

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The World in Troubled Times

Oral history challenges
and opportunities

2022
Vol 2



Collection Editors

Christina Landman
Sekgothe Mokgoatšana



sport, arts & culture

Department:
Sport, Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



NATIONAL INSTITUTE
FOR THE HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



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ISBN 978 - 0 - 6397 - 4863 - 4

eISBN 978 - 0 - 6397 - 4864 - 1

FOREWORD

The Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA), with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), hosted the 18th Annual National Oral History Conference from 13 to 15 October 2021 at the Thabo Mofutsanyane District in Clarens, Free State Province. The theme of the conference was The World in Troubled Times: Oral History Challenges and Opportunities.

This anthology contains papers delivered at the above-mentioned conference. Presenters gave papers of high academic standard and were encouraged to contribute towards this selection of the Conference Proceedings Volume 2.

All manuscripts received were subjected to a double-blind peer review process, that is, each manuscript was sent to two reviewers. Corrections and alterations were made by the authors to the satisfaction of the Editors. The articles contained in this collection are primarily for an academic audience.

The National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) has made this book possible with their generous donation.

The contributors are from diverse disciplines and institutions, with a research focus on oral history. They are from tertiary educational institutions and provincial archives, with some of them engaging in Master's or Doctoral studies.

The Editors of these Conference Proceedings are proud to present this anthology with its excellent articles. The collection makes a massive contribution to local, national, and African knowledge in general, information that would have been lost if it was not for the effort and existence of OHASA. The committee wish to thank Tanya Pieterse for assisting the authors in the preparation of their articles for this publication.

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Charlotte Maxeke's contribution to African nationalism, Pan-Africanism and anti-colonial movement

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Charlotte Maxeke was instrumental in establishing Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and the anti-colonial movement in South Africa. Despite the role she played above, Maxeke's contributions do not feature much in South Africa's liberation history, and hence the need for this article. To appreciate Maxeke's role, the Afrocentric theory was adopted to illustrate the significance of her contributions towards South Africa's liberation buried in the marshes of Eurocentric epistemologies. The idea is to re-configure the African narratives in the context of meekest nationalist and feminist traits. The article adopted the oral history methodology. The desktop research design was followed to qualitatively appraise the existing literature to relate the participants' narratives to understand Maxeke's contributions to South Africa's liberation. The article argues that through the 1913 anti-pass law protests, Maxeke provided an essential substance to South Africa's political revolution. Through the Bantu Women's League and the All African National Convention, Maxeke helped empower women in politics, economics, and society. In doing so, Maxeke showed her dedication to the 'development' of a sophisticated nationalism to fight against all forms of oppression. Charlotte Manye Maxeke also provided an African framework to linguistic nationalism. Native languages were used to write speeches to communicate her political ideas. This article recommends that the African liberation archives should deconstruct the Eurocentric and patriarchal linear narratives of South Africa's liberation history.

Contribution: Maxeke's contribution to Pan-Africanism, nationalism, and anti-colonial movements is counter-read in existing meta-narratives on South Africa's liberation that marginalize women's roles. The oral historical methods and desktop analysis founded on qualitative inquiry help sustain Maxeke's contributions to South Africa's liberation struggle.

Keywords: Maxeke, Pan-Africanism, Nationalism, Anti-Colonial Movements, Feminism, Bantu Women's League.

Background

This article explores Charlotte Maxeke's contributions to Pan-Africanism, nationalism, and anti-colonial movements in South Africa. The idea is to counter-read the existing meta-narratives on the liberation of South Africa that marginalises the role of women. The study is underpinned by the social sciences and humanities theoretical foundation to contribute towards an engaging intellectual debate about South Africa's oral history. The role women played in liberating South Africa from apartheid in

terms of the national memory re-construction is new in South Africa. This article adopted an innovative approach that goes beyond the traditional patriarchal construction of history by illuminating women's roles in nation making, where reference to Charlotte Manye Maxeke is central.

The article adopted a qualitative research methodology where oral history methods were key in data collection. The qualitative methodology enabled this researcher to gather information from published works, unpublished thesis and dissertations, and autobiographies to entangle different narratives, theoretical linkages, and the orally captured participants' narratives. The adopted thematic data analysis approach helped to produce key themes that enabled the reconstruction of knowledge. The said key themes are: Maxeke's autobiography, Pan-Africanism, nationalism and, feminism and linguistic nationalism.

The researcher discovered that Maxeke was an important figure in South Africa's liberation from colonialism. Maxeke was influenced by colonial conditions in South Africa and anti-racism movements in the United States. She challenged the colonial system by organizing women demonstrations, strengthened the Bantu Women's League (BWL) and held several leadership positions in the African National Congress (ANC) and the National African Convention on Woman (NACW). Maxeke played a pivotal role in the African women's feminism construct and the women's roles in liberation struggles. In addition, Charlotte Maxeke is remembered as a native linguist because of her role in writing revolutionary letters in isiXhosa. This article attests that there is a need to remember and honor heroines such as, *inter alia*, Helen Suzman, Rahim Moosa, Lilian Ngoyi, and Ida Mntwana. There is a need to honor these women in order to create a historical balance in South Africa's liberation struggle narratives.

Introduction

Many iconic figures such as Lilian Ngoyi, Rahima Moosa, Ida Mntwana, Amalia Cachalia, and Charlotte Maxeke are not fully acknowledged in African historical annals. Their stories were dismembered in order to dehumanise and ridicule the African anti-colonial history's tidal waves. Stories of the nationalist launched liberation struggles witnessed in post-independence Africa are remembered as victors and treacherous, and as liberators and villains, depending on the writer's political standpoint. The truth of the early years of anti-colonial resistance is buried in the marshes of sands. Nevertheless, the fourth-generation African scholars have realised the dismemberment of African histories and Africa's heroines. Maxeke's story is not fully articulated in South Africa's historical narratives. Yet, Nelson Mandela appears in almost any narrative about South Africa's liberation history where he is seen as the champion of anti-apartheid, reconciliation, and post-independence good governance.

For Ntwape (2014), Maxeke's non-existence in our historical narratives is similar to Ida Mntwana, a key player in the organisation of the Congress of the People and leader in the 1950s anti-pass demonstrations. Rahima Moosa and Helen Joseph helped organise the Women's March under FEDSAW assisted by Lillian Ngoyi and Sophia Williams. These women organized about 20 000 women to march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to demonstrate against the apartheid regime's pass laws. Lilian Ngoyi was powerful orator whose anti-apartheid speeches were an inspiration to her comrades during the liberation struggle years. Though these women were honoured by the post-apartheid government, Helen Suzman appears in a number of articles as having contributed to the liberation of South Africa.

Helen Suzman fled anti-Semitism in Europe to South Africa and was elected a Member of Parliament in 1953 under the United Party (UP) that was anti-apartheid (Ntwape 2014).

Single narratives are a threat to the understanding of the ‘idea of South Africa’. Suzman’s story is inadequate to fully trace South Africa’s liberation from both colonial and apartheid bondages. In a struggle to establish a complete version or decolonial narratives in South Africa, Maxeke’s story would help to establish new arguments and in-sights into what happened during the liberation struggle years. Not much is written about Maxeke so far. Maxeke conquered the imperialists’ hearts by launching various anti-colonial campaigns in South Africa and abroad. With her intellectual vigour, Maxeke challenged the imperialist systems such as racism, capitalism, and Black people’s de-humanisation. This article analyses Maxeke’s contribution to Pan-Africanism and African nationalism during the early years of political uprisings against South Africa’s colonial government.

In doing so, the article adopted the Afrocentric theoretical paradigm to factually analyse Maxeke’s contribution to the birth of a free South Africa. Asante’s (2007) theory helped to describe how African histories were robbed and dismembered, and how Africans were dehumanised. To understand the South African liberation history’s faults, this article illustrates Maxeke’s story as one of the notable women relegated to the foot notes of history. According to Thozama (2012), Maxeke’s legacy is not fully acknowledged as only a few nationalists are celebrated in South Africa. The Afrocentric theory helped provide new themes in South Africa’s liberation history in line with Ani’s (1994) ‘yurugu’ concept. Yurugu is an Afrocentric method developed by Ani (1994) that help to explain African issues in an Afro-centred paradigm. Mazama (2003) noted that Afrocentric is a thought consciousness, paradigm, mode of analysis, and an actionable perspective where Africans seek (from agency) to assert subject place within the context of African history. Yurugu seeks to remember the dismembered. Remembering the dismembered Maxeke’s legacy is re-asserting the subject place of women and nationalism in African agency.

The Afro-centric theoretical paradigm complements concepts such as Pan-Africanism, nationalism, and the anti-colonial movement. The theory helps redefine African history in African perspective (Asante, 2007). Pan-Africanism is the political ideology that informed Africa’s political movements. Martin (2013) sees Pan-Africanism as the blueprint and political idea that inform the past and present in an attempt to re-map Africa in the global civilisation map. Pan-Africanism is an emancipatory ideology. Mahomva (2014) defined Pan-Africanism according to ideological and political reflections, that is, Africans’ social, cultural and, political and intellectual movements in Africa and abroad that seek to rebuke African inferiority and promote Africa’s liberation. Maxeke’s leadership and political activism roles are equivalent to those intellectual figures in developing Pan-Africanism. The inclusion of women in the struggle redefine Pan-Africanism and women struggles as part of the liberation movement (Thozama 2012).

The anti-colonial movement is synonymous to Pan-Africanism, but the former is beyond theoretical. Anti-colonial movements are practical issues that include riots, strikes, demonstrations, sabotages, and liberation struggle wars (Martin 2013). Anti-colonial movements can be conceptualised as leading demonstrations for votes. Maxeke’s leadership in various organisations indicates her role in anti-colonial movements. The movement sought to uproot colonial systems and their governments. Martin (2013)

problematised nationalism as one of the critical issues that defined the movement against colonialism as identity and culturally based, an African cause. These attributes show Black people's unity and solidarity in fighting against racism and colonialism.

There is a critical link of Afrocentric, nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and anti-colonial movements to intellectually locate Maxeke's contribution to South Africa's liberation. Maxeke's role goes beyond the issue of lingua franca and feminism as part of the Pan-African movement. The first section explains the methodology and research design adopted in this article to confront the existing meta-narratives about South Africa's liberation struggle. The second section presents information gathered from documents. The first part of the discussions looks at Maxeke's life as a singer and a political activist. This is important to understand how the conditions then created a politically conscious Maxeke and led to her involvement in political activism.

Maxeke's early life narrative is a starting point in remembering her greatness in the annals of African history. The second part discusses women bodies, souls, and minds as awakened by Maxeke in South Africa, the influences from the call for Africana Womanism, race, and feminism. Discussing the above help to understand and develop new forms of knowledge about feminism and Africanism. Here, the focus is on Maxeke's contribution to Pan-Africanism. Maxeke's contributions to Pan-Africanism helps understand how she imported W.E.B. DuBois' ideas of free Africa to South Africa and how this ideology challenged the colonial governments.

The third part deals with issues untouched by most writers who wrote about Maxeke, that is, Maxeke's decolonial linguistic traits in writing speeches in Xhosa as part of the broader Pan-African movement. Dhlomo, Vilakazi, and later Kwesi Kwa Prah realised the importance of linguistic nationalism to escape mental slavery (Prah 2016). This article benefited from scholars who conducted research about Maxeke such as Thozama (2012) and Jaffer (2016). The said scholars provided practical and theoretical recommendations to broaden debates and raise important issues regarding national memory. By exploring Maxeke's Pan-Africanism, nationalism, and anti-colonialism, this article helps counter-read the idea of South Africa's existing historical narratives.

Research methodology and research design

The missing narratives about South Africa's liberation struggle in mainstream historical studies evokes the need to engage in thorough research in this respect. This article utilised the qualitative methodology underpinned by the desktop research design and oral history methods. Doing so helped to blend secondary data with oral narratives to help understand Maxeke's contribution to South Africa's liberation struggle. The idea is to stimulate debates about women's contribution in the country's liberation in order to obliterate selective memory in the study of the country's liberation history. Maxeke's contribution to the liberation of South Africa needs to be publicised in the annals of history and modern South Africa as one of the founding mothers of the new South Africa.

Creswell (2013) defines research methodology as a scientific and social inquiry of certain social phenomenon to uncover truths and reality and provide concrete solutions to known problems. Maxeke's contribution to the birth of a nation is a critical phenomenon that requires in-depth

studying. Studying Maxeke's contribution to South Africa's liberation is part of the knowledge making process or the re-construction of the South African historiography.

Kumar (2014) defined the qualitative research methodology as a non-numeric, normative, analytical, and empirical inquiry of social issues. In an attempt to uncover the role played by Maxeke in the construction of South Africa's anti-colonial movements, qualitative methodology was the best in that it condenses copious quantities of data, is not expensive, and helps uncover subjective issues. Subjective issues include existing Eurocentric historical narratives and the Afrocentric attempts to re-construct South Africa's liberation historiography. The qualitative methodology helps create a balance in understanding issues and escape the dangers of a single story (Adichie 2015). However, the researcher's subjective opinion affects the factual construction of arguments about the phenomenon.

The researcher's Afrocentric pre-supposition thought is advantageous in deconstructing the existing narratives, and it does not escape the realities of overlapping thoughts. Qualitative research designs are used as the overall operational pattern framework and the procedures for acquiring information needed. This researcher also adopted the documentary review and oral method of data collection. The idea was to capture other scholars' views about Maxeke's nationalist and feminist activism against the Union Governments. Dissertations, thesis, books, and journal articles were used to collect secondary data. Through oral history methods, the researcher interviewed senior retired politicians and associates of her families. The idea was to capture their narratives, memories, emotions, and experiences in the liberation struggle, especially Maxeke's involvement. The challenge to this method is the absence of participants who directly engaged with Maxeke.

The participants' knowledge is quite important in building the arguments and constructing new forms of history to develop 'oral history' as a method of data collection. Oral history methods were developed such that the liberation struggle narratives' heroes are used to counterfeit the existing liberation memory of women's involvement in decolonial movements. The researcher sustained this method with relevant literature, records, empirical works, and archival materials. However, subjective discourses illuminate oral history data collection where male participants represent a masculine knowledge and female participants entrench feminine discourses of liberation history. The feminisation and masculinisation of the liberation history are subjective discourses that affect the objective interpretation of data. However, balancing these two dominant issues provides a satisfactory understanding of the history of liberation and Maxeke's role therein.

The article deconstructs existing narratives found in secondary sources, and hence critiques these information repositories. The following sources were prominently used here; Zubedia (2016) *The beauty of the heart: The life and times of Charlotte Manny Maxeke*, Thomas (2012) PhD Thesis, *Theorizing women: The intellectual contributions of Charlotte Maxeke to the struggle for liberation in South Africa*. These two sources are more descriptive and offer broad information about Maxeke's involvement in Black people's liberation struggle in South Africa. Data were analysed thematically for easier interpretation and analysis. Creswell (2013) stated that thematic analysis is the data collection method founded on the principle of reducing large quantities of data into themes and sub-themes. This researcher grouped information according to themes such as Maxeke's autobiography, her intellectual

and political contribution to Pan-Africanism and South African nationalism, Maxeke and the position of 'native women', and linguistic nationalism.

The broad themes helped to confront ahistorical arguments about South Africa's nationalism as patriarchal and locating the founding matriarchs in the birth of the nation. For Asante (2007), the Afrocentric paradigm's mandate is to 'remember the dismembered'. The above themes are premised on the Afrocentric method of analysis to counter the Eurocentric historiography hegemony that continue to dismember the African issues. In observing ethical practices, this article acknowledged all sources used to avoid plagiarism. Participants' names were protected through codes (PH 1 to PH 10).

Results and Discussion

Women in the pages of South African nationalist historiography: Charlotte Maxeke

Traveling internationally at a time when Black women were viewed as lesser than less, Maxeke's unimaginable journey through history was used to inspire and promote ideologies of hope, transformation, cultural diversity, and a sense of citizenship among youth in and outside South Africa (Jaffer 2016:22). (Translated from isiXhosa). History pages are blank on women's role in South Africa's liberation struggle. Who was Charlotte Maxeke?

Her heroic contribution to the cause of Africa astonished me to a higher magnitude. I only knew Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and Steve Biko as father-figures of the liberation struggle and only a few women. Being exposed to the history of anti-pass laws astonished me. I realised the women's role in challenging the Union Government as did Nelson Mandela. Maxeke's leadership during that time mirrors women's brilliance and selfless sacrifice to Black People's cause. Maxeke's history must be told and written in the annals of South African liberation history (PH 3).

The above challenges the mainstream South African historiography in relegating Maxeke to the dustbins of Black people's liberation history. Maxeke's story is uncharted in South Africa's historical studies. Only a few scholars have written about her so far. Lack of studies about her is a sorry case in the re-construction of South Africa's nationalist historiography that is male dominated. The challenge writing Maxeke's biography is the lack of sources. However, Jaffer (2016) wrote an informative piece that adds to Maxeke's biography issues such as her philosophy and political ideas. The book titled: *The Beauty of the Heart: The Life and Times of Charlotte Manny Maxeke*, focuses on Maxeke's life and contribution to South Africa's liberation struggle.

Jaffer (2016) focused on deconstructing the patriarchal nature of South Africa's liberation struggle historiography where he adopted the Foucauldian point of view in constructing a single narrative from various 'other' stories to have a complete version of historical truth and knowledge. Maxeke was born while South Africa faced political instability that included anti-colonial resistance, wars of occupation, and colonial land disposessions that made it difficult to locate her place and year of birth. Scholars struggle to solve the above mistry. Using different historical sources, therefore, scholars have come up with Maxeke's different dates and birth places (Thozama 2012).

For Skota (n.d.), Maxeke was born in Ramokgopa in Pietersburg town (currently Polokwane under Capricorn district), on the 7th April 1874. Verwey (1999) locates Maxeke's birthplace at Fort Beaufort in the then Cape Colony. Most scholars agree with Verwey's (1999) recorded date and place of Maxeke's birth. Maxeke received missionary education in the then Cape Colony. Missionaries came to Africa with "mission civilisatrice" ideas to civilize and convert barbaric Africans. Southern Africa witnessed mass missionary activities by different missionary societies, namely, the London Missionary Society, Dutch Missionary Society, and various missionaries from protestant and the Roman Catholic Church.

Grosfoguel (2013) asserted that Father Bartolomeo de La Casas and humanist Gines Juan de Sepulveda started a debate about the humanity and humanness of non-Europeans in Spanish colonies under the presence of King Phillip II. Father Bartolommeo de La Casas argued that non-Europeans in Spanish colonies were human beings, and hence there was no need to convert them to Christianity and incorporate them in Spanish territories. However, de Sepulveda counter-argued that Africans were not human enough, they were barbaric, and it is according to natural law for the civilised beings to impose rules on them. This famous debate defined the conditions of non-Europeans across the world. Maldonado-Torres (2018) said that after the 1550 Valladolid Judgment about the Red Indians' humanity, the issue of sub-humanity was directed to Africans as people without soul, religion, and civilisation, and hence the need to give them religion and civilisation. Therefore, missionaries came with the concept to civilise and convert 'barbaric Africans to Christianity'. Missionaries established schools to teach Africans how to read and write to prepare them for theological literacy as an alternative to demonic African cultures (Lezra 2011).

After completing her lower grades, Maxeke proceeded to Edwards Memorial School in Port Elizabeth. Together with her sister Katie, they were introduced to Mr. Paul Xiniwe, the School Choir's Conductor and Headmaster. Under his influence and guidance, the two sisters discovered their musical talent. The discovery marked the beginning of the two sisters' musical journey. In 1889, Maxeke qualified as a teacher. In 1894, her family relocated to Kimberly. At that time, Kimberly was full of opportunities. J. H. Ballmer of Blackpool in England organized a two-year concert tour for the Jubilee Choir to the British Isles (Thozama 2012).

Wellington Mayiza, Paul Xiniwe, Josiah Semouse, Johanna Jonkers, Katie Manye, Mrs. Xiniwe, Charlotte Manye, Letty, John Xiniwe, and Albert Jonas made up the Jubilee Choir. The Jubilee Choir received an invitation to sing before Queen Victoria. Maxeke attended public lectures by Emily Pankhurst of the suffragette movement that made her want to fight for women's rights (voting, citizenship, and gender equality). The group went to London and became the 'first Kaffir Choir to Visit England'. The group members refused to be called 'Kaffir', a derogatory term that is racist in nature and intent.

After the first tour of Europe, the Jubilee Choir was invited to tour the US. On touring the US, seven members of the choir met Bishop Ransom of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E) who immediately saw an opportunity to expand the work of the church beyond the African American constituency. The A.M.E was established to empower the African Americans spiritually, economically, and politically. In 1884, the A.M.E's President, Samuel Mitchel, organized scholarships for South African students to study at the Wilberforce University, and Maxeke was one of them. In 1901, she received a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree. To Maxeke, obtaining the B. Sc. degree opened her understanding of colonialism, knowledge production, construction and issues of race and gender's mental effects. Maxeke

became aware of her enthusiasm to educate Africans for them to escape the wrath of colonialism (Xuma 1930). In 1901, Maxeke returned to Africa to dedicate her life to empowering Africans on self-determination. In June 1913, she led the first anti-pass campaign against the union government where she and 700 other women marched to Bloemfontein City Council and burned their passes. She became the first executive President of the National African Women Convention and played the most important role in women's liberation and the native South Africans. Maxeke established the Wilberforce Institute dedicated to teaching Africans about who they are. She also played an important role in the missionary work of the A.M.E women ministries. Maxeke organized scholarships for brilliant female students to study at the Wilberforce University. She died in 1939. Maxeke's life and work in liberating South Africa's Black women is hardly explored in South Africa.

Pan-Africanism and Nationalism:

Charlotte Maxeke's intellectual contribution to the struggle

Charlotte Manye Maxeke is one of the Pan-Africanist architects of the twentieth century. However, Maxeke's contribution to Pan-Africanism is overshadowed by the glorification of father figures such as Kwame Osagyefo Nkrumah, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, William DuBois, Leopold Senghor, Kwame Toure, Oliver Tambo, and Nelson Mandela. Not much has been written about women Pan-Africanists so far. The anti-pass campaigns and demonstration delineate from the political discourse, conferences, and philosophical to practical struggles for Black people's attainment of freedom. I believe that Charlotte Manye Maxeke was an equal Pan-Africanist figure to Marcus Garvey and Kwame Nkrumah. The challenge is that her story is relegated to the margins of the Pan-African history (PH 1).

The results suggest that Maxeke contributed equally to Pan-African and African nationalism as did male Pan-Africanists. Pan-Africanism is the coalesce movement of Africans in Africa and beyond to fight for their rights and freedom affected by colonialism and the trans-Atlantic's slave trade (Mahomva, 2014). It seeks to rebut the African inferiority from the dominant colonial system of thought powers and political impositions. Marcus Mosiah Garvey, George Padmore, W.E.B. DuBois, Kwame Ture, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Frantz Fanon, Samora Machel, and Amilcar Cabral are Pan-Africanism's founding fathers. However, Maxeke and Pixley Ka Isaka Seme also played an equal role in Africa's political activism and nationalist consciousness that re-shaped nationalist struggles based on race, gender, identity, and politics.

Lumumba (2010) acknowledged that Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, in 1904, famously known for his essay "Regeneration of Africa" argued for the rise and awakening of Africa. Similarly, Maxeke came into being in transforming the theoretical ideas of nationalism into reality with her remarkable leadership during the anti-pass campaigns in Bloemfontein City. She managed to change the narrative in two folds; through public demonstrations (the involvement of women in liberation struggles) and through Africans re-claiming their humanity.

Africans re-claiming their humanity was against the background of the popular Eurocentric image of Africans as non-humans, non-thinking beings, and sub-humans. This is evidenced by violent occupation by the Dutch (17th century) and the English (18th century) that forced Africans to be converted to Christians, thereby abandoning their culture that connected them with the metaphysics of the above. Residential houses in townships for labour reservoirs were built, symbolizing white supremacy. Ghetto townships were characterized by poor service delivery, sanitation, increase in crime rate and abject

poverty. The idea behind such residential set up was to define ‘blackness’ as non-human and barbaric, and who deserved to live like animals. That is why Maxeke fought against colonialism after her return from the USA where she was inspired by the revolutionary activities of the African Americans and mentored by W.E.B. DuBois (Pan-Africanism’s intellectual giant).

Pass laws were against humanity in South Africa. The laws limited the Black people’s freedoms. In search of the natives’ freedom and humanity, Maxeke engaged in protests against pass laws by burning pass books. The pass law protests inform us about South Africa’s history of liberation as equally led by women as well. There were various protests against the union and apartheid governments respectively. The 1960 Sharpeville Massacre also exemplifies women leadership in the fight against apartheid. The 1960s demonstrations were the continuation of the struggle for freedom underpinned by the first movements against colonial laws and policies (Ndhlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

Charlotte Maxeke’s most important contribution to nationalism was including women in the struggle movement. This was against the background of patriarchal society advanced by displacements, forced removals, and the colonial family and education system premised on the idea of male superiority. To Maxeke and other women, nationalism remained a struggle against sexism, patriarchy, racism, capitalism, inequality, and colonialism given Maxeke’s philosophical leanings (PH 2).

The above participant conceptualises Maxeke’s role in developing nationalism discourse to include women in the struggle movement against colonialism beyond cultural issues. The anti-pass campaign shows women’s gallantry and dedication to attaining the natives’ freedom. Maxeke challenged the patriarchal nature of the struggle movement (Wells, 1986). Women were the most oppressed group due to colonialism. Colonialists came with the Catholic-Protestant sexist cultures that relegated women to society’s periphery to justify their oppression. Women were used as sex objects whilst they were the mothers of freedom since they bore children to sustain the revolution. Women nurtured those children to bravery, ready to fight for the natives’ rights. The ANC was formed to fight for Black people’s rights in South Africa and beyond. However, the ANC was rooted in sexist political theory that pushed women to the periphery. Maxeke redesigned South Africa’s nationalist struggle through her leadership by openly challenging pass laws.

Through Maxeke’s initiatives, male nationalists realised the importance of women in that struggle. Xuma’s (1930) poem, “Mrs. Charlotte Manye: What an Educated Girl Does”, traces Maxeke’s intellectual stamina and how she re-shaped nationalism and the ANC’s political structure. Maxeke believed in education as a means to understanding the colonial government structures and proper methods of confrontation. In nationalist struggles, education was key. That is why Julius Nyerere and Robert Mugabe established schools in refugee camps to improve the refugees’ understanding of the liberation struggle and Black people’s political ideology. Maxeke’s contribution to Pan-Africanism was based on gender equality, freedom from colonial laws, equal education, and culture as important ethos of African nationalism.

The struggle against all forms of dominance: Charlotte Maxeke and feminist epistemic enterprise

In remembering the liberation struggle, we must not forget the role of women. Charlotte Manye Maxeke was one of the dedicated women cadres who played a heroic role in the liberation of South Africa.

She included 'Africana womanism' and 'Black feminism' as part of nationalism. She believed that the liberation of Black South Africans meant the liberation of women from class exploitation, colonialism, and patriarchy. Maxeke also revolutionarised nationalism by influencing women to be involved in liberation decision making through the Bantu Women's League and All Africa Women Convention.

Charlotte Maxeke was a feminist who believed in nationalism as a redemptive methodology (PH 4). In fighting against all forms of domination, Maxeke played a critical role in the struggle and liberation of women in South Africa. Her dream was not to treat women as an exceptional or another form of struggle but part of the nationalist struggle. Maxeke broadened the linear perspective of nationalist struggles, which was about race consciousness and political liberation but continued to relegate women phenomenon to the periphery. Women history is theorised in three categories; the first part relegated women to the development of nationalism in assigned roles as secretaries, mothers of revolution, and women guerrillas. The second one emphasized the role of distinguished women leaders and their role in resistance.

While the third dealt with the development of the women movement and the spread of feminist discourses about the liberation of women in different parts of Africa (Mima 1996). These categories help one to understand Maxeke's intellectual contributions to women's struggles in South Africa. First, as secretary of the movement; second, as notable leader; and third, as having helped in the development of broader women struggle in South Africa. However, Maxeke's contributions go beyond Mima's (1996) analysis by adding the fourth value which sought to reconfigure feminist discourse to fit the African or native womanhood in the liberation struggle.

The challenge with nationalism is that it followed the pretext of paternalistic patriarchal politics moulded from African and Christianity cultures of female subjugation. Liberation from colonialism became the main issue and women liberation was viewed as not part of the struggle. However, Maxeke corrected that historic injustice and included women affairs in nationalism as part of a wider movement against colonialism. Thomas Sankara once said; 'Political liberation without women liberation is meaningless'. That is, all forms of dominance must be accounted for in nationalist struggles as an ideology and people's struggle. The colonial culture exported patriarchal mentality to Africa, which originated during the era of Catholic Paternalism that burned women philosophers accused of witchcraft. After the fall of Al-Andalusia, women in the Iberian Peninsula became philosophers, and were thus accused of witchcraft and burned alive.

The treacherous activities obliterate women's role in the making of knowledge. The mainstream disciplines in social and natural sciences, and in medicine are dominated by male intellectuals (Kapuya, 2020). Knowledge production is thus patriarchal and so is nationalist historiography. As a young and educated woman, Xuma (1930) described Maxeke as one of the prominent struggle intellectuals who used different intellectual methodologies to diagnose and prescribe strategies that re-sharpened nationalism in South Africa. Maxeke adopted an experiential approach to analyse issues while at Wilberforce University. She followed the popular methodology to understand the African American identity, race, and culture. Doing so was critical to understanding human relations as experiences were constructed to form concepts and strategies to deal with the liberation of people of colour in America and abroad. The methodological praxis helped scholars to document African

Americans' everyday life and experiences in economics and politics. Doing so helped Maxeke to understand the impact of racism, mental slavery, and the politics of colour. The American system is not elitist *per se* as it involved everyone in understanding issues that affect them and develop mutual solutions to their problems. The American system is used to understand the African Americans' livelihoods from Afrocentric perspectives, ghetto conditions, crime, drugs, popular culture, music, poetry, art, aesthetic, and philosophical reflections. Maxeke used the same methodology to understand Black women's plight concerning issues of African womanhood, the Native Question, culture, race, and women in nationalist movement.

Thus, Maxeke understood the situation beyond the Eurocentric social science methodologies on researching the conditions of the colonised subjects in colonial states. Wynter (1994) and Lugones (2017) claimed that women in colonial states were reduced to subjects, were non-citizens, and were stripped of all rights in the state. Women were highly dehumanized compared to their male counterparts. Women were oppressed because of their skin colour, women were oppressed because they were part of farm workers, and hence triple oppression (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 2015). Women were used as sex slaves to breed Coloureds in South Africa.

Women's dehumanization was extreme, and hence the need to incorporate their struggles in nationalism. That is what Maxeke did to bring feminism to Africa. Hers was spiced by African American and Africana Womanism, and hence was different from Emily Pankhurst's feminism. The idea was to contextualise women revolutions among native women of different ethnic groups in South Africa. For Wells (1983) the visibility of women in the historical narratives of the liberation struggle is questioned. Women's visibility thereof is not about the memory of the liberation struggle but the inclusion and involvement of women in the struggle. Women's non-existence is deliberate and is premised on Eurocentric sexist historiography.

In 1918, Maxeke adopted a practical revolutionary strategy of involving women in the broader political struggle as the president of the Bantu Women's League. The league adopted the name 'Bantu' to express a cultural phenomenon to the struggle, unity, and preservation of Black cosmology. The Bantu concept helped the league to be a critical anti-racist and anti-sexist organisation that made it relevant in the liberation struggle. For Wiredu (2002), Bantu means the virtue of being human, which came from the phrase 'I am because we are'. Black being and identity is cosmos and is transacted from the social and cultural values of the community. Black being is an important cultural philosophy of the people in Central and Southern Africa (Ramose 2012; Tempels 1954). Bantu cosmology played an important role in the liberation struggle. Bantu cosmology is not sexist since it was founded on the principle of inclusion, children, women, disabled, and men, elders and young, making it a resistance nourishment and triumph against the Euro-American modes of being.

Wells (1983) noted that the ANC was formed under the banner of missionary culture, resistance, and the issue of patriarchal sentiments with pieces of cultural identity. ANC's resistance traits were more elitist. The first bunch of the ANC intellectuals composed the political structure of the organisation to wage resistance and fight for social justice. Women were allowed to have membership with no voting rights. Maxeke challenged this system through a heroic movement recorded in the history of South Africa's liberation struggle. Together with the Bantu Women's League, she marched against

pass laws which restricted the movement of native South Africans in the country. The anti-pass law campaign was celebrated as an important movement, which strengthened African nationalism against colonialism. Maxeke critically developed a number of feminist theories on decolonial movements as non-sexist movements. She transformed the nationalist paradigm from being sexist to inclusion through the use of institutions for it to be relevant and impetus in the struggle.

After a series of disagreements during the All-African Convention in Bloemfontein, wives of the delegates including Charlotte Maxeke proposed a convention to establish a women's independent body to help in the struggle against colonialism. The National Convention of African Women (NCAW) was established. The NCAW's objective was to play an advisory role to All African Convention on issues of race consciousness and nationalism while maintaining its autonomy. That is how women were included in the broader and wider African nationalism (Wells 1983; Qunta 1987; Cele 2018). Charlotte Maxeke was elected NCAW's first President, deputised by Lily Nikiwe of Port Elizabeth, M.T. Soga of Queenstown was its National Secretary, Mrs. Xala of Natal was the Assistant Secretary, and Mrs. Mahabane of the Orange Free State was its Treasurer.

This Convention's first and second conferences raised a lot of critical issues in the history of women colonialism, the issue of sexism, sexual objects, the Native Land Act of 1913, pass laws, and various issues in native womanhood and broader 'race consciousness'. Maxeke's courage and boldness helped construct an epistemic foundation of post-colonial and decolonial feminism, which raised the question of female bodies in colonialism, women and culture, women and the history of liberation, women and race, and women and the post-colonial state. She offered a future perspective of women inclusion in the construction of a post-colonial state as important citizens equal to men.

The issue of gender inequality in Pan-African movement challenged not in demonstration against its sexist appearance but waged a heroic movement which made a clear admission of women involvement in the struggle against colonial enterprise. The fusion of African American experiences (Africana Womanism) and Bantu Womanism offered a critical counter-reading of the western forms of feminism, which was Eurocentric in application. Maxeke admitted that men considered women their inferiors and properties based on the culture of dowry.

The dowry culture was commercialised and became expensive, which raised the value of women from being equal human beings to properties. Charlotte Maxeke reiterated the issue of inequality within women movements as the crippling factor to the achievement of the struggle's goals and objectives. Most feminist movements were affected by the inequality syndrome. That is why Maxeke divorced herself from the Euro-American movement, which was characterized by the racial class system. She believed that the movement was not owned by one woman who was in leadership but by all women and that made Ubuntu projection a reality.

For April (2012), 'Maxeke epitomised women's struggles against the domination of basic human rights such as dignity, happiness, education, employment opportunities, and property ownership'. On the education issue, Maxeke believed that it is a source of upliftment and enlightenment. She helped brilliant female students to acquire scholarships to study at the Wilberforce University (Xuma 1930). Education is the key to women empowerment and the most important aspect about Charlotte Maxeke

on education was her belief in African American epistemologies as the most basic forms of knowledge, which helped to improve Black people's mental conditions.

Wilberforce University is an African Methodist Episcopal affiliated institution formed to help empower the African Americans. The university's objective contributed to the development of the university curricula. The university's curricula were Africanised, and spoke for the African Americans, their culture, race, gender, and identity. Maxeke was ahead of her time given that before the Rhodes Must Fall or the coloniality of epistemologies, she had realised the mental effects of colonialism and the importance of African American institutions in decolonization. Therefore, Maxeke was beyond an ordinary feminist. She constructed the foundation for understanding the African Womanhood philosophy, Bantu feminism, women in nationalist struggle, and the decolonial education.

Native Languages: A linguistic decolonial credence of Charlotte Maxeke

Reading Charlotte Maxeke's biography in selected books, one realises that only a few scholars acknowledge her love for native languages and their usage to communicate her messages. This section gives a critical analysis of Charlotte Maxeke's linguistic contribution to the development of grammar and Xhosa writings in colonial times. After returning to South Africa as an intellectual moulded with Pan-African philosophy, Maxeke deposited the importance of culture and identity to evoke the need to develop indigenous languages to communicate with the subalterns. Doing so explained her uniqueness from other intellectuals in the history of South Africa's liberation. Most of the male struggle stalwarts gained opportunities to study overseas and came back speaking foreign languages fluently. Such changes affected communication with local people. Instead of returning home speaking and boasting of her intellectual achievement, Maxeke masterly weaved indigenous languages with Pan-African philosophy to rich the subalterns.

The theory of Pan-Africanism is based on subalternity. However, there are classes in those subaltern formations where education is the factor for division. Nonetheless, Maxeke humble ignored divisive issues such as ethnicity, class, and gender in the continent's liberation endeavours. "The biggest weapon yielded and daily unleashed by imperialism against the collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, and in their capacities. For instance, with other people's language rather than their own (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986).

Ngugi (1986) realized the linguistic effects of colonialism to Africans. Language helped dehumanize and destroy African memory hidden in linguistic gourds such as names, stories, folklore, legends, and myths that made up an African being. The main theme of the colonizers was to repress resistance sourced from the cultural unity. Indigenous languages were 'linguisticides'. Destroying Africans was done through Missionary education, which taught Africans foreign language literacy mainly for communication and easy conversion to Christianity. The project went well, many schools were introduced to serve the purpose and achieve the colonial aim. Foreign languages were used as a measure of intelligence. Educated Africans were alienated from society. Kapuya (2020) stated that instead of being self, Africans become the other, a non-African consciously and non-Europeans in cognitive discourses. Education bred confusion and the Stockholm syndrome of viewing the White

race as survivors, blessed, and civilized. It is this paranoia which led to the establishment of colonial systems unopposed by the Blacks. Most Black people developed an affection of the white system.

Fanon (1967) reiterated that the most educated people are the most alienated. He meant that the educated people are alienated from their roots, culture, history, people, and philosophy. Educated people have western thoughts and ideologies, which relegate African thinking and cognitive processes. This is coined as coloniality of knowledge and being (Grosfoguel 2013; Mignolo 2013; Ndhlovu-Gatsheni 2013 & Maldonado-Torres 2018). Coloniality of knowledge and being is problematic to African nationalism, particularly where the educated elites were in the forefront constructing a Pan-African ideology and led political activism. Ironically, Black elites acknowledged the Eurocentric forms of thoughts, which raised the questions of the Afrocentric nature of Pan-Africanism. European knowledge in missionary schools relegated Africa to the periphery of history by adopting the Hegelian historical philosophy which attest that Africans are people without history, without intelligentsia, without knowledge, and without civilization. They opened up the emptiness of Africans and filled that emptiness with Eurocentric mind-set that is anti-African.

Maxeke was not led astray by European education because the Wilberforce University was the African American institution meant to uplift African Americans and Africans alike socially to counter the African backwardness narrative. She received a revolutionary Afrocentric education that prepared her to challenge the colonial system, race consciousness, and identity. The missing astonishing issue in public information is the use of native languages to communicate her liberation message to the periphery. Despite being a holder of a B.Sc. degree from the USA, Maxeke understood the strength of native languages in promoting liberation, cultural memory, identity, and solidarity. For Maxeke, the use of native language was the gear towards revolutionary in reclaiming self, history, identity, and culture affected by colonialism and its government (PH 3).

In an attempt to restore the memory of pre-colonial Africa and the need to fight for independence, Maxeke engaged with the subalterns through her Xhosa writings. There was easy communication with people in rural areas, and hence the intellectual development of a native language. Theorizing this discourse, lingua franca, or linguistic nationalism became part of a broader African nationalism aimed at fighting the colonial system and the linguistic hegemony across the continent. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) Maxeke's strategy was emulated by Steve Bantu Biko around the 1960s when he used indigenous languages to communicate people's culture and grievances to promote solidarity and deal with mental slavery. Biko said: "The most potent weapon of the colonizer is the mind". The issue of linguistic nationalism is part of mental delinking from the Eurocentric cognitive enterprise to return to the African consciousness and realise the need for independence in all spheres of life. Charlotte Maxeke dedicated her intellectual ability to transform society and critically engaged with people through her Xhosa writings.

Recommendations

Social sciences and humanities scholars need to engage on critical research that focuses on South African liberation history. Scholars should acknowledge all the nation's patriarchs and matriarchs in South Africa for public benefit. Scholars and researchers who studies the life and contributions of African heroes and icons, and with reference to Charlotte Manye Maxeke have to adopt the Afrocentric theoretical paradigm as a critical method to remember the dismembered and counter-narrate the western canons of thought.

It is imperative to develop a broadcasting series of Maxeke's history, legacy, and intellectual contribution to South Africa's liberation to publicise her selfless heroic sacrifices. Feminist movements and gender activist organisations should document Maxeke's notable contributions to the liberation of South Africa. The life and contribution of Charlotte Maxeke will give encourage too many young women who are fighting different battles today. The idea is also to depatriarchalize the memory of the nation making. In counter-narratives, scholars should reflect on the lingua franca or linguistic nationalism concerning its significance and contribution to the liberation of South Africa. The article calls for historians to chronicle the liberation of South Africa in the context of female heroines who were key players therein. This will assist the nation to fully recover the lost Oral History in South Africa from the imperial epistemic designs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the nationalist historiography has reached a phase of re-examination and re-generation to understand the role of the subalterns in the construction of oral history. After years of writing the history of the liberation struggle, the outcome is that women's position has not yet been fully articulated in understanding their roles as mothers, secretaries, and guerrillas. The narrative is still linear and follows patterns of Eurocentric sexist epistemologies. Nationalism praises and hero worships the founding fathers, not the founding mothers. The roles of Jacques Garvey, Nina Gomer, Harriet Tubman, Charlotte Maxeke, Stella Madzimbamuto, and other heroines of early resistance have not been articulated argumentatively not as a spate feminist history but a nationalist history in the struggle against slavery, racism, and colonialism across the continent.

The story of Charlotte Maxeke evokes the epistemic agency of researching the role of women in the construction of modern Africa to create a complete historical piece. In this regard, Charlotte Maxeke played a pivotal role in South Africa's nationalist history in particular and Africa in general, as a musician, teacher, mother, and leader. Jaffer (2016), Thozama (2012), and Xuma (1930) uncovered Maxeke's story, but the road is still narrow, her contribution is beyond what is covered. Maxeke re-designed nationalism through the anti-pass law campaigns, feminism, and linguistics as part of her decolonial credence. It is evident that doing so would require the use of oral history methods if we are to unravel the mystery surrounding Maxeke's contributions to South Africa's liberation given that not much is written about her. The sooner this is done the better for the future generations considering that those with Maxeke's memory perish with age. Once they are no more, Maxeke's historical contributions to who we are today would be lost forever, never to be reconstructed again.

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Lived experiences during a community-based COVID-19 relief programme from 2020 to 2021: The role played by the Vusizwe foundation in kwaZangashe

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The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already existing social ills such as poverty, unemployment, poor sanitation infrastructure, and scarcity of water in rural communities. In a plight to address that, the South African government introduced social grants and food parcels to cater for basic needs. However, the grants have been insufficient to feed the households. With an overarching aim to bring resources to the community for the eradication of systemic social ills and realization of the impact on socio-economic factors of the community, it became clear to the Vusizwe Foundation that the lockdown imposed by the government of South Africa was taking its toll on the community of kwaZangashe. The Vusizwe Foundation embarked on a COVID-19 relief programme which included the distribution of food parcels, hand sanitizers, cloth face masks, water reservoirs, training COVID-19 regulations advocates, and providing shelter to the destitute. The current study investigates the role played by the Vusizwe Foundation in implementing its COVID-19 relief programme in kwaZangashe. The qualitative research methodology, a case study research design, and purposive sampling are applied in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the implementers of the programme, whereas focus group interviews were conducted with beneficiaries of the COVID-19 relief programme. The study finds that unemployment worsened, the sources of income for most families decreased due to lockdown, and COVID-19 led to the collapse of already ailing service provision. The study concludes that the relief programmes rolled out by the Vusizwe Foundation were much needed interventions following the devastation caused by COVID-19. The study recommends that the government should provide long term basic services to flatten the curve of COVID-19.

Contribution: During COVID-19 the implementation of government's socio-economic measures were delayed and insufficient to guarantee the right to social security and an adequate standard of living. The Vusizwe Foundation took the responsibility to assist community members particularly during lockdown. This study aims to encourage other community-based organisations to enable government to institute relief programs to assist community members. Also, it will strengthen the responsibilities and perception of community-based organisations.

Keywords: COVID-19, relief programme, Vusizwe Foundation

Introduction

The COVID-19 virus which originated from the city of Wuhan in the Hubei province of China has quickly spread to all corners of the world. This virus was first identified as a new corona virus (severe

acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2, or SARS-CoV-2), and it was later named Corona virus Disease-19 or COVID-19 (Qiu, Chen, & Shi 2020). The spread of this virus across the globe has been tragic as it has led to the collapse of healthcare systems, the loss of millions of lives and income, and it has left economies devastated. The devastation has been immense to the extent that millions of people have been relegated into poverty and traumatized. Social relief programs and activities have thus become a necessity second to none.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been felt in all spheres of South Africa, a country whose constitution (1996), Bill of Rights, Section 27, stipulates that ‘everyone has the right to have access to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents’. To curb further devastation caused by the virus, President Cyril Ramaphosa declared the pandemic a national disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002. The South African government also effected a R500 billion emergency response which included a Social Relief of Distress Grant from April 2020 to limit the economic fallout (Department of National Treasury (DNT) 2020). However, despite the massive emergency response package, South Africa was plagued by mismanagement of funds and an economic collapse (Naudé & Cameron 2020:221). Naudé and Cameron (2020:221) further point out that the South African government implemented the lockdown in March 2020 without having an exit strategy in place.

The government further imposed a national lockdown (26 March 2020) that was meant to achieve extreme social distancing and thus stop the spread of the virus. The citizens were encouraged to stay at home and to limit social interaction if possible unless they needed essential goods and services. South Africa further followed other countries worldwide and adopted several public health measures that were intended to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures included the practice of social distancing, the wearing of facemasks in public spaces, hand sanitizing (alcohol-based sanitizer), frequent hand washing with soap and running water, symptom screening, testing, isolation, quarantine and contact tracing, the etiquette of coughing into one’s elbow or a tissue, and the use of personal protection equipment by all health workers.

The government further made efforts to cushion its citizens against the impact of the pandemic. However, these efforts have been but a drop in the ocean given the extensive damage caused by the pandemic. The South African government swiftly responded to the spread of the virus by instituting a national lockdown. The lockdown enforced by the government resulted in millions of South Africans either losing their jobs or having their income significantly reduced. A report by Statistics South Africa shows that 1.4 million South Africans lost their jobs during the lockdown and thus the scale of poverty increased severely as most people could not afford to provide for their families (Centre for Economic and Social Rights South Africa 2021). This resulted in mental health burdens and many people screened positive for depression symptoms (Oyenubin & Kollamparambil 2020:79).

The government’s socio-economic measures were delayed and when they were implemented, they were insufficient to guarantee the right to social security and an adequate standard of living, especially in the context of such a devastating crisis (Centre for Economic and Social Rights, South Africa 2021). Bassier and Zizzamia (2020:220) further highlight that the economic meltdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa led to approximately 70% of adults (18-64 years) living below

the upper-bound poverty line (UBPL) of R1,265-00 per person per month, with approximately 40% living below the World Bank's benchmark of \$1.90 a day (R436-00 per month) (Jain, Bundlender, Zizzamia & Bassier 2020:143) measure. Moreover, food insecurity and malnutrition are some of the results of the pandemic. The government's social relief programs in this regard, though commendable, have not adequately matched the extent of the demand as the child support grant is set below the food poverty line and an estimated 18% of eligible children do not receive the grant because of a lack of documentation (Centre for Economic and Social Rights, South Africa 2021).

Thus, several organisations such as churches, non-governmental organisations, and private companies have also joined hands with the government through COVID-19 relief programmes. One such organisation is the Vusizwe Foundation. This study investigates the COVID-19 relief programme rolled out by the Vusizwe Foundation during the national lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Background

Vusizwe Foundation, a shorthand expression for Vusizwe sika Menziwa Development Foundation Trust, is a registered non-profit organisation (NPO) based in kwaZangashe halfway between Dutywa and Ngcobo in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. The name is derived from the term *vusa isizwe* which means 'nation awakening' (<https://vusizwefoundation.org>). By choosing this name the organisation seeks, among other things, to rejuvenate the cultural heritage of its community, namely the nation of iNkosi (Chief) Menziwa who gave birth to Chief Pokwana. The foundation is a brainchild and a community-development agent of the Pokwana Royal Council (Twayise 2021). It also serves as a vehicle through which social discourse, writing, and research is pursued with a special focus on community development, heritage, arts, culture, and customary law (<https://vusizwefoundation.org.za>).

The overarching aim of the foundation is to ensure that the said community has access to much needed resources. Thus, in a bid to address the challenges faced by its community, the foundation is a one-stop institution which provides a plethora of services to its constituents free of charge. These services include technological services such as access to the internet using wi-fi, photocopying services, computer services where community members can use word-processing applications to create curricula vitae and other documents, telephone services, provision of temporary shelter during natural disasters, facilitating for old age pension grants, child grants, disability grants, assisting retired migrant workers to apply for their benefits, assisting students with their application for tertiary education as well as tertiary financial aids such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), playing an oversight and technical advisory role in community cultural practices such as male initiation cultural practices (ulwaluko), and providing English reading classes after school hours for children from grade R to grade 8.

Contextual setting and socio-economic status of kwaZangashe

The kwaZangashe village is situated midway between Dutywa and Ngcobo off the R408. Although the previous area was six times bigger, the current area stretches about 150sq kilometres, bordering four of the five villages that were removed from the original area. The population is overwhelmingly Dlamini although there are other tribes who are related to the same. The present-day immediate population of

kwaZangashe is approximately 40,000 people, mostly youth who are largely unemployed. The population of the entire basin access services from the tribal office in kwaZangashe from time to time. This entire population relies on three high schools, two rivers, two clinics which barely have sufficient medicines most of the time, and clinics that are at the opposite edges of the village and nearly 20km apart. Main income streams are social grants provided by the government cash deposits from relatives who work mainly in the mines and some in Cape Town, casual labourers who are semi- or not skilled at all who work around the villages on an expanded Public Works Program of the Department of Public Works, and there are also very few educated professionals such as nurses, teachers, etc. (kwaZangashe Village community profile 2019).

Problem Statement

The trail of destruction resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown has been devastating. Moreover, COVID-19 relief programs have largely been rolled out in piecemeal, poorly planned, and insufficient manners. In many cases this has left vulnerable and poor communities in despair and between a rock and a hard place.

Purpose of the Study

The current study sought to investigate the role played by the Vusizwe Foundation in implementing its COVID-19 relief programme in kwaZangashe.

Objectives

1. To establish the socio-economic situation of the kwaZangashe community.
2. To determine social relief programs rolled out by the Vusizwe Foundation in kwaZangashe.
3. To ascertain how the kwaZangashe community views the COVID-19 relief program rolled out by the Vusizwe Foundation.

Literature review

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic crisis severely impinged on the livelihoods of millions of households and threatened to leave lasting scars on countries' socio-economic landscapes (The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth [IPC-IG] 2021). According to Devereux (2021), actions such as lockdowns taken by governments in trying to stop the spread of the corona virus have disrupted livelihoods and prohibited economic activities. This has seen many people around the world facing unprecedented hardships. Furthermore, the impact of lockdowns has been noted by Coibion, Gorodnichenko, and Weber (2020) namely, that lockdowns rather than COVID-19 infections led to lower consumption, increased unemployment, lower inflationary expectations, increased uncertainty, and lower mortgage payments.

Demirguc-Kunt, Lokshin, and Torre (2020) estimated that social distancing measures led to a decline in economic activity. Moreover, in vulnerable communities the lockdowns had a variety of results which include the following:

1. Households do not get paid and hence reduce their consumption and savings levels (Baldwin 2020).
2. As much as 50 percent of the working population might not be able to find work (Gourinchas 2020).
3. The small business entrepreneurs were less likely to hold jobs that could be performed remotely from home.
4. The likelihood of being unemployed during March (lockdown period) was significantly higher for racial and ethnic minorities.
5. In communities with high levels of other social ills, these communities' susceptibility of getting infected with COVID-19 might be downplayed by their anxiety to poverty.
6. What was more worrisome was that no one, including governments, had a clue when the scarring economic effects perpetuated by COVID-19 will be reversed.

The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) (2021) notes that the extensive consequences of the COVID-19 crisis place social protection even more squarely at the centre of attention.

Methodology

The current study applied a qualitative research methodology, a case study research design, purposive sampling, and made use of semi-structured interviews in collecting data. The application of the qualitative research methodology was founded on the fact that the researchers sought to investigate the lived experiences of the said community during the pandemic. Thus, narratives would be useful in unpacking all the necessary details that were of interest to the researchers. By virtue of applying purposive sampling, Vusizwe Foundation staff members involved in the COVID-19 relief program and beneficiaries were the target population. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were viewed as rich sources of data and who were thus directly involved in or benefited from the relief program. A total of ten male and female participants were targeted. Five of these research participants, aged between 18 and 42, were members of Vusizwe Foundation who included the Director, the Centre Manager, the English Reading Class Mentor, and the General Worker. The other five participants were beneficiaries of the COVID-19 relief program, and they were made up of four females and one male, aged between 25 and 92. Thus, focus group interviews were conducted with the beneficiaries during a community meeting in July 2021 whilst face to face interviews were conducted with members of Vusizwe Trust on different days of June 2021 and July 2021. The letter to seek approval to conduct the research was sent to the director of Vusizwe Foundation. Also, all the members were requested to complete a consent form that indicated that their identity would remain confidential and that their participation is voluntary. Subsequent sections present the data thematically, with the themes derived from the objectives of the study.

Data presentation

This section presented data thematically. Collected data was transcribed and selected according to its common coding, analysed, and presented. The information is presented in narrative text. These themes were derived from the objectives of the study which were:

1. To establish the socio-economic situation of the kwaZangashe community.
2. To determine social relief programs rolled out by Vusizwe Foundation in kwaZangashe.
3. To ascertain how the kwaZangashe community views the COVID-19 relief program rolled out by Vusizwe Foundation.

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community of kwaZangashe

The first objective of the study was to establish the socio-economic status of the kwaZangashe community prior to the rolling out of the Vusizwe Foundation's relief programs. The data show that the community had been plagued by a number of challenges as a result of either the COVID-19 pandemic or those challenges which emanated before the pandemic and worsened during the lockdown. During the focus group interview with community members, the researchers sought to establish the challenges which were faced by the kwaZangashe community. Participants 1 and 2 highlighted that COVID-19 was fuelling poverty that was caused by high unemployment among people that were supposed to be economically active, that is, the youth.

'Many young people were left jobless as they lost their sources of income during the lockdown,' said participant 2.

The community members also highlighted that there was an influx of people to the village who had apparently lost their jobs in cities such as Johannesburg. A major cause for concern was the fact that these people were sharing the scarce resources with villagers who were also unemployed and poor.

The data also pointed to water scarcity as one of the major challenges bedevilling the community. Participant 4 highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic had devastating consequences for many people in kwaZangashe as they were already struggling with the impacts of water scarcity. This was exacerbated further by the lockdown restrictions which made it challenging for members of the community to travel and search for water sources. The community members, through the focus group interview, highlighted that they felt neglected by the government which had failed over the years to provide them with clean, safe, and drinkable water. These community members highlighted that the water crisis had driven them to use water designated for animals and thus exposed themselves to hygiene and health hazards.

The focus group interview also revealed that the community is served by a river stream called *Ngqutura*. The river-crossing is called *Mqakathweni* (every river-crossing has its own name in kwaZangashe). However, the data revealed that this river is unable to provide the community with sufficient water throughout the year as it completely dries out during winter. Even in some seasons with high water availability—that is, during the rainy season such as summer, the water that comes from the river is contaminated, highlighted participants 3 and 4.

'Some villagers also use the river as the dumping site for material which includes baby diapers among other things,' said participant 4.

To further show the gravity of the water crisis, community members revealed that the water being consumed by the community was meant for animals and it has a bad odour. One focus group participant, participant 6, highlighted that: 'After fetching the water, we usually use the water after four days hoping that the odour will have ceased.' Participant 7 noted that the odour was similar to that of a dead dog or animal. The community had few water tanks which were not solving the water problem as they needed the community to pay an estimated R2,000-00 to hire a truck to fetch and fill each ten thousand litre tank with water.

Poverty, starvation, and unemployment were some of the socio-economic challenges faced by the community. The data pointed to the fact that due to the high level of unemployment and scarce resources, hunger and/or starvation had taken its toll in the community. The participants indicated that the pandemic had led to breadwinners losing their sources of income in cities and around the village.

The data showed that prior to Vusizwe Foundation's distribution of cloth face masks, members of the community were hardly complying with the regulations pertaining to the wearing of face masks. Instead, the mandatory strategies adopted by grocery and clothing stores such as 'no mask no services' aimed at increasing face mask compliance, led the communities to engage in unhygienic practices such as the sharing of scarves that were used as masks and sharing of masks.

'thina bambi besibolekisana ngezikafu xa kufuneka singene ezivenkuleni edolophika kuba sisehlulakala ukuthenge iimask,' said participant 9.

The data revealed that most community members could not afford purchasing face masks due to poverty and unemployment levels. The data also showed that service provision in a number of areas including kwaZangashe had also collapsed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant 1 and participant 3 revealed that health workers in the local clinic were falling ill due to COVID-19 infection and this led to the closure of the clinic. The same trend was experienced in other public spaces such as the South African Police Services (SAPS) and schools among others.

Social relief programs rolled out by Vusizwe Foundation in kwaZangashe

The second objective of the study was to establish the social relief programs rolled out by Vusizwe Foundation in kwaZangashe. The data from interviews with Vusizwe Foundation staff members showed that its COVID-19 relief programming included, among other things, the distribution of food hampers, cloth face masks, sanitizers, foot operated sanitizers dispensers (FOSD) in public spaces, decontamination of public spaces, the training of Vusizwe employees on fogging, the distribution of COVID-19 information brochures, the training and placement of Vusizwe COVID-19 agents, and the training of the Vusizwe Vela peer educators.

'We also conducted training of the Vusizwe COVID-19 agents and re-installed boreholes to provide water to the community,' said participant 10.

The interview data revealed that food hampers that included simple cloth face masks were distributed to the households classified by Vusizwe Foundation as zero income households, owners of small business enterprises whose businesses were closed due to lockdown, and any other household receiving government grants or income that was not sufficient. Participant 7 and participant 8 indicated that the distribution of food hampers was originally conceptualized by the Vusizwe Foundation aimed at cushioning short term income to small business enterprises in the absence of their normal income or any subsidies to their businesses. The Director of Vusizwe foundation indicated that the beneficiaries of the food hampers included communities from kwaZangashe Basin (under Ngqutura administrative

area), other neighbouring villages that fall under Engcobo Rural town, Umtata (Bhaziya administrative area), Lady Frère, and other Vusizwe strategic partners.

The data from the interview with the Director of Vusizwe Foundation revealed that the distributed food hampers included the following: 12kg flour, 12 kg mealie-meal, 10kg sugar, 1 litre cooking oil, 750 grams Ellis Brown, 2kg soap, 1kg salt, 500 grams soup, 3xycast, sanitizer, 5 masks, and brochures. Other food hampers had sanitary towels for women. One participant from Vusizwe, participant 8, went on to highlight that ‘the distribution of food hampers was termed as Operation *cingicebo* (loosely translated as ‘devise a plan’) and this sought to send a message of how communities need to be strengthened and think of a plan’.

‘In naming this intervention “operation cingicebo”, Vusizwe Foundation acknowledged how hunger can make those that are hungry unable to think’, said participant 8.

In addition, he said that: ‘Indirectly, the “*operation cingicebo*” was encouraging the communities to think out of the box. It further sought to ensure communities devise long term strategies of putting food on their tables even post COVID-19.’ Vusizwe Foundation is unwavering in its opinion that poverty problems of this village would be addressed when communities produce their own food through farming activities. Once communities can engage in producing their own food through farming, participants believe that communities will be able to use idioms such as ‘even their dogs would go to sleep full’ (*Izinja zakulala zihluthi*) or *amakhwenkwe axhoma amanqatha phezu kwethango* (‘boys hanging fat on the kraal’).

The interview data also revealed that the distribution of COVID-19 hand sanitizers served as a double-edged sword that is, as a preventative measure to flatten the curve of the COVID-19 pandemic and it addressed the challenges of the scarcity of water.

‘Abantu bebenzinyelwa kokuhlamba izandla rhoqo ngenxa yokunqaba kwamanzi ibe ke ingummiselo ukuzihlaba’, said participant 4.

Thus, the data showed that sanitizers somehow provided community members with an alternative to wash their hands and be hygienic. The data also pointed to the fact that Vusizwe Foundation also provided foot-operated sanitizer dispenser (FOSD) stands which were placed in public spaces. ‘We also provided the community with equipment for fogging public spaces that have been contaminated,’ said the Director of Vusizwe Foundation. ‘Trained Vusizwe Foundation employees conducted the fogging’, added participant 10. However, the interview data revealed that such services as fogging were not self-sustaining as they were provided free of charge, and therefore could not be sustainable in the long run.

Vusizwe Foundation also embarked on the distribution of brochures that had basic information on COVID-19, which was highly appreciated, as participant 2 stated:

‘Bekukho unqongophalo lolwazi oluvela malunga neemfundiso ngale covid-19.’

The information in the brochures was appreciated because it was written in the IsiXhosa language that is understood by the majority of the people in this community, such as old people and also the youth with low levels of literacy.

The interview data also showed that the foundation trained Vela Peers: educators otherwise known as COVID-19 agents. Participant 6, participant 7, and participant 8 indicated that the role of peer educators was to do community awareness, advocacy, and enforcing compliance on COVID-19 regulation among the communities.

‘They were visible in public events such as funerals’, added participant 8.

These COVID-19 agents were originally meant to be placed in local clinics to work with health promoters on various COVID-19 preventative works, such as screening. ‘However, such work has not commenced because these COVID-19 agents have been denied entry into local clinics due to lack of consent from health authorities’, responded the Director of Vusizwe foundation.

How the kwaZangashe community views the COVID-19 relief program rolled out by Vusizwe Foundation

The third objective of the study was to establish how the kwaZangashe community viewed COVID-19 relief programs rolled out by the Vusizwe Foundation. The focus group participants acknowledged the fact that Vusizwe was a facilitator between funders and the community. Participant 3 stated: ‘Vusizwe is strategically poised in deep rural areas and, therefore, it is a link between people with resources—that is, the funders and the community.’ Participant 5 also noted as follows: ‘Vusizwe has connected donors and/or funders with our community as it identifies the needs of the communities through dialogue and engagement, and thereafter mobilizes resources for the community.’ The focus group interviewees applauded Vusizwe for its great role in this community.

The data also showed that in the eyes of the community members, Vusizwe was perceived as a vehicle for uprooting poverty. These community members were in awe of how the foundation had managed to mobilize resources and respond to the plight of the people during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. Vusizwe was applauded by the participants for these interventions as the following remarks show:

- ‘iVusizwe Foundation isikhuphile ezintwaleni’, loosely translated as ‘Vusizwe Foundation has taken us out of the lice.’ This is a loaded statement that means to be taken out of poverty. ‘To be in lice’ is a popular expression that is associated with poverty. This refers to the chronic poverty that makes one unable to afford items such as soap to bath their bodies.
- ‘We are free of hunger’. With these words participant 6 was explaining how poverty and hunger had incarcerated them and how the food hampers from Vusizwe served as a form of liberation to them.

Moreover, the data showed that Vusizwe Foundation’s COVID-19 relief efforts had led community members to think of the foundation as the purveyor of civilization to communities. Participants seemed to be short of words to describe Vusizwe, as can be seen in the following expressions:

‘It is a beautiful thing’, said Participant 3.

‘It is something to look up to’, said participant 1 and participant 2.

‘It has given the communities civilization,’ added participant 3.

‘It has made us to be people’, said participant 4 and participant 5

In demonstrating the difference made by Vusizwe Foundation, one community member from a different village not serviced by the foundation highlighted that:

‘When you look at relief programs rolled out by Vusizwe Foundation in this community you would think that a tokoloshe has farted on our village which is not serviced by this organisation,’ said participant 7 (a tokoloshe is an evil spirit that is believed to be of a short stature, whose mandate is to bring calamities). This participant further highlighted that even the road infrastructure of kwaZangashe is far better in comparison to theirs.

The focus group interview data also showed that community members viewed Vusizwe Foundation’s model as the best-practice model for community leadership, especially in rural areas. As the communities normally approach the homestead of Chief Jongisilo that has the mobile Vusizwe Foundation office attached to it, the director of Vusizwe foundation indicated that the request of help normally brought to Vusizwe Foundation is dominated by two words, ‘*silele singatyanga*’—meaning ‘*we went to bed hungry*’. He further added that after the distribution of COVID-19 food hampers, communities gave Vusizwe Foundation feedback saying ‘*niyisusile ikati eziko*’, meaning that ‘*you have removed the cat from the fireplace*’. This is an expression used to illustrate that when there is food the fireplace is used for cooking, but when there is no food, the fireplace is used as a resting place by hungry cats because there is no fire being made. The community members emphasized that Vusizwe Foundation should continue with the COVID-19 relief programme, even post COVID-19. Vusizwe Foundation was further requested to continue with the assistance of food, water, and sanitizers.

Other success stories of the COVID-19 relief program include assistance in accessing pension grants. Participant 10 responded:

‘Ngenene iVusizwe Foundation indibuyisele isidima sam yandenza umntu kwelishesha le lockdown.’

This participant was conveying her appreciation of what Vusizwe Foundation did for her — that is, providing her with food hampers in the short term and then providing the pension grant for her father in the longer term. The participant highlighted that poverty had dehumanized her whereas Vusizwe COVID-19 relief efforts restored her dignity. The data also showed that Vusizwe Foundation had facilitated access to other grants such as the disability grant.

Other success stories emerging from the data include the fact that one community member got a new house built for her as she had been homeless owing to family feuds. Participant 7 highlighted that they were surviving from the child grant for her child that was not sufficient for their needs including the payment of her funeral plan: she contributes to ‘*masingcwabeni*’ (local burial societies).

‘Bekukudala ndinqwenela ukuzakhela indlu koko ngenxeni yokungabinanto ibisele iliphupha nje elo’, exclaimed the participant.

This participant was explaining her plight of poverty that was perpetuated by family fights that saw her living in her husband's homestead. However, Vusizwe built the woman a new house.

The face-to-face interview data also revealed that Vusizwe Foundation employees also reported the positive benefit they gained from COVID-19 relief programs. Even though COVID-19 had fuelled poverty levels, it compelled them to think out of the box. Participant 9, who is the employee of Vusizwe Foundation stated that COVID-19 has forced the Vusizwe foundation to unleash the potential they were unaware of as organization. This refers to the complex activities they have achieved, ranging from the rapid screening of the participants for food hampers to their ability to distribute food to such a high number of beneficiaries.

'Vusizwe has also learnt how all the projects are "work in progress" – that is, how they can keep on thinking of innovative ways to maximize quality to their projects as they roll them out as well as the flexibility – namely, to modify strategies as per the program's needs,' elaborated participant 9.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study showed that the COVID-19 pandemic and especially the lockdown which was imposed by the government exacerbated the level of poverty within the kwaZangashe community. Thus, members of the community fell into the poverty bracket during the lockdown as their sources of income dried up or were swept away. The data showed that the droughts and starvation within the rural community were causes for concern and that the lockdown added to the food insecurity. These findings have concurred with a report by the government of South Africa which noted that the COVID-19 crisis poses an additional threat to food security of millions of South Africa who were already suffering from food insecurity before the pandemic (Government of South Africa n.d.).

Due to the lockdown the high unemployment rate further worsened as a lot of people lost their jobs and other sources of income. The current study also showed a trend in which people who lost their jobs in cities were moving back to rural areas where they were trying to share scarce resources with the poor and unemployed rural dwellers. This unemployment had a direct impact on poverty as more than 1.4 million South Africans lost their jobs and thus could not afford to buy food and live decent lives. The government of South Africa (n.d.) also notes the devastating effects of the pandemic which has worsened and is expected to keep worsening the unemployment rate in South Africa.

The data also showed that the COVID-19 pandemic led to the collapse of the already ailing service provision services. The data showed that clinics, SAPS, schools, and other service providers had closed shop due to COVID-19 infections. Nurses, teachers, and police officers had taken ill and could not continue working and providing necessary services. One of the elements that needs a re-think was the sanitiser distribution plan because of the limited staff members especially senior ones and a shortage of vehicles. They tended to centralise some of the bulk distributions – for example, in clinics and schools they would simply deliver lots of stock in 25L containers and hope that the staff would not loot it for their own families and friends.

The data also pointed to the scarcity of water which had been an essential part in the fight against COVID-19. Members of the community were left between a rock and a hard place as their health would be compromised without clean water. When it comes to provision of water through boreholes and community tanks, the Foundation acknowledges that the four boreholes are far from being sufficient, but one of the major challenges that Vusizwe Foundation did not address was to get the water tested to establish whether it is suitable for human consumption and if not to get it treated accordingly before it goes into the tanks.

The data also showed that the government's social response was not sufficient as it could not enable beneficiaries to earn a decent living. The data thus showed that COVID-19 relief programs rolled out by Vusizwe Foundation were a much-needed intervention following the devastation caused by COVID-19. These relief programs included the distribution of food hampers, cloth face masks, sanitizers, FOSDs in public spaces, decontamination of public spaces, the training of Vusizwe employees on fogging, the distribution of COVID-19 information brochures, the training, and the placement of kwaZangashe COVID-19 agents, and the training of the Vela Peer educators. The foundation was also involved in the training of the kwaZangashe COVID-19 agents, the provision of water to the community, and the re-installment of the boreholes. Such initiatives had somehow cushioned community members against the hardships brought about by COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown.

One of the greatest dangers which Vusizwe foundation should never repeat was that they did not have a strict policy of isolating the decontamination team (who was constantly dealing directly with covid cases including taking covid casualties to mortuaries) from the rest of the other sub-project teams. Even the food distribution team was supposed to have been totally isolated from other teams because if one person had contracted covid and infected others it would have meant that the entire Vusizwe Foundation project would have suddenly come to an end.

Recommendations

Having analysed and presented the findings, the researchers further made recommendations to Vusizwe Foundation. The researchers recommended that Vusizwe needed to identify and strengthen strategic collaborations. Such collaborations would go a long way in ensuring long term sustainability and continuity of its relief programs. The researchers also recommended that Vusizwe identifies village intellectuals who could offer valuable insight into relief programs. The researchers also recommended that beyond food, PPEs, and water provision Vusizwe should provide entrepreneurial skills to its community. Such skills would go a long way in eradicating poverty and minimizing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with regard to unemployment. The researchers further recommended the need for infrastructural development in the community to facilitate development and access to the global village and opportunities for the youth.

The recommendations were also directed towards the need to devise strategies for utilizing COVID-19 equipment such as fogging equipment in the long term. The current study also recommended the provision of COVID-19 education material using IsiXhosa as the medium of communication. Lastly, the researchers recommended the need to provide long term, basic services to flatten the curve of COVID-19.

Conclusion

The current study concluded that COVID-19 and the lockdown had worsened the already deplorable living conditions of communities such as kwaZangashe. Such communities which were already facing poverty, droughts, unemployment, poor infrastructure, poor service delivery, water scarcity, and poor roads were plunged into more hardships. Unemployment and hunger worsened, and water challenges became a prominent health issue as there was a need for clean water for hygiene purposes aimed at fighting the spread of the virus. Due to lockdown many people lost their sources of income which led to a struggle for obtaining scarce resources. The study also concluded that the lockdown was imposed without a solid plan of how to cushion citizens and thus most people plunged into poverty. However, the study also concluded that the relief programs rolled out by Vusizwe Foundation cushioned the community against the devastating impact of the COVID-19 virus and the lockdown. Vusizwe had managed to provide community members with food hampers, clean water, housing for some members of the community, and provided sanitizers and other essential services. The study also concluded that Vusizwe needed to provide community members with entrepreneurial skills which would go a long way to eradicate poverty and unemployment.

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Teaching oral history: Strategies and methods used in teaching oral history

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The purpose of this article is to provide a strategic method to use for teaching oral history in class. The article draws from interviews conducted with librarians, historians, and academics in the area of Engcobo in the Eastern Cape Province. Research indicates that educators play an integral role in guiding learners in the process of oral history. Respondents stated that teaching oral history entails the ability of both educators and learners to engage in skilful historical inquiry. The process of historical inquiry is to extract, interpret, and analyse information from a number of sources so that both teacher and learner will be able to think critically. Research methodologies such as qualitative research are used in oral history. In contemporary research technology has been identified as another important instrument in oral history research. Sources such as textbooks, video cameras, the constitution of South Africa, newspapers, websites, oral sources, and interviews assist the teacher and the learner in oral history. Much of the literature on teaching oral history enables the teacher and learner an opportunity to celebrate and commemorate key national figures who promote reading, presenting, recording, and writing skills. Oral history teaching lacks planning, communication, time management resources, and financial support. It is recommended that proper guidance, monitoring, and supervision by educators will promote oral history.

Contribution: This paper seeks to highlight challenges experienced in undertaking oral history research in rural areas (with a focus on the Eastern Cape) and how these challenges can be mitigated. It intends to become a tool for researchers seeking to navigate a common minefield in sourcing information from traditional settings. Its contribution to social sciences will be to empower future educators with credible knowledge-based methods to undertake similar research. It will further enhance future approaches or methodologies of approaching communities which, while faced with infrastructure backlogs, are custodians of some of the best oral history stories still to be told.

Keywords: Engcobo, Eastern Cape, oral history

Introduction and Background

Oral history is an integral part of the indigenous knowledge systems of African people. Oral history provides extremely important information about civilisations and cultural know-how. It is useful repository of African history and belief systems. While it has traditionally been a preserve of community leaders and sages, recently educators regularly find themselves charged with the responsibility to be

its custodians. Educators have come to play an integral role in guiding learners through the process of developing learners' familiarity to oral history. It should be about developing the ability to undertake a process of a historical inquiry-based skill for both the educator and learner. The process of historical inquiry is to promote the ability to extract, interpret, and analyse information from several sources so that both educator and learner would be able to think critically. For such results to be achieved various research methodologies such as quantitative and qualitative are used in oral history research. At the centre is the orality of the subject and the sources which provide information on it. In recent times the use of cutting-edge technology has become more necessary in answering some key oral history questions. Teaching oral history in classrooms comprises textbooks, video cameras, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, news sources, and interviews.

Baylor University Institute for Oral History (2001) defines oral history as 'a sound recording of historical information obtained through an interview that preserves a person's life history or eyewitness account of a past experience'. Oral history is nothing more than a branch of historical research. Teaching oral history happens when the educator guides learners in an oral history project by applying relevant skills and concepts. To achieve desired results the educator must employ the principle of starting from the known to the unknown. In applying this principle, a skill to understand a range of sources of information available for studying the past is developed. Learners will be able to extract and interpret information from a number of sources. Oral history uses participatory learning to stimulate interest and excitement in a classroom. It is an effective teaching tool that encourages learners to play an active role in their own education. This result is achieved by inviting inquiries, stimulating discussion, and transformation of abstract concepts into concrete realities. A study was done at Nyanga High School and Engcobo Village Senior Secondary School on how teachers can introduce, guide, and assist oral history learners to participate fully in their own oral history education.

A qualitative research method was applied, with the researcher conducting interviews at two schools in Engcobo.

Advantages of oral history

One of the advantages of teaching oral history is that for most learners their accounts are based on first-hand experiences. Their responses are unfiltered since there is little time to digest and formulate a thought-out answer. Research has found that in a scheduled question and answer session the margin of misinformation in a response is higher than when the interview is impromptu, and the source is detached from her mental comfort zone. The combination of these advantages allows for the individual to give authentic responses to questions about their experiences rather than formulate a well thought out written response (Oelofse & Du Bruyn 2021:6). It gives ordinary people a voice.

Disadvantages of oral history

Many academic historians still question the reliability of oral sources and the uses thereof. They argue that oral testimony is often too 'subjective, inaccurate, contains distortions and that individual memory is unreliable and subject to subsequent changes in people's perspective' (Sideris 2021:06). The unreliability of the interviewee's memory for hard and specific facts and chronological sequence

is undoubtedly the major criticism of oral evidence (Seldon & Pappworth 2021:6). They argue that it is plausible that a source would struggle to recall, let alone having an accurate memory of events that took place more than forty years ago. The source could have trouble remembering an exact detailed experience. Another disadvantage is the recollection of being only one person's view. Due to the possibility of false memories and some specific unrecorded details attributed to one source it is difficult to corroborate events as described. With limited individuals' point of view, it is difficult to create a clear image of the time (Moyer 1999:5).

Methodology

Interviews with interviewees are used carefully and skilfully in oral history methodology. People were interviewed for this paper and their responses analysed to produce a common understanding of what works and what does not work. A qualitative research methodology was adopted for the purpose of this study. Approaching research through source-based interviews supplements and enriches the written record. It is also important in validating what has already been written and accepted as mainstream knowledge. Interviews remain a useful and unique way of gaining access to information by using the human memory as a historical source. At Nyanga high school I interviewed one teacher and three learners: one boy and two girls. At Engcobo Village SSS I interviewed one teacher and three learners: one boy and two girls.

Interviews

Interviewers are sent out in pairs. Open-ended questions are employed which allow subjects to explain how they saw the situation and what it meant for them. (eg. Why? How? Why did you do that?)

The interview is recorded on a camera or smart phone while notes are also written down in case of camera and phone malfunction. Permission to record the subject's voice is obtained prior to the interview to maintain the highest standards of ethical behaviour. Photos are taken of the subject and old photos related to the study are collected. Permission to take photos of the subject is obtained prior to the interview to operate within ethical requirements of each interview.

Debriefing

Investigators meet and discuss the video footage to determine if additional interviews are necessary.

Transcription: the videos are typed and edited.

Final draft: a final copy is written and approved by the subject.

Finished record: photographs and original videos are integrated into class content.

Preparation: exhaustive reading on topic to be studied.

Simulation: investigators interview each other and establish what questions will be covered during interview.

Research Findings

Oral history and skills development

Research skills

Learners involved in oral history develop the desire to find out more from other sources, leading to searches in libraries and archives. Learners are exposed to the value of primary sources, of which oral history recordings and related archival material are good examples. They develop research and questioning skills when they are confronted with contradictory evidence. Different people give different versions of the same event and the interviewee's story may differ from the textbook account. Not only does the learner develop the ability to verify information gathered from different sources, but he/she also realises in the process that historical events do not affect all people in the same way (Timmins 2000).

Language skills

The development of language skills includes both written and spoken language. Learners develop language skills by formulating questions, conducting interviews, and transcribing them. In addition, learners develop listening skills since they have to focus on the interviewee's narrative during an interview. By interviewing others or being interviewed themselves, learners gain confidence with regard to expressing themselves in words (Siler 1996:6).

Technical skills

These skills are acquired mainly through the handling of equipment used for recording and transcribing an interview. Learners learn how to properly handle equipment and how to use it in combination with other equipment such as video cameras. An oral history project may also lead to the collecting of related artefacts, photographs, and in the process learners learn how to handle such items and take care of them, as well as in the case of photographs how to produce them. (Weitzman 1975).

Social skills

The interview process develops some important social skills during the learner's interaction with interviewees. They learn how to communicate with adults, they develop tact and patience, they experience feelings of empathy towards others, and they are confronted with conflicting values and attitudes towards life. Another important aspect that should be emphasised here is the opportunity that oral history offers for learners to work in teams. In view of the increasing emphasis on co-operative learning and group activity, learners benefit from being involved as a group in an oral history project (Wietzman 1975).

Cognitive and other skills

Some of the most important skills acquired through oral history are cognitive skills. These include an understanding of historical concepts and timelines, genealogy, cause and effect relationships, and problem-solving skills. Writing reports about individual oral history also develops analytical and composition skills. Developing these skills are opportunities for self-disclosure and building self-worth.

How do educators use Oral history

The investigation into how a teacher introduces, guides, and assists learners with oral history in a school environment was conducted at Nyanga High School and at Engcobo Village SSS between 25 June 2020 and 30 June 2021. Mr Lihle Mthambeka is the history teacher at (which of the two schools?) and participated in an interview. The school annually participates in the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition. The Inkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Project is a national competition that has taken place every year since 2006. It is open to secondary school teachers and learners in Grade 8-11. The aim of the competition is to increase learner interest in history and to encourage scholars throughout South Africa to engage with their shared history in addition to exploring their personal community histories. This is a joint project between the Department of Education, South African History Online, and South African History Archives.

Mthambeka demonstrates to learners that ‘history happened here’. There is an umbilical relationship between history and the community. Students feel as if history happened somewhere else to different people. Oral history projects are history making within a community. It makes history come alive with real people’s voices. An oral history teacher builds a sense of civic engagement among learners. In conducting research, participating learners engage their communities on pertinent oral history issues and topics that are of importance to them. Some learners develop a better understanding of the problems they are facing through their participation in oral history. The educator stated that he prepares the learners first before conducting the interview.

Asanda Ponoshe is a grade 11 learner of Nyanga High School and stated that she has learned the skill of operating and editing the video camera because of oral history. Samkele Zihlangu, grade 10 learner described the method they use when doing oral history as the collection of different thoughts and opinions by the interviewer.

Sinako Mgwatyu, a grade 11 learner agrees with Samkele that interviewing people does not mean collecting data only but collecting detailed information regarding rules in history which aim at retaining transparent data rather than disseminating news.

At Engcobo Village SSS Mr Vuyani Dintsi is the history teacher whom I interviewed. Dintsi stated that in each oral history project participants actively partake in social interactions and gain new experiences. Through these interactions and experiences, they collect different viewpoints to obtain new facts. The methodology of oral history he uses is a naturalistic method and qualitative research. Naturalistic research methods are geared towards explaining human complexities. These methods emphasize human complexities and people’s capacity in shaping their experiences.

Wongaletu Rode who is a grade 11 learner at Engcobo Village SSS stated that gathering information in advance about the interviewee makes it easy for him to know the type of questions to ask before the interview. There are those who cooperate less, who need to be encouraged repeatedly and patiently.

Imi Fadane who is also doing grade 11 stated that it’s easy to do research in communities where they are well known, rather than in another village where they are not known, although they gain experience in communities they are not known.

Abonile Mbuthuma, a grade 10 learner commented that without the assistance of the teacher they cannot achieve the goals set for them. Sometimes during the project, they change roles.

Lesson procedure

1. Teacher asks learners to write down a topic they think of when they hear the word 'history'.
2. The teacher polls the class to see how many students wrote down similar topics.
3. He groups learners with similar topics together.
4. He assigns each group three primary sources to read and analyse. He allows thirty minutes for reading and analysis.
5. As they finish their reading and analysis, he reminds groups to generate three research questions related to primary sources they have reviewed. Alternatively, the class can choose to pursue additional questions, or they can choose another topic.
6. He concludes the session by identifying student groups.

Preparatory steps

1. Identify interview subject.
2. Who will do what?
3. What financial resources are available?
4. What guidelines will the project follow?
5. What are the priorities and goals of the project?
6. Make a list of potential interviewees; this list will grow as they are referred as additional interviews.
7. Recording equipment.

A simulation is done before the learners start the interview to familiarise themselves with the interview process. Consent forms which stipulate the goals, and the purpose of the interview are signed by the interviewees.

Mthambeka stated that learners are able to analyse information according to the text provided for them. They can extract useful and useless information from interviews they conducted. They encounter numerous problems, but they are able to overcome them. Learners are able to compare traditional sources. Oral history helps students to develop empathy. They are able to make the person being interviewed relaxed. They are able to acquire 80% of the information required. They are able to cover the fundamentals of Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. They are able to see why oral history is necessary. The school's budget has does not cover all the costs of the project. Sometimes learners need to travel to the interviewee more than planned by the school budget.

Dintsi confirms that the safety of the learners during the interviews is guaranteed as he accompanies them when they travel longer distances.

Learners' responses and thinking

After learners have conducted the project, their responses differ as they have experience different challenges. Wongalethu confirmed that oral history helps them understand how individuals and communities experienced the forces of history.

Asanda commented that interviews sometimes take longer than the set time. Some interviewees were absent at the time of the appointment. Learners don't have high quality recording equipment. Learners did not always follow prepared questions as they ended up helping families they interviewed. They developed relations with them. Some interviewees' remarks were judgemental, impatient, and disrespectful. Some wanted rewards for telling the stories. Others wanted the interviews to be about themselves, therefore they change the story.

Engcobo library

The community library is used by learners to search for information when researching oral history. The library assists learners with internet access to conduct their research. There are few history books and no recordings of oral history of the local area.

Conclusion

It has been observed that student researchers in Nyanga High School and Engcobo village SSS conduct their research under difficult conditions. Some of the challenges are the absence of material needed to conduct a successful interview with people from their communities. Other challenges related to material conditions of their interviewees and time constraints that come with working in rural communities. While they find value in the skills they develop through the research, the challenge remains the lack of technical resources such as quality recording and transcribing equipment. While there is good leadership from the educators at Nyanga High School and Engcobo Village SSS, there is a common challenge of lack of material that hinders most learners. The under-sourced library at Engcobo is not helping the situation either.

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The elephant in the room: Understanding vocational education through oral history

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Vocational education has been considered the first education to be received by Africans from the colonists, especially from the British model. Many vocational education disparities transpired in the event of the transmission of vocational education, which are not underscored in most studies by scholars. These imbalances of vocational education led to ‘retarded’ societies which still exist in South Africa. This article seeks to address the elephant in the room—that is, the colonial and postcolonial impact on vocational education often overlooked by policymakers, curriculum designers, and lecturers. Through heavy reliance on the oral history tradition, the article asks what can be learnt from the past to inform and build a stronger and contextually relevant Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector through the exploration of the relevant literature on the history of vocational education, colonial ideology, vocational education disparities, history of vocational education, and Afrocentric research.

The article presents and argues for an Afrocentric research design in understanding the nature of the ‘elephant in the room’. Often studies conducted by scholars on TVET colleges focus on the present and future, forgetting about the fact that vocational education is as old as colonialism and how the past continues to impact the curriculum today. The article, therefore, proposes that tapping on past policymakers, curriculum designers, lecturers, and students’ memory through oral history interviews will greatly enhance TVET education. This will be complimented by archiving and document analysis. Finally, the article presents the proposed research design.

Contribution: With this study the authors seek to offer recommendations in improving the current situation in the TVET sector. By assisting curriculum developers and decision-makers in developing a curriculum of National Certificate (Vocational) (NCV) programme, it will assist in introducing mechanisms to aid graduates in becoming employable. This can be achieved through understanding vocational educational through oral history.

Keywords: Afrocentric oral history oral history interviews vocational education, vocational education disparities

Introduction

The word ‘*mlungu*’ in isiZulu or ‘*Mzungu*’ in kiSwahili refers to a white person. In KwaZulu-Natal at different construction sites (plumbing, building, car repairs, electricity) you will often hear the use of this word to refer to a black person who is in charge or the owner of the business. Furthermore,

analysis of these places reveals that these places are dominated by male figures. Again, the person referred to as *mlungu* is a black South African person with the others who are often foreign African nationals. These are the unspoken realities that perpetuate post-colonialism, yet we know that these attitudes and knowledge remain unchallenged. This is the elephant in the room that we argue about, is the heritage of colonial vocational education that informs our TVET sector today.

In this article, we ask the question: what can be learned from the past to inform and build a stronger and contextually relevant TVET sector? The significance of the article is therefore twofold. First, it proposes the use of African TVET sector. Importantly, it states that we cannot deal with the problems the sector faces today or debate its future without understanding the history of the sector. Second, the article makes an argument for oral history tradition in the generation of history while at the same time allowing all involved to learn from the process. The article, therefore, does not intend to answer the research question but presents a proposal as to how an Afrocentric research design informed by oral story tradition can go about answering the question.

Background

Vocational education colonial ideology

The arrival of the European mission in Africa around the 18th century can be regarded as one of the elements that disseminated Christianity on the African continent through education: vocational education in this instance (Stuart 2018; Broad 2016). In Africa during the early 1800s European missionaries offered skills training only relevant for the needs of the seaports' economic growth, and to gain competitive advantage in the global markets (Buthelezi 2016), however, the European missionaries worked together with the colonial government and provided skills that complement colonial state's ambitions of development, until 1961 when South Africa became an independent Republic (Oliver 2017). The prosperity of the European ambitions of the so-called 'vocational education' led to the snowball approach of introducing Africans to European civilization (Kallaway 1992).

Before 1910 vocational education was considered best for only non-whites, therefore, the colonists provided education of poor quality (Badroodien 2004). The non-whites which included the Africans, Coloureds, and Indians acquired skills to work as labourers. The probable reason for the poor education to Africans was that there was a possibility of greater success through production by the villagers. Therefore, the colonists sensed that competition was imminent. Coloured males were fit for carpentry, shoemaking, decorating, plastering, masonry, tailoring, bricklaying, engine cleaning, and painting (Malherbe 1977:163).

From the 1920s until the 1960s the South African state offered compulsory vocational education to the whites. This was a consequence of the growth in commercial agriculture (Badroodien 2004). Even though vocational education was entirely offered for the whites, the ideology that it was 'work for the blacks' ruled the mentality of the whites. They regarded it as inferior and insufferable (Buthelezi 2016; Badroodien, 2004). The vocational skills acquired were generally relevant to a branch of knowledge and occupations that would make a competent worker and loyal citizens (Badroodien 2004). Also, vocational education provision in the 1960s included teaching people work ethics, routines, and social work which was considered for the restoration of the economy of South Africa by that time (Badroodien 2004).

The elephant in the room: Vocational education disparities

The origins of the vocational education disparities can be traced back from the societies' gender roles, cultural beliefs, and prior democracy lifestyle in African countries. Disparities in vocational education to be presented in this study includes gender, race, and budget allocation in TVET colleges.

Gender disparity

Common cultural disparities existed in South Africa. Cultural norms have hindered women from partaking in vocational education programmes in developing countries like South Africa (UNESCO 2010). The stereotype that women must take care of children and the home, influences the choices of most women not to venture into vocational education. African cultures still hold to the stereotype of women belonging in the kitchen. According to the World Bank (2012) report, cultural beliefs consider women as caregivers, impacting their chosen careers and fields of study. At the secondary school, they chose programmes that would be relevant to their careers. For instance, they choose teaching as a career so that they could balance work and house duties (World Bank 2012), neglecting science and engineering as belonging to a masculine field (Moletsane & Reddy 2011).

This perception goes on to influence the women even in the world of work where engineering is considered a technical area more suitable for males. Women did not picture themselves as engineers.

Vocational curricula were mostly masculine such as tool repairers, wagon drivers, and plumbing creating an expectation that women should not pursue them. There is a necessity for institutions to provide gender-friendly programmes and strategies to accommodate females that are admitted for technical-based subjects. Also, there must be availability of interventions that may shield females from this continual exclusion from vocational education. Women must be given equal access to education, regardless of cultural beliefs and gender. There must be an equal opportunity in educational programmes and world of work. Vocational education curriculum should not favour sexism and marginalise women because that can hinder their willingness to partake in the society.

To redress the balance, the democratic South African government came into power. It has the mandate to provide fair and equal education for all the people of South Africa. Curriculum development was the option to rectify these disparities. The vocational education programmes should not be gendered. The FET act 98 of 1998 was aimed at mitigating the disparities that existed during the colonial era.

Race disparity

The provision of vocational education and training in the 1800s was theorised as an ideological mechanism to 'civilise' non-whites (Kallaway 1992). Also, their vocational education provided skills that boosted the missionaries' economy in the seaports. It goes without saying that those vocational skills only benefited the colonial government. Around 1910 until the 1960s vocational education in South Africa was mandatory to white children. This was as a result of the industrial revolution and World War II (Badroodien 2004:28).

In the 1970s few non-whites were receiving vocational education. The requirement in vocational institutions was that only those who have passed standard six should be admitted. It was clear that only a limited number of Africans will qualify because they hardly studied up to that far by then. The Apprenticeship Act of 1922 was used to disqualify Africans in vocational education and skills trades, permitting mainly the white learners (Malherbe 1977:194). Even when the skills trade was allowed to non-whites it was not of the best quality. The inequality of study opportunities made the white learners develop the mentality that vocational education was solely meant for the non-whites and they considered it a disgrace if they do any vocational jobs. As a result, they preferred office work in the mines and manufacturing industries. There was fear that once the non-white learners get trade skills, they will outcompete the white learners in the labour market (Malherbe 1977:193).

In 1994 when the South African government got into power it had the motive of providing fair and equal education for all. The technical and vocational education institutions were amalgamated to form Technical Vocational Education and Training in 2002 following the TVET Act of 98 of 1998, which made it easy for the distribution of resources and increased enrolment of Africans in TVET colleges.

Funding of vocational education as a disparity

During the 1900s vocational education institutions were unfairly funded. Discrepancies occurred when it comes to funding of non-white vocational institutions and the vocational institutions attended by the white children (Buthelezi 2016). Badroodien (2004:31) indicated that between 1910 and 1930, the Union Government kept aside considerable funds to finance the educational courses for the white children. Twenty per cent of the national state services was spent by the Union Government on the education of the white children (Malherbe 1977:156). Malherbe further highlighted that the expenditure of the state on education grew from an amount of approximately R3.5 million in 1910 to R18 million 1930. The motive behind the increase of funds was white urbanisation which occurred during the period of 1910 and 1930 (Malherbe 1977:156).

In 1945 when the United Party assigned the De Villers Commission of Inquiry to investigate technical and vocational education, it happened that their findings were ignored which resulted in technical and vocational education institutions not being recognized (Terblanche 2017:81). Terblanche also stated that technical and vocational education colleges suffered financially since they fell under the auspices of the Cabinet as government institutions in 1954. In addition, Terblanche pointed out that much of the funds were now to higher education.

Due to the inequality of funds in technical and vocational colleges, they had no updated resources, thus they had poor enrolment compared to other higher education institutions like universities. For an educational institution to be successful it requires abundant funds for human capital development, updated resources, high enrolment, and competent graduates (DoE, 2007a). However, in 2007 the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funded TVET colleges because of the introduction of National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes that were said to be responsive to the labour market. This funding was also an attempt to increase enrolment in the TVET colleges, as it was not recognized previously. In 2009 there was another hope for the betterment of TVET funding. Different SETAs were able to fund occupational programmes offered at TVET colleges, though there was tight competition from non-governmental colleges. There was

Higher Education and Training**Vote 15****Summary of budget**

2019/20					2020/21	2021/22
Name of entity	Total (R million)	Current payments	Transfers and subsidies	Payment for capital assets	Total	Total
MTEF allocation						
Administration	460.4	455.0	-	5.5	491.6	519.8
Planning, Policy and Strategy	90.8	86.6	3.9	0.3	98.1	103.1
University Education	73 409.9	102.2	73 307.2	0.5	80 660.1	85 097.1
Skills Development	282.4	142.3	138.4	1.8	299.6	318.8
Community Education and Training	2 532.8	2 379.3	151.7	1.8	2 714.7	2 888.9
Technical and Vocational Education and Training	12 721.8	7 134.8	5 584.7	2.3	14 475.2	15 451.3
Subtotal	89 498.2	10 300.2	79 185.9	12.0	98 739.3	104 378.9
Direct charge against the National Revenue Fund						
Sector education and training authorities	15 006.8	-	15 006.8	-	16 349.9	17 845.8
National Skills Fund	3 751.7	-	3 751.7	-	4 087.5	4 461.5
Total expenditure estimates	108 256.7	10 300.2	97 944.4	12.0	119 176.8	126 686.2

Executive authority: Minister of Higher Education and Training Accounting Officer: Director-General of Higher Education and Training
 Website: www.dhet.gov.za

Table 1.1 Source: 2019 Estimate of national expenditure Vote 15 Higher education and training

no guarantee of funds from SETAs as funding depended on occupational programmes offered at the college while TVET colleges are challenged by curricular change timeously. Therefore, TVET colleges continued to experience inequality in funds compared to universities.

Table 1.1 indicates a summary of estimated national expenditure of Higher Education and Training (Mogajane 2019). As mentioned above, the budget allocation is unequal between universities and TVET colleges. These unequal funds allocation results in the TVET colleges not being able to purchase updated teaching equipment, and train its staff, consequently, incompetent graduates are produced.

The context and history of vocational education in South Africa

Vocational education can be defined as a programme that helps an individual to acquire skills and practical knowledge for a particular job. Before 1990 vocational education had disparities that limited individuals to acquire skills to compete for employment. This was evident through the gender, race, and budget allocation in the training institutions. Vocational programmes like artisans, tool repairers, miners, machine operators, and welders, to mention a few, were reserved for males by then. Enrolment requirements played a major role in compromising the chances of the female gender into vocational education. Vocational education is aimed at providing technical skills and knowledge necessary for work environment (Okoye & Nkanu 2020).

The countries in the world differ significantly in size, economic level of activity, and the independence date which have an influence on their vocational education systems (Gonon 2019:157–159). They also differ in the sense that some of these countries inherited their vocational education systems from the British ideology (Katartzi & Hayward 2019:299–314), which resulted in unconscious social exclusion. Many of the formal trades as we know them today were brought to the Africans by immigrants from abroad around the 1800s (Davis 2008:1891–1896). The most common purposes of vocationalisation of education

in various countries was for the alleviation of unemployment, stopping urban migration, transmission of attitude, skills relevant for employment, and economic growth (McGrath *et al.* 2006).

Formal and informal education practices were taught through indigenous knowledge systems from parents to children and occurred since the existence of the San, Khoi, and Bantu speakers of Southern Africa before the arrival of the European settlers in 1652 (Walt, Potgieter & Wolhuter 2014:279–290). Culture, tales, procedures, knowledge, and traditions were the curricula of the past executed by the community to equip an African child. It is believed that this trickled-down approach was used to orally pass knowledge, culture, traditions, and procedures from generation to generation and it was integrated with social, artistic, and recreational life of indigenous people. The outgrowth of industrial developments resulted in the pressure for the youth to engage in vocational education (Terblanche 2017). The industrial revolution that originated with the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886, led to the development of technical education in South Africa (Terblanche 2017).

Technical apprenticeship classes were promoted by Witwatersrand, Durban, and Salt River (Malherbe 1977:167–168). In 1896 the School of Mines was established in Kimberly since it had evening classes. Malherbe (1977) indicated that the curricula in the technical colleges favoured males as students and included carriage building, machine construction, practical mathematics, and sketching. The Pretoria Trade school of 1909 offered programmes in woodwork, blacksmithing, plumbing, electrical trades, wagon building, mechanics, and printing. Around 1910 technical schools located in Durban, Pietermaritzburg, and Pretoria offered daytime lessons.

In 1916 a basic system of occupational education for only the whites existed while blacks were excluded in the apprentices and only those who passed standard six was used as a criterion to exclude Africans. It was known that with that criterion in place it was obvious that blacks would be excluded because they hardly studied up to that standard. Therefore, the Apprentice Act of 1922 was followed to support the colonists' strategy of excluding the blacks. As a result, only whites were accommodated by the Act. The whites were sceptic of the blacks that if they are allowed an opportunity to study further, they would outcompete them in jobs in the labour market (Okumura & Usui 2016).

However, 20,000 technicians were in demand due to the emergency for work in the industries and manufacture and service machinery created by World War II (Avis 2016; Abedian & Standish 1992; Malherbe 1977). Due to that demand, the Africans were permitted to attend at vocational colleges in the evening (Fishman 2021). Poor 'whites' were relocated to non-skilled and semiskilled occupations (Billett 2020).

In 1948 the National Party took over (Rosnes 2019) and the African youths vocationalised education through the Bantu education later in 1953. Their curriculum was mainly linked to the labour market which included mining and agricultural interests (Chisholm 1992:9). Formal trade tests were introduced by the Central Organisation for Technical Training (COTT) and administered by the Central Organisation for Trade Testing (Moll, Steinberg & Broekmann 2005:16-19). Durban, Pretoria, Cape Town, and Witwatersrand occupational colleges were upgraded into colleges for Advanced Technical Education following the Technical Education Act of 1967. The Pretoria Technical Institute, in 1940, had the COTT for the organisation of training and skilled human capital.

In 1994 the new South African government was elected into power. It had the mandate of creating, implementing, and ensuring a better life for all the people of South Africa. Briefly, it was aimed at social inclusion that has been ignored before apartheid in vocational education. The attempt to replace the old apprenticeship has not been successful as from its implementation in 1998 due to poor curricula and poor management from the colonies. Therefore, Further Education and Training (FET) colleges were established. The policy framework for education and training (ANC 1994) released by the African National Congress (ANC) led to the declaration of White Paper 4: ‘programme for the transformation of further education and training in 1998’. This document discusses the key values and the vision for the establishment of the new system of education and training (DoE 1998a:6).

The historical introduction of TVET colleges in South Africa

After 1994, technical colleges became educational institutions for work-based apprenticeship system. The FET Act no. 98 of 1998 reformed FET colleges as well as technical colleges into fifty TVET colleges. The motive behind the amalgamation was to capacitate colleges with a variety of programmes that had the possibility of upskilling students and meeting social and economic demands adequately (DoE 2007). TVET colleges explore the abilities, knowledge, and talents of students with the aim of addressing former injustices in education by providing accessible, flexible, and responsive programmes to the majority of South Africans. Also, TVET colleges were established to mitigate the chronic unavailability of work placements for students. TVET colleges were intended to offer practical skills as well as theoretical knowledge linked to a specific world of employment. The colleges arm students with skills and qualifications appropriate for starting out on a career path. Under TVET colleges, the National Certificate and Vocational programmes were established as alternative routes to complete the senior certificate (DoE, 2008) and to cater for school dropouts to acquire basic skills and knowledge relevant for workplace (Gewe 2013). NCV programmes in TVET colleges comprised the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 2 to 4.

In 2014 the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), with the authorisation of Umalusi — a council responsible for setting and monitoring standards for general and further education and training — introduced a workplace-based experience (WBE) which was aimed at paving the way to skilled employment for students. As a result, students registered at TVET colleges with specific needs like employability, entrepreneurship, or further education opportunities.

The proposed Afrocentric research design

For the Afrocentric scholars the cornerstone of African problems is colonialisation. This affected almost all African countries and is therefore a shared experience for all Africans. Many scholars and African leaders such as Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1993), Julius Nyerere (1963), Eze (2014), and many others have defined colonialism and its consequences for the African person. Common among the scholars and relevant for this article are the psychological effects of colonialism. Borovoi, Foland and Vlaev (2016) comments that:

‘This colonialism colonises the minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within colonised societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all. In the process, it helps to generalise the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside, in structures and in minds.’ (Borovoi, Foland & Vlaev 2016)

Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1993) talks about decolonising the mind. The proposed research design is a process of research that facilitates full participation of research participants, but importantly it is a process of learning in the process of research, hence oral history tradition becomes important. Some western scholars such as Mary Lefkowitz (1979) in her book *Not out of Africa: Afrocentrism an excuse to teach myth as history* have been vehemently against Afrocentrism. For us Chinua Achebe (1972) succinctly articulate our view,

‘I never will take the stand that the Old (Eurocentrism) must win or that the New (Afrocentrism) must win. The point is that no single truth satisfied me—No single man (or woman) can be correct all the time, no single idea can be totally correct.’ (Chinua Achebe 1972)

Achebe’s view on the plurality of different knowledge is further elucidated by Asante saying: “African people for over 300 years have lived on the intellectual terms of Europeans. The African perspective has finally come to dinner” (Asante 1991: 42). Lastly and most importantly:

‘Afrocentrism is nothing more than a legitimate demand that African scholars study their society from inside and cease to be purveyors of an alienated intellectual discourse ... If we are adequately Afrocentric, the international implications will not be lost on us’ (Mafege 2000, cited in Oloruntoba 2015:17).

Afrocentrism therefore implores all of us to study our African society as insiders, raising the question: what does it mean to be an insider? To be an insider, we argue, means that in studying African communities, in confronting African problems, in generating African history, or in the process of generating knowledge African lenses must be used. This is the acknowledgement of African ontology and epistemologies. It is about Africans naming their experience, defining it, and deriving existence from that perspective (Oloruntoba 2015; Tolliver 2015; Hlela 2016).

Afrocentrism as a theoretical framework is therefore a shift or a movement at all levels of being. For Achebe, it is decolonising the mind. For Asante (1998), it is a violent and a revolutionary process. Fanon (1996) views it as a violent process, while Chilisa and Preece (2005) see it as a process of reclaiming identity, the self, and the agency of representing the self. Hlela (2017:28) states that:

‘Afrocentrism is a process of *learning* about the impacts of colonization on the African person, *de-learning* the psychological, cultural and social implications thereof and *re-learning* what it means to be fully human, embracing the significant values of the past and infusing relearned identity into all aspects of life.’

Afrocentrism is a research paradigm that seeks to create humanising values such as a quest for social justice and harmony (*Ma'at*) based on the African ways of meaning making and generation of knowledge (*Nommo*) (Asante 1987, 1990). It pursues *Ubuntu* (humanness) as a central ontological and epistemological category in African thought which is based on a holistic view of life, the interconnectedness of all things, and spirituality (ontology) (Huang 2016). The key characters of Afrocentric research by Mazama (2003:27) are: 1. the African experience must guide and inform all inquiry; 2. spirituality is important and must be given its due place; 3. immersion in the subject is necessary; 4. holism is a must; 5. intuition is a valid source of information; 6. not everything that matters are measurable; and 7. knowledge generated must be liberating.

Oral history as a methodology for understanding vocational education

Wahlberg (2009) highlighted that oral history can be through a non-written culture whereby an oral process of transmission is done through remembering and keeping stories and histories through the generations. Therefore, oral history can be defined as the sound recording of historical information, obtained through an interview that preserves a person's life history or eyewitness account of a past experience (Portelli 2018). Oral history will be used to provide an in-depth understanding of vocational education (Gonon & Deisinger 2021). Oral history also enlightens us on what has changed as well as what has been unchanged over time.

In this section we differentiate between an oral history approach and oral history interviews. The differentiation is further informed by Friere's (1964) view that the purpose of education can either be domesticating or liberating. The oral history approach we adopt is informed by Afrocentric values such as liberator practice, humanization, and self-identity. In other words, it is not just about retelling the story from your point of view but also a reflective and change engagement. Sinomlando Centre for Oral History (2013) provide three purposes of oral history as academic, developmental, and educational. The academic purpose for this proposed research design is the exploration of the past to inform the future. The development model uses the assert-based approach and capabilities theory. Both focus on what the community has, which is their history, and finally the educational purpose as indicated is liberator praxis.

In this regard, oral history interviews will be semi-structured, used to obtain an in-depth understanding of vocational education through interviewing lecturers that taught vocational education, and alumni students that underwent vocational education at the now defunct Edendale Vocational college and Plessislaer campus, at UMgungundlovu. Portelli (2018) indicated that oral history interviews are based on the interviewee's perception of what he considers as true. In the same vein Wahlberg (2009) regarded oral history as interviewing participants and transcribing their lived experience, events, or stories for historical documentation, making it the primary source of the subject. A sample of 12 participants (3 lecturers and 9 students) from the defunct Edendale vocational college and Plessislaer campus will be purposefully and snowball-sampled for oral history interviews about their historical lived experiences in the college (Liu & Zheng 2021).

Oral history posed to the best research methodology for this study because it permits participants to voice their personal results of change from simple aspects of life to more complex aspects. The views may also include how their lives stayed the same regardless of change, especially in areas like

traditions, education, and values. In addition, oral history also ensures that history is not lost but made available for posterity (Palys & Atchison 2014).

The weakness of oral history is that interviewers need to ensure that the oral sources underwent scrutinization to be reliable. Therefore, interviewees should have excellent memories of the subject. The details of the subject should be appropriate and have to be verified with written sources if available. For oral history interviews, the interviewer should be technically skilled and have experience. Ranjan (2012) postulated that an interviewer should also be knowledgeable of what needs to be extracted from the interviewee, like asking questions which are interrelated to the subject to give more insight to the problem. Furthermore, the interviewer should be experienced and professionally well-equipped. The oral history interview would be considered unsuccessful if the interviewer has no knowledge of what exactly he wants to know or record, and no substantial information was obtained from the interviewee.

Since the interviewees can have poor memory, checking for credibility of the information given is important (Oelofse 2011). We will ask follow-up questions and approach the same issue from different angles of inquiry at different stages in the interview, while observing the non-verbal behaviour of the interviewee. Then later, we will compare and contrast the information obtained.

A diary of the interviewee can be considered to supplement the subject or experience. Oral history complements document-based history. The preservation of the oral material is important.

Method for analysing data from oral history

A historical research methodology is necessary to create a good narrative and to apply the right analysis to the data the researcher collected through interviews. A four-stage approach will be proposed and used for this goal. Each stage is related and connected to the one before it, and the last stage completes the circuit by connecting to the initial stage. As a result, all phases of data analysis are, in a sense, complementary to one another.

The interview process will be done in three stages. The initial interview will be aimed at getting the participants to think back on and organise their experience. The second interview depicts the experience in depth and the setting in which it occurred, and the third interview focuses on the significance of the experience for the interviewees. The steps of analysis that we will consider are data collection through interviews with the witnesses and first-level coding, second-level coding, and determination of the subcategories. Also, the third-level coding, determination of the key categories, and making connections between the major categories and creating the story.

Stage one:

Data gathering and analysis

The information obtained through interviews, oral testimony, and first-level coding at this point develops into the following facts: familiarity with the information, its organization, and the extraction of the initial codes. The interviews will be recorded using a voice recorder and handwritten notes. The interviewee will be informed that a voice recorder is utilized. The interviews consist of four sets of questions: a warm-up, a memory, a judgment, and a follow-up.

The data will be analysed using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) for textual analysis after the recorded interviews have been manually and digitally transcribed. Participants' alterations in facial expressions will be noted. The written notes will assist in recalling the expressions or emotions of the participants when writing the narrative.

The codes to be used will contain the abbreviation of the name of the college and the participant number. For example, EVC1 which is Edendale Vocational College, participant 1. The data coding will be done at the same time while analysing it. The data will be organised and summarised and organised to facilitate labelling of categories.

Stage two:

Second-level coding and determining the subcategories

To get the participants' first-hand experiences, coding is used. It is regarded as the initial stage of interpretation. The participant's past experiences are examples of lived experiences. A subcategory will then be created from the data using similar concepts, and it will be placed next to another subcategory. Then, in order to look for related codes, we will evaluate the obtained subcategories.

Stage three:

Third-level coding and determining the main categories

The puzzle pieces are now put together so that when the approved documentation is analysed, the entire picture can be seen. The codes will be given to the participants in order to ensure coding validity at various stages. It is decided whether the oral history technique is reliable at this crucial step. The key categories will be defined, labelled, and coded at this stage.

Stage four:

Connecting the main categories to one another and writing the narrative

The major categories will be linked at this stage. The narrative is the result of the participants' spoken words and organised in accordance with the major categories. The historical image of the participants' viewpoint on historical experiences will be portrayed in the narrative.

When the analysed data are collected, it will be documented forming a story of the experiences and events that transpired in the lives of the lecturers and students that underwent vocational education. The information can also be archived for future generations to learn from. Also, the outcomes from oral history interviews will bring back TVET colleges' recognition.

Conclusion

In this article, we researched understanding vocational education through oral history. The article was aimed at addressing the origins of vocational education disparities that are presently affecting TVET colleges through using the Afrocentric approach as a proposed research design. The history of vocational education presented events that transpired in the past but are still shaping our current TVET colleges.

The colonial ideology is still existing in our new TVET colleges. The use of Afrocentric approach in this article as a proposed design entails the element of multiculturalism which can assist in shaping our education system to match our African educational culture to produce competitive TVET graduates.

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The extent of women involvement in the *Ulwaluko* rituals among the AmaZizi-Dlamini ethnic group of kwaZangashe, Eastern Cape

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Annually boys from the AmaZizi, the Dlamini ethnic group in the Eastern Cape Province, partake in the *Ulwaluko* rituals — a customary male initiation ritual that is performed to transform boys into men. Boys leave the safety and comfort of their homes to live in secluded areas for around a month as they embark on the journey to manhood. The *Ulwaluko* is still shrouded in secrecy. As a result, the AmaZizi-Dlamini women tend to be among those who are, to an extent, excluded from these ‘secretive’ parts of the rituals. When the national department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs tried in 2016 to legislate the involvement of women in *Ulwaluko*, it was labelled a ‘serious mistake’ by men opposing the idea, and the controversial clause was retracted. However, traditionally there is a significant split on gender roles during *Ulwaluko*. Women cook and prepare for the related ceremonies while men are responsible for the customary practices and decisions required in the process. This study aimed to explore the role played by women in the rites of passage of the AmaZizi-Dlamini boys. A qualitative research methodology was employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of elderly men and women of the AmaZizi-Dlamini and traditional leaders within the AmaZizi-Dlamini. The findings of this study indicate that the women of the AmaZizi-Dlamini ethnic group play a significant to almost dominant role in this entire process. The pace of the ritual and the time set by women regarding the time to prepare the food, making traditional beer, and identifying what preparations and modifications should be done in the homestead ahead of the ritual. This study recommends that, a) men and women, as custodians of society, need to make the young people understand that *Ulwaluko* is not exclusively a responsibility of young men, and b) that women need to understand and embrace their role in *Ulwaluko* rituals and equate themselves with the provisions of their culture as women.

Contribution: The power dynamics have been identified and maintained through several forms of demarcations and differentiations. Perceptions have put men at the helm of important social and cultural activities especially the culture of male customary initiation while relegating women into a passive position. Exploring and pointing out the roles and responsibilities of women in the *Ulwaluko* rituals, will assist women to equate themselves with the provisions of their culture as women.

Keywords: Women, *Ulwaluko*, male initiation, AmaZizi, Dlamini/AmaDlamini, AbaNtu, rite of passage.

Background

Saved from precolonial Africa, where society maintained a relatively equal and more equilibrium society, philosophically (modern) African leadership has not completely embraced the

democratisation for all the population segments in many countries (Kang'ethe & Nomngcoyiya 2016:126). According to Kang'ethe and Nomngcoyiya (2016), power has been championed through driving many people desperate so that they can adore, fear, and pay allegiance to those holding power. Since patriarchy is a perfect facilitator of power hegemony, (modern) African leadership has capitalized on controlling children and women as a way of upholding and maintaining power. The power dynamics have also been defined and maintained through some forms of gender demarcation and differentiation (Women and Law in Southern Africa 1998). Men have therefore put themselves at the helm of important social and cultural activities (Afolayan 2004). Therefore, the culture of male circumcision (*Ulwaluko*) has been controlled by men while women have been relegated to a passive position (Ntombana 2011:635).

Ulwaluko, the customary male initiation practice, is an important and deeply rooted custom of various ethnic groups in South Africa, and it is a supremely treasured customary practice especially amongst ethnic groups such as AbeSuthu, AmaZizi, AmaHlubi, AmaBhele, AmaXhosa, AbaThembu and many other significant ethnic groups of the Eastern Cape. It is the firm understanding of these communities that in order to be a complete and strong man one has to undergo and fulfil all these rituals that constitute the customary male initiation practice, known in isiXhosa as *Ulwaluko*. *Ulwaluko* serves as a doorway through which an adolescent male must step to become a respected member of society, or as it is called among the AmaXhosa, to attain manhood (Venter 2011:560). Obtaining this status bestows rights, privileges, and obligations on the individual concerned (Mtuze 2008:119). Privileges and obligations include owning land/house, attending cultural gatherings, marrying a spouse, participating in meetings in the traditional court, etc. The initiates are called *abakhwetha* in IsiXhosa. A single male in the group is known as an *umkhwetha*. A male who has not undergone initiation is referred to as *inkwenkwe* (boy) regardless of his age and is not allowed to take part in male activities such as tribal meetings.

Young males attend initiation schools to be taught the values, principles, hardships, respect, and accountability within their cultural tradition. In the old days this would happen over a specific, defined period, usually two to six months, and this would occur during winter all the way into summer. These days present day it takes an average of a mere four weeks because the boys either must go back to school or to work.

At the break of dawn on the day preceding the seclusion period the boys will have slept at the main hut of the family usually belonging to his grandmother, and the men will come early in the morning and sound the infamous saying, '*inkwenkwe mayihlukane nonina*', loosely translated as 'the boy must separate mother', at which point the boy is taken to the kraal and after a full day of *umgubho*, the journey into the seclusion period begins.

According to Ntombana (2011:636), during this time of seclusion the *abakhwetha* (initiates) are taught about their history, discipline, how to be a responsible young person, as well as how to be a family man who contributes positively to society. Women are not allowed to set foot inside *esuthwini* – the initiation hut – during the seclusion period because this is where the safely guarded sacred parts of the ritual are performed and protected from those who have not undergone the customary initiation practice (Magodyo 2013).

The position and role of women in society is a complex phenomenon with many variables. Geisler (1997) implies that women play a role in their own subordination. The women are the vanguard of the general health of the boys when they are in the initiation school in that they must always ensure that the male figure of the family (father, uncle, or brother) visits the initiation school regularly to monitor the initiates. This study argues that women do not only have the right to be involved in any matter concerning their children's physical and emotional well-being, but as legal guardians under the law they are responsible to put their children's safety above any cultural custom or ritual, therefore, this study will explore the extent of women involvement in the *Ulwaluko* rituals of the AmaZizi ethnic group.

Contextual setting of the Amazizi

According to Soga (1929), author of *Southeastern Bantu*, the Dlamini are cattle breeding people that migrated down from central Africa and settled for many generations in the Zimbabwe/Zambia areas before moving to settle in Swaziland and present-day Natal. Dlamini the 8th gave birth to various branches of a tribe which were, before Dlamini himself, known as Imihuhu: a part of the AmaLala stock race (Soga 1929). It was Dlamini who begot Mthimkhulu (of the AmaHlubi tribe) and Sibalukhulu. From Sibalukhulu descended various tribes namely, AmaZizi, AmaKhuze, AmaSwati, AmaTolo, AmaMiya, AmaNdlangisa, and AmaLimakho (Pokwana & Pokwana 2008).

Although some of these tribes are found all over Southern Africa, with some having migrated down south to the present-day Eastern Cape from as early as the 1600s: was during the Mfecane wars that some of these AmaDlamini tribes moved further down to settle in Mbhashe territory under King Ngubengcuka of the AbaThembu in the present-day Eastern Cape, and the AmaZizi of the kwaZangashe village settled there after being rewarded with the land for their role during the Nongxokozelo wars between 1870-1874 with their chief at the time being Chief Pokwana, son of Chief Menziwa (Pokwana & Pokwana 2008). The AmaZizi of kwaZangashe have a total estimated population of 35,000.

Problem statement

Africa's cultural norms and standards have created power differences between men and women by defining their roles in societal settings, and religious, occupational, family, marriage, and sexual relationships (Kang'ethe 2016). While it may be perceived that women are culturally excluded from participating in customary initiation processes, the Department of Traditional Affairs policy on the Customary Practice of Initiation (Section 7.6, 2015) acknowledges that the role and rights of women in relation to the initiation practices of traditional communities have for a long time been a debated and sensitive subject. Ignoring the rights of women to have a say in the welfare on their children and cultural practices would constitute an infringement to the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution (1996), as South Africa is governed by a constitutional democracy. From a gender and cultural perspective, it can be argued that within the context of gendered division of labour in preparation of initiation schools, the role of women is not a new phenomenon exclusively introduced through the modern state and its legal framework. Women historically and currently had significant roles to play in this process, even though they do not directly participate in the actual activities of initiates inside the actual initiate huts (*amabhuma*). This study aims to explore the extent of women involvement in the *Ulwaluko* rituals among the AmaZizi-Dlamini ethnic group of kwaZangashe, Eastern Cape.

Research purpose and objectives

There have been many discussions on various gender-related issues in society, one being the exclusion of women from the customary male initiation practices. In most instances, there have been various attempts by government to remedy the situation through legal framework changes. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the extent of women involvement in the *Ulwaluko* rituals among the AmaZizi-Dlamini ethnic group of KwaZangashe, Eastern Cape. The study specifically sought to:

- Explore the role of women in the three phases of rites of passage of *Ulwaluko*
- Find out if women participate in the choice of *Ikhankatha*
- Find out if women participate in the choice of *Iinqcibi*.

Methodology

In order to explore the research question/problem statement, this study employed a case study design in which qualitative interviews were employed to amass lengthy narratives about the role of women in the customary male initiation practice amongst the AmaZizi tribe. The KwaZangashe village in the Eastern Cape Province was chosen for this study because that is where the AmaZizi tribe mostly resides. Due to limited resources and time constraints, a purposive sampling was employed by interviewing 27 people. The participants included five young men and three young women between the ages of 25 to 38, three old men and four old women between the ages of 40 and 55, two sub-headmen, two municipal ward committee members between the ages of 35 to 55, two kwaZangashe Initiation Forum members between the ages of 40 and 65, one Vusizwe Foundation staff between the ages of 30 to 45, and five ordinary community members between the ages of 30 and 70. Letters to seek approvals were sent to the head of municipal ward committee, the director of Vusizwe Foundation and the chairman of KwaZangashe Initiation Forum.

A semi-structured interview guide was developed in English, translated into isiXhosa, and all questions were posed in isiXhosa. The participants were requested to complete a consent form which declared that their participation in the study is voluntary and that their identity remains confidential. An audio recording device was used to record the interviews, as well as written notes.

Ulwaluko practice among in the AmaZizi

Magodyo, Andipatin and Jackson (2017:345) explain *Ulwaluko* as a Xhosa word that refers to an initiation ritual. In essence, the term *ulwaluko* is derived from the term *ukwalula* which is loosely translated as 'to straighten'. This refers to straightening/setting right the generally delinquent behaviour of boys and takes place during the seclusion period (Pokwana & Pokwana 2008:39). The purpose of *Ulwaluko* is to transform boys into men. The ritual aims to instil good moral and social values. *Ulwaluko* is an old practice amongst the AmaZizi. While many may have stopped it during the wars of Mfecane, the AmaZizi of kwaZangashe have performed this practice since time immemorial without suspending it. In the cultural practices of the AmaZizi, a male cannot transit into manhood unless he undergoes *Ulwaluko*. He may not address the members of the community in a meeting and not even allowed to enter a traditional house during a cultural event or ritual. So, his permit is to undergo customary initiation (Mfecane 2016).

The process of *Ulwaluko* begins with *ibhunga*, a meeting of the village men where they discuss the matter and look at which traditional surgeons and traditional nurses are best to consider and the women for the

possible pace of the ritual in terms of what processes and preparations need to be followed. From *ibhunga* the boys are given strips of sheep skin to signify permission that they are allowed to go ahead with initiation.

According to Vincent (2008), before boys go into the initiation school, the elders must ensure that all the prerequisite rituals have been observed and this include, ensuring that:

- The childhood ritual of imbeleko is done.
- Intambo yobulunga has been obtained and put around the neck of the prospective initiate.
- The Umngcamo/Ukushwama ritual is performed where a goat is slaughtered, and a specific piece of meat taken from the right shoulder of the goat is roasted for the prospective initiate to taste first, before anyone else can eat from that goat.

Several ceremonies take place before a young boy leaves for initiation in which the family gathers to seek blessings and see the boy off. The young boys are reintroduced to their ancestors and 'uQamata', the High Ancestor who is understood by the AbaNtu, ethnic groups such as the AmaZizi and the Xhosa people, as the conduit between God the Creator and the People. One of the important aspects during the performance of these rituals are festivities that take place, such as stick fighting, Umgubho—the singing of traditional songs and dancing all night and all day (Magodyo 2013). Men are fully alert and on full guard particularly in the last twenty-four hours before the boys head off to the mountain. Adult men must ensure that boys don't decide to run away after the rituals have started and that other groups of boys from other villages do not cause fighting with the boys undergoing the initiation rituals. It is the belief of the AmaDlamini that if boys ran away after rituals have been performed, they may even go mad permanently (Pauwels 2020).

Findings and discussions

This section presented data thematically. Collected data were transcribed and selected according to common themes, analysed, and presented. The information is presented in narrative text. These themes were derived from the objectives of the study as discussed below.

The role of women in the three phases of rites of passage

Separation

The first objective of this study was to establish if mothers participate in decision making concerning the initiation of their boys. The data collected from the interview indicate that during the separation process the parents of the boy (mother and father) discuss the readiness of the boy to go into the initiation, which also includes the date that the boy will be going. Also, the collected data indicate that, once the family has been informed, the mother will take the boy to the clinic for medical examination.

The participants also indicated that once the preparation of *Ulwaluko* begins, the women will then build the huts for the initiates. The preparation of the farewell ceremony (*Umgubho*) for the initiate is also done by women according to the collected data. The building of the hut for the initiates is a crucial step in the initiation process because most rituals pertaining to the initiate will be done in the hut, therefore, mothers/women play a significant role here. Therefore, these findings suggest that the mothers are involved from the beginning in the planning for the initiation of their sons.

Transition

The participants indicated that when the period of transition begins the boys leave home for the mountains, the women form an entourage and accompany the initiates halfway to the mountain singing, ululating, and dancing in joy all the way. As a participant said:

‘kulapho ke sixhentsayo, sisombela, sikikizela de sifumane ukuba amakhwenkwe asetyenziwe.’ (P1)

The interviewee also revealed that once the boys have entered the initiation school in the mountain, they will be circumcised immediately. Then the signal will be sent to women that the circumcision went well. After these women will lift their dresses up and pee on an anthill to make mud which they smear on their foreheads, as explained by one of the participants:

‘ooTata ke bathi xa sele begqibile ukusebenza basinike indlela yokusazisa nokuba baphakamise ibhatyi. Thina mazibazana kulapho ke siphakamisa iilokhwe sichamele isidulu, sandule ukuqaba elodaka ebunzi. Asiphindi sihlambe ukusukela ngalomini de kufike umhla wokojiswa kwabakhwetha. Asisondeli nakubayeni bethu kwelithuba.’ (P2)

Furthermore, the collected data revealed that, after putting the mud on their faces, women are not allowed to bath for eight days, and must refrain from intimate activities. P1 indicated that women supervise the provision of food to the initiates (three times a day). On the 08th day there is a ritual called *umojiso* and all the men in the village gather at the *esuthwini* to also assess the progress of the initiation. Women are supposed to prepare and provide food and all amenities needed for the ritual at the mountain. P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 indicated that the women also prepare for *umgidi*, the return ceremony. They make sure there is food, drinks, and attire. These findings suggest that mothers/women play an extremely critical role at this stage, because they must stay clean/pure for eight days in support of the healing period for the initiate. They believe that if they do not do that it will affect the health of the initiate.

The return

The interviewees indicated that, once the date of the return from the mountain is set, it is announced immediately. The women must then make sure that everything is ready. P8 and P9 highlighted that, on the day of the boys’ return, the women mark the celebration and ululate in joy while men sing *igwatyu*, a song of war, called *somagwaza*.

Furthermore, this study finds that, on arrival, the boys arrive at the kraal for rituals and briefing where women are not allowed. After the rituals at the kraal the women will allocate the boys a hut where they are staying for two days and provide them with all hospitalities. The women will then address the boys in the allocated hut (*ukulaya*) in the absence of their fathers where they tell them about good behavior. As one participant shared:

‘Siyabayala sibaxelele ngendlela yokuziphatha elindelekileyo kubo njengamadoda.’ (P8)

These findings reveal that women continue to play a role in determining the staying of the initiates and making sure that they provide for their needs. Women also are part of providing guidance to initiates so that they become responsible of the society.

The interviewees also indicated that after two days the boys will go to the river to wash. Women will then prepare clothes for the boys. After that the boys will be integrated back into the society.

Choice of *ikhankatha*/traditional nurse

The interviewees indicated that the *ikhankatha* (traditional nurse) is chosen by both parents (mother and father) and that the *ikhankatha* is a male person usually 30 years of age and above with a minimum of 10 years' experience as a man (initiated customarily), who will be responsible to look after and care for the initiates and give all the teachings of manhood that have been handed down for generations.

However, P9 indicated that the *ikhankata* does not communicate with the mothers about information pertaining to the secrets of *esuthwini* (the initiation hut). They only tell them about the things they need. The report on sensitive matters from the mountain is given to the fathers, as one participant voiced:

'zonke izinto eziyinxalenye neemfihlelo zasebakhwetheni asizixelela kodwa yonke enye into siyayazi.' (P9)

The interviewer asked what happens in case there is no father in the family, to which the participant mentioned that a close relative is brought in to perform the full responsibilities of the father of the initiate. One interviewee responded:

'ngenxa yokuba ayikho inkedama kwaNtu, umama ke uye asondeze indoda endala yekhaya ukuze ibenguyise wenkwekwe xa oyizalayo engekho.' (P8)

These findings highlight that within the *Ulwaluko* process there are certain issues that are treated as secretive to women. However, women are part of making decisions in relation to the needs of the *Ulwaluko* process.

Choice of *ingcibi*/traditional surgeons

The interviews revealed that *ingcibi*, or traditional surgeon is chosen based on character and manners. Furthermore, the interviewees indicated that only an initiated man above 30 years of age can be an *ingcibi* and not a female. An *ingcibi* is responsible to operate the foreskin of the initiate.

When the interviewers asked about the involvement of women in this stage, participants indicated that women are not involved when it comes to issues of the *ingcibi*:

'asiyane sixelelwe ngezinto ezimalunga nengcibi. Namaxa kukho ezongxakana banoba bakhe babenazo ebhumeni, thina sibona nje amadoda emanate esehla esenyuka sikrokre ke ukuba hleze kukho abajikajikakana nako.' (P5)

These findings give emphasis that some part of *Ulwaluko* is a secret to women, particularly the information about what happens in the initiation school.

Conclusion and recommendations

In the AmaZizi/Dlamini tribe, women play a significant to an almost dominant role in the process of *Ulwaluko*. The pace of and time frames are set by the women based on how long it will take to prepare critical aspects such as preparation of food, fermenting corn for making traditional beer, identifying what preparations and modifications should be done in the homestead ahead of the ritual. Without such processes the initiation cannot be completed properly. Women also participate in the identification of traditional nurses (*amakhankatha*). It is only the mother of the initiate who in solidarity with her initiate son will not wash for the first eight days while the boy attends the initiation school. The date and preparations of the exiting ceremony are also led by the women.

This study recommends that men and women as custodians of society need to make the young people understand that *Ulwaluko* is not an exclusive responsibility of young men only. The study also recommends that women need to understand and embrace their role in *Ulwaluko* rituals and equate themselves with the provisions of their culture as women.

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The traumatic experiences suffered by Mathebe women during the 1970 state of emergency in Lesotho

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This article documents the traumatic experiences of women suffered during the 1970 state of emergency in Lesotho. As supporters of the opposition party, the Basotho Congress Party, they were victimised for voting it into victory. These experiences are missing in the published literature. Mathebe, a rural village in the Mafeteng district, is used as a case study. Extreme acts of political repression were perpetrated in this village by the Police Mobile Unit and some members of the Basotho National Party Youth League. This article follows the oral history theory and methodological approach because it is based on oral data. It relies on the use of interviews to get in-depth data from the four interviewees about their experiences during that troubled time. It uses pseudonyms instead of their real names as it does not intend to promote further trauma on them and their descendants in the present time or in future. It finds that these women experienced physical, psychological, and mental trauma through politically motivated assault and arson. It concludes that the state of emergency became the first instance of ‘troubled times’ in the political history of Lesotho, which serves as a testimony of a ‘world in troubled times’ and what these four women endured, just like Charlotte Maxeke did. It recommends an inclusive approach to documentation of experiences relating to phenomena. This article is part of a M.A. dissertation completed in July 2020 at the National University of Lesotho.

Contribution: This article is a documentation of personal testimonies of women who suffered during the 1970 state of emergency as these are missing in the previously published literature. It contributes to oral history theory, memory, and women studies.

Keywords: oral history, trauma, memory studies, personal testimonies, authoritarian rule, Lesotho, Southern Africa.

Introduction

Lesotho held its first general elections in April 1965 in preparation for independence. The Basotho National Party (BNP) won the elections. On 4 October 1966 Lesotho became independent from the British colonial government. The period from 1966 to 1970 proved to be fragile for Lesotho’s newly found democratic rule. This was because of the precarious power that the country’s first democratic government had which made it prone to political challenges. The subsequent and first postcolonial elections were held in January 1970. This was the time when Lesotho was expected to enjoy her independence and democratic rule. However, it experienced its first postcolonial undemocratic rule because a state of emergency was declared. The state of emergency, locally known as *qomatsi*,

represents one of the troubled times in the political history of the postcolonial Lesotho. It set in motion events that marked the beginning of authoritarian rule characterised by repression and acts of political violence. It led to human suffering meted out to the opposition: the immediate victims were political leaders of the opposition. Civilian victimisation soon followed.

Background

On 27 January 1970 the first postcolonial general elections were held in Lesotho. According to *Leselinyana la Basotho* (1970), the political parties competing in the elections were as follows: Basotho Congress Party (BCP) led by Ntsu Mokhehle, BNP led by Leabua Jonathan, Marema-Tlou Freedom Party (MFP) led by Tšepo Mohaleroe, as major parties, while there were few candidates from the United Democratic Party (UDP) under Charles Mofeli's leadership, and independent candidates.

On the election day, when asked about the progress of the elections, Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan mentioned that the elections were proceeding freely and fairly without any hiccups. In a surprising turn of events, when it emerged that his party had been defeated in the elections by the BCP, Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan stopped the announcement of the election results and declared the state of emergency. He alleged that the opposition BCP perpetrated acts of violence during the elections (Khaketla 1971:210). These allegations were denied by the opposition. In a statement published by *Leselinyana la Lesotho* (1970), Koenyama Chakela, the Secretary General of the BCP at the time, stated that the reason was that the BNP had suffered defeat and lost to the BCP in the elections. It had won thirty-six constituencies out of the total of sixty. The declaration of the state of emergency had nothing to do with the alleged acts of violence. He maintained that this was a blatant lie fed to the press. Numerous reports provided information that upon learning that the BCP had become victorious in the elections Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan decided to declare the state of emergency. It was reported that both parties were standing at twenty-three constituencies each (*Leselinyana la Lesotho*, 1970 and *Moeletsi oa Basotho* (1970)). At this point Lesotho's politics transitioned from democratic to authoritarian rule, because instead of handing over the reins to the victor, Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan resorted to declaring the state of emergency.

The declaration of the state of emergency was followed by a series of events. First, the 1966 Independence Constitution was suspended. Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan maintained that this constitution was not in line with the principles and customs of the Basotho and that a new constitution would be drafted (Khaketla 1971:208). This was followed by the immediate arrest and detention of the leaders of the opposition parties. According to *Leselinyana la Lesotho* (1970), an hour and a half after the declaration of the state of emergency and the suspension of the constitution, Ntsu Mokhehle and Khauta Khasu the chairman of the BCP executive committee were arrested. Other prominent politicians were also arrested (Mphanya 2004:1). Thus, the onset of repression of the political party leaders started. This was done to ensure that the immediate threat or potential threat of resistance to the despotic rule was repressed and neutralised. This is further explained by DeMeritt (2016) who maintains that it is assumed that governments repress opposition because they seek quiescence and quell popular dissent. Repression of the opposition parties was further achieved through the *Lesotho Order of 1970*. This Order was instrumental in reinstating Leabua Jonathan as the Prime Minister of Lesotho despite his political party's apparent defeat during the elections. Section 4(2) of this Order effectively reinstated Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan as the Prime Minister of Lesotho.

King Moshoeshoe II was placed under house arrest and subsequently in exile in the Netherlands. This was achieved through the deployment of police to the King's royal residence in Matsieng. After that, the government issued *The Office of the King Order of 1970* (Laws of Lesotho 1970) which required the King to immediately subscribe to the Office of the King under oath as prescribed in the Order to be recognised, confirmed, and by implication reinstated to his office. Then followed the imposition of a curfew which was achieved through the *Emergency Powers Order 1970* (Laws of Lesotho, 1970). Movement was permitted between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

In the last place, newspapers, especially those that were deemed to be anti-BNP, were banned. For instance, *Leselinyana la Lesotho* was banned from publishing from 20 March 1970 and resumed publishing on 10 July 1970. Its sister publication *Moeletsi oa Basotho* was not banned because being a Roman Catholic Church (RCC) affiliated newspaper it was deemed to be sympathetic to the BNP. This meant that readers were exposed to one-sided reporting, emanating from a newspaper that was sympathetic to the ruling party and did not represent the views of the opposition parties.

This article contributes towards the knowledge generated about the state of emergency, oral history theory, testimonies, and memory studies related to the postcolonial political history of Lesotho and Southern Africa. It investigates how civilians suffered during this troubled time. It contributes to the previously published literature by focusing on traumatic experiences of women which are rarely included in historical writings. The literature on the subject to date had focused exclusively on how the other leaders of the opposition parties, the political elites, and King Moshoeshoe II suffered during this transitional period. A detailed discussion of their experiences is provided by Khaketla (1971). Khaketla was the Secretary General of the MFP, a member of the King's Privy Council (1965-1970), and an editor of the *Mohlabani* newspaper. As a member of the Privy Council, he had intimate knowledge of the state of emergency. He writes about how leaders of the opposition parties and the King were affected by the state of emergency and the immediate arrest of political leaders of the opposition party, the BCP. He further writes about King Moshoeshoe II's house arrest and the difficulties endured by their family as he was not allowed to have visitors. He also records his personal experiences as he was put under house arrest and how this prevented him from performing the day-to-day errands. He mentions that his wife, Masechele Khaketla, wrote a letter to then Commissioner of Police J.H. Hindmarsh and the mother of Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan begging for the deplorable acts of repression to stop (Khaketla 1971). He mentioned that Tšepo Mohaleroe was also placed under house arrest and was unable to go to the office and attend to his legal practice. He provides a clear sequence of events leading to the state of emergency and how things unfolded. He refers to the retaliation measures which people in their respective villages adopted against the torturous acts of the Police Mobile Unit (PMU) and other perpetrators. This book is by far the most significant published literature on the state of emergency. However, the book does not document testimonies of women who suffered through an event that was not of their own making and relied on newspaper reports and not personal testimonies of those who suffered.

Another relevant publication on the state of emergency (Pule & Thabane 2010a:19-38) provides a documentation of the Clement Mooki Leepa rebellion in 1970 at Thaba-Telle in Matsieng. It is perhaps the first and only article to date to give a detailed account of Clement Leepa's rebellion of February to March 1970 in Matsieng. It is based on oral history and memory. It narrates the story by an interviewee who participated in the rebellion during the state of emergency. The article provides

insight into what happened following the declaration of the state of emergency, particularly where the government, through the police, invaded the villages and how some people organised themselves to resist the government. It explains why Leepa and some local men resisted the 1970 unconstitutional government during the months of February and March 1970 when the government started to root out any form of opposition against its authoritarian rule. It argues that there were deeper, personal reasons why people resisted the government in 1970 than merely accepting at face value that they were trying to topple the government. It further argues that the Monarch played an underhanded role in the rebellion. Leepa was eventually killed.

Other published sources that relied on an oral history approach on the subject include Mphanya (2004) and Pule and Thabane (2010). These are biographical literature based on male political elites who shared their traumatic experiences during the state of emergency. Mphanya, a prominent politician, a Deputy Secretary General in the BCP Executive Committee and a candidate for the Koeneng No. 14 constituency, relates the incidents of violence against BCP supporters (Mphanya 2004:73-74). This took place in Maseru, Thaba-Phechela, Baking, Taung, Majaheng, and Ha Koasa where disheartening atrocities were carried out. In another biographical book (Pule & Thabane 2010b:86), Mphanya narrates how he became a victim during the state of emergency. He mentions that he was arrested after Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan declared the state of emergency.

Moreover, this article seeks to highlight the significance of oral sources for a theory and method of history by focusing on oral history, testimonies, and memory studies in Lesotho. A recent contribution by Thabane (2019:1-23) documents oral testimonies relating to the 1986 military coup in Lesotho. On 20 January 1986 a military coup took place in Lesotho which ended the BNP's authoritarian government. Thabane relied on oral testimonies of three individuals who were civil servants during Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan's regime. The article argues that the stories of the victors in the coup have come to dominate the stories of the opponents of the coup.

Another contribution was from Mahula (2017) who documents the traumatic experiences of witnesses to the 1982 Maseru massacre. In 1982, the South African Defence Force (SADF) violently raided Maseru in search of African National Congress (ANC) operatives who were suspected to have been harboured there. This resulted in the deaths of 42 South Africans and 12 Basotho. The focus of this study is the witnesses' recollection of this traumatic event and why little has been said about it.

An equally important contribution came from Thabane (1986), who provides a detailed discussion of the use of personal testimonies as a source of history. He maintains that the authors of the history of Lesotho have focused on the experiences of great events and great men. They have neglected documenting the day-to-day experiences of ordinary people. He emphasises the significance of life experiences of ordinary people, their interpretation, and conclusion in a holistic understanding of the history of Lesotho.

Aim and objectives

The aim of this article is to document the traumatic experiences suffered by women during the state of emergency in 1970. This is important because a documentation of women's testimonies is missing in the published literature on the state of emergency.

The objectives of the article are as follows to:

- i) Document the traumatic ways in which Mathebe women suffered during this troubled time
- ii) Document the consequences of the trauma suffered by the Mathebe women
- iii) Share reflections from the researcher about oral history methods.

Setting

This article's focus is on Mathebe, a rural village found in the Mafeteng district, approximately 60 kilometres south of the capital, Maseru. It was selected because extreme acts of repression and acts of political violence were meted out there to the supporters of the BCP by some members of the PMU and the BNP Youth League. Mathebe was one among many strongholds of the BCP. It was selected because some of the people who became victims of repression were still alive unlike those in other villages such as Thaba-Chitja. Furthermore, unlike other places, Mathebe was closer to the researcher and as a self-funded study, the travel and other costs incurred would not be excessive for her. The name Mathebe originates from the name of the mountain that forms the backdrop of the village. The village was placed under the chiefly administration of the Matetes. Morena Moshoeshoe I's senior wife Mamohato was born from the Matete family.

Methodology

The article falls within the broad spectrum of qualitative research. It aims to investigate a phenomenon that marked a transitional and troubled period in the postcolonial political history of Lesotho, which saw the shift from democratic to authoritarian rule. It uses a historical research approach to investigate the 1970 state of emergency in Lesotho. The researcher relied on newspaper reports as primary sources about this period in Lesotho's history, because during this period reliable and effective reporting came from newspaper reports published in Lesotho and South Africa. This is attested by Switzer and Switzer (1979:23). Through their bibliographic guide they locate, identify, and describe South African and Lesotho newspaper publications that dominated news reports from the 1830s to 1970 and contend that they became the crux of the protest press during apartheid and the state of emergency respectively. Mission newspapers became significant primary sources in relation to the events of 1970. In this regard, *Leselinyana la Lesotho* (1970), a newspaper founded in 1863 by the Paris Evangelical Mission Society (PEMS) in Morija, provided reports of events following the declaration of the state of emergency by Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan. It provided reports of the published election results, the declaration of the state of emergency, and what took place thereafter. It refers to the invasion by the police at Tšitsong in the Quthing district where one police officer died instantly, and seven other people were killed. At Phamong in the Mohale's Hoek district, one police officer and three civilians were killed. Another equally important mission newspaper (*Moeletsi oa Basotho*, 1970) founded in 1933 by the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in Mazenod, reported several incidents of shooting, arson, and arrests in numerous villages across the country. These were villages that were affiliated with the BCP. Unlike its sister publication, *Moeletsi oa Basotho* was not banned because being an RCC affiliated newspaper it was deemed to be sympathetic to the BNP. It further reports that one of the areas affected was Ha 'Mampiletso in the Quthing district where the community retaliated by throwing stones at an armed attack by the police. Seven civilians and two police officers died in this confrontation.

Equally important were the South African newspapers which provided weekly reports of the events that took place during the state of emergency. These include *Sunday Times* (1970) and *The Friend*

Name	Details
Mamolefi* 83 years old. A wife.	Born in 1934. At the time she was 36 years old, married, with three children. Her husband worked in South African mines.
Manthabiseng* 86 years old. Wife and subsistence farmer.	Born in 1937. She was 33 years old at the time and a mother of two children. Her husband also worked in the mines in South Africa.
Molelekeng* 76 years old. A wife and self-employed.	Born in 1942. She was 28 and had two children. Her husband worked in the mines in South Africa.
Lerato* 72 years old. Self-employed.	Born in 1947, she was 23 years old at the time and had just given birth. Both Lerato's parents worked in South Africa, one in the mines and another at a farm.
* Denotes pseudonyms of participants	

Table 1.2 Profiles of the interviewees

(1970). The *Sunday Times* is a Johannesburg newspaper that began publishing in February 1906 while *The Friend*, a Bloemfontein-based newspaper, was established in 1850 and published on a weekly basis. These newspapers published up-to-date reports on arrests of political leaders, speeches by the Prime Minister regarding the state of emergency, King Moshoeshoe II's house arrest and subsequent exile, suspension of international aid, and other related news. The researcher made limited use of the newspaper clippings extracted from the weekly publications and soft copies of *The Friend* and *Sunday Times* newspapers obtained from Morija Museum and Archives (MMA) and the Free State Provincial Archives, respectively.

The article employs an oral history methodology approach to analyse the oral data it is based on. It uses personal testimonies from women in the Mathebe village to document their traumatic experiences as victims of repression and acts of political violence. For purposes of obtaining more in-depth data, the researcher used interviews and asked open-ended questions. Four women were interviewed, and purposive sampling was used because those who were interviewed were only those who suffered directly during the state of emergency because the study sought to document first-hand testimonies. It focussed on these women who were well into their adult life and were still alive to tell their stories, as most other people who were affected had died. Furthermore, the researcher interviewed men and women for the purposes of the Masters dissertation, but their experiences varied. For instance, because of the danger of resistance posed by men, they were instantly imprisoned while women suffered in other ways as shall be revealed. The researcher was not limited by language as she speaks the same language as the interviewees namely, Sesotho. The interviews were recorded on a smartphone, transcribed, and translated from Sesotho into English. Ethical protocols were followed, such as seeking permission to conduct research from the local authority and seeking permission from the interviewees to record the interviews. Their consent was verbally sought and granted. The researcher explained to them that permission could be given in writing, but they dismissed that notion. The reason for this could be that they trusted the researcher or that they felt that written consent was too much. Although the interviewees showed no objection to their names being used, the researcher chose to use pseudonyms instead because she wanted to avert inflicting any unforeseen trauma to them and their descendants given the volatility of politics in Lesotho. The profiles of the interviewees are presented in the Table 1.2.

Discussion of findings

The article discusses the specific traumatic ways in which the four Mathebe women suffered during the state of emergency namely, assault and arson. It then discusses the consequences of these two

acts of violence which were physical, psychological, and material. The physical consequences include maiming and hospitalisation. The psychological trauma includes horror and fear for life while the material hardship includes loss of property, homelessness, and politically motivated famine. It also shares impressions on oral history methods.

The first specific traumatic way in which one of the four Mathebe women suffered during the state of emergency was through assault. Manthabiseng* narrated how she was physically assaulted. She narrated that her attackers were three young men who were members of the BNP Youth League, of whom one was known to her. The physical assault that was meted out to Manthabiseng* was unlawful, intentional, and involved direct application of force on her body. Manthabiseng* narrated that these three young men attacked her without provocation: 'I was sitting in my house when they came in. They asked me why I was not listening to the radio. I said to them: "Hey. leave me alone!"' The assault on Manthabiseng* was violent in nature because of the kind of weapons used by the perpetrators on a defenceless person. They used machetes and knobkerries to hit her. The injuries inflicted denote the brutality of the assault. In physical assault cases it is important to consider the areas of the body that were targeted. Manthabiseng* mentioned that her assailants hit her on the head, knees, and hands as she tried to defend herself and used her hands to shield the blows. She further mentioned that she tried to fight back by kicking at her attackers and using her hands. They beat her up badly and left her unconscious in a pool of blood. She showed the researcher the scars on her head, knees, and a maimed hand as one of her fingers was badly damaged and had to be amputated in hospital. Considering the violence and the injuries inflicted on her, this was a clear case of aggravated assault. In legal studies, aggravated assault is equivalent to attempted murder. However, due to the suspension of the constitution, Manthabiseng* had no option of legal recourse to take against her assailants.

The second traumatic way in which the four Mathebe women suffered was through arson that was committed on their immovable property. All four women's houses were situated near the Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC) church, an area which was badly affected by arson. This part of the village is approximately four kilometres from the main tarred road. One of Manthabiseng's two houses was set alight after she was physically assaulted and left for dead. She later learned of this misfortune while she was in hospital.

The interviewees related how the events unfolded on that fateful Easter Friday morning. In the morning hours a fight ensued between Mathebe men and some members of the PMU and the BNP Youth League. This happened as people assembled in the nearby LEC church. The congregants heard gunshots and ran out of the church, fearing for their lives. From there a fight broke out between these groups. The women mentioned that this resulted in loss of lives on the PMU and BNP Youth League sides who were government agents of repression. One of them managed to escape and alerted members of the PMU in Maseru that their fellow members were killed in a fight by Mathebe men. Thus, members of the PMU retaliated by invading the village, killing people, and setting alight several houses in the village. Lerato* narrated that around 16h00 on the fateful Easter Friday they saw from a distance a cloud of dust caused by the vehicles of the members of the PMU coming into the village, travelling at high speed. Residents had put stones in the road to slow down the vehicles as they entered the village. She further mentioned that as soon as they saw the cloud of dust, they knew trouble was coming. The stones put in the road bought them just enough time to flee to the Mathebe mountain. She mentioned that they

watched in horror from the top of the Mathebe mountain as their houses were set alight, one after the other. Mamolefi* mentioned that their house had been allocated to her family to live in by her in-laws. Molelekeng* narrated that her husband had built them a house through the earnings accumulated from working in South African mines.

The nature of the arson that took place in Mathebe was violent and deadly, because in some instances the houses were set alight with people still inside, who in turn lost their lives. For instance, the interviewees mentioned that four women were locked in and died in one of the burning houses. One of them was a wife of the local LEC Church reverend. Furthermore, the arson was intentional, patterned, and politically motivated. The interviewees explained that when they came back from the mountain, they found that the houses that were burned belonged to supporters of the BCP. They were told by the people who remained at the village who were either supporters of the BNP or MFP, that the arsonists had knowledge of which houses belonged to the supporters of the BCP, which were then set alight.

The consequences of the physical assault and arson experienced by these four Mathebe women were many and varied namely, physical, psychological, and material. First, the physical consequence applied to Manthabiseng* as she lost one of her fingers due to the physical assault inflicted on her by the perpetrators. The scars on her head and knees and the missing finger are a constant reminder of the violent ordeal and acute trauma that she faced during the state of emergency.

Second, there is the psychological consequence related to the human suffering and the negative feelings experienced during this traumatic event. Writers (Tedeschi & Calhoun 1995:22) contend that: 'When the circumstances to which individuals are exposed involve significant threat to life, health or to important property, it is likely that those individuals will feel apprehension, worry and concern for some time following the event.' These extreme feelings will propel them to flee or fight back. When faced with a threat to her life, Manthabiseng* fought back and used her hands and feet to kick at her assailants during this acute trauma. The severity of her injuries led to her hospitalisation for about two months and during this time her children were not able to go to school. Hospitalisation alone is traumatic. As a mother who could not attend to her children's needs at that time this worried her.

Mamolefi* narrated that she was carrying their youngest child on her back as they fled to the mountain. She mentioned that at one point the child fell on the ground, and she quickly picked her up. As she did that, a bullet fired by the members of the PMU landed on the spot where she had just picked up the child: 'I had never been so scared in my life. My heart was pounding in my chest as I ran for our lives.' The fear that engulfed Mamolefi* at that moment was immeasurable as not only was her life in danger but also that of their child.

Lerato* was nursing her infant who was less than three months old. She had to run and seek refuge to save their lives. Her siblings had fled to their relatives who resided in neighbouring villages. She did not know whether they were safe or alive and this worried her.

Mamolefi*, Molelekeng*, and Lerato* mentioned that they were horrified by the sight of their burning houses and the sound of 'machine' guns being fired by the PMU late that evening. The extreme fear for their lives propelled them to run to the Mathebe mountain and seek shelter. Even as they were

on the mountain they feared for their lives and those of their children. They related the extreme fear for losing their lives as the PMU chopper hovered over the mountain, sending beams of light as shots were fired at people who had sought shelter on the mountain. They narrated that they spent two to three nights on the mountain fearing that the PMU members would return and kill them all. Molelekeng* mentioned that at one point her mother went down to the village and brought back equipment and food supplies and cooked for the children on the mountain.

The last consequence was material loss. All four women lost their immovable property. Their houses, like most Basotho huts, had thatched roofing which easily caught fire. Two of the houses belonging to Lerato's parents were burned down and everything in the houses was lost, including furniture, food from the fields, clothes, and blankets. Lerato* explained that they became homeless as these were her parents' only two houses. For Lerato* and her siblings this became a very difficult time because they had no clothes, no food, and no beds to sleep on. She had just given birth to her first child who was born two to three months prior to this unfortunate incident. It took their parents about six months to finally be able to rebuild one of the two burned houses. Her brother quit school and went to South Africa to look for a job to help their parents rebuild the houses. During Manthabiseng's hospitalisation, her husband had to quit his job in the mines in South Africa in order to take care of their three children. This amounted to loss of income and her family also incurred costs related to frequent visits to the hospital. Molelekeng*, Mamolefi*, and Lerato* were left without a roof over their heads. Molelekeng* and Mamolefi* became homeless, but because they still had their in-laws' houses to go back to, their suffering was short in this regard, which was not the case for Lerato*. She, together with her siblings, became homeless and had to live with their relatives in neighbouring villages for a period of six months. Molelekeng* mentioned that they were never able to rebuild their house and had to move back to live with her in-laws. Mamolefi* rebuilt hers only after many years. None of the interviewees could recall the costs related to the rebuilding of the houses. The arson led to a politically motivated famine. For instance, Manthabiseng* lost twenty bags of sorghum and fifteen bags of maize and wheat respectively. Lerato* recalled that their family lost twenty bags of maize. They had to rely on handouts from their neighbours and relatives from nearby villages.

The published literature had focussed on how male political leaders, prominent politicians, and King Moshoeshoe II suffered at this time. It mentioned that these political leaders were arrested and imprisoned for almost 12 months. It did not even document the experiences of their wives during that time and how their lives were affected, seeing that they had to take care of their families. It is common knowledge in various villages in Lesotho that women suffered during the state of emergency, but these sufferings have not been documented. What are documented are the great male leaders, yet women are leaders in their own homes and communities.

Finally, the following reflection about oral history methodology are important: it requires patience and dedication from both the researcher and the interviewees because what one may view as data collection within one year, may well extend into three years as it takes time to establish rapport and gain the confidence of the interviewees. Furthermore, the recollection of the interviewees was not affected by the 50-year gap between the time the event took place and the time they narrated their experiences: the horrific sight of the fire that engulfed the village, the sound of gun shots, and the helicopter that circled

the mountain that evening is etched in their minds for life. They were well in their thirties and still remember what happened on that fateful Easter Friday very clearly. The interviewees were willing to share their experiences, as traumatic as they were, but this did not retraumatise them because in their narrations they seemed at ease and even laughed at shocking events that unfolded. The oral history method was the best method to get the most out of the interviewees as they related their experiences. If these were told as second-hand testimonies, the depth and credibility would not be the same. Oral history methods challenge us to lend a hand beyond what researchers are looking for in a specific area and bring positive change.

Conclusion

This article documented the specific traumatic ways in which the four Mathebe women suffered during the state of emergency in Lesotho. It has also discussed how they and their families were affected by these traumatic incidents. It has shown that the previously published literature on the subject had excluded women's experiences due to the focus on men's experiences. The personal testimonies presented in this article cannot be taken as representational of other traumatic experiences suffered by women from other parts of Lesotho during this time. These are peculiar to these four Mathebe women. It concludes that the 1970 state of emergency was the first instance of a 'world in troubled times' in the postcolonial political history of Lesotho. The testimonies of the four Mathebe women testify to their suffering just like other prominent women such as Charlotte Maxeke. Fortunately, they have lived to tell their stories. The article recommends that research about traumatic experiences should include experiences of women because they also suffer like their male counterparts. This happens because they nurture children during such troubled times and are expected to be strong and hold their families together. Any great historic event has both female and male casualties. It is important to take an inclusive approach, because although women were not at the forefront in politics they were nonetheless affected.

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