincial levels; the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs); the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative South Africa (ASGISA); the Joint Initiatives on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA); and the Extended Public Works Programmes (EPWP) (South African History Online n.d[b]: 3).

Several provinces were drawn into these projects. As a background, provinces such as Limpopo, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu Natal resolved to embark on programmes that were seeking to commemorate the wars that were fought in their areas which were spearheaded by the traditional leaders in the resistance to land dispossession by the colonialists. The House of Traditional Leadership realised the lack of promoting the historical past of the provinces in the form of their rich history of Wars of Resistance and dispossession. The House had also noted that provinces were lagging in terms of marketing the colonial war histories. Of concern was the lack of education in the present generation regarding the role played by traditional leaders in the liberation struggle. Western influence and enculturation have distorted the perceptions about traditional history and indigenous past (South African History Online n.d[b]: 3).

In a way the commemoration of Wars of Resistance and dispossessions is also perceived as a tribute to the 'fallen sons and daughters of the African soil and this sought to address the idea of promoting African Renaissance' (South African History Online n.d[b]: 3). This rich historical past was therefore portrayed by remembering the wars that were fought against colonial advancement. 'This project also comes at a time when our nation is faced with challenges of social ill-health conditions, for example, HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis, initiation challenges and other related diseases that are in need of traditional healing perspectives (indigenous knowledge systems)' (South African History Online n.d[b]: 3). Further, the project was aimed at the revival of cultural tourism, living heritage practices and role of traditional administrative structures (South African History Online n.d[b]: 3).

The criteria used to select each war was, that the war was between the colonialists and the black Africans, that it reflected unity amongst tribes, that its impact was felt across river boundaries, and that it signalled united resistance from the part of the chieftainships (South African History Online n.d[b]: 3).

The provinces viewed involvement in projects of this nature as an opportunity to contribute to the "African Renaissance" in line with former President Thabo Mbeki's vision, thereby instilling an awareness of common heritage and nationhood. Moreover, this would help promote and invest in cultural diversity through heritage and common nationhood while at the same time, build a strong sense of South African unity. More importantly, this project was significant in that it took

place at a time when traditional leadership and African heritage were being challenged by the influence of modernisation. It was also aimed at unifying the provinces internally and the nation by way of showcasing the past experiences which in turn, would be part of agencies of social change and social cohesion (South African History Online n.d[b]: introduction).

Further, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommended symbolic reparations to victims of apartheid. Symbolic reparations in terms of the TRC report encompassed measures that facilitated communal processes of remembering the pain and victories of the past. Such measures aimed to restore the dignity of victims and survivors. Commemorative aspects included exhumations, tombstones, memorials or monuments, and the renaming of streets and other public entities (Report of the Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee: vol 6: 95). Some provinces chose to expand the TRC recommendation beyond victims. They needed to look back to focus on Wars of Resistance and dispossession.

The DSAC in Limpopo, therefore, submitted a proposal to the provincial cabinet through its Member of the Executive Council (MEC). In its draft framework and business plan for the project, the DSAC stated that the Wars of Resistance underpinned the leadership, courage, and achievement of traditional leaders in the political history of resistance against colonialism and liberation in South Africa. The proposed business plan also stated as rationale the realisation of the lack of education of the present generation about the role played by traditional leaders in the liberation struggle (South African History Online n.d[a]).

The legacy of the Wars of Resistance hinged on several cultural values which have a direct bearing on the sites associated with the political resistance and tensions. It is because of values such as those briefly described below that this legacy remains outstanding:

Historical value:

The Wars of Resistance are historic in nature and constitute an integral aspect of South Africa's past worthy of conservation. The sites of the Wars of Resistance are a physical manifestation and proof of the intangible values which epitomise the historical context (South African History Online n.d[b]).

Political value:

The Wars of Resistance have been instrumental in shaping the political landscape of South Africa.

Throughout the colonial years and post-colonialism, the legacies of Wars of Resistance have shown tremendous influence in the subsequent political regimes to follow (South African History Online n.d[b]).

Educational value:

The teachings of Wars of Resistance still prevail and are relevant today. The sites of Wars of Resistance and dispossession represent a museum without walls or an open-air archive scattered with traces of history and meaning. The sites present the opportunity for the development of an educational resource to serve the immediate and broader surrounding communities. In particular, the sites are conducive for the establishment of an interpretive centre that could serve as an outdoor learning experience. There are also far-reaching prospects for research and development leading to knowledge production, especially since there is a need for documentation of information (South African History Online n.d[b]).

Economic value:

Although the economic value of the sites associated with Wars of Resistance can be realised in several ways, currently, tourism is the most crucial economic activity that has been identified. In this regard, tourism has the potential to contribute to economic development and provide opportunities for job creation in the surrounding areas. Sustainable tourism can thrive when it is executed responsibly by means of upholding conservation measures pertaining to the management of sites (South African History Online n.d[b]).

The Limpopo government initially appropriated a R3 000 000.00 budget towards the completion of this project, however, when it was deemed not enough then the provincial government let it roll over and, in the end R6 000 000.00 was allocated for the whole project (De Wet 2009). The concept document proposed statues in honour of the following chiefs: Sekhukhune, Makhado, Ngungunhane, Malebogo, Mokopane, and Makgoba (in no order) as the ones selected to be honoured through statues for their leadership during the Wars of Resistance (Mulaudzi 2013). Ironically, all but one of these traditional leaders lost their Wars of Resistance against their white enemies. Perhaps, like many other societies, Limpopo proved themselves capable of organising their provincial public psyche around a "lost cause". However, it was more for their bravery to stand up against white intrusion into their land possessions that they were being

honoured, which will be discussed in the later chapters. While in the case of Ngungunhane, his inclusion seems to have been motivated by the need to embrace the Tsonga / Shangaan speaking groups who at present, live in Limpopo province, the traditional leader had indeed fought similar wars against the Portuguese, which explains why he was taken into exile in Portugal, where he later died.

Statues are not necessarily an entirely new culture in Limpopo province. A statue of the late Patrick Mphephu, one-time President of the former Republic of Venda, still stands outside the former Venda parliamentary buildings. Mphephu's statue casts a stern eye over the deserted car park, once reserved for ministers. Like Mphephu's statue, former Lebowa Prime Minister, Dr C.N. Phatudi's statue still stands outside the Lebowakgomo legislative chambers. Recently, a memorial column was erected in honour of Peter Mokaba, the late president of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), in Mankweng Township outside of Polokwane.

The proposal to erect statues was accepted by the provincial Premier Sello Moloto, when in his state of the province address to the first session of the third legislature of Limpopo, at the beginning of his term as the Premier in May 2004, he committed the province to:

> Celebrate the lives and honour the spirits of our historical *icons*. These are represented by our warrior traditional leaders such as Sekhukhune 1, Tshilwavhusiku Makhado and Nghunghunyane (Limpopo Provincial Government 2004-8).
>
> The real work then started in earnest.
