“There are So Many of Us”
A History of the Izinkumbi and Grouping Processes in Precolonial and Colonial Natal, c.1824 - 1862

By

Angela Ferreira

B.A. University of the Witwatersrand
B.A. Honours, University of the Witwatersrand

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the history of the people who came to be known as 'Izinkumbi' — or 'locusts' — in the period between 1820 and 1864 residing in the Mkhomazi-Mzimkhulu region of what is today the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. It explores their origin in the 1820s when, with the support of the Zulu king, Shaka, numbers of Africans collected under the newly arrived English traders at Port Natal. By the 1830s, these trader adherents mobilised as the 'Izinkumbi' in a war against Shaka's successor, Dingane. Since their inception, the Izinkumbi have occupied an ambiguous social space. Their mixed constitution and blending of African and European material culture and practices confused colonial attempts to categorise and place the Izinkumbi within the developing tribalscape. The research concludes that Izinkumbi — a name for a group of people that uses the *isiZulu* noun or 'thing'class, '*izi*,' as opposed to the people class '*ama*,' — was a category reflecting a *social process.* The Izinkumbi were a shifting combination of different groups' shared pasts, living strategies, intentions and actions, forged in relation first to the rule of the Zulu kings and later to the British colonial government. The case of Izinkumbi brings much-needed attention to the history of southern KwaZulu-Natal. It also contributes to the literature on identity as a process in which agents participate rather than a given *thing* people have.

Preface

In 2019, a KwaZulu-Natal community interested in their history contacted the KwaZulu-Natal Museum. They asked the humanities department if researchers would assist in uncovering and writing their history. Many of the members of this community — who bore surnames of the British traders from the 1820s, such as Fynn and Cane — mentioned that they were part of a grouping called the 'Izinkumbi – or locust – tribe.' They were particularly interested in their familial ties to one Hans Lochenberg, a man of mixed racial descent living in 'Nomansland' — the region between Mpondoland and the Natal colony — in the nineteenth century. They wanted to uncover Lochenberg's Khoesan lineage and use their ancestry for a modern-day land claim. As a volunteer researcher at the museum, I was required to locate existing primary sources on Hans Lochenberg. All of these sources—from official papers to diary entries and sketches—became the fundamental part of a research paper on the history of Hans Lochenberg that I co-authored.[1] The paper covered Hans Lochenberg's history and ties to Khoesan lineage or identity. It deconstructed the metanarrative of Lochenberg as a cattle rustler — and Khoesan as a criminal class — and instead painted his actions as resistance to colonialism. In hindsight, however, I realised that the paper's central argument was lacking as it oversaw the nuances of the concept of identity. Instead, it treated Khoesan and coloured as identities that just were. It failed to jostle with the ideas of race and Khoesan – particularly what they meant between 1820 and 1850 and how these terms took on different meanings in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It also overlooked Lochenberg's ties to the Izinkumbi. Although this may have been beyond the paper's focus, the Izinkumbi descendants raised interest in Lochenberg.

My initial research into the life of Hans Lochenberg raised further questions about the history of the Mkhomazi-Mzimkhulu region — what I consider as southern Natal — particularly the history of the community calling itself and being called 'Izinkumbi.' I became interested in where the Izinkumbi came from and how they navigated the precolonial and colonial space over the nineteenth century. I was particularly curious about what the Izinkumbi were when they first emerged, how they seemingly *became* 'coloured' in the nineteenth century, and how they reshaped themselves as Khoesan in the twenty-first century.

[1] Geoffrey Blundell, Angela Ferreira, and Troy Meyers, "'Mijnheer Lochenberg': On the Construction of Khoesan as a Criminal Class," *Southern African Humanities* 35, no. 1 (December 2022): 31–70.

In 2020, I joined the Archive and Public Culture — APC — program under Professor Carolyn Hamilton to pursue an MA on the Izinkumbi's history from their formation in the 1820s to the current day while looking at different identities such as Khoesan and coloured. The proposed scope proved too vast for a Master's thesis, however. The complications brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic meant that access to the provincial archives was long-term impossible, as were interactions with Izinkumbi descendants. I thus contained my research to the years between 1820 and 1864.

One of the challenges of the thesis related to how to name the people I focused on and how to conceptualise their groupness. I needed to avoid being captured by essential categories and teleological assumptions. Describing the Izinkumbi became a linguistic trial and error process as I tried out terms like 'identity' and 'collective identity,' all of which held a theoretical weight of their own and risked reducing and essentialising the Izinkumbi. Eventually, the entire concept of identity became problematic, leaving me at an impasse. In truth, identity was a poor analytical tool because it either meant too much – essentialising the Izinkumbi – or too little, painting the Izinkumbi as so fluid and ambiguous that they may as well not have existed at all. I was so fixed on the notion of 'an Izinkumbi identity' that I did not realise I was at risk of creating an 'Izinkumbi identity' that would fit the theoretical narrative. It had become clear that if I wanted to understand the past of the Izinkumbi, I needed to look beyond the confines of identity.
I scoured academic resources for works that could help me with this challenge. One study, *Beyond Identity*, stood out.[2] It saw identity as more of an action than a thing people had. It urged researchers to focus more on *identification,* explaining that people 'have particular ties, self-understandings, stories, trajectories, histories, predicaments', which 'inform the sorts of claims they make.'[3] These insights helped me think of the Izinkumbi as a process, an action and a choice guided by people's responses to various circumstances. Being Izimkumbi was something that people consciously *did* together over time. Another essential piece of literature is an upcoming book by Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, highlighting the importance of mobility and political fluidity in the precolonial Natal landscape.[4] Their concepts helped me think about

[2] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (2000).
[3] Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" 34.
[4] Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, *Draft Book Chapter Presented to the Weekly Sminar, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, 18 September, 2024*. Unpublished.

grouping processes and how the Izinkumbi located themselves in the Natal landscape using their mobility and political fluidity.

Ultimately, the thesis is not a historian's attempt to uncover and define the formation and shifting of a true Izinkumbi *identity*. Instead, it explores collective actions and decisions made and shared by certain people over a short period in response to the changing Thukela-Mzimkhulu political landscape. It looks at how these actions and decisions came to be called or associated with the appellation Izinkumbi and how they changed over time. I hope my research helps bring more light to the relatively under-researched southern Natal past and will help other researchers identify the subtle problematic Western habits present in the language we use to describe and explore the past.

I am grateful to my supervisor, Professor Carolyn Hamilton, for her patience, support and guidance over the past few years. Thank you to John Wright for the various discussions around my work. I would also like to thank the numerous intellectuals and academics who attended the Archive and Public Culture Workshops who read my work and gave me crucial advice. Thank you to the staff of the Pietermaritzburg Archive Repository and Killie Campbell Library for being so helpful. Thank you to my supportive partner, Lee Stoop, my parents, as well as the friends, bandmates, dogs and family — Kaylene Ferreira, Rick Ferreira and Jessica Ferreira-Edwards — who stood by me while I took on this arduous task while dealing with stress, sickness, and the loss of many loved ones. RIP Balloo Ferreira, Ezio Ferreira, Catherine Savage, Ross Wilsenach.

List of Abbreviations

APC	Archive and Public Culture
BPP	British Parliamentary Papers
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
CSO	Colonial Secretary Office
KCL	Killie Campbell Africana Library
NAB	Pietermaritzburg Archive Repository
NCP	Natal Colonial Publications
SNA	Secretary of Native Affairs

Glossary of isiZulu terms

Ama: A plural noun prefix denoting a group of people or a people class
amaButho: Zulu regiments
IsiBhalo: Natal colony's system of forced labour
Induna: a person of authority — or a headman — appointed by a chief.
Inkosi: King, paramount chief
Inyanga: An African medicinal practitioner
Izi: A plural noun class denoting a group of things
Ndlovu: Elephant – sometimes representing kingly potency
Silwane: Animal or beast — sometimes representing kingly potency
Tagathi: A benevolent person using supernatural forces to do harm to others
ukuKhonza: The African practice of partnership or communal agreement wherein subjects trade their allegiance for a chief's protection.

Note on Terminology

When discussing the history of what is today, KwaZulu-Natal, various terms and orthographic names must be addressed.

First, the several terms used to identify KwaZulu-Natal in different periods must be addressed. I use river orthography such as 'Thukela-Mzimkhulu' to denote the precolonial region between 1824 and 1843. Phongolo-Thukela' describes the precolonial region north of what is currently KwaZulu-Natal. 'Zulu kingdom' refers to King Shaka's — subsequently Dingane's — Zulu polity occupying the Phongola-Thukela region from 1810. 'Mkhomazi-Mzimkhulu' refers to the south of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region (which I call 'southern Natal' after the colony's establishment in 1843). Southern Natal would stretch as far as the Mthamvuma River only after the colonial government annexed further land in 1866. Thus, for this thesis, southern Natal ends at the Mthamvuma River.

Some new regional names come into use after the arrival of the British traders. I use 'Port Natal' for the coastal area where the British traders settled in 1824. For the period after British annexation in 1843, I use 'Natal' or 'Natal colony.' I use '*tribalscape'* to describe the colony's administrative efforts to distinguish and bring order to the African population. For the various colonial districts in Natal, I use colonial spellings when discussing the colonial layout of the land—such as 'Umkomanzi District'—but use modern orthography—such as Mkhomazi—when describing the features of the landscape.

I use the term 'Nomansland' for the region south of the Natal colony between Mthamvuma and the Mzimvubu Rivers. While the colonial administration labelled it as 'Faku's—the amaPondo King—residency,' this region did not fall under his jurisdiction. The colony likely did this to pressure Faku into dealing with cattle raids that were troubling the colony. By 1860, colonists labelled it as 'broken country' or 'uninhabited,'[1] and 'Nomansland' also began being used more

[1] James Wyld, *South Africa*, 1:2565000 (London), Ackersdijck Collection, accessed June 13, 2023, https://uu.oldmapsonline.org/maps/7ffad40b-7129-5607-9d82-758e3dce8eb6/.

often in the *Natal Witness.*[2] I prefer using 'Nomansland' to show that there was no colonial jurisdiction over this space before 1866. All the precolonial and colonial quotations used by the thesis retain their original spellings and orthography.

The words 'native,' 'refugee' and 'aboriginal' were central to the emerging colonial discourse from 1843. As the colonial government was in the early stages of transforming Natal into a tribalscape, these terms had not yet reached a consensus and often became muddied and confused. In time, the colonial discourse in Natal used 'native' as a general term for Africans in Natal. 'Aboriginal' was applied to Africans who had rights to land in Natal according to colonial logic and definitions. I use these colonial terms only when analysing the discourse and discussing various colonial ordinances and policies. These terms should be read as constrained to the discourse of the time and not be thought of according to modern definitions. I use 'African' or 'Africans' to refer to the African people living in the colony.

Regarding polities and groupings, I use modern spellings unless quoting a colonial or European account. For example, I use 'abaThwa' to speak about a grouping from Nomansland but maintain Isaacs' use of 'Botwas' when quoting him. For the main polity under discussion, I use Izinkumbi throughout, although some colonial accounts referred to them as 'nkumbi' and 'nkumbini.' The same applies to the Nsimbi polity, which colonial accounts sometimes called 'Nsimbini.' 'Izinkumbi' and 'Nsimbini' are the currently accepted names. I only use the past alternatives when quoting colonial accounts.

[2] "Monthly Summary," *Natal Witness*, December 5, 1862.

INTRODUCTION

The name 'Izinkumbi' first surfaced in 1838 in historical accounts from the region today known as the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. That year, two residents of what would become the Natal Colony in 1843 — Reverend Owen and Mr Hewetson — witnessed a 'large troop of native warriors […] headed by a white man'[1] marching to war against the Zulu King, Dingane. The troop flew a flag marked 'Izinkumbi.'[2] History has since simplified the Izinkumbi grouping into a 'tribe' whose story forms part of a larger tale of white chiefs in Natal. To this day, detailed historical accounts of the Izinkumbi and the southern region of the current KwaZulu-Natal province —between the Mkhomazi and Mzimkhulu Rivers—are virtually non-existent. The few works that mention the Izinkumbi often dismissed them as an insignificant grouping under the British traders at Port Natal.[3] Some even confused the Izinkumbi with the adherents of Henry Francis Fynn,[4] a British trader at Port Natal who later became a magistrate for the Natal colony. The Izinkumbi were the followers or adherents of Henry Fynn's brother, Frank Fynn, another British trader at Port Natal. Importantly, they should not be reduced to mere *followers.* They were a grouping with agency, able to shape and reshape themselves through time.

Since their inception, the Izinkumbi occupied an ambiguous social space and confused the developing colonial discourse that sought to arrange and categorise the African population in the mid-nineteenth century. According to colonial logic, the Izinkumbi were both new and old, aboriginal and foreign and something of — but not entirely — 'a tribe.' This confusion stemmed from colonial and European misunderstandings of the Izinkumbi's mobility and political fluidity. They interpreted these elements as disruptive and chaotic as opposed to the order found in sedentism. While these moments of confusion reveal the colonial government's inability to make

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[1] Francis Owen, *The Diary of the Rev. Francis Owen: M. A., Missionary with Dingaan in 1837-38* (Van Riebeeck society, 1926): 126; "Mr Heweston's Journal" in John Bird, *The Annals of Natal: 1495 to 1845* (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 354-355.
[2] Owen, *The Diary of the Rev. Francis Owen,* 354-355.
[3] See Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal, 1824-1857: A Biographical Register*, vol. 6 (University of Natal Press, 1981); Shirron Bramdeow, "Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community in Natal 1824 - 1988" (Masters, UKZN, 1988).
[4] See footnote 19 in Testimony of Melapi ka Magaye in John Wright and Colin de B. Webb, eds., *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples' Volume 3* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 1982): 95.

sense of groups beyond the tribal stereotypes they had created, they also paint a different picture of Natal than the colonial tribalscape. They highlight how people being called and calling themselves 'Izinkumbi' used their social and political fluidity and mobility to forge connections. This thesis presents a detailed history of the Izinkumbi from 1824 to 1864. It addresses gaps in the history of what we now know as southern Natal and sheds light on the various processes behind the forging of social and political connections over this period.

Rationale

The history of the Mkhomazi-Mzimkhulu region — henceforth southern Natal — is under-researched compared to the rest of KwaZulu-Natal. Consequently, little is known about the various groupings occupying this space in the late precolonial and early colonial period. The Izinkumbi's history presents an opportunity to learn more about southern Natal and its grouping processes between 1824 and 1864. The dense source pool on the Izinkumbi shows the unfolding and development of connections and groupings over a brief period. A history of the Izinkumbi could thus add to current understandings of Natal's political, economic and social connections. Identity — especially collective identity — is also a key issue in the history of KwaZulu-Natal. The existing material has made great strides in moving away from essentialism and revealing identity's subjective and contingent nature. However, moving beyond identity as something that all people *have* can show how groupness and identity are *processes* constantly being shaped and reshaped by agents in response to specific social, political and economic events. This thesis considers the Izinkumbi as a process of shifting connections over time.

Literature Review

Several branches of this literature are essential to this research. These include research on precolonial Natal, publications of the British traders, research on the traders and southern Natal, and the history of the Natal colony, including analyses of its emerging discourse.

Literature on Precolonial Natal

Insights into the precolonial era are valuable to the thesis as they help show the more long-term social and political events in what is today KwaZulu-Natal. My research draws from John Wright's 1989 thesis on the formation of polities within the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region.

Wright's work is crucial to understanding the political climate of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region when the British arrived in the 1820s. He presented detailed insights into the social dynamics of the precolonial period, which are crucial to understanding the trading community dynamics.[5] Wright showed that the political state of the early nineteenth-century Thukela-Mzimkhulu region was not purely the result of Shaka's reign or what he critiqued as the devastation stereotype — but was, in fact, the culmination of decades of political events unfolding since at least the 1750s. Wright's work showed that on the eve of the traders' arrival in 1824, the Zulu Kingdom was still establishing control over the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region. Increasing British political and economic interests in this region — which they called 'Natal' — would soon challenge the Zulu hegemony, invoking a 'new era' in the region's history.[6]

The branch of precolonial historical research into identity is also essential, particularly those challenging ethnicity and tribe. In 1989, Wright and Hamilton highlighted political fluidity in precolonial Natal, arguing that African communities were not bound and static but underwent political and social shifts.[7] The Phongolo-Mzimkhulu region's fluid political landscape facilitated the shaping and reshaping of groupings, including the rise of the Zulu Kingdom and the creation of social categories like amalala.[8] In subsequent research on the amalala, Hamilton and Wright refined their argument, demonstrating that group identity or 'ethnicity' resulted from fluid social processes instead of innate or hereditary elements.[9] By the 1990s, these ideas of identity as fluid were adopted into the political economy approach.[10] Robert Morrell and Georgina Hamilton's volume *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives* demonstrated how political settings of domination and subordination, the rise of an African middle class, and responses to capitalist production, colonial tax laws, and urban

[5] John Wright, "The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries: A Critical Reconstruction" (University of the Witwatersrand, 1989).
[6] Wright, *The Dynamics of Power*, xi.
[7] John Wright and Carolyn Hamilton, "The Phongolo-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," in *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910: A New History*, ed. Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest (University of Natal Press, 1989): 58.
[8] Wright and Hamilton, "The Phongolo-Mzimkhulu," 78.
[9] Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, "The Making of the AmaLala: Ethnicity, Ideology and Relations of Subordination in a Precolonial Context," *South African Historical Journal* 22, no. 1 (November 1, 1990): 3–23.
[10] See works in Robert Morrell and Georgina Hamilton, eds., *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives* (Indicator Press, 1996).

influx control all played roles in identity formation.[11] These works show that the Natal region was a dynamic space and that mobility and fluidity were central to its political landscape. These are essential factors to remember when looking at the emergence of the Izinkumbi.

British Trader Publications or Compilations and Research on their Discourse

The earlier writings of the British traders are significant to this research. Henry Fynn's writings and Nathaniel Isaacs' *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* are the most prevalent sources.[12] Isaacs' account covered his arrival at Port Natal in 1825 and his life and affairs at Port Natal up to 1835, when he left. Unlike Isaacs, Fynn did not compile and publish his life accounts in Natal. Instead, his writings are scattered across various archives, such as the Natal Archive and the Killie Campbell Library. Some of Fynn's accounts were compiled, ordered and published posthumously in the 1950s by D.M.K Malcolm and James Stuart as *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn*.[13] The available Fynn accounts range from his pre-Natal travels in Mozambique to his death in the 1860s. While Fynn's original diary was lost, and Malcolm and Stuart's publication was more a rearrangement of several of Fynn's writings—which Fynn had drafted decades after the event—historians continued to use the 'diary' unreservedly for the next three decades.[14]

Research from the 1990s on these trader writings showed that historians needed caution when using them. Julie Pridmore and Dan Wiley's criticisms of the unreserved use of these sources are applicable here. In their respective works, Pridmore and Wiley questioned the processes behind the composition of Malcolm and Stuart's *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn.*[15] With a specific

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[11] See John Lambert and Robert Morrell, "Domination and Subordination in Natal, 1890-1920," in *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives*, ed. Robert Morrell (Indicator Press, 1996); John Wright and Carolyn Hamilton, "Ethnicity and Political Change before 1840," in *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives*, ed. Robert Morrell and Georgina Hamilton (Indicator Press, 1996); Maylam, "The Changing Political Economy."; Wright and Hamilton, "The Phongolo-Mzimkhulu Region."

[12] Nathaniel Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa: Descriptive of the Zoolus, Their Manners, Customs, Etc. Etc. with a Sketch of Natal*, vol. 1 (E. Churton, 1836).

[13] Henry Francis Fynn, *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn*, ed. D.M.K Malcolm and James Stuart (Shuter and Shooter, 1950).

[14] See B Leverton, "The Papers of Henry Francis Fynn," *Historia* 9, no. 1 (1964); Felix Okoye, "Tshaka and the British Traders 1824-1828," *Transafrican Journal of History* 2, no. 1 (1972).

[15] See excerpt in *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn*, ed. D.M.K Malcolm and James Stuart (Shuter and Shooter, 1950).

focus on two British traders — Henry Fynn and Nathaniel Isaacs — Pridmore and Wiley's research detailed how colonial and imperial ideas shaped their writing and how publication expectations drove their narrative.[16] They advised researchers to acknowledge these sources' subjective nature and caution against their unreserved use.[17] With these new insights into the nature of these primary sources, researchers began criticising the pioneer metanarrative that had saturated Natal history for almost a century.[18] While these problems can be found throughout trader, traveller and missionary accounts, they are still valuable to the thesis when reading against the grain. The thesis highlights how these sources contain linguistic and discursive similarities when writing about the trader groups or the Izinkumbi. The thematic and linguistic similarities within the sources present an opportunity to read against the grain and reveal the unfolding lifeways in Natal between the 1820s and 1860s.

The History of the British Traders, the Izinkumbi and Southern Natal

Several works constructed the British traders' history from 1824 by analysing the traders' publications. In the 1980s, these works focused on what trader history could say about the African communities in the Natal region. Charles Ballard's 1989 work *Traders, Trekkers and Colonists* presents a helpful overview, starting with the British traders and ending in the late nineteenth century.[19] Ballard highlighted the traders' socioeconomic relationship with Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom. While political economy research moved away from trader-centric narratives, they did not entirely reveal much about the African communities forming under the British traders. They limited Port Natal's history to a trader-Zulu Kingdom dichotomy, focusing only on the 'big men' such as Shaka and Fynn. For the most part, the 1980s continued to portray the

[16] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures*.
[17] See Dan Wylie, "Textual Incest: Nathaniel Isaacs and the Development of the Shaka Myth," *History in Africa* 19 (January 1992): 411–33; Julie Pridmore, "The Writings of H.F. Fynn: History, Myth or Fiction?," *Alternation* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1994): 68–78; J. Pridmore, "Hunter, Trader and Explorer? The Unvarnished Reminiscences of H.F. Fynn," *Alternation* 4, no. 2 (January 1, 1997): 46–56; Dan Wylie, "'Proprietor of Natal:' Henry Francis Fynn and the Mythography of Shaka," *History in Africa* 22 (January 1995): 409–37.
[18] Julie Pridmore, "'Pioneers' and 'Natives': Establishing the Natal 'Metanarrative'? 1825–1860," *African Historical Review*, January 1, 1996.
[19] Charles Ballard, "Traders, Trekkers and Colonists," in *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910: A New History*, ed. Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest (University of Natal Press, 1989): 116 – 145.

British traders as powerful and influential white chiefs who ruled over an otherwise amorphous and agentless mass of Africans.[20]

However, one work from the 1980s presented more insight into the African adherents. Shirron Bramdeow's 1988 thesis explored the history of the 'Fynn community' called the 'Nsimbi' — a division of the Izinkumbi since the late 1850s — from 1824 to 1988.[21] The Nsimbi comprised the former followers of Henry Fynn — Fynn had abandoned Natal in the 1830s, leaving his people under the leadership of one of his *induna* — who were collected and ruled over by an Izinkumbi chief, Vundhlase, in the 1850s. Bramdeow's work broke new ground in the history of the trading communities. First, it presented readers with a detailed history of one of the trader adherent groups. Second, and most crucially, it used the voices and oral histories of Nsimbi descendants.

Bramdeow's research was, however, constrained by several aspects. Overall, her work was highly Fynn-centric. It considered the Nsimbi — whom she branded 'a mixed-ethnic community'— as one of Fynn's 'most enduring of all legacies,' a grouping he alone shaped.[22] Bramdeow overlooked evidence that an Izinkumbi chief, Vundhlase, founded the Nsimbi in the 1850s. She did not consider the political dynamics in the decades before Fynn arrived at Port Natal in 1824, overlooking the political and societal shifts that would have influenced African settlement under the British traders. Instead, she attributed the Nsimbi's existence solely to Henry Fynn, undermining African agency in grouping processes. Finally, she did not problematise the concept of 'coloured.' While it was only after 1910 that the government began using the category 'coloured' for people of mixed race, Bramdeow essentialised the Nsimbini as a 'coloured progeny' or 'mixed-ethnic community' since their inception in the nineteenth century.[23]

The literature on southern Natal — the region between Mkhomazi and Mzimkhulu — and the Izinkumbi in the nineteenth century is scarce. Two publications on these subjects are essential to

[20] Marjory Davies, *Twin Trails: The Story of Fynn and the Southey Familiers* (Salisbury, 1974); Louis Du Buisson, *The White Man Cometh* (Jonathan Ball, 1987).
[21] Shirron Bramdeow, "Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community in Natal 1824 - 1988" (Masters, UKZN, 1988).
[22] Bramdeow, "Henry Francis Fynn," i.
[23] Bramdeow, "Henry Francis Fynn," i.

this research. First is Nokuthula Cele's work on a 'frontier chiefdom' called the Kwamachi.[24] Cele challenged the homogenising of Natal Africans as Zulu and highlighted diversity, cultural flexibility, and fluidity in social formations from the past. Although Cele's work did not include the Izinkumbi, it is a good reference point for how communities and individuals forged connections in southern Natal in the nineteenth century. Finally, there is Eva Jackson's chapter in *Ekhaya: The Politics of Home in KwaZulu-Natal.*[25] Jackson's research — which analysed the political life of an Izinkumbi chieftainess named Vundhlase between the 1830s and 1870s — sought to 'confront the empirical gap in studies of women's political leadership in pre-colonial and colonial south-east Africa.'[26] Jackson's research added much-needed information to the history of women political leaders in South Africa, showing how Vundhlase generated political relationships and protected her chiefly status. Unfortunately, the work treated Vundhlase and the Izinkumbi as entities that just "were," overlooking their historical contingency. Jackson did not consider the historical, social and political processes that shaped and reshaped the Izinkumbi.

The History of Colonial Natal: Discourse, Knowledge and Identity

Two avenues of research about the Natal Colony are integral to this research. The first explores how the colonial administration attempted to form knowledge about and arrange Africans in Natal. A significant branch of this history explores how 'tribe' was a colonial invention.[27] Recent research has considered how the colonial tribalscape mindset influenced how colonial writers and administration generated knowledge and subsequently built an archive out of that knowledge. With these points in mind, researchers urged historians to treat the archive not as an objective source pool but as a historical subject. In 2002, Hamilton *et al.'s* edited volume *Refiguring the Archive* highlighted how the archive had formed under specific circumstances. It was a power-laden process which involved choosing which documents and knowledge were archivable. More recently, Hamilton and Leibhammer's edited volume *Tribing and Untribing the*

[24] Nokuthula P. Cele, "The History of the KwaMachi People: A Frontier Community between Zulu and Mpondo in the Nineteenth Century," in *Tribing and Untribing the Archive, Volume 1*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2016).
[25] Eva Jackson, "Familial Authority, Political Authority and the Life of a Female Chief in Colonial Natal," in *Ekhya: The Politics of Home in KwaZulu-Natal*, ed. Meghan Healy-Clancy and Jackson Hickel (UKZN Press, 2014), 48–82.
[26] Jackson, "Familial Authority," 48.
[27] See Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (University of California Press, 1991).

Archive explored how the colonial tribal mindset influenced the archival process.[28] The volume worked towards *untribing* the archival and material record and dealing with abiding Western interpretations of the Natal's past. *Tribing and Untribing* highlighted change in African communities over time, recognising how historical sources are continuously shaped and reshaped by changing political, economic, cultural and historical contexts. These insights are key when looking at *how* the colonial government perceived, documented and represented the Izinkumbi within the colonial space.

The second avenue of research crucial to this thesis is the history of grouping processes in Natal. In analysing Buthelezi's use of historical symbols in identity formation, several scholars explained how contemporary Zulu identity was the product of a long process of invention.[29] Hamilton's *Terrific Majesty* explored the history of various representations — colonial and African — of King Shaka from colonial times to modern media.[30] Her work moved away from stereotypical narratives which painted Shaka's image as solely a white or colonial invention. Instead, she highlighted African agency within these processes of representation. Another work on Zulu identity is Carton *et al.'s* 2008 volume *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu Past and Present.*[31] The volume covered the emergence of the Zulu Kingdom in the nineteenth century and explored the development and changes of the Zulu identity from the 1800s into the twentieth century. These works made significant developments that showed how identity was fluid and constantly influenced by the immediate political and social climate.

Jill Kelly's *To Swim with Crocodiles* was a recent important contribution to the history of identity in Natal.[32] Kelly's work provided historical insight into a generational conflict between the Nyavu and Maphumolo chiefdoms in the Table Mountain region of KwaZulu-Natal between

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[28] *Tribing and Untribing the Archive, Volume 1*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2016).
[29] Patrick Harries, "Imagery, Symbolism and Tradition in a South African Bantustan: Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Inkatha, and Zulu History," *History and Theory* 32, no. 4 (1993): 105–25; Daphna Golan-Agnon, *Inventing Shaka: Using History in the Construction of Zulu Nationalism* (L. Rienner, 1994).
[30] Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Harvard University Press, 2009).
[31] Benedict Carton, John Laband, and Jabulani Sithole, *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (Columbia University Press, 2009).
[32] Jill E. Kelly, *To Swim with Crocodiles: Land, Violence, and Belonging in South Africa, 1800-1996* (Michigan State University Press, 2018).

1800-1996. Notably, Kelly used the concept of *ukukhonza* as a point for historical analysis, highlighting the nuances within chief-subject relationships. Kelly's analysis of *ukukhonza* is crucial to my research on the Izinkumbi. It shows how allegiance and adherents were not social givens but how people secured access to land, security and resources by entering political relationships. Kelly's insights on adherence processes are important when exploring the role of *ukukhonza* in the emergence of the Izinkumbi grouping during the period in question.

T.J. Tallie's *Queering Colonial Natal: Indigeneity and the Violence of Belonging in Southern Africa* is a crucial piece of recent literature.[33] Tallie combines indigenous studies and queer theory to explore how, in the Natal colony, the 'lines of assumed order are skewed by [African] ideas, actions or formations.'[34] His work shows how the British colonial government designated certain African practices and customs as deviant as opposed to the normal or "proper behaviour" of British settlers. Tallie explains that African bodies, customs and practices served to 'queer' the colony's 'attempted forms of order' because their very existence impaired the colonial administration's 'desired order.'[35] Hence, he argues, the 'very bodies of indigenous peoples can become *queer* despite remaining ostensibly heterosexual in their orientation and practice.'[36]

Tallie's depiction of the struggle between colonial 'normalcy' and African queerness is helpful when exploring how settler and developing colonial discourse portrayed and classified the Izinkumbi. A significant part of this thesis deals with European and colonial attempts to categorise and define the Izinkumbi by measuring their supposed normal and deviant traits. The colonial administration viewed the Izinkumbi's appropriation and use of specific European materials and practices as a bastardisation or corruption of civilised European characteristics instead of "proper behaviour." Because the Izinkumbi straddled the line between British order and deviancy — what Tallie would consider queerness — they confused the developing colonial tribalscape and discourse. These moments of confusion and ambiguity in European and colonial language — stemming from colonial attempts to define and categorise African bodies — reveal

[33] T. J. Tallie, *Queering Colonial Natal: Indigeneity and the Violence of Belonging in Southern Africa* (University of Minnesota Press, 2019).
[34] Tallie, *Queering Colonial Natal,* 7.
[35] Tallie, *Queering Colonial Natal,* 7.
[36] Tallie, *Queering Colonial Natal.*

the social and political fluidity central to forming, shaping and reshaping the Izinkumbi grouping. These traits were a key part of Africans' resistance against colonialism.

Research Aims

This thesis presents a detailed Izinkumbi history and explores their processes of connection-forging and grouping between 1824 and 1864. Exploring how the Izinkumbi situated themselves within and navigated the Natal space over time shows how mobility and political fluidity were central to their formation. Early European and colonial accounts about the Izinkumbi were often fraught with ambiguity because the authors saw their fluid social state as unusual. The Izinkumbi were often at odds with the dominant colonial discourse, and the emerging colonial administration struggled to categorise them properly and fit them within the developing tribalscape. These moments of discordance and ambiguity within Izinkumbi history reveal important nuances behind how Africans forged, shaped, maintained and changed connections in the Natal region. In exploring these *unusual* aspects of the Izinkumbi, the thesis contributes to the broader discussion on identity-making processes in the history of what is currently KwaZulu-Natal.

Methodology: Sources and Limitations

The thesis draws on archival records from the Pietermaritzburg Archive Repository (NAB), the Killie Campbell collections, and digitised resources from the Hathi Trust Digital Library. It includes primary accounts of several travellers and British traders, including Henry Fynn, Nathaniel Isaacs, R.J Garden, Allen Gardiner, George French Angas and some missionary accounts. Several official colonial documents mention the Izinkumbi during the colonial period. From annexation in 1843, the administration focused on identifying which of the 100,000 Africans in Natal had aboriginal land rights. As the *Natal Witness* put it, the administration needed to 'throw light upon the subject of who are, and who are not, "natives" in the true sense of the word.'[37] Most colonial records mentioning the Izinkumbi occur within this administrative context where government officials measured their 'tribalness' and aborigineity. Other materials include the Natal Ordinances, British Parliamentary Papers, the Colonial Secretary Office, the Natal Colonial Papers, the Secretary of Native Affairs, and the Chief Native Commissioner.

[37] "Native Tribes in Natal," *Natal Witness*, November 27, 1868.

Several newspapers, such as the *Natal Witness, Natal Mercury, and Grahamstown Journal*, were also consulted via the World African Newspaper Archive.

This archival approach has significant limitations that require highlighting. Archives are subjective and result from 'the conditions and circumstances of preservation of material' and 'the exclusion of material from the record.'[38] The Izinkumbi's archival presence is negligible, likely because they were only *archivable* in specific circumstances.[39] The earliest writings mentioning the collective that would become called Izinkumbi comprise a collection of traders' and travellers' writings. These include the accounts of Henry Francis Fynn and Nathaniel Isaacs and the testimonies from the James Stuart Archive. Later traveller accounts include those of Captain Allen Francis Gardiner, George French Angas and R. J. Garden. These accounts provide non-administrative insights into the Izinkumbi but are also limited. In their extensive critiques of colonial travel writing, Pridmore and Wiley have shown how these texts were the combined result of the broader colonial milieu and the authors' beliefs and intentions.[40] The same issue also applies to administrative accounts.

The thesis addresses these limitations by reading against the grain and using a discourse analysis approach loosely inspired by Michel Foucault's concept of discursive practices.[41] Foucault has shown that "things said" — or accepted bodies of knowledge — are material artefacts that signify certain beliefs intrinsic to a broader social order. From this point of view, archival materials do not form so-called objective reflections of the past but rather are keys to knowledge generation, discourses, and discursive tools of the past. This thesis treats these sources as parts of an emerging colonial discourse and explores how they attempted to make sense of the Izinkumbi.

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[38] Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, and Graeme Reid, "Introduction," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Springer Science & Business Media, 2009): 7; Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton University Press, 2010); See also Carolyn Hamilton, "Forged and Continually Refashioned in the Crucible of Ongoing Social and Political Life: Archives and Custodial Practices as Subjects of Enquiry," *South African Historical Journal* 65, no. 1 (March 1, 2013): 1–22,; Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer, "Tribing and Untribing the Archive," in *Tribing and Untribing the Archive, Volume 1*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016).
[39] See Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Springer Science & Business Media, 2009).
[40] Dan Wylie, "Textual Incest," 411–33; J. Pridmore, "Hunter, Trader and Explorer? The Unvarnished Reminiscences of H.F. Fynn," *Alternation* 4, no. 2 (January 1, 1997): 46–56; Julie Pridmore, "The Writings of H.F. Fynn: History, Myth or Fiction?," *Alternation* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1994): 68–78.
[41] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2012).

The research uses moments of ambiguity, paradox and confusion in the developing colonial discourse to reveal the fluid and mobile processes of groupness and collectivity among Africans in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region between 1824 and 1864.

Another problem with the archival approach is the loss of information. Sadly, a source that would have proven vital to this research is currently missing from NAB. The file — CNC Vol. 77A Nkumbi Tribe — contained interviews conducted by the then Native Commission in the 'early twentieth century' with several members of the 'Izinkumbi tribe' regarding their current lifeways and issues. The file went missing under suspicious circumstances when the archivist on duty — who wished to remain anonymous — noticed an increased interest in the file between 2019 and 2020.[42] While it could simply be a case of an innocent misfiling, given that it was possibly going to be used as evidence in a future land claim by the Fynn descendants, it is possible that political motivations were at play. Either way, the file is currently unobtainable, and its resurfacing would prove invaluable. Given issues such as these and the vulnerability of archives to these elements, it is hoped that our archives and libraries take the necessary procedures to digitise their collections.

Chapter Outline

The thesis comprises seven chronologically arranged chapters covering the emergence of a group identified as Izinkumbi from 1824 to 1864. Chapter One gives an overview of the dynamics of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region between 1750 and 1824, showing how the political climate from the 1820s resulted from half a century of political shifts. It explores the arrival of the British traders at what they called Port Natal. It highlights how the traders' misunderstandings of the political landscape led to the notion of an empty and devastated Natal region. The traders saw African mobility and political fluidity as social turbulence and attributed this 'chaotic' state to Shaka.

By mid-1824, Shaka permitted the traders to settle at Port Natal and trade in the region. The chapter shows how *ukukhonza* was crucial to the trader-Shaka relationship. Although the traders believed they had purchased the Natal region, they had become Shaka's clients through

[42] Conversation with NAB archivist anonymous

ukukhonza. The traders could take African followers as part of their arrangement with Shaka. Shaka's protection over the traders at Port Natal introduced new political opportunities at Port Natal. Several Africans chose to settle at Port Natal under the traders. As per the existing custom, *ukukhonza,* the traders offered protection in return for labour power. While the trader narratives sought to create saviour-saved and ruler-subjects dynamics in their writing, the chapter highlights African agency in these processes. The chapter concludes with the coup in 1828, which saw Dingane replace Shaka as the Zulu ruler. Following Shaka's assassination, some subjects of the Zulu Kingdom took advantage of the political confusion and continued to travel to and live with the traders at Port Natal.

Chapter Two explores the continued growth of the aggregations at Port Natal under the British traders during the first half of Dingane's reign from 1828 to 1835. The chapter uses two avenues to reveal how these mixed communities began shaping themselves. First, it explores European gossip about Port Natal. Second, it looks at how the aggregations at Port Natal established a system of order and punishment. The chapter analyses several cases of European gossip to reveal the unfolding lifeways at Port Natal. Instead of focusing on the judgemental elements in the gossip, the chapter focuses on the things that incited this gossip, revealing how the people at Port Natal actively mixed social and cultural elements such as clothing and language. Following gossip, the chapter examines Isaacs' accounts of forming a 'senate' at Port Natal. Before reviewing different examples of 'senate' hearings, it analyses the subjective issues with Isaacs' accounts, especially how he sought to portray the traders to British and colonial audiences. Despite these shortcomings, the chapter shows how parts of Isaacs' accounts are useful in understanding the unfolding political dynamics at Port Natal. The various 'senate' hearings reveal a very different power dynamic to the chief-subject one the traders tried to create. Instead, they show how the traders' power was primarily limited to the confines of existing African practices and laws, which they could not easily change. Chapter Two juxtaposes the gossip and the hearings to show how the people at Port Natal began forming groupings. The Port Natal aggregations began drawing the lines of inclusivity and exclusivity using language, material culture and social and political practices to establish a shared set of norms.

Chapter Three examines how the corrosion of the Dingane-trader relationship from 1835 led to adherents boosting their groupness and entitativity (their perceived groupness). Dingane was against the traders taking in followers from the Zulu Kingdom, but the traders persisted. By 1838, these tensions exploded into war, and the traders joined forces with the newly arrived Trekkers. Several British traders formed forces from their adherents. Two missionary accounts mentioned that Frank Fynn's force marched under a flag marked 'Izinkumbi' or 'locusts.' This is the first known incidence of these aggregates collecting under a shared name and displaying that sense of collectivity to outsiders. The chapter closely examines these missionary accounts to show how the adherents combined their shared agendas and collective memories through songs and symbols under one title, Izinkumbi. In doing so, they not only increased a sense of groupness among themselves but also to outsiders.

Chapter Four covers the early period of colonial rule from the establishment of the Natal Republic in 1840 through the first decade of British colonial rule, between 1843 and 1852. It explores how the Izinkumbi situated themselves in the colony and how the early administrative processes—concerned with dividing and allocating land—dealt with them. At the onset of this period, Vundhlase — Frank Fynn's widow — became chief of the Izinkumbi. Under Vundhlase's rule, the Izinkumbi were selective in their interactions with the colonial government. The Izinkumbi engaged in strategic cooperation with the colonial government and avoided its influence when possible. Vundhlase stayed a significant distance from the colonial centre, allowing the Izinkumbi to maintain economic independence and avoid some administrative processes like containment in locations and *isibhalo*. At the same time, however, Vundhlase was increasingly drawn into the system of indirect rule and had to cooperate with the colonial government to avoid deposition. The chapter shows how Vundhlase maintained a careful balance between evasion and cooperation to keep her people and the colonial government happy while protecting her chiefly status.

Chapter Five focuses on two witness accounts of the Izinkumbi and other trader descendants. The first is an 1849 painting and description by a naturalist and artist named George French Angas.[43] The second comprises the diarised accounts of Captain R.J. Garden — who was part of

[43] George Angas, *The Kaffirs Illustrated* (London: J. Hogarth, 1849).

a road surveying team — between 1851 and 1852.[44] Each of these travellers encountered members of the trading groups, including some from the Izinkumbi. The accounts of Angas and Garden are riddled with ambiguity and paradox because they kept trying to force their subjects into colonial categories such as savage and tribe. The chapter uses these paradoxes to show how the colonial milieu could not easily define the Izinkumbi as per its general tribal ideology. Angas and Garden fixated on their subjects' unusualness, especially their mixed biological and cultural characteristics. They could not comprehend their subjects' fluidity and reduced it to mimicry. Unable to categorise the trader descendants according to colonial standards, Angas and Garden turned to terms like 'bastard' and 'half-caste.' The moments of confusion and ambiguity show that these colonial categories could not capture the Izinkumbi's social and cultural fluidity. They were essentially an anomaly on the unfolding tribalscape, not quite entirely tribal, savage or civilised according to colonial logic.

Chapter Six explores further colonial efforts to form the Natal tribalscape between 1852 and 1855. The chapter examines the minutes of the 1852 commission on the 'past and present state' of Africans in Natal[45] and the first tribal map of Natal made public in 1853.[46] The colonial administration continued arranging Africans into tribes, seeking to define which tribes were 'indigenous or foreign.' These classifications leaned heavily into the devastation narrative, and consequently, most Africans in Natal were considered foreigners. Interestingly, the commission faced difficulties when dealing with the Izinkumbi. The Izinkumbi did not qualify for either of these classifications, and the administration considered them anomalous. The colonial administration disregarded their precolonial or 'aboriginal' presence in Natal because they were too mobile and unfixed and contained people aligned to various *ama* groupings. Consequently, the administration introduced the auxiliary classification 'remnants' to describe the Izinkumbi. Colonial interpretations of indigeneity as timeless and fixed could not grasp the Izinkumbi's mobile and fluid politics, thus painting them in a strange and ambiguous light.

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[44] R.J. Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast between Port Natal and the Umzimvooboo" (1852), A1157 Garden Papers vol.2, NAB.
[45] James Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission Appointed to Inquire Into the Past and Present State of the Kafir in the District of Natal, and to Report Upon Their Future Government, and to Suggest Suci Arrangements As Will Tend to Secure the Peace and Welfare Of* (Fb&c Limited, 2017).
[46] Unknown, *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*, 1853, 1853, M2/134, NAB.

Finally, Chapter Seven covers the decade between 1853 and 1863. During this period, the colonial government focused on avoiding imminent financial ruin and ongoing cattle raids by adopting new agricultural and security ordinances. The Izinkumbi were the centre of these administrative fronts because southern Natal had agricultural and security potential. By 1855, the government established the first southern district called the 'Lower Umkomanzi District' with Henry Fynn as its first magistrate. Meanwhile, Shepstone requested that Vundhlase take control over Henry Fynn's people, who were considered leaderless and unruly. She called this group the 'Nsimbi.' With the new district in place, the administration implemented a commercial cotton farming project and sought Fynn's aid in securing Izinkumbi labour. However, Fynn had little influence over the Izinkumbi and often complained about their non-compliance. He also blamed his dwindling influence on the lack of administrative resources in the new district. The Izinkumbi continued their system of strategic cooperation, producing noticeable yields in the cotton project and simultaneously avoiding *isibhalo* by working for private farmers. They also exploited the colony's jurisdictional limits by taking some of their political matters over the border into the region known as Nomansland.

In seven chapters, the thesis shows how the Izinkumbi constituted a process. Their emergence culminated in a series of circumstances, including the political shifts in the late eighteenth century, the arrival of the British traders in 1824, the establishment of Port Natal and the rising tensions between Port Natal and the Zulu Kingdom in the 1830s. Within this time, Frank Fynn's followers shaped and moulded their shared memories, desires and losses into a tangible and recognisable collective that came to be called the Izinkumbi. The emerging colonial discourse struggled to fit the Izinkumbi into its developing tribalscape. The colonial perspective often portrayed the Izinkumbi as unusual, ambiguous and paradoxical. According to these views, they were old and new, outsiders and insiders, and civilised and savage. They were never one thing at one time, and the thesis shows the Izinkumbi as a dynamic social and political process rooted in African mobility and political fluidity. Izinkumbi was the collective response of a group of people to their past and present circumstances.

Part 1: The Late Precolonial Period c.1820-1838

CHAPTER ONE

Contextualising the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region: The Movement of People and the Forging of Connections Between 1750-1828

Introduction

When the British traders arrived in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region in 1824, they erroneously described it as empty due to Shaka's so-called tyrannical reign. However, the current state of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region was the product of the complex political landscape shaped by groupings' mobility and political fluidity. In the precolonial period, African mobility and political fluidity were central to the shaping and reshaping of large and smaller groupings such as the Mthethwa, Ndwandwe, Zulu, Cele and Thuli. The British traders misunderstood the fluid political landscape as discordant and disruptive. They attributed the lack of territorial boundaries and abiding sedentism to Shaka's wars and reduced the various Africans they encountered to 'refugees' or 'remnants.' The traders' accounts created a saviour-saved narrative which portrayed them as bringing order to — and saving the 'refugees' of — the Thukeka-Mzimkhulu region.

The British traders were drawn into these fluid political processes by effectively entering into a relationship with the Zulu Kingdom equivalent to the *ukukhonza* process. Shaka permitted them to stay and trade in the region and take in African followers as chiefs. The traders settled on the coast at what they called 'Port Natal.' Shaka's protection over the traders sparked political opportunity in Port Natal. It allowed Africans to forge and reshape connections. Many people thus chose to live under the traders via *ukukhonza* as it gave them access to social and political opportunities and immunity from Shaka's armies. These aggregations at Port Natal continued to grow after Dingane — Shaka's half-brother — took power over the Zulu Kingdom in 1828.

Chapter One shows how the emerging aggregations at Port Natal culminated in several significant events. The growth and shifts of larger polities from the 1750s, combined with Shaka's diplomatic interests in the Cape Colony and the British traders' need for African security

and labour power, created a rich environment for Africans to forge new connections. The British traders, importantly, acted within this fluid political landscape, and most of their social dealings or transactions occurred within the confines of *ukukhonza.*

A Brief Overview 1750-1824

Before 1750, the Thukela-Mzimkhulu area was inhabited by 'small and decentralised chiefdoms.'[1] Change and tension, however, were on the horizon as larger groupings — such as the Mabhudu, Dlamini, Magudu and Mthethwa began forming.[2] As international trade at Delagoa Bay shifted from ivory-centred to cattle-centred, cattle-trading groups adopted aggressive measures to replenish their herds, mainly by deploying *amabutho* in expansion campaigns and raiding forays against other chiefdoms.[3]

From the late eighteenth century, the region between Delagoa Bay in Mozambique and the Thukela River underwent new processes of identity formation, experiencing an increase in centralisation, 'coercive power', and 'more pronounced social stratification.'[4] While some smaller groups were absorbed, subjugated, scattered or quashed by these expanding polities, others formed resistance unions or adopted 'defensive expansion.'[5] These included the Nyuswa, the Mkhize, the Chunu, and the Qwabe 'from the Mhlatuze lowlands along the Ngoye range towards the upper Matikulu River.'[6] Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Qwabe's defensive expansion disrupted certain other groups, compelling them to ford the Thukela, bringing tension southward into the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region.[7] Two major groups impacted by Qwabe expansion were the Thuli and the Cele. In the face of Qwabe expansion, the Thuli

[1] John Wright, "Making Identities in the Thukela-Mzimvubu Region, C.1770-1940," in *Tribing and Untribing the Archive, Volume 1*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2016): 186.
[2] John Wright, The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries: A Critical Reconstruction, (University of the Witwatersrand, 1989): 26-27.
[3] Wright, The Dynamics of Power, 31.
[4] Wright, The Dynamics of Power, 33-34. See also Carolyn Hamilton, "Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom" (Masters, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985).
[5] John Wright, "The Thuli and Cele Paramountcies in the Coastlands of Natal, c. 1770-c. 1820," *Southern African Humanities* 21, no. 1 (December 1, 2009): 180.
[6] John Wright, "The Thuli and Cele." 180.
[7] Carolyn Hamilton, "Political Centralisation and the Making of SocialCategories East of the Drakensberg in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38, no. 2 (2012): 292.

moved from their settlement at the Matikhulu River, eventually establishing themselves near what was later called Port Natal, dominating the region's smaller extant polities. The Cele also crossed south of the Thukela at the end of the century.[8] The Thuli and Cele incursions 'completely transformed' the Thukela-Mzimkhulu political landscape from being populated by smaller disconnected chiefdoms to occupied by 'two relatively large, if loosely structured, new polities.'[9]

By the 1800s, the Delagoa Bay-Thukela area was home to roughly seven major polities, including the Mthethwa, Mabhudu, Tembe, Ndwandwe, Dlamini, Qwabe and the Hlubi.[10] Between roughly 1800 and 1815, Mthethwa expansion under Chief Dingiswayo aggravated tensions in the lower Thukela region.[11] Dingiswayo positioned Shaka as the head of the Zulu — a branch of the Mthethwa —providing him 'with the military means to begin bringing neighbouring chiefdoms under Zulu domination.'[12] In time, the Zulu chiefdom grew into a sizeable centralised power. With the robust Zulu chiefdom under their influence, the Mthethwa attacked the Ndwandwe. This ordeal ended in the former's defeat and the death of Dingiswayo. Faced with the imminent threat of a Ndwandwe attack, the Zulu chiefdom began building a protective coalition—either through force or compliance—with neighbouring groups.[13] Thus began the Zulu expansion around 1816.

Between 1816 and 1820, several marginal communities were affected by the Ndwandwe-Zulu conflict. Shaka attacked the Qwabe, who subsequently submitted to the Zulu under their newly installed chief, Nqetho. The Qwabe's submission facilitated the Zulu Kingdom's incursion into the southern coastlands. Other chiefdoms impacted included the Ngwane and the Hlubi, who were soon eradicated by the former. The Bhele engaged in conflict with the Ngwane, but many submitted to them while others fled further southwards.[14] During this time, the Thembu dominated the eastern end of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region, while the Chunu, Memela, and

[8] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 40-55.
[9] Wright, "The Thuli and Cele," 189.
[10] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 156.
[11] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 164.
[12] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 175.
[13] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 179-180.
[14] Wright, "Making Identities," 195.

Nhlangwini moved further southwards, raiding smaller groupings. In time, the Mpondo Kingdom—located south of the Mzimvubu River — under Chief Faku defeated most of the Thembu, while Shaka defeated the Chunu. Some members from both groups returned to the north and submitted to Shaka.

Shaka progressed southward but could not send a formidable *amabutho* into the area because of conflict on the Zulu's northern borders. Instead, Shaka ruled this space by proxy through the establishment and aid of a 'client chief.'[15] Shaka installed the Mkhize—under Chief Zihlandlo—as a satellite chiefdom to instill order and authority, making the Mkhize the principal superior group in the area.[16] The Mkhize expanded across the Thukela River, suppressing surrounding polities and siphoning resources and labour power for Shaka. After expanding into Cele territory, Shaka intervened in a dispute between Magaye and Mande over the Cele chieftainship and installed the former as chief over the Cele.[17] Magaye used a Zulu *amabutho* known as the *iziYendane* to conduct cattle raids on nearby polities.[18] Evidence of what transpired with the Thuli polity is scarce. According to John Wright, Shaka likely disbanded the Thuli kingdom to the south and installed his chiefs within the area to overlook those communities that survived the offence and keep watch over the Qwabe.[19]

With the Zulu incursion into the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region, existing polities and groupings underwent shifts. Smaller polities to the south of the Thukela either moved out of the area or were broken up or absorbed by larger polities. As the Zulu Kingdom expanded under Shaka's leadership, some surrounding chiefdoms, such as the Thuli and Cele, became its tributaries. The Zulu used denigratory discourses of difference to distinguish certain subjects of the Zulu kingdom from others. For example, the Cele, Thuli, and surrounding communities bore the collective label *amalala*, which Wright states translated to 'menial' by this period.[20]

[15] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 253-254.
[16] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 232.
[17] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 255-262.
[18] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 259-262.
[19] Wright, "Making Identities," 196.
[20] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 317-318.

The practice of *ukukhonza* was central to the fluid political landscape. In her recent work, Jill Kelley provided a useful definition of *ukukhonza.*[21] *Ukukhonza,* she argues, constitutes a practice 'of affiliation, a social agreement that historically bound together subjects and leaders to provide land and security.'[22] While land played a significant role in leadership and power, people's movement and allegiance ultimately determined chiefly or authority status, as per the Zulu proverb, "A chief is a chief by the people who *khonza* him."[23] Through *ukukhonza,* people could forge, maintain, and change connections based on their political climate. Hamilton and Wright argue that this flexibility and political dynamism were strategic and crucial to 'the management of risk and the exploitation of opportunity.'[24] *Ukukhonza* was a key practice in the movement and maintenance of smaller groupings during the political changes taking place in this period.

Smaller groupings in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region used *ukukhonza* alongside their political fluidity to deal with risks and access opportunities. Within the current political landscape, they had few options, including 'migrate as an independent unit, remain in situ and wait for dangers to subside[or] *khonza* to a new leader who could offer effective protection.'[25] As smaller groups moved or lived under larger groups via *ukukhonza* agreements for security purposes, specific regions would have become more densely populated and others 'relatively denuded of inhabitants.'[26] The traders had, in effect, entered a politically dynamic Thukela-Mzimkhulu, which they misunderstood as chaotic and fractured.

Rising British Interest in the Natal region: The Arrival of the British Traders

Meanwhile, by the early nineteenth century, the British East India Company became interested in trade along the East African coast. By 1810, the British established an economic agreement with the Portuguese, opening East African ports to British traders.[27] For the British, Delagoa Bay was a prominent source of ivory; as such, they reluctantly continued trading for ivory from the

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[21] Jill E. Kelly, *To Swim with Crocodiles: Land, Violence, and Belonging in South Africa, 1800-1996* (Michigan State University Press, 2018).
[22] Jill E. Kelly, *To Swim with Crocodiles,* xxxii.
[23] Kelly, *To Swim with Crocodiles,* xxxii.
[24] Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, *Draft Book Chapter Presented to the Weekly Sminar, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, 18 September, 2024.* Unpublished.
[25] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 272.
[26] John Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 272.
[27] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 327.

Portuguese.[28] Over the next decade, British interest in the prospects of the eastern coastline continued to grow so much that by 1821, the British government deployed a maritime excursion to survey the East African coastline.[29] By the mid-1810s, merchants in the Cape Colony were rather eager to send expeditions to the Natal region to procure ivory and livestock.[30] Doing so, however, required building relations with King Shaka.

In 1823, two British merchants, Francis Farewell and Lieutenant James King, launched an expedition to the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region with the aid of the trading company Nourse and Co. The dangerous coastal layout blocked their attempts to land merchandise and reach Shaka. Despite returning to the Cape Colony empty-handed, Farewell and King retained their partnership and sought to reattempt their expedition in 1824.[31] Simultaneously, another British trader, Henry Francis Fynn, had travelled overland via horseback from the Cape to the southern parts of the Natal region, hoping to meet and trade with Shaka. However, Fynn did not venture far beyond the Mgeni River and thus made no contact with Shaka.

By early 1824, Fynn joined Farewell's mission to establish trade in Natal. Farewell arranged further financial support for his trading campaign with Messrs. Hoffman and Peterssen and assembled a sizeable crew for another mission to the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region.[32] Fynn and his crew — including an Englishman named Henry Ogle, an interpreter named Frederick, a Khoe retainer named Michael and two other Europeans — sailed to Natal on the sloop *Julia* roughly six months ahead of Farewell's intended landing. Fynn's party successfully landed in what they came to call 'Port Natal' in March 1824. In the six months between his landing and Farewell's arrival, Fynn engaged with the local Africans and located ivory sources. He did not, however, physically meet Shaka and only communicated with him through African proxies. Farewell joined them in 1824, and Fynn's brother Frank Fynn arrived in 1829.[33]

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[28] Linell Chewins, "The Relationship between Trade in Southern Mozambique and State Formation: Reassessing Hedges on Cattle, Ivory and Brass," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 4 (July 3, 2016): 734.
[29] Linell Chewins, "The Relationship between Trade."
[30] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 325-328.
[31] Henry Francis Fynn, *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn*, ed. D.M.K Malcolm and James Stuart (Shuter and Shooter, 1950): 56.
[32] Carolyn Hamilton, "'The Character and Objects of Chaka': A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as 'Mfecane' Motor," *The Journal of African History* 33, no. 1 (1992): 42.
[33] Excerpt from *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn* in Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal, 1824-1857: A Biographical Register*, vol. 6 (University of Natal Press, 1981): 229.

The Social, Political and Economic Climate of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu in 1824

After arriving, the British traders found the Africans near Port Natal to be in what they described as a 'disunited and mixed' state,[34] which they attributed to the aftershocks of Shaka's expansive wars.[35] By the time the traders arrived in 1824, the more concentrated African populations within the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region were those under the Ngwane in the northwest, those under the Cele just south of the Thukela, and the Chunu and other polities nearby the Mzimkhulu.[36] Fynn mentioned two smaller groupings near Port Natal, the 'Amatuli'[37] and 'Umnini.'[38] According to Fynn, smaller groups in the region had 'lost all their crops and cattle, and so great was the danger of appearing in the open country that the remnant of the tribe seldom left the bush or Bluff, excepting to take fish when the [tide] ebbed.'[39] Fynn described the people at Port Natal as 'not in tribes or under chiefs […] not cultivating, as their crops were destroyed […].'[40] Rarely, he continued, were 'more than two natives seen together' because of the 'great difficulty they experienced in obtaining food but from their distrusting each other.'[41]

The traders' representation of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region as empty and desolate at this time was rooted in their misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the current political landscape. Their thinking was driven by Eurocentric ideas, which defined land as bounded property and equated sedentism to ownership over said land. In the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region, however, movement and political fluidity were part of the political order and their daily lifeways—subsistence, economy, and architecture—facilitated their mobility.[42] Although some circumstances may have pressured Africans to move at times—as opposed to voluntary movement—they were not necessarily 'displaced.' Colonial terms like 'displaced' and 'empty' suggested that these Africans were permanently tied to one place or space, overlooking the

[34] "Statement of William Smith to James Stuart and William Bazley" (January 1907), Fynn Family Papers File 10: Notes on the Fynn Family Collected by James Stuart and William Bazely, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[35] Fynn, *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn,* 60.
[36] John Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 273-274.
[37] Fynn, "Letter in Fynn's Writing."
[38] Fynn, "Letter in Fynn's Writing."
[39] Fynn, "Letter in Fynn's Writing."
[40] "Statement of William Smith."
[41] Henry Francis Fynn, "Letter in Fynn's Writing," n.d., Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 3, Killie Campbell Manuscripts."
[42] Hamilton, Carolyn and Wright, John. Draft Book Chapter Presented to the Weekly Sminar.

importance of mobility in their everyday lives. As seen before, the various incursions over the Thukela River did not empty Natal of its inhabitants but instead led to significant demographic changes and political shifts in the region. The movement of the Thuli, Cele and finally the Zulu into Natal transformed the existing geopolitical environment.

By August 1824, Farewell and his crew joined Henry Fynn at Port Natal. Shortly afterwards, the traders arranged their first meeting with Shaka at his homestead in Bulawayo. Around a month after the first meeting, there was an assassination attempt on Shaka. Fynn — allegedly — played a big part in saving Shaka's life.[43] According to Farewell, he and the other traders 'had an opportunity of further gaining his [Shaka's] friendship by curing him of a dangerous wound he received since we have been here.'[44] Shaka granted land to Farewell 'as a reward for his kind attention to [Shaka's] illness from a wound.' [45] Farewell drew up a document relaying this supposed land grant which extended 50 miles inland and 25 miles along the coast and included 'Bubolongo'[46] or the region that the traders called Port Natal. The tract of land granted to the English traders was agreed to be for:

> The sole use of said Farewell and Company, their heirs and executors, and to be by them disposed of in any manner they think best calculated for their interests, free from any molestation or hinderance from myself [Shaka] or subjects.[47]

The traders were also granted authority over the African people living in Natal. As per the agreement, Shaka acknowledged Farewell:

> As the Chief of the said country, with full power and authority over such natives who like to remain there after this public grant, promising to supply him with cattle and corn, sufficient for his consumption when required. [48]

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[43] Fynn, *The Diary,* 83-85.
[44] Lieutenant Farewell to Governor Lord Charles Somerset, September 5, 1824, in John Bird, *The Annals of Natal: 1495 to 1845*, vol. 1 (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 195.
[45] Fynn, *The Diary,* 87.
[46] Fynn, *The Diary,* 87.
[47] Fynn, *The Diary,* 87.
[48] Fynn, *The Diary,* 87.

Henry Fynn also gained chiefly status 'over the natives from Tongati to Imtamvuna.' [49]

The trader's accounts of these affairs are exaggerated and skewed, claiming that they rescued Shaka and subsequently *bought* the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region from him. While Farewell understood this agreement to mean that he *owned* the land entirely, some subtleties require close attention. Importantly, Farewell's document should not be considered from a colonial perspective of territorial administration, wherein the land was a product Farewell could purchase and own. Such an agreement was highly unlikely as it did not follow African customs regarding territory[50] at the time. Fynn's son, Henry Francis Fynn jnr., later clarified this in a statement to James Stuart:

> […] it is contrary to native custom to dispose of land permanently in any other way [than] to dispose of ownership of land gained by conquest, and the ownership of land can only be changed by conquest, so therefore the sum and substance of the grant to Farewell notwithstanding documents to that effect, was clearly according to native custom a fallacy, but the meaning of the grant was a concession or a monopoly of trade over the area in question. [51]

The situation can be understood as Shaka granting the traders conditional jurisdiction over that space. The British traders—perhaps unbeknown to them at the time—had more likely lived under Shaka through *ukukhonza*. Notably, at this time, the practice of *ukukhonza* was not rooted in the notion of servitude or subservience but in cooperation and reciprocity. A chief was expected to give their adherents security in return for their allegiance.[52] Even Fynn Jr.—Henry Fynn's future European son born in 1846— understood the traders' living arrangement to be in line with *ukukhonza,* writing:

> H.F.F was created paramount chief over the natives from Tongati to Imtamvuna. By this it should be clearly understood that this area according to native law, continued to be the property of the Zulu nation […].[53]

Shaka did not necessarily sell land to the traders but received them as his subjects in this fluid and dynamic political space. Shaka and the traders had entered a political relationship that defined specific responsibilities and ensured accountability. Thus, there would have been

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[49] "Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn per His Son HF Fynn" (n.d.), Fynn Family Papers File 10: Notes on the Fynn Family Collected by James Stuart and William Bazely, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[50] Shirron Bramdeow, "Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community in Natal 1824 - 1988" (Masters, UKZN, 1988): 26.
[51] "Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn."
[52] See Kelly, *To Swim with Crocodiles*.
[53] "Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn."

conditions for the traders to stay at Port Natal. The traders were expected to present Shaka with gifts, including ivory. They also had to assist him in conflicts with other polities. On multiple occasions, Shaka requested the traders and all African inhabitants in Natal to aid him in battles. At the same time, however, Shaka would have needed to reciprocate by giving the traders social, political and physical protection. The traders had even understood themselves to be under 'the protection of Shaka.'[54] Numerous trader accounts regarding Shaka's generosity towards them—expressed in the form of cattle and crop endowments and his giving them people to assist them in their daily challenges—testify to this security.

Shaka received the traders so easily because of his political and economic interests. While the traders often relayed that Shaka 'showed great desire that [they] should live at the port,"[55] his accommodating them was strategic. Shaka was interested in diplomacy and trade with the Cape Colony.[56] After allowing the traders to settle, he expressed an interest in sending 'two of his chiefs to the Cape, for the purpose of being better acquainted with the English nation.'[57] Regarding trade and diplomacy, the traders had access to both material items—especially guns and medicine—and the Cape Government. Thus, creating and maintaining a relationship with them would have been useful for Shaka. The traders were also of immediate political value to Shaka. As chiefs, the traders could police the region on Shaka's behalf. In granting them leadership over non-Zulu peoples in Natal, Shaka ensured they lived under an ally instead of becoming a threat over time.

The forming political relationship between Shaka and the traders, combined with the existing dynamic and fluid political landscape of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region, promoted the formation of new groupings at Port Natal. The prevalence of mobility and political fluidity in the region made it easy for African people and groupings—from disparate backgrounds—to settle under the traders via *ukukhonza.* They could exchange their allegiance for the traders' security, which also provided them with immunity from Shaka.

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[54] Cape Town Saturday, June 4, 1825. *Cape Town Gazette:* 1.
[55] Fynn, *The Diary,* 78.
[56] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 331.
[57] Lieutenant Farewell to Governor Lord Charles Somerset, 195.

A Growing Community 1824-1828

In August of 1824, the traders officially settled at Port Natal, marking the onset of a new and dynamic grouping that would continue to grow, shape itself and transform over several decades. The traders were in a delicate position, living in what they considered to be 'outside the reach of humanity.'[58] They had virtually little access to food and supplies in their immediate vicinity. Moreover, their maritime journeys to the Cape to resupply provisions and trade goods were sporadic. In 1825, Lieutenant Hawes — the commander of the naval vessel called the York who encountered the Natal traders during a voyage that same year — described their desperate situation as having made 'but little progress in cultivation, probably from their limited numbers: they are much in want of supplies and are entirely destitute of bread and flour […] they appear only to want a vessel and supplies [from the Cape].'[59]

That same year, Farewell's trading partner, Lieutenant King, arrived in Natal with his party, including Nathaniel Isaacs. Their arrival, however, did not ease the situation because they wrecked their brig Mary in the process of landing in Port Natal.[60] The traders salvaged what materials and provisions they could but were mainly left without supplies and no means to sail to the Cape. This would have pressured the new relationship with Shaka, as lost cargo impacted their means of 'fulfilling [their] promises to the Chiefs.'[61] As such, the Natal traders held very few bargaining chips and were even more reliant on Shaka. One of Isaacs' earliest diary entries illustrates this dependency:

> Finding to-day that our cattle began to diminish, and that it was requisite to obtain a further supply, and not having means to purchase it, another visit to Chaka was seen to be unavoidable […].[62]

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[58] John Cane in a letter to Grahamstown Journal August 3, 1832. Vol.1 No.82.
[59] Cape Town Saturday, June 4, 1825. *Cape Town Gazette:* 1.
[60] Cape Town Friday, December 30th, 1825, *Cape Town Gazette*.
[61] Report of an Officer aboard the Burravoutd Vessel. Cape Town Gazette Cape Town Friday, June 16th, 1826. Survey of the Coast of Africa (From the Hampshire Telegraph, January 10)
[62] "Another Journey to Chaka" in Nathaniel Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa: Descriptive of the Zoolus, Their Manners, Customs, Etc. Etc. with a Sketch of Natal*, vol. 1 (E. Churton, 1836): 69.

Soon after the establishment of Port Natal, several Africans moved to settle under the traders. On this topic, the traders developed a saviour-saved discourse which portrayed them as *taking in* so-called destitute Africans. Henry Fynn, for example, frequently described how they 'brought' Africans that were 'remnants' of past 'tribes' back to Port Natal to be 'under the protection of' the traders.[63] Farewell also mentioned how the Africans of the region were 'much pleased' at the traders becoming chiefs over Natal.[64] These portrayals misunderstood *ukukhonza* agreements, understated African agency and downplayed the traders' dependency on African followers. Through *ukukhonza,* Africans *chose* to settle with the traders, and their allegiance played a significant role in the traders' survival. For example, Shaka provided the traders with provisions, and roughly 100 people from his kingdom — including women, workers, and indunas — to, according to Farewell, 'reside near and *protect* the settlement.'[65] Thus, the traders were not the only ones providing security. African followers also had a role in protecting Port Natal. Several smaller groupings within the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region moved to Port Natal to live with the traders via *ukukhonza*. By early 1825, Fynn had roughly 100 adherents.[66] The first grouping to settle under Fynn was the Mnini.[67]

Shaka's politics were significant in these processes. While the traders painted themselves as the saviours of these groups, they were not in much of a position to look after them. Shaka continued to supply the traders with cattle and corn and allowed the traders to accept more followers.[68] Fynn wrote how he 'collected these remnants of skeletons' and 'gave them cattle, fed them, and gave them land and seed corn.'[69] Yet, he would not have been able to do this if Shaka had not 'enriched' him with 'cattle […] corn or land.'[70] In an undated letter to the Bishop of Cape Town, Fynn wrote that he 'bestowed upon them [the African adherents] about five hundred head of cattle during 10 years given to my gratis by Chaka.'[71] The traders were hardly absolute 'saviours.' Instead, they were involved in the complex process of *ukukhonza* wherein their

[63] Fynn, "Letter in Fynn's Writing."
[64] Lieutenant Farewell to Governor Lord Charles Somerset: 195.
[65] Cape Town Gazette June 4, 1825. My emphasis.
[66] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 31.
[67] "Notes on Henry Francis Fynn as per his son H F Fynn."
[68] Cape Town Gazette June 4, 1825.
[69] Henry Francis Fynn, "Letter from Fynn," March 20, 1861, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[70] Fynn, "Letter from Fynn."
[71] Fynn, "Letter from Fynn."

allegiance to Shaka — and Shaka's political and economic interest in the traders — allowed them to receive African followers.

Receiving followers benefited British traders by giving them access to African labour power. Isaacs mentioned that the traders' adherents would 'assist in building huts for the reception of these newcomers.'[72] The adherents were also crucial in agriculture; Fynn described how many 'cultivated the soil'.[73] Isaacs' diary has several accounts of the traders getting their adherents to plant and maintain food gardens.[74] A report made in 1826 by a passing sailor mentioned that 'The European Party are supplied by the Natives with cattle; they have an abundance of Indian Corn, which they cultivate themselves, also plenty of milk […].'[75] The adherents also assisted with other manual tasks, including hunting and building. The same passing sailor mentioned above stated that the adherents aided the traders in building a new vessel to replace the Mary. The sailor stated that 'Mr. King had the assistance of as many as he required, to bring the timber for building his vessel from the woods.'[76] Aside from labour, the traders saw their following growing as a means to safety. Isaacs noted that the traders 'apprehended no danger' from taking in many followers 'but rather thought it a security.'[77] Some of the traders even taught various followers to use firearms over time.[78]

During this time, people continued moving to Port Natal. Some Africans left their current groupings to live under the traders in Natal, and some even left the Zulu Kingdom.[79] On some occasions, although generally small, entire extant groups joined the traders. Certain important members of the Cele, including Mpepika Nomajuba, Mbikwana, Sipongo, and their followers, left the Thukela to settle under Fynn.[80] Some people even travelled vast and risky distances to live with the traders. 'Jacoula' — a man living under Henry Fynn since 1824 — stated that he migrated over 100km from the Mvoti River. He explained that he 'was induced to come away

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[72] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 217.
[73] Fynn, "Letter in Fynn's Writing."
[74] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 32, 145, 148, 313.
[75]"Statement of a Sailor of His Majesty's Sloop Helicon," *Cape Town Gazette*, April 28, 1826: 1
[76] "Statement of a Sailor," 1.
[77] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 31.
[78] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 129.
[79] "Statement of Jacoula" (n.d.), Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[80] "Statement of Maguntsha E'Nsimbini.

from the Umvoti because [he] heard of the white men "Farewell and Fynn" being there.'[81] According to Jacoula:

> Mr. Fynn was a chief at that time, Chaka having driven the people about in every direction; and then Mr Fynn collected them, protected and fed them, and gave them cattle and clothing. Mr. Fynn was great because anyone who ran away from the Zulu country and other tribes came to Mr. Fynn for protection, and obtained it.[82]

Groups of people who lived beyond the Mzimvubu in Pondoland joined the traders. For example, a fragment of the MaJali people of 'the Mpondos of the Mgandini river between Mtamvuma and Mzimvubu' adhered to the traders.[83] The MaJali also chose to live under Fynn.[84]

The settlement choices these African groups made show the importance of mobility and political fluidity among communities in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region. The traders misinterpreted and misrepresented the situation as *saving* and *taking in* so-called 'refugees' and 'remnants.' Yet, these movements were already part of the existing political landscape, and those who chose to adhere to the traders were generating new groupings and relations through their mobility and political fluidity. Nevertheless, the traders' haven or asylum narrative would dominate how Europeans—and later colonial officials—perceived the groups that chose to live with traders at Port Natal via *ukukhonza*. The movement of several disparate groups to Port Natal between 1824 and 1828 gave rise to an ambiguous aggregation of people that went beyond the scope of European—and later colonial—tribal classifications. The established tribal discourse could not grasp these groupings. 'To call them Zulus,' Henry Fynn later wrote, 'would be to imply that the greater portion of them are refugees from the Zulu country – this is not true. To call them natives is in opposition to the fact that few are, strictly speaking, natives […] The appellation of Coloured people is also inapplicable […].'[85] Thus began the onset of a series of discursive confusions by European—and later colonial—voices regarding these developing Port Natal groups.

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[81] "Statement of Jacoula."
[82] "Statement of Jacoula."
[83] "Statement of Maguntsha E'Nsimbini."
[84] "Statement of Maguntsha E'Nsimbini."
[85] "Letter in Fynn's Writing," n.d., Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 3, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.

Continual Growth at Port Natal 1828-1832

In 1828, Dingane—Shaka's half-brother—orchestrated the assassination of Shaka and took over the Zulu Kingdom. His reign — which spanned just over a decade — consisted of various balancing efforts to keep positive relations with the Port Natal traders and maintain socioeconomic and diplomatic stability within the Zulu Kingdom. Dingane quickly initiated several policy changes that would help solidify his newfound leadership. He relocated the Zulu capital to the Mid-White Mfolozi area[86] and maintained order over the south with the newly formed *Hlomendlini* regiment. He attempted to convert some of Shaka's lieutenants and initiated policies to annihilate those he could not win over. He also altered military policy, eased regulations, allowed the *amabutho* to marry, and vowed less violence to gain the military's loyalty.[87]

Meanwhile, more British traders arrived in Port Natal in the 1830s. In 1831, James Collis settled at Port Natal with ten other 'Europeans,' ten retainers, and fifty horses.[88] By 1835, Collis established four homesteads and was chief over twenty adherents. [89] Alexander Biggar soon followed with his son George Biggar.[90] Other traders who joined Natal during this century included D.C. Toohey, William Cowie, and the Cawoods. However, little material is available on these latter traders.

Dingane's transition to power was not without turmoil, and it brought about a degree of political uncertainty. While Dingane tried to bring circumstances back under control, several Shaka sympathisers and subordinates to Dingane left the Zulu Kingdom, many choosing to settle under the British traders. One of the more substantial cases was the Qwabe revolt, in which the Qwabe broke away from the Zulu Kingdom and moved en masse in a southwesterly direction. At least

[86] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 372-373.
[87] Peter Colenbrander, "The Zulu Kingdom, 1828-79," in *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910: A New History*, ed. Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest (University of Natal Press, 1989): 86.
[88] Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal, 1824-1857: A Biographical Register*, vol. 4 (University of Natal Press, 1981): 149.
[89] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal,* vol. 4, 150.
[90] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal,* vol. 2, 82.

one hundred of the Qwabe settled with the Natal traders.[91] The Qwabe revolt tarnished the reputation of the Zulu military, encouraging more people to leave the Zulu Kingdom. [92]

Dingane considered these movements to be desertion and responded aggressively. He first deployed the Hlomendlini regiment along the southwestern borders and forcefully removed several communities occupying the south coast.[93] The Cele, Qwabe and the Qadi were among those he attacked. In 1829, he killed the Cele Chief Magaye and devastated the Cele polity by 1831. Those who avoided Dingane's attacks used their mobility and political fluidity to move southward. They settled at Port Natal and acknowledged the traders 'as their chiefs.'[94] For example, the Cele — including those under Mabojwanav kaJojo kaFokotshana, Tshwnkwini ka Mtungwane, Yabatshe and Ndunge ka Yabatshi — and Chief Magaye's sons left 'to seek safety under the Natal Paramount Chief Henry Francis Fynn.'[95] From here onward, the Cele allegedly said, 'We are Fynns.'[96] Fynn subsequently sent the Cele to hide under Ogle, knowing Dingane was pursuing them.

The inflow of people into Port Natal was virtually constant, and the traders continued pushing their saviour narrative when describing these movements of people. One year into Dingane's ascendancy, Isaacs wrote of the continued arrival of those who left the Zulu Kingdom, mentioning that they 'sought Natal as a place of greater security and repose, knowing that we always sheltered our people against the hostile attacks of other tribes […].'[97] Isaacs continued, writing that the traders' settlements 'had now become somewhat formidable […] The natives were seeking, in families, to be admitted into our tribe and to become "our people."'[98] Between 1829 and 1832, Fynn allowed several groups avoiding Dingane's forces, such as 'Kelimba' — or

[91] From Evidence of Elderly Natives taken by direction of Sir John Scott in John Bird, *The Annals of Natal: 1495 to 1845 Vol.1* (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 150. See also Felix N. C. Okoye, "Dingane: A Reappraisal," *The Journal of African History* 10, no. 2 (April 1969): 221–35.
[92] Colenbrander, "The Zulu Kingdom, 1828-79," 86.
[93] Charles Ballard, "Natal 1824–1844: The Frontier Interregnum," *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 1982): 56; Peter Colenbrander, "The Zulu Kingdom, 1828-79," in *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910: A New History*, ed. Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest (University of Natal Press, 1989): 89.
[94] Grahamstown Journal [title illegible]. 1834, April 3. Vol.3(119): 2.
[95] Diko Fynn in a statement to James Stuart, 1907. Killie Campbell Manuscripts: Fynn Family Papers File 10.
[96] "Statement of Maguntsha E'Nsimbini."
[97] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 77.
[98]Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 77.

Lukilimba — and "Umconto's people", to live under him.[99] These Africans '[placed] themselves under the protection of Messrs. Collis and Ogle,' and some under Fynn.[100] Two other groups that joined Fynn after fleeing from Dingane were the Embo tribe under Chief Singela Mkize' and the Nywasa under Chief Mhlope Nzobe.[101] In 1832, 52 people arrived under a man named 'Dansaler.'[102] That same year, in November, the Cawoods authored a letter to the Grahamstown Journal stating that Fynn's people alone numbered close to 200.[103]

The traders also gained followers from southern territories between the Mzimkhulu and Mzimvubu Rivers. In 1829, Chief Fodo of the Nhlangwini expressed interest in living with Fynn. During Shaka's campaigns, the Nhlangwini migrated to the Mzimkhulu-Mzimvubu region.[104] Around 1830, after suffering a defeat to the amaBhaca, Fodo moved the Nhlangwini northward and established his homestead, Dumezulu, on the southern bank of the mid-Mkhomazi River.[105] At this time, Dingane had 'established tributary relations over the Nhlangwini.'[106] Fodo and the Nhlangwini considered the traders as a political buffer between them and Dingane. Creating relations with the traders was important to Fodo because his people had been close allies and 'personal adherents of Tshaka's.'[107] Dingane was less likely to attack groups living with the traders because it could potentially cause conflict with the Cape Colony.

That same year, Chief Dumisa—a hunter and ivory trader—of the Duma or aba-Kwa-Duma joined the traders.[108] He established a settlement, ezimPetwini, 'not far inland of Mzinto' just south of Isipingo, where Fynn had settled. Dumisa gained some importance among the traders,[109] and quickly became one of Fynn's primary elephant hunters in the 1830s.[110] According to his son

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[99] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 36.
[100] "Original Correspondence Of Henry Francis Fynn, Ingoma, 30th Sept, 1832.," *The Grahamstown Journal*, November 29, 1832: 2-3.
[101] "Statement of Maguntsha E'Nsimbini."
[102] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 217.
[103] "Letter from the Cawoods," *Grahamstown Journal*, November 22, 1832. Vol.1(48): 2.
[104] Wright, "Making Identities in the Thukela-Mzimvubu Region," 195-196.
[105] Jeff Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal: African Autonomy and Settler Colonialism in the Making of Traditional Authority* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013): 85.
[106] Wright, "The Dynamics of Power," 375.
[107] "Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn."
[108] Alfred T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal: Containing Earlier Political History of the Eastern-Ngúni Clans* (Longmans, Green, 1972): 529-531.
[109] Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal,* 531.
[110] "Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn."

Duka Fynn, sometime after Dumisa moved, Fynn made him chief, and he and his people subsequently grew into a 'large tribe.'[111] Isaacs stated that Dumisa joined them at Port Natal after 'having heard of [Fynn's] good treatment,'[112] Dumisa and Fodo were part of a group of elephant hunters who operated between the Mkhomazi and Mzimkhulu Rivers, known as, according to Isaacs, the 'Botwas.'[113] The 'Botwas' were likely the abaThwa, mixed groups generally comprising the San people of Nomansland. Isaacs documented his encounters with several other 'Botwas' individuals and chiefs, including 'Keegor', and 'Umseboacher.' According to Isaacs, the abaThwa 'detest[ed]' the Zulu Kingdom and felt living under the traders would shelter them from Dingane.[114]

In 1830, Isaacs and Fynn sought an audience with Dingane to discuss "Umseboacher's" desire to settle under the traders with his two hundred adherents. Isaacs and Fynn wished 'claim to that chief's services, not knowing whether the king considered him as tributary to the Zoolas, or as part of our people.'[115] Dingane 'allowed it under the condition that they [Unseboacher] continue to adhere to his governance' and said to Isaacs:

> I consider him and his people […] to belong to you […], but he is still under my government, and I have the privilege of killing him if he offends me, because he is of my country, and you are our friends.[116]

It is doubtful that the abaThwa *belonged* to Isaacs and Fynn at any given time. Instead, the traders and abaThwa started an economic relationship as the former sought the latter's 'services' in elephant hunting.[117] As prolific elephant hunters, the abaThwa would have been valuable trading partners to the British traders.

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[111] "Statement of Duka Fynn to James Stuart and William Bazley" (January 1907), Fynn Family Papers File 10: Notes on the Fynn Family Collected by James Stuart and William Bazely, Killie Campbell Manuscripts:37.
[112] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 74.
[113] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 43.
[114] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 197.
[115] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 129.
[116] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 129.
[117] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 129.

Existing and New Connections

These various cases of African people joining the British traders at Port Natal reveal the potential multifaceted or layered qualities of connections and groupings. Most came from intact groupings and even held essential positions in those communities, as opposed to being devastated and displaced. Dumisa and Fodo, for example, joined the traders as established chiefs—yet Duka stated that Fynn made him a chief,[118] highlighting how the traders skewed events to fit their saviour narrative. The Ehlangwini, amaCele, amaQwabe and Duma — among others — did not essentially dissolve after adhering to the trading groups. Their people continued to identify as Ehlangwini, amaCele, amaQwabe and amaDuma well after the traders left Natal and even featured on a colonial tribal list from the 1850s.[119] This shows that these groupings did not need to cede their existing group connections to form economic and social arrangements with the traders via *ukukhonza*. Instead, these groupings formed relationships and negotiated with the British traders. They could offer the British traders something valuable in exchange for an alliance.

Conclusion

Chapter One presents a broad overview of precolonial politics that shaped the Thukela-Mzimkhulu into the political landscape the traders encountered in 1824. It shows how the sociopolitical state of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region in the 1820s was not solely the result of Shaka's incursions but more of expanding polities and kingdoms from the later eighteenth century. Mobility and political fluidity were crucial to these processes as various large and small groupings could move and amalgamate— using the practice of *ukukhonza*—in response to current circumstances. Upon their arrival in 1824, the British traders misunderstood the political landscape as disruptive and unsettled and described the region as empty or depopulated.

Despite not understanding the Thukula-Mzimkhulu's politics, the British traders became subjects to it, to an extent. Although the traders suggested that they bought the Thukula-Mzimkhulu region from Shaka, they had effectively agreed to live under him via the practice of *ukukhonza.*

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[118] "Statement of Duka Fynn to James Stuart and William Bazley."
[119] *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*, 1853, 1853, M2/134, NAB.

Through this arrangement, Shaka granted the traders settlement and trading rights in the area and permitted them to receive African followers. Shaka was willing to have the traders live under him because it gave him access to European goods and possible diplomacy with the Cape colony.

Shaka's protection over the British traders introduced new political opportunities, attracting several Africans to Port Natal to settle under the traders. In time, a significant aggregation formed. The traders used a saviour-saved discourse when describing these events, representing Africans as needing urgent rescue. The British trader narratives demonstrate their lack of understanding of *ukukhonza* and overlooked Africans' mobility and agency. The traders did not necessarily *take in* Africans but received adherents who *chose* to live with them. Several of these people, importantly, belonged to other groupings and maintained those social ties while living under the traders. The social and economic arrangements between Africans and the traders were, hence, multifaceted and layered, as these Africans did not have to cede their existing connections to live with the traders via *ukukhonza.*

By 1824, the British traders had thus entered a dynamic and fluid political landscape centred on mobility and *ukukhonza.* They superimposed their Eurocentric notions of land as bounded property onto the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region. Consequently, they misrepresented the region as empty and erroneously stated that they had purchased and owned it. However, they acted within the existing political landscape. Their relationships with Shaka and later their adherents unfolded within the confines of *ukukhonza*. They did not rescue refugees but received African agents who chose to move. Their adherents did not give their labour power and security out of gratitude but in exchange for the benefits the traders' relationship with the Zulu Kingdom offered.

CHAPTER TWO

Gossip and Law: Processes of Connection and Belonging at Port Natal 1828-1835

Introduction

Chapter Two covers the early development of connections, groupness, and belonging at Port Natal between 1828 and 1835. During this period, the traders' aggregations continued to grow substantially. As such, the people living at Port Natal needed to find ways to organise themselves by forging connections, establishing norms, and creating a sense of belonging. The chapter draws from two different groups of sources to reveal how these emerging groupings began organising themselves. First, it explores the gossip of European travellers and missionaries about the British traders and their followers at Port Natal. While these gossip cases were entirely pejorative towards the traders, carefully reading them unveils how the traders and adherents shared social aspects such as clothing and language, showing political and social fluidity at work in grouping processes.

The chapter then examines Nathaniel Isaacs' descriptions of law and order at Port Natal, examining several of his accounts about 'senate' hearings. It uses these narratives to explore processes of norm creation at Port Natal. The chapter carefully uncovers Isaacs' biases and agendas, specifically with his use of the term 'senate.' It shows how his writing and the way he framed things aimed to prevent censure from his European readership. Nevertheless, the chapter uses the salvageable parts of the text to show how the forming communities at Port Natal began creating boundaries of inclusion and exclusion through forming a deliberative council. It also shows how Africans were agents in these processes, further demonstrating that the traders' chiefly rule worked within the confines of *ukukhonza.*

By juxtaposing the gossip and Isaacs' accounts, the chapter reveals the developing sociocultural confluence in Port Natal. Social and political fluidity were central to these processes as they allowed the developing communities at Port Natal to establish norms, including communication and social order. It shows how the process of groupness and belonging required the traders and their adherents to share language, material culture and practices of law and punishment.

The Outside World Reacts: Missionary Gossip on Port Natal

This section covers several instances of European gossip about the British traders and Port Natal. It uses Kathleen Feeley and Jennifer Frost's definition of gossip, which they argue is information generated and spread about specific people. The subjects of this information are not present during or do not contribute to these communications, be they written or verbal.[1] By the 1830s, the aggregation at Port Natal had grown to roughly 5,000 people. The expanding settlement at Port Natal was no secret to the outside colonial world, and several pejorative accounts by travellers and missionaries soon surfaced. The chapter first examines secondary or hearsay gossip, by those who never met the traders and their adherents at Port Natal. It then looks at one eyewitness case of gossip by a traveller named Allen Gardiner. Whether or not they were hearsay or firsthand retellings, these accounts focused on the traders' physical appearance, clothing, language, social and sexual relationships, and general demeanour. They lamented the traders adopting African customs and accused them of abandoning civilised life.

Some of the earliest gossip about Port Natal can be found in the accounts of three missionaries, Reverend James Archbell, Richard Haddy and Reverend Stephen Kay. Interestingly, their accounts were all secondhand as they had never met the traders or travelled to Port Natal. Nevertheless, the Port Natal communities' reputation preceded them as they were described as 'infamous characters.'[2] Reverend James Archbell of the Wesleyan Missionary Society was one of the first missionaries to write about the British traders. In a letter to the Missionary Society dated December 1829, Archbell mentioned encountering a 'Zula Chief' named 'Motsilakatsi'—Mzilikazi — on his travels from Plaatberg.[3] Mzilikazi told Archbell that he knew of the 'white men […] at Natal.' Mzilikazi told Archbell that the traders 'taught Chaka to make spears with crosses […].'[4] At this point in the text, Archbell mentioned that the traders 'went out to war with

[1] Kathleen Feeley and Jennifer Frost, "Introduction," in *When Private Talk Goes Public: Gossip in American History*, ed. Kathleen Feeley and Jennifer Frost (Springer, 2014): 2.
[22] James Archbell, "Missions in Southern Africa," 1829, Missionary Notices Vol. VI No. 179, Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals: 356.
[3] James Archbell, "Missions in Southern Africa," 356.
[4] James Archbell, "Missions in Southern Africa," 356.

Chaka. They go naked like the natives and are married among them.'[5] Five years later, Stephen Kay—a Wesleyan missionary and corresponding member of the South African Institution wrote of the traders' tattered clothing showing little difference to 'the beast-hide covering their neighbours.'[6] He wrote that they 'abandon[ed] themselves to the habits and manners of savage life,' and that their 'proper colour [could] scarcely be identified for the filth that covers them.'[7]

All the missionaries were concerned with the traders' failure to teach Africans Christianity. Archbell mentioned that they only there for 'the sake of secular gain' instead of 'teaching them [the Africans] to true happiness.'[8] The traders' infamy was almost mythic in quality as most who wrote about it had not travelled to Port Natal. Another Wesleyan missionary named Richard Haddy, for example, voiced concern over the lack of Christianity in Natal and was infuriated over the traders' lack of interest in spreading the religion to their adherents. 'Savages,' he wrote, 'are left to learn what Christianity is from the conduct of some who unworthily bear the sacred name.'[9] Similarly, Reverend Kay lamented that the traders failed to '[promote] the work of civilisation.'[10] Some missionaries were worried that the traders' corrupting influence on the locals would hinder future missionary work and that their 'first attempts to instruct the natives will find their [the Africans] prejudices against him and his doctrine ten-fold stronger than he would have found them, had he himself gone before [the traders].'[11]

Sex was also a topic in this gossip. Some researchers have argued that the archival record about the traders' sexual relations only 'speaks exclusively of marriage' and that 'casual (illicit) liaisons would be remarked upon only much later in the nineteenth century.'[12] However, this

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[5] James Archbell, "Missions in Southern Africa," 356.
[6] Stephen Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria: Describing the Character, Customs, and Moral Condition of the Tribes Inhabiting That Portion of Southern Africa: With Historical and Topographical Remarks Illustrative of the State and Prospects of the British Settlement in Its Borders, the Introduction of Christianity, and the Progress of Civilization* (Negro History Press, 1834): 340.
[7] Kay, *Travels and Researches,* 340.
[8] James Archbell, "Missions in Southern Africa," 356.
[9] Mr. Haddy, "From the Same, Dated April 1st, 1834," October 1, 1834, The Missionary Notices, Vol. VII, No.226, Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals: 543.
[10] Kay, *Travels and Researches*, 340.
[11] Mr. Haddy, "From the Same, Dated April 1st, 1834," 543.
[12] Will Jackson, "Not Seeking Certain Proof: Interracial Sex and Archival Haze in High-Imperial Natal," in *Subverting Empire: Deviance and Disorder in the British Colonial World*, ed. Will Jackson and Emily Manktelow (Springer, 2015), 188.

does not appear to be the case. Both Kay and Archbell mentioned the traders' sexual engagements with African women. In 1829, Archbell wrote that the traders were 'married among them.'[13] Kay considered the traders 'like those native chieftains themselves' because they 'embrace[d] from eight to ten black wives or concubines!'[14] Kay's use of the word 'concubines' reflected the general colonial disregard for African marital customs. Marriage between British men and African women – through an African ceremony in particular — was deemed unofficial, so much so that these women were 'concubines.'

By the 1830s, the traders' alleged nakedness, marital practices, penchant for war, and their 'going native' were common themes in missionary writings on the Natal region. The traders and their adherents had taken on mythic qualities as they were subject to a grand narrative made by people who had not witnessed anything at Port Natal. Contrastingly, Gardiner's writing is based on his encounters with the traders and their adherents. However, his writing contained themes similar to those of the missionary accounts. His accounts were likely influenced by past gossip. The chapter will now examine his writing and explore what gossip can reveal about the emerging groupings at Port Natal.

Gardiner's Poetic Gossip

In 1835, Captain Allen Gardiner — a former Royal Navy officer turned missionary — entered Natal to bring 'true religion, civilisation, and industry into those benighted regions.' [15] Although Gardiner did not gain permission to preach in the Zulu Kingdom, he settled in Port Natal for a year after eight British traders had requested his services and had 'promis[ed] to use their influence to induce the people to observe the Sabbath and attend the preaching.'[16] During his stay, Gardiner kept a journal, which was published in 1836 as *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country in South Africa.*[17] While Gardiner spoke somewhat positively of the Natal settlers, one section of his writing is an antagonistic poem titled 'The Natal Hunters.' In the poem,

[13] James Archbell, "Missions in Southern Africa," December 31, 1829, Missionary Notices Vol. VI No. 179, Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals.
[14] Kay, *Travels and Researches:* 340-341.
[15] Allen Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country, in South Africa* (London: William Crofts, 1836): 1.
[16] Grahamstown Journal. May 1, 1835 Vol. IV No. 179:3).
[17] Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey.*

Gardiner described the practices of one of the hunting or trading groups as being 'so grotesquely habited, and [creating] so wild a situation, that [he] could not resist scribbling'[18] the following poem.[19] I have numbered the stanzas for ease of discussion:

1

In olden times we oft have heard,
Though many deem those tales absurd,
Of half-tamed men called Buccaneers,
Who scoured the sea, and oft the land,
On plunder bent, with sword in hand,
Cutting off noses, sometimes ears.

2

Now these men, as the story runs,
Were strangely garbed, though armed with guns,
And blunderbluss, and spear;
All men of wild terrific mien,
The fiercest that their foes had seen,
Transfixing all with fear

3

Now just such men as these I've seen,
As wild to view—on slaughter keen;
But, perhaps, you'll think I'm jesting;
'Twas but the other night I found
The ruffians seated on the ground,
Each from his labours resting.

[18] Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey,* 110.
[19] Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey,* 111.

4

White, brown and black, of varied hue,
Composed this strange — this motley crew,
The sullen Hottentot and blithesome Kali; So long unshaved the whites had been. Thick bristles stood on every chin;
Despised the toil of washing daily.

5

Each proud Incosi stood erect,
Which added much to the effect,
The rest like monkeys crouched behind;
It would not many words require;
To give an inventory entire,
Of all their habiliments combined.

6

Four leathern trousers duly worn
With woollen frocks, some badly torn,
Two bonnets rogue — a hat crowned,
Three shoes that ne'er had covered hose,
With openings wide t'admit the toes,
Were all the four white people owned.

7

In suits of ditto, closely fitted,
The natives never can be pitted,
One garment lasts them all their days;
But Hottentots on finery bent,
Are not so easily content,
And ape their moody masters' ways.

8

The lip moustached — the sallow face,
Denote that haughty, thankless race,
They'd sell their skin for brandy;
E'en Erin's sons they far eclipse,
In placing goblets to their lips,
Whene'er they find them handy.

9

A few I marked with strange attire,
While crowding round a blazing fire,
Some sea-cow fat devouring.
Red caps and tattered frocks they wore,
With brigantines besmeared with gore,
Like border bandits lowering.

10

In strange confusion, round them strewed,
Muskets and powder-horns I viewed,
With skins, and fat, and dogs, and game;
For neither elephant nor buffalo,
They every leave in peace to go,
But fell with deadly aim.

11

I've seen the savage in his wildest mood,
And marked him reeked with human blood,
But never so repulsive made;
Something incongruous strikes the mind,
Whene'er a barb'rous race we find,
With shreds of civil life displayed.

12

There's more of symmetry, however bare,
In what a savage deigns to wear,

In keeping with the scene;
These, each deformed by what he wears,
Like apes that dance at country fairs,
Seemed but a link between.

13

‘Twould puzzle poet — painter too —
In vivid colours bright and true
That living chaos to portray:
The twilight shed a ghastly glare,
On all the group assembled there,
As round the flick’ring fires they lay.

14

The Zoolus’ song, the white men’s cheers,
With grating Dutch, assailed our ears,
As we approached their lair;
E’en faithful Echo stood amazed
At the wild Babel they had raised
Upon the evening air.

15

E’en now the image haunts my brain!
Those hideous forms and shouts remain,
Like fever’d dreams on restless nights;
And perhaps ‘twere better here to end
These sorry rhymes, lest I offend

The poem drew from the European idea of the civilised and savage dichotomy. Gardiner was fixated on the decay of these social boundaries. The poem is wrought with paradox because Gardiner found it difficult to distinguish between the Africans and Europeans in the group. He painted the group as a corruption of ‘civil life’ that made more sense in the context of ‘fever’d dreams on restless nights.’

Gardiner's horror towards the trader group can reveal certain social and cultural aspects that were key in these groupings' formation. The hunting group would have been at the point of convergence of the imagined civilised-savage boundary because they adapted and shared parts of one another's social practices. Instead of being bound by these European ideals, they exercised a degree of sociocultural mobility and fluidity. This is evident in several of Gardiner's examples of the group's 'living chaos.'

He described the adherents' 'varying hues' of skin colour, including 'white, brown, and black.' He then mentioned different social divisions, such as 'the sullen Hottentot' and the 'blithesome Kali.' His latter description — a reference to the Hindu Goddess Kali — was likely for the Africans of the group, given that the English translation for Kali is 'the black one.' The final of these social groups was 'the whites', who he mentioned were dirty and unshaven. Although Gardiner attempted to separate these categories, their boundaries become increasingly blurred as the poem progresses. The different groups were shown to have adopted parts of each other's so-called behaviours, customs, and material items, essentially corrupting civilisation with savagery. Gardiner fixated on the group's clothing, stating that their 'entire inventory' was so meagre that it required a few words. He mentioned the poor condition of the whites' clothing, describing it as 'worn' and 'torn.'

Gardiner coupled their bad clothing with their 'unshaven' state, explaining that they 'despised' personal hygiene. Gardiner then moved onto the adherents' clothing, describing it as 'strange attire' including 'red caps,' 'tattered frocks,' and 'brigantines.' The adherents' mix of European and African attire left them looking, he wrote, 'deformed' and ridiculous 'like apes that dance at county fairs.' In donning European clothing, Gardiner argued that the adherents merely 'ape[d] their moody masters' ways.'[20]

Gardiner then discussed the group's mixed metaphysical elements, such as language and social structure. Gardiner described how different group members had formed a pidgin using parts of each other's languages. Gardiner described a messy blend of 'the Zoolu's song,' 'the white

[20] Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey,* 111.

man's cheers,' and 'grating Dutch' as a 'wild Babel' that 'assailed' his ears. Besides language, Gardiner highlighted how the British traders had adopted specific African leadership structures. In stanza five he called British hunters in the group '*incosi.'* This is the only point in the poem where he used an *isiZulu* word. His use of an *isiZulu* word was likely intentionally ironic, given that he disapproved of mixing European and African languages in the same poem. Gardiner's linguistic deviation represented the British traders' digression from Britishness; they had adopted African customs and hierarchal systems as chiefs or *inkosi.* They were not British generals or governors but *izinkosi* with tattered grass hats for crowns. African social hierarchies had no place in broader European ideology. Throughout the piece, he painted the group with a penchant for violence, describing them as 'ruffians' or 'wild.' Gardiner wrote that all the game in Natal 'fell with deadly aim' and that these hunters rarely let animals go in peace. He also referred to their participation in more militant affairs, calling them 'buccaneers' or 'border bandits.'

A careful reading of Gardiner's poem reveals the entangled nature of these Port Natal groupings' material culture and social life. Regarding the Africans in the group, Garden was appalled at their misuse of so-called civilised *things*. He commented that they had distorted civilised qualities like clothing, leaving themselves 'deformed.' The 'whites' in the poem were barely distinguishable at the beginning of the poem as only their clothing stood out as a potent signifier for Gardiner. Gardiner's pejorative poem shares many qualities with the accounts of Archbell, Kay and Haddy. Looking beyond the gossip can reveal certain intricacies within the grouping processes at Port Natal. The gossip stemmed from difficulties defining and categorising the Port Natal communities according to European logic. These moments of confusion shed light on the nature of the connections forming at Port Natal.

Looking Beyond Gossip

On the surface, these accounts show that the colonial subjects who wrote them were generally disturbed by the mixed state of living in Port Natal. They saw the blurring of African and European practices as chaotic. While these gossip cases mirror the colonial paradigm of the time, they can also say more about how connections formed and grew at Port Natal in the 1830s. They present evidence for the unfolding and forging of new connections in Natal, showing how the traders and adherents shaped an ad hoc social structure. The missionaries' difficulty in

categorising and making sense of the people at Port Natal shows how these communities were beyond the colonial imagination. The connections and lifeways unfolding at Port Natal challenged the social boundaries central to the colonial worldview.

Survival at Port Natal relied on a kind of blended living where people could communicate with one another, cooperate, and live together. The British traders endorsed and engaged in certain African practices because they could not enforce European hierarchy and ideologies. For example, they did not attempt to convert Africans to Christianity and practised African marriage customs. This suggests that the traders did not have the power to force their ways onto Africans. Doing so would have jeopardised their relationships with Africans in the Thukela-Mzimkhlu region, ultimately hurting trade prospects. This goes back to the system of *ukukhonza*. The traders did not rule their adherents but were in a mutual relationship. They needed their adherents to survive, and overstepping social and cultural boundaries could have caused attrition. Blending their and African lifeways was thus a better option.

The gossip was also highly focused on the people's physical appearance and the languages at Port Natal. Clothing and language were another part of the blended living and grouping processes at Port Natal. Gardiner and the other missionaries saw the Europeans' adoption of African clothing as degenerative and reduced the African use of European clothing to mimicry. The case of mixed clothing and language shows that the people of Port Natal established mix forms of communication and expression, appropriating each other's clothing and languages to form connections.

Looking beyond the European discourse and ideology, these cases of gossip present evidence of the forging of connections and groupings at Port Natal. Moving away from outsider accounts, the chapter will examine Nathaniel Isaacs' accounts of the development of law and order at Port Natal. Exploring the rise of a system of 'good fellowship,'[21] the chapter uncovers the processes of groupness from within these communities.

[21] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 80.

Establishing 'Good Fellowship:' Order and Punishment at Port Natal

While the missionaries spread gossip, the Port Natal aggregations grew exponentially. Consequently, the traders — and likely the chiefs and communities living with them — 'saw the necessity of adopting rules for their future government [to] preserve order and promote industry.'[22] In his *Travels and Adventures*, Isaacs detailed these earlier governance processes in the Natal region. While these accounts present insights into how the aggregation communities were shaping their groupings, it is crucial to remain cautious of Isaacs' narrative. Dan Wiley has presented a detailed overview of the problems with Isaacs' Travels and Adventures, ranging from using a ghostwriter to deliberate embellishment.[23] A significant reveal by Wiley was a letter from Isaacs to Fynn urging writing about Natal to '[excite] public curiosity' and 'make the Government settle it [Natal].'[24] The book aimed to generate British interest in the Natal region and kindle colonial pursuits. Isaacs also portrayed the traders in a positive light, counteracting the gossip discussed above. Importantly, Isaacs' writing suggested that the African adherents were lawless and required the British traders to develop a system of governance. His writing minimised African agency when, as the chapter shows, many of the laws and rules used at Port Natal existed among African communities.

While being mindful of these motives and agendas in the accounts discussed below, this section uncovers the power dynamic in the Natal region and shows the use of norm creation in shaping groupings. According to Isaacs, the traders requested the principal chiefs of each kraal or group living under them to 'form something like a senate' to meet biweekly, discuss serious events, address complaints, and rectify crimes.[25] Isaacs' choice of words here is interesting. The word 'senate' was likely used with a British audience in mind, and Isaacs used it to create a specific orderly image of the trader settlements. 'Senate' was perhaps an excessive or disproportionate term given that it generally describes deliberation at a state level. 'Senate' also minimised

[22] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 80.
[23] Dan Wylie, "Textual Incest: Nathaniel Isaacs and the Development of the Shaka Myth," *History in Africa* 19 (January 1992): 411–33.
[24] See P. R. Kirby, "Unpublished Documents Relating to the Career of Nathaniel Isaacs, the Natal Pioneer", Africana Notes and News in Dan Wylie, "Textual Incest: Nathaniel Isaacs and the Development of the Shaka Myth," *History in Africa* 19 (January 1992): 414.
[25] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 81.

African agency, given that it reflected British governance. Based on Isaacs' descriptions — which are discussed below — this system was more of a deliberative council.

The council comprised several traders, including Fynn and Isaacs, and the African chiefs living under them. All members could listen, contribute to discussions, and make final judgements based on a majority vote. While it mainly dealt with punishing crimes, the 'senate' also sought to prevent innocents from becoming the victims of false accusations, mob justice and deceit. In short, the council encouraged adherents, according to Isaacs, to 'live in good fellowship.'[26] While Isaacs portrayed the traders in an orderly light for his readers, a careful reading of his accounts can reveal some of how the traders and adherents began shaping new groupings.

Most of the laws these communities followed were common among African communities living between the Zulu Kingdom and the Mzimvubu River.[27] Some laws also drew from the practice of *ukukhonza* as they required adherents and chiefs to meet specific responsibilities. One of the council's first motions was to supply the women of the Port Natal settlements with seeds. These women were required, in exchange, to sow the seeds, and the senate would monitor the future harvesting processes. This motion was based on social parameters — including gender roles[28] — wherein African women were responsible for cultivation. The traders were likely aware of these gendered practices, noting that African women worked on 'their little husbandry, and [did] all [of the] laborious work.'[29] The council made labour like farming and animal husbandry mandatory for those wishing to remain at Port Natal. Should certain community members have disapproved of these terms, they were allowed to revoke their adherence to Port Natal and leave after obtaining the council's consent.[30]

The council also approved capital punishment, particularly for concealing or carrying poisonous roots within the settlement. By the early 1830s, noxious plants were banned entirely from the

[26] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 106.
[27] See Fynn's evidence in the 1852 Commission in: James Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission, Vol. 1: Appointed to Inquire Into the Past and Present State of the Kafir in the District of Natal, and to Report Upon Their Future Government, and to Suggest Suci Arrangements As Will Tend to Secure the Peace and Welfare Of* (Fb&c Limited, 2017).
[28] See Cherryl Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (New Africa Books, 1990).
[29] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 182.
[30] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 82.

Port Natal homesteads, and only elephant hunters were exempt. Death for poisoning was, according to Fynn, a well-established law within the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region.[31] The death penalty also applied in cases of murder, witchcraft, treason, rape, and injuring cattle.[32] Alongside capital punishment, the traders continued using existing indigenous laws to which their followers were accustomed. There were lighter sentences — such as fines — for crimes including arson, adultery, theft, maiming, and bearing false witness.[33]

Isaacs documented five hearings during his time in Natal. The first case highlights the significance of supernatural elements in crimes, investigations and hearings. Isaacs described 'Umtondese's' — an adherent chief — involvement in an accidental gunpowder explosion that killed a boy.[34] The council concluded that 'the fatal affair was caused by the "*Issetuter"* [sic] or Spirits.'[35] In other cases, the council used supernatural practitioners or *izinyanga* to 'smell out' criminals.[36] In one case, the *inyanga* made false accusations, and an innocent individual who had been wrongly accused was almost put to death. In response, the senate agreed to sentence the *inyanga* to death.[37] Isaacs allegedly tried to downplay the undisputed use of *izinyanga* to solve crimes. He mentioned that he exposed an *inyanga's* alleged deceitful and extortionist methods, and Isaacs' people sought to punish the *inyanga.* The *inyanga,* however, escaped and faced no trial.

Isaacs used this commotion to de-emphasise the role of witchcraft in general sickness, stating that the traders 'were the proper persons to whom they ought to apply for relief and that in future, we commanded them not to entertain so absurd an idea as that of the power of witchcraft.'[38] Isaacs likely attempted to show his European and colonial readers that he and possibly the other traders did not condone African 'superstitions' and challenged them at times. Their distaste for *izinyanga,* however, had little impact on their followers' beliefs. Isaacs' writing

[31] "Evidence of H. F. Fynn 1852 Commission," *Natal Mercury*, April 14, 1853, Fynn Family Papers File 8, Killie Campbell Manuscripts: 21.
[32] "Evidence of H. F. Fynn 1852 Commission," 21.
[33] "Evidence of H. F. Fynn 1852 Commission," 21.
[34] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 103.
[35] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,'*106.
[36] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 111.
[37] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 111.
[38] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 175.

— highlighting the traders' *Britishness* — starkly contrasted the prevalent missionary gossip that accused traders of adopting native practices.

In one case where a woman was found with noxious roots, Isaacs wrote that his and Fynn's attempts to prove her innocence failed. He attributed violent sentences to the council, writing that he and Fynn 'were obliged to acquiesce in the sentence pronounced by the senators — death — our laws making any attempt to poison a capital offence.'[39] In a similar case, the senate assembled to hear the case of a man who had poisoned children 'under the pretension of curing them.'[40] The chiefs that apprehended the culprit 'anticipated his sentence [which would have been death], and at once put it into execution.'[41] In blaming the more violent sentences and outcomes on the African laws in the 'senate,' Isaacs protected himself and the other traders from British censure.

Social Dynamics and Chiefly Limits at Port Natal

While the cases are fraught with Isaacs' bias and agendas, some crucial points can be drawn from them. The establishment of a shared loose system of order and punishment shows that there was some level of norm-creation happening at Port Natal. These laws — mandatory for people living in Port Natal — developed a social boundary that could differentiate between insiders and outsiders. To be a part of the emerging community at Port Natal, one had to behave and treat others according to the council's laws. These rules, in turn, created a sense of belonging as the people living in Natal would have followed them collectively.

Isaacs' accounts reveal nuances in the British traders' chiefly powers and rights, perhaps showing that they were limited to the confines of *ukukhonza*. Just because they were allegedly chiefs over these aggregations did not mean they could enforce British ideologies onto them. Gossip regarding the lack of Christianity at Port Natal and the traders' use of African laws reveal the limitations of their chiefly status. The lack of Christian teachings and the adoption of African order processes shows that the British traders could not change the adherents. Based on the

[39] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 164-165.
[40] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 110-111.
[41] Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa,* 110-111.

available evidence, the traders were not particularly interested in converting and 'civilising' their following. Adopting and living by existing African customs made more sense to the traders mainly because they validated their leadership. The traders likely understood that British law and Christianity held little value at Port Natal. Enforcing stringent change and alien ideologies would have likely ended in attrition, and, as the previous chapter has shown, the traders' survival depended on having a following.

These elements point to the nuances in the developing social dynamics at Port Natal at the time. While the traders did rule over the aggregations as chiefs, their chiefly powers only worked within the confines of African practices and beliefs, namely *ukukhonza*. The traders were not ruling over an amorphous and agentless mass of people. On the contrary, they had to incentivise their followers to live under them. The traders had to navigate the political terrain carefully, accepting existing African ideologies and practices. The traders' capacity to ensure economic and social stability was thus conditional.

Conclusion

Between 1828 and 1835, the population of Port Natal continued to grow. As such, the people living there had to develop some form of cooperative and organised living to ensure their social and economic security. The available external and internal sources — the gossip and Isaacs' accounts, respectively — clarify how the people living at Port Natal forged new connections, bridged some social and linguistic gaps and established social boundaries. These developing connections at Port Natal gave rise to instances of European missionary gossip. A deeper analysis of the gossip shows how different people living in Port Natal practised a degree of social and political openness and that this fluidity was crucial to their ability to forge connections amongst themselves. European onlookers such as these missionaries could not make sense of the social dynamism and flexibility at Port Natal, often interpreting it as an abomination or affront to the so-called natural order of things. This was the onset of ambiguity and paradox in European — and later colonial — descriptions of the communities at Port Natal.

This political and social openness was also crucial for establishing ordered living at Port Natal. The formation of what Isaacs called a 'senate' reveals the onset of norm-creation processes at

Port Natal. By encouraging specific ways of living, the people of Port Natal were essentially refining a sense of community, defining who were insiders or outsiders. African agency, importantly, played a significant role in these processes as many of the laws adopted at Port Natal already existed in African communities. Establishing conditions for inclusion and exclusion shows how the people of Port Natal were creating a sense of groupness and collectivity. These processes of norm creation also reveal the nature and confines of the traders' leadership. The traders did not have the power to enforce their ideology and worldview onto their followers. While the traders were indeed chiefs, they could not shift various existing social praxis. Attempting to implement colonial ideologies would have been to their detriment, given that it could end in attrition and a loss of labour power and agricultural security. Instead, they left African beliefs and practices alone, allowing their societies to function according to these laws. Ultimately, their chief powers were confined to the agreement of *ukukhonza.*

Despite these sources coming from different perspectives – the gossip being more harmful in its intent – reading them against the grain reveals the processes of connection and belonging at Port Natal. The people at Port Natal adopted parts of one another's material culture, practices of order and punishment, and languages. The chapter shows how collectiveness and groupness are not something people always *have* but instead something they *do.* The aggregations at Port Natal were actively involved in developing and forging connections, collectiveness and groupness. These processes set specific social parameters, defining belonging and outsiderness. Throughout this period, the people at Port Natal — the traders and the African aggregations — were actively closing the sociocultural barriers between them, as doing so was crucial to their survival.

CHAPTER THREE

'Izinkumbi:' Tension, Conflict and Grouping Processes 1835 - 1838

Introduction

In the late 1830s, political uncertainty surfaced between Port Natal and the Zulu Kingdom. Dingane was increasingly concerned with the British traders accepting people who left the Zulu Kingdom at Port Natal. He initially sought peaceful resolutions but to no avail. Tensions only worsened near the decade's end when the Voortrekkers sought to purchase Natal from Dingane. After Dingane killed the Voortrekker commander Piet Retief and his followers, circumstances quickly deteriorated, and war between Dingane and the trekkers and British traders broke out. The British traders headed several forces against Dingane between 1837 and 1838. One force in particular — Frank Fynn's followers — stood out above the rest as they marched into battle carrying a flag marked 'Izinkumbi.' This is the first known account of when the grouping under Frank Fynn became known as 'Izinkumbi.'

Chapter three explores how the traders and their adherents' responded to the deteriorating political climate encouraged 'entification' or grouping processes leading to the Izinkumbi's emergence. The chapter analyses two eyewitness accounts — Rev. Francis Owen and Mr Hewetson — of the force calling itself 'Izinkumbi.' The accounts reveal how these adherents used various discursive tools and technologies — such as material symbols and collective memory — to increase their sense of groupness. It also shows how the grouping boosted their collectiveness for outsiders or onlookers — their entitativity — using various material and immaterial elements. Izinkumbi was thus the process and outcome of the grouping's joint efforts to organise their shared pasts, present and desires.

Heightening Tensions between Dingane and Port Natal

By the mid-1830s, the British traders received more people who had left the Zulu Kingdom. Although Dingane was seemingly unresponsive or unconcerned regarding these movements at first, he began seeking ways to quell what he considered as attrition from his kingdom. With

diplomacy in mind, Dingane requested that the traders turn new 'deserters' away.[1] Allen Gardiner played a significant part in dealing with Dingane's anxieties around attrition and desertion. In the same year of his arrival, 1835, Gardiner signed a treaty with Dingane on behalf of the British residents to ease the Zulu king's anxieties. The agreement specified that Dingane agreed that those who left the Zulu Kingdom 'who are now at Port Natal may remain and shall never be called to on account for having deserted provided [the traders] send back those who leave me in future.' [2]

Thus, from the end of 1835, the Natal traders were not to accept any more adherents who left the Zulu Kingdom. Yet, the traders were noncompliant and continued receiving more followers. In 1837, the Cape Government made Captain Gardiner British Resident in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region, giving him magisterial power over the British traders of Port Natal.[3] Several traders — including Biggar, Cane and Ogle — protested and refused to recognise his authority. Gardiner was powerless against the traders and 'had no way of enforcing any action he might take' against them.[4] The traders' continued disregard for Dingane's requests kindled rumours of imminent Zulu attacks on Port Natal. These rumours were so frequent that the British traders began to 'regard the matter as a casualty to which they had often been exposed [and would] take to the "bush", should the necessity arise.'[5] Gardiner remarked on these apprehensive living strategies, writing that:

> On account of the frequent threats of Dingarn to send down and reclaim his runaways, the open country was considered as unsafe, and every village and hut carefully concealed among the woods with so much ingenuity and labour, that in threading the narrow and winding avenues leading to some of these jungle fastnesses, I have often fancied I was approaching the dismal abode of some desperate buccaneer. Although widely scattered, the native population in the immediate vicinity may be estimated at 2500, among whom about thirty Europeans and a few Hottentots are residing […].[6]

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[1] "A Letter from Gardiner."
[2] "A Letter from Gardiner."
[3] *A Treaty concluded between Dingaan, King of the Zoolus and the British Residents at Port Natal* in John Centlivres Chase, *The Natal Papers: A Reprint of All Notices and Public Documents Connected with That Territory Including a Description of the Country and a History of Events from 1498-1843, in Two Parts (Part 1).* (R. Godlonton, 1843): 40.
[4] To the editor of the Graham's Town Journal in John Centlivres Chase, *The Natal Papers: A Reprint of All Notices and Public Documents Connected with That Territory Including a Description of the Country and a History of Events from 1498-1843, in Two Parts (Part 1).* (R. Godlonton, 1843): 98.
[5] Allen Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country, in South Africa* (London: William Crofts, 1836): 82.
[6] Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey,* 83-86.

With little to no trader co-operation, Dingane sought aid from the Cape Government. In a letter to the 'King of England' by the British interpreter Thomas Verity, Dingane allegedly requested that the traders be 'called back to their own country.'[7] He also desired:

> A chief to be sent to Port Natal to pursue peace and to see that [his] people do not go down there, and to tell them that they are not to remain there. If this is done the white people who are there now may all stop, but if this is not done I should wish them to be removed. Captn Gardiner is the chief you have sent to Port Natal, but he says that he has no power to send my people back who desert from me […]. If my people who desert to Port Natal are sent away and not permitted to remain there, I shall be satisfied. This is what I ask — All the ground on which the white people live about Port Natal I give to the King of England — I give them the whole country between the Umgani River and the territory occupied by Faku and Napai, from the sea coast to the Quathlamba mountains […].[8]

Dingane's requests bore no results as the traders continued taking in enemies of the Zulu Kingdom. Later, in 1837, Dingane attacked the Qadi, and several survivors made their way to the Port Natal traders, who accommodated them.[9] In response, Dingane outlawed all exchanges with Port Natal.[10] With this, the traders feared a Zulu invasion of Port Natal was imminent and began building a defensive fort.[11] However, they demobilised after Dingane clarified that he had no intention of invading.[12] The calm that followed, however, was short-lived.

Meanwhile, in the Cape Colony in 1836, tension between the Boer settlers and British colonial government had reached a head. Most Boers opted to desert the Cape Colony — as Voortrekkers — and establish their own republics more inland, potentially in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region. The arrival of the trekkers — under Piet Retief and Andries Pretorious — in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region in 1837 added to the precarious political atmosphere between the traders and Dingane. The traders were both open to and against the trekker's presence. On the one hand, the trekker presence could potentially end the 'economic and political control of Dingane'[13] and

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[7] Cession of Natal Territory to the King of England, 21 June 1837 in G. W. Eybers, *Select Constitutional Documents Illustrating South African History, 1795-1910* (G.Routledge & sons, limited, 1918): 149.
[8] Cession of Natal Territory to the King of England.
[9] Felix N. C. Okoye, "Dingane: A Reappraisal," *The Journal of African History* 10, no. 2 (April 1969): 223.
[10] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 2, 82-83.
[11] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 4, 33.
[12] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 4, 33.
[13] Charles Ballard, "Traders, Trekkers and Colonists," in *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910: A New History*, ed. Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest (University of Natal Press, 1989): 121.

offer security against 'any attack of the Zulu nation.' [14] However, trader independence was now at stake as the Boers saw the traders as their subjects. According to Henry Fynn, they 'publicly expressed the old[…], might is right, you few English here must submit to us the more powerful.'[15] Before proceeding to Dingane, Retief met with the 53 English traders at the Port, allowing them to select 12,000 acres of land but insisted that they would fall under the trekkers' government.[16] Nevertheless, the English — for the most part — agreed to aid the Boers and escorted a Boer party to Dingane.

In his meeting with Dingane, Retief requested to purchase the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region. Dingane agreed to sell him the land if Retief and his party retrieved stolen cattle. Rev. Owen warned the trekkers of Dingane's reservedness towards selling the land, stating that Dingane 'knew that they desired Port Natal, but he did not intend to give it to them.'[17] Once Retief and his party returned to Dingane in early 1838, having recovered the stolen cattle, Dingane ordered their execution. Two British traders, Thomas Halstead and George Biggar, were also killed in this event. Another trader, William Wood, and Reverend Owen witnessed the attack and were informed by a messenger that Dingane considered the Boers to be *tagathi* and thus sentenced them to death.[18]

Immediately after the traders learned of the events at Dingane's place, they 'decided that open war […] was preferable to risking the murderous treachery of the Zoolu chief, to which all around were hourly exposed.'[19] The traders communicated their 'determination and readiness' to join the Boers in the battle against the Zulus.[20] According to Alexander Biggar, the trader

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[14] Henry Francis Fynn, "Henry Fynn's Lecture: The Boers Migrate from Cape Colony to Natal" (n.d.), Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[15] Fynn, "The Boers Migrate."
[16] Her Majesty's Commissioner in Natal in John Bird, *The Annals of Natal: 1495 to 1845* (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 370.
[17] Francis Owen, *The Diary of the Rev. Francis Owen: M. A., Missionary with Dingaan in 1837-38* (Van Riebeeck society, 1926): 65.
[18] William Wood, "Statements Respecting Dingane: With Some Particulars Relating to the Massacres of Messrs. Retief and Biggar.," in *The Annals of Natal: 1495 to 1845*, ed. John Bird (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 382.
[19] "Dreadful Massacre of the Emigrant Farmers," *Grahamstown Journal*, March 8, 1838: 4. See also Bird, *The Annals of Natal,* 383.
[20] "Dreadful Massacre," 4.

forces did not intend 'to join' the Boers 'but co-operate with them,'[21] attesting to the idea that the British were not necessarily accepting of the Boer presence but supported it to rid the area of Dingane. According to Toohey, Biggar fought to avenge his son, George, under the guise of assisting the Boers 'in the hopes that they [the British traders] would be allowed the first turn at plundering the ivory' at Dingane's capital.[22]

The Port Natal Communities Attack: Groupness, Entitativity and War

The British traders quickly rallied forces and initiated several smaller military campaigns against Dingane in 1838. The traders' adherents were seemingly very willing to participate in this war. According to a trader called William Wood, resistance was the most viable option for the adherents as they 'knew what awaited them if they should fall into Dingane's hands.'[23] Bearing that this was likely trader propaganda, many adherents stood their ground when they could have left, as per the practice of *ukukhonza*.

John Cane, Frank Fynn and Henry Ogle headed the first excursion against the Zulus in March 1838. John Cane headed another force roughly 2100 strong, including 450 of his adherents and 600 of Fodo's followers. Cane's force successfully raided a subordinate Zulu settlement, returning at the end of March with between 4000 and 7000 cattle and 500 women and children 'as wives and labourers.'[24] His second expedition, however, suffered a decisive defeat at the Battle of Ndondakusuka that same month.[25] Toohey was allegedly told — although by whom is not clear — that Ogle and his party abandoned Cane, allowing the Zulu forces to rush in and 'deal death.'[26]

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[21] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 4, 34 from Port Natal in John Centlivres Chase, *The Natal Papers: A Reprint of All Notices and Public Documents Connected with That Territory Including a Description of the Country and a History of Events from 1498-1843, in Two Parts (Part 1).* (R. Godlonton, 1843): 99; 124-125.
[22] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 4, 34 from James Stuart, *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples* vol. 2 (University of Natal Press, 1976): 419-424.
[23] William Wood, "Statements Respecting Dingane," 383.
[24] Ballard, "Traders, Trekkers," 121. See also Bird, *The Annals of Natal,* 384; Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 4, 34.
[25] "Extract of a Letter from Mr. F. Fynn to Mr. W. M. Fynn," *Grahamstown Journal*, May 17, 1838: 4.
[26] R.J. Garden, "The Boers Take Natal" (1852), A1157 Garden Papers vol.2, NAB: 666.

Throughout these skirmishes, Frank Fynn's force stands out. Frank Fynn headed a separate force of 2700 people, including men belonging to 'Donzella,' Dumisa, 'and all that the white residents could muster.[27] There are at least two existing eye-witness accounts of the events involving Frank Fynn's forces: that of Rev. Francis Owen and Mr. Hewetson, who travelled through the Natal region in 1838. According to Reverend Owen:

> On our way we met a large troop of native warriors headed by a white man, some with guns, others with spears. The word "izinkumbi," locusts, was marked on the flag, and as they moved forward they sung a war song to the following effect: "The Wild beast (Dingarn) has driven us from our homes, but we will catch him."[28]

Mr. Hewetson wrote:

> I fell in with a strange set of warriors. About four hundred Zulus came bellowing a war-song. It sounded exactly like the noise of angry bulls. No one could mistake its meaning; its tone was that of gloomy revenge. The words in English were: 'The wild beast has driven us from our homes; but we will catch him.' They were headed by a white man, who had an old straw hat on, with an ostrich feather stuck in it. He had on his shoulder an elephant gun, covered with a panther's skin, and walked quite at ease at the head of his party, who went on with this dismal song, except that occasionally they all whistled the Zulu charge. They had flags flying, on one of which was written 'Izinkumbi' (or the locust); on another, 'For justice we fight.' They did not fatigue themselves with jumping or shouting; but the monotonous howl could be heard from at least two miles. In front they drove the cattle for slaughter; in rear, the degraded wives carried Indian corn, pumpkins, &c., all of which passed so quickly by me that it seemed a frightful dream.[29]

Owen and Hewetson's narratives are the first known recorded accounts mentioning that Frank Fynn's followers banded under the collective name 'Izinkumbi' or 'locusts.' It is uncertain as to why the adherents elected this name as there are no known or surviving testimonies that explain it. Curiously, 'Izinkumbi' is a noun-class word with the prefix *izi* and not a people-class word that would instead have the prefix of *ama.* It is difficult to say why this is the case. It may have something to do with the mixed nature of the group as it comprised a combination of several *ama* groups such as the amaQwabe, amaThuli and amaCele. Using a noun class word to name this collection of *ama* groups simultaneously highlighted their connections to each other and their existing *ama* connections.

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[27] Account of Toohey in R.J. Garden, "The Boers Take Natal" (1852), A1157 Garden Papers vol.2, NAB: 664.
[28] Francis Owen, *The Diary of the Rev. Francis Owen: M. A., Missionary with Dingaan in 1837-38* (Van Riebeeck society, 1926): 126.
[29] Hewetson, "From Mr. Hewetson's Journal, 1838," in *The Annals of Natal: 1495 to 1845*, ed. John Bird (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 354-355.

While locusts likely carried negative connotations within African communities in the region, given that they could damage fields of crops, the very scant availability of folklore about locusts makes it challenging to say for sure. Some studies may help understand the cultural relationship between the local people and locusts. A *Natal Witness* article from 1850 mentioned that locust swarms had 'never been heard of' after colonisation in 1843.[30] Yet, one should not conclude that swarms *never* happened the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region. Although most locust outbreaks in South Africa are known to occur in the Karoo and its immediate surroundings, historical studies into pest control have shown that the Thukela-Mzimkhulu area experienced locust swarms.[31]

How, then, did local populations experience and relate to the locust? In the 1830s, Thomas Pringle described the locust swarms of South Africa, stating that they were 'often seen in such numbers as to obscure the sky when they [were] passing' and could 'destroy luxuriant fields of corn in a few hours.'[32] Pringle also spoke to a 'Bushman' — although he wrote his interlocutor's testimony in a poem — who mentioned that 'mighty nations dread[ed]' the 'wasting locusts.'[33] In some cases, locusts were used as metaphors to dehumanise opponents and enemies during conflict. In the early nineteenth century, a Xhosa prophet, Makhanda or Nxele, called for war with Grahamstown.[34] Pringle produced a copy of Makhanda's words, which compared colonists to locusts:

> Remember how the spoiler's host
> Did through our land like locusts range!
> Your herds, your wives, your comrades lost.[35]

It is possible that the Thukela-Mzimkhulu people's stance on the locust was similar. A recent study on the cultural significance of locusts in sub-Saharan Africa refers to an 'old article' of Pringle's — which I, unfortunately, can only find through a secondary source — explains that

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[30] "Immigration," *Natal Witness*, June 7, 1850.
[31] R.E. Price and H.D. Brown, "A Century of Locust Control in South Africa," in *Research Priorities for Migrant Pests in Southern Africa*, ed. R.A. Cheke, L.J. Rosenberg, and M.E. Kieser (The University of Greenwich, n.d.), 37–49.
[32] Pringle, *African Sketches* (London: Edward Moxon, 1834): 354.
[33] Pringle, *African Sketches*, 15.
[34] See Janet Hodgson, "A Study of the Xhosa Prophet Nxele (Part 1)," *Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa* 6, no. 2 (1985).
[35] Pringle, *African Sketches*, 53.

the amaZulu believed that locust swarms were sent 'by Gods and spirits' and that 'offers to the spirits should be made to get rid of them.'[36] The source suggests that locusts were a supernatural punishment requiring ritualistic measures to get rid of them.

Based on these various records, it seems that locusts were considered pests because of the destruction that came with them. Why would the aggregation under Frank Fynn associate themselves with something so negative? No known historical accounts explain why they chose 'Izinkumbi' as their name. When I asked an anonymous Izinkumbi descendant why they thought their ancestors chose this as their name, they responded, 'because there are so many of us.'[37] It is certainly possible that the aggregation referred to its size and strength in numbers. In smaller numbers, locusts were insignificant, but their masses could 'obscure' the sky and devastate farming communities. 'Izinkumbi' could have also highlighted the group's spontaneity and the adherents' ability to organise swiftly and band together as if out of nowhere, despite maintaining connections to various *ama* groupings. The name Izinkumbi was also likely a threat to farming communities and societies like the Zulu Kingdom, as locusts would destroy a significant portion of their food and economy. While the coming together under 'Izinkumbi' appeared suddenly, the name stood the test of time. It is still in use today, more than a century after it first appeared on the flag in 1838. Several crucial elements within this moment of conflict contributed to the emerging sense of belonging and collectiveness of 'Izinkumbi.' These will now be discussed in detail.

Singing Songs and Flying Flags: Increasing a Sense of Collectivity and Entitativity

Hewetson and Owen's encounter with the Izinkumbi was initially an aural experience; both men heard the force from several 'miles' away before seeing it as the force sang or chanted a war song. Hewetson and Owen translated the lyrics of the song as the following:

[36] Arnold van Huis, "Cultural Significance of Locusts, Grasshoppers, and Crickets in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine* 18, no. 24 (2022), 12.
[37] Conversation with anonymous Fynn descendant, 2020.

> The Wild beast has driven us from our homes, but we will catch him.[38]

Interestingly, another trader force sang a similar song, or possibly the same song with an alternate translation. A separate force led by Robert Biggar, comprising '30 Europeans, a few Hottentots, and fifteen hundred Zulus.'[39]

> We are going to kill the elephant who killed our forefathers, fathers, mothers, wives, and children, and eat his cattle. And if we catch him, we will cut him in pieces.[40]

It is possible that these were the same song, with variations in the different onlookers' understandings and translations. Therefore, the discussion will refer to both versions of the song. War songs are performances comprising physical components such as singing, moving, clapping, and metaphysical elements and the messages the physical performance and the lyrics deliver. These songs are more than mere performances, however, as they are essential to grouping processes. War songs are a way for performers, like the Izinkumbi, to manifest themselves, share their concerns towards their place in society and express their relationship to those around them. We should thus consider war songs as what Ogonna Ana calls 'badges of identity'[41] or elements in the much larger and ongoing processes of grouping.

Although specific mechanical aspects of the Izinkumbi's war song — tempo, rhythm, movement and style — are unascertainable, Hewetson and Owen's descriptions reveal enough about other vital elements. First is the actual sound of the performance, which can be found in Hewetson's account. In stating that the forces were 'bellowing' out the lyrics and comparing them to 'angry bulls,' we can assume that the commandos sang loudly and angrily. They had no intention of being stealthy and instead sought to present themselves as an organised collective to be reckoned with. That all witnesses could make out the lyrics and hear them from at least '2 miles'[42] away suggests that the parties also delivered a synchronised and orderly performance; they moved and

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[38] Hewetson, "From Mr. Hewetson's Journal, 1838," in *The Annals of Natal: 1495 to 1845*, ed. John Bird (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 355.
[39] William Wood, "Statements Respecting Dingane," 383.
[40] William Wood, "Statements Respecting Dingane," 384.
[41] Ogonna Agu, "Songs and War: The Mixed Messages of Biafran War Songs," *African Languages and Cultures* 4, no. 1 (2007): 8.
[42] Journal of the Rev. Francis Owen in Bird, *The Annals of Natal,* 354-355.

acted as a collective that others would hear before they saw. They wanted their collective and organised presence to be heard and known.

The lyrics have several vital components contributing to a sense of belonging in the Izinkumbi. The first is that the song created a clear divide between *us* and *them.* The former constituted those on the march singing the song. The latter was that which caused the singers suffering, an entity that drove them out and killed their families. Interestingly, both songs represent the antagonist as either a 'wild beast' or 'elephant.' 'Elephant' and 'wild beast' — *Ndlovu* and *Silwane* respectively — were honorifics that connoted kingly potency.[43] The songs were metonyms for Dingane and the Zulu Kingdom. The songs created a visual and metaphoric polarity between the singers and their powerful adversary, creating us and the imagery. In delineating the antagonists and protagonists, war songs 'conscientise the fighting forces, to confirm them in their sense of identity.'[44] Already, having a shared adversary served as the foundation of the Izinkumbi connection.

Importantly, the songs told a story and developed a shared narrative for the group. The past is a major focus of the songs, as they express a difficult history in which the singers' ancestors were killed and forced to move. Links to the past are a key element in war songs, as they grant the songs a certain credibility and emphasise continuity, allowing them to become a 'strong armour of resistance.'[45] The Izinkumbi sang about being 'driven' out from their 'home,' and Biggar's commando sang about how the Zulu Kingdom had killed their 'forefathers, fathers, mothers, wives, and children.' The lyrics show that the adherents had shared memories and experiences despite their different backgrounds. While some adherents experienced these events firsthand, others possibly learned of them through oral history. Therefore, the stories in these songs can be considered cases of collective memory.

[43] See Bevelyn Dube, "Representing the Past in the Present: The Timelessness of the Ndebele Royal Praises," in *Zimbabwean Transitions: Essays on Zimbabwean Literature in English, Ndebele and Shona*, ed. Mbongeni Malaba and Geoffrey Davis (Amsterdam & Newyork: Matatu, 2007), 39–51.
[44] Agu, "Songs and War," 9.
[45] Agu, "Songs and War," 5.

While collective memories comprise people remembering the same or similar past events, they also tell how people made sense of their present.[46] Collective memory is a valuable discursive tool in politically and socially turbulent situations, as specific people — particularly oppressed people — can harness these ways of remembering to kindle collective resistance.[47] In the now turbulent Port Natal setting, collective memory functioned as a social adhesive, helping to create a sense of collectivity among the disparate adherents. In referencing a traumatic past which they attributed to the Zulu King, the songs justified the adherents' shared conflict with the Zulu Kingdom. They showed that the same threat from the past lived on in their present and that they wished to address it together.

The collective memories expressed in the songs recalled the hardships the Zulu Kingdom inflicted on the adherents during its expansionist campaigns, which was covered in Chapter One. In time, those who settled in the Port Natal region under the traders would have shared their stories, forming a metanarrative about their past encounters with the Zulu Kingdom. The second song could be considered a mythicised version of the narrative as the singers claimed they lost virtually *all* their people to the Zulu Kingdom. Collective memories, indeed, often take on mythic qualities like this.[48] This is not to say that the songs were fabricating reality. Instead, they were simply *ways of remembering* or positioning oneself within the present. A mythicised version of the past would better strengthen present connections. The war songs reflect how this group acted in unison when Hewetson and Owen witnessed them. But they also show how their groupness was a complex and timely process in which people came together and found ways to remember their past.

Aside from the war songs, the force had specific material items that showed groupness, which Hewetson and Owen described. Both mentioned the groups' use of two flags, one marked 'for justice we fight' and the other marked 'Izinkumbi.' The flag's presence would have created the idea of a form of conjoined groupness or a tangible entity. However, the flag and its concepts

[46] Paul Thompson and Joanna Bornat, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 2017): 198-207.
[47] Bill Nasson, "Abraham Esau's War, 1899-1901: Martyrdom, Myth and Folk Memory in Calvinia, South Africa," in *The Myths We Live By*, ed. Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (Routledge, 1990)
[48] See Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, "Introduction," in *The Myths We Live By*, ed. Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (Routledge, 1990).

were part of the traders' discourse, as flags were not a prevalent expression among Africans in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region and surrounding regions. In the context of precolonial Natal in 1838, the flag would have been perceived and received in a specific way. During this time, African inhabitants in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu, including the adherents, neither used flags nor could read English. Using two marked flags seems fruitless if one interpreted their use as a method to announce, 'We are the Izinkumbi who want justice.' The situation requires careful reading.

While the use of flags was largely absent from Natal at the time, those who had communicated, traded, and fought alongside the British trader groups between 1824 and 1838 had likely become familiar with the *concept* of flags. The British traders hoisted an English flag at Port Natal over a decade prior and possibly used it when fighting in Shaka and Dingane's wars. Furthermore, the Africans in the Natal region would have been familiar with representational symbols. For example, the Zulu army had a symbolic identification and unity system — via shields, furs and feathers.[49] Thus, although outgroups and enemies could not read 'Izinkumbi' or 'For Justice we Fight,' the very presence of a flag — the material thing itself — represented some collective alignment.

Bolstering Collectivity

The case above shows that collectivity and groupness were boosted using specific discursive tools. But to what degree were Africans and the traders in charge of these processes? The trader and missionary accounts contain elements of propaganda and Eurocentricity, respectively. A surface reading of this event would be that the traders formed a loyal force they named Izikumbi and that this force was ready to die in battle for their cause. Yet, the case is more complex, and several points require attention.

First, the adherents chose to stay with the traders during the conflict with Dingane. As the first chapter has shown, movement and mobility were a usual part of the political landscape and could be used to avoid conflict and war. In this case, the adherents used their political flexibility to mobilise and shape connections that could deal with and address the conflict between Port Natal

[49] Ian Knight, *The Anatomy of the Zulu Army: From Shaka to Cetshwayo, 1818–1879* (Frontline Books, 2015): 33.

and Dingane. Second, is blending British and African collective metaphors, using an *isiZulu* word on a flag. This synthesis reveals *how* the traders and adherents represented the unfolding grouping to themselves and the outside world. Whether 'Izinkumbi' was chosen by or imposed on the grouping is uncertain. However, the grouping's maintenance of the name for well over a century [see following chapters] suggests that the adherents had a hand in — or at least appropriated — the name choice to represent their grouping. These two points, combined with the presence of war songs relaying collective memories, motives and agendas, show that the adherents — alongside the traders — had agency over processes of groupness. To both the Izinkumbi and the Zulu forces they would have encountered, the flag and war songs demonstrated that this force, although comprising different people — from various *ama* groupings — shared certain beliefs, goals and ideals, which they banded together under the name Izinkumbi.

Conclusion

The emergence of the Izinkumbi in the late 1830s was by no means instantaneous. It was a process unfolding in and around Port Natal for at least two decades. With the complete corrosion of their relationship with Dingane in 1838, the Port Natal traders and their adherents looked for ways to organise and reinforce themselves. Reifying their groupness was vital to their survival. This included increasing outsiders' perceptions of their groupness, otherwise known as their entitativity. Political and social fluidity were central to this process as these people adopted different material items and symbols to blend their various *ama* groupings under one name. Frank Fynn's forces openly displayed their groupness and collectivity on a march to war under an 'Izinkumbi' flag.

The grouping, now called the Izinkumbi, used various discursive tools, including flags, war songs and collective memory, to increase their collectivity and entitativity, drawing a line between their 'us' and the Zulu Kingdom's 'them.' They banded together and sang songs about their shared pasts. The songs and flags were tools of inclusion and exclusion, creating a sense of groupness while marking outsiders. They combined African and European materials and practices to boost their groupness. On the one hand, the adherents sang in *isiZulu* and used

African metaphors and symbolism; on the other hand, they used flags. These adherents combined their shared sense of loss and trauma, history, and agendas under one title, ‘Izinkumbi.’ The emergence of the ‘Izinkumbi’ grouping highlights the political fluidity of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region as various *ama* groupings joined together in a new collective without dissolving their extant ties and connections to other groups.

Part 2. Strategic Politics and Categorical Confusion: Navigating the Emerging Tribalscape of Colonial Natal, 1839 - 1862

CHAPTER FOUR

The Izinkumbi in the Unfolding Tribalscape: Ambiguity and Strategic Cooperation 1839 - 1852

Introduction

Chapter Four focuses on the emergence of the British colony of Natal — spanning the coast from the Thukela to the Mzimkhulu Rivers and inland to the Kahlamba mountains — in 1843. It explores how the Izinkumbi navigated the emerging colonial landscape, native locations, the Hut Tax and *isibhalo* or mandatory labour. At the start of this period, Izinkumbi politics had undergone significant shifts as they gained a new chief, Vundhlase, and relocated to the space between the Mkhomazi and Mzimkhulu Rivers, or southern Natal. Between 1843 and 1852, the Izinkumbi practised what can be called strategic cooperation, simultaneously avoiding and complying with the emerging colonial administration. While they paid the Hut Tax and aided in colonial warfare, they also avoided *isibhalo* for the most part and maintained their economic independence. Vundhlase's strategic cooperation with the colonial government was enough to prevent both deposition and attrition, demonstrating her ability to navigate internal and external politics.

The chapter also examines how the Izinkumbi fit into the unfolding colonial discourse. The new colonial administration introduced several measures to organise the African population and mould Natal into a tribalscape. The Izinkumbi were drawn into these early administrative processes. The colonial administration's confusion of Natal's political fluidity for devastation and emptiness fueled misrepresentations of the Izinkumbi as unusual. This was the beginning so a series of paradoxical and confused administrative attempts to arrange and make sense of the Izinkumbi.

The Boer Republic 1838-1842: A Brief Overview

In December 1838, the Boers defeated Dingane in the battle of Ncome River. Dingane's half-brother, Mpande, took advantage of Dingane's defeat and – in alliance with the Boers under Andries Pretorious – rebelled against Dingane at the beginning of 1840.[1] Mpande took over the Zulu Kingdom, allowing the trekkers to establish the Boer Republic of Natalia,[2] located between the Thukela and the Mzimvubu rivers from the coast and the Kahlamba mountains.[3] By 1841, the Boer government — Volksraad — founded the town of Pietermaritzburg.[4] Between 1839 and 1842, an estimated 60,000 trekkers settled in Natal under the first trekker government.[5] The Volksraad was highly concerned with land partitioning and management, and one of the first acts of the Republican Government was to grant land to its citizens according to the traditional Cape Dutch fashion.

The Republic Government soon faced the growing African population in Natal. Dingane's defeat in 1839 induced the onset of mass migrations—or returns—of various African communities—including groups like the Qwabe, Cele, Mbatha, Ngwane, and Thembu—into Natal.[6] The Volksraad reduced many of these Africans to illegal occupants or squatters, stating that Africans:

> With the exception of a few, who lived at Natal, had no right or claim to any part of the country, they having only come amongst us after the emigrants had come hither, with a view of being protected by us.[7]

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[1] Charles Ballard, "Traders, Trekkers and Colonists," in *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910: A New History*, ed. Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest (University of Natal Press, 1989): 122.
[2] Jeremy Martens, "Decentring Shepstone: The Eastern Cape Frontier and the Establishment of Native Administration in Natal, 1842–1849," *South African Historical Journal* 67, no. 2 (April 3, 2015): 185-187.
[3] John Bird, "Proclamation on Natal Limits. February 14, 1840," in *The Annals of Natal: 1495 to 1845* (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 389.
[4] John Bird, ed., "The Rev. J. Archbell to Editor of the Graham's Town Journal. September, 1841.," in *The Annals of Natal: 1495-1845* (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 656.
[5] Ballard, "Traders, Trekkers and Colonists," 123.
[6] Wright, "Making Identities," 201.
[7] John Bird, ed., "Extract from Resolution Taken by the Honourable Volksraad. 2 August, 1841.," in *The Annals of Natal: 1495-1845* (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 644-645.

The Volksraad proposed relocating these Africans en masse to the tract of land between the 'Umtamfuna and Umzimvubu' Rivers.[8] These ideas, however, never came to fruition as the Republic soon came to an end.

During this period, the Izinkumbi appear to have interacted little with the short-lived Boer government, and no known documents mentioning any interactions between them seem to exist. Two factors likely played into the lack of encounters. First, the Izinkumbi moved away from Port Natal. Second, the Volksraad did not have the time nor resources to extend into the regions where the Izinkumbi had settled. By the time the republic was established, the Izinkumbi had moved to more southern parts of the Natal region — the land between the Mtwalume and Mzimvubu Rivers — to avoid any possible retaliatory attacks by the Zulu. Importantly, they were familiar with the southern lands and had some settlements there already. Gardiner had observed one of Frank Fynn's 'villages' in 1835 along the northern side of the Mzimvubu.[9] Frank's son, Tom Fynn, mentioned that Frank had settled at the Mzinto River in the 1830s.[10] When Frank Fynn died between 1838 and 1839, most of the Izinkumbi were likely settled in the Mzinto region.[11] Following Frank's death, the Izinkumbi moved further south to the region between the Mtwalume and Mzimayi Rivers, near the town currently called Hibberdene.[12] They remained here after the establishment of the Natal colony.

The Republic of Natal ended swiftly as the Cape Government was concerned that the Volksraad's aggressive measures against cattle raiders would end in war and exacerbate frontier tensions. In 1841, the Cape dispatched troops to Natal under Captain Smith — a seasoned British military campaigner — as a countermeasure.[13] Smith described the Volksraad's native policy as

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[8] Bird, "Extract from Resolution," 644-645.
[9] Chief Tom Fynn papers in Spencer ed. *British Settlers in Natal,* 221.
[10] Chief Tom Fynn papers, 221.
[11] Chief Tom Fynn papers*,* 222.
[12] Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell," August 1952, Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts. See also Eva Jackson, "Familial Authority, Political Authority and the Life of a Female Chief in Colonial Natal," in *Ekhya: The Politics of Home in KwaZulu-Natal*, ed. Meghan Healy-Clancy and Jackson Hickel (UKZN Press, 2014): 51-52.
[13] John Bird, ed., "Mr. P. H. Zietsman to the Editor of the 'Zuid Afrikaan.' January 5th, 1841.," in *The Annals of Natal: 1495-1845* (P. Davis & Sons, 1888): 622- 624.

'unjust and illegal,' arguing that it would promote 'warfare and bloodshed.'[14] Over the next year, tensions between the Cape Government and the Republic of Natal continued rising. Concerns that the new Volksraad would threaten British trade routes piled onto worries about frontier stability.[15] In the meantime, the Cape merchant class latched onto these anxieties, arguing that British colonisation would end inter-tribal violence, halt the progression of the Boer invasion, and end the Boer-Zulu conflict. In 1842, tensions reached a head in another Natal British-Boer clash at the Battle of Congella. With Grahamstown's aid, the British warded off the Boers. Following this, the Republic of Natal ended, and British annexation occurred.

British Annexation: Defining and Dividing the Natal Landscape and its People

In 1843, Napier announced the annexation of Natal and employed Henry Cloete as Her Majesty's Commissioner. [16] In October 1843, Cloete and King Mpande signed a friendship and cooperation treaty. Following this, the point from the Thukela River mouth to the Buffalo River became the official boundary between the Zulu Kingdom and the newly established Natal colony.[17] In 1844, the Natal colony was declared an autonomous district of the Cape Colony under Commissioner Cloete,[18] and something of a British Colonial Administration was instated in 1845.[19]

African migration quickly became a core part of the developing administrative discourse because of the continuous influx of Africans into Natal. One of the emerging administration's first tasks was to define and divide the landscape among the government, the settlers, and the Africans. Regarding land ownership, Natal's government followed the British notion of land as bounded 'property' to be marked off by boundaries and controlled by 'property rights.'[20] There were also 'Crown Lands' which belonged solely to the Natal government. With the ongoing African influx,

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[14] Quoted in Alan F. Hattersley, *The British Settlement of Natal: A Study in Imperial Migration* (Cambridge University Press, 2009): 60.
[15] Alan F. Hattersley, *The British Settlement of Natal: A Study in Imperial Migration* (Cambridge University Press, 2009): 44.
[16] Jeremy Martens, "Decentring Shepstone," 188.
[17] Treaty Between Henry Cloete, Esq. Her Majesty's Commissioner for Natal and Panda, King of the Zulus, 5 October 1843. In G. W. Eybers ed., *Select Constitutional Documents Illustrating South African History, 1795-1910* (G.Routledge & sons, limited, 1918): 180-181.
[18] Hattersley, *The British Settlement,* 60; Ballard, "Traders, Trekkers and Colonists," 123.
[19] Ballard, "Traders, Trekkers and Colonists," 123.
[20] Kelly, *To Swim with Crocodiles,* xl.

however, it became crucial to define which fragments of land belonged to Africans and colonists. The question, 'What will the government do with the Eighty Thousand Natives now scattered over this extensive colony?' was fundamental to the developing administrative body.[21]

The colonial administration needed to make the immense African population manageable. Between 1846 and 1849, two commissions were tasked with establishing 'locations' that would be 'well defined, and not too distant from the present abodes of the Natives who would be induced to occupy them, and that they afford sufficient space.'[22] During this time, the administration founded seven locations: Zwartkop, Mlazi and Mvoti in 1846[23] and Inanda, Impofana, Kahlamba, and Tugela in 1849.[24] The Izinkumbi did not fall into any of these locations as they lived beyond the southernmost location — 'Umlazi Location' — around the Mzinto and Mtwalume Rivers.[25]

The colonial administration also opted to develop more bite-sized and manageable categories for the African population, drawing inspiration from tribal notions developed in Cape Colony discourse. The Natal administration grouped and assigned names to — or *tribed*[26] — Africans thought to have 'shared a common descent and a common tribal culture and identity.'[27] The Natal tribing process was not simply a *rinse-and-repeat* of Cape Colony tribal discourse and took on a unique shape. The colonial government was fixed on discerning which African 'tribes' truly belonged in — and had a claim to — Natal, essentially assigning either aboriginal or foreign status to each of these 'tribes.'

Developing a historical narrative of Natal was crucial to forging a tribalscape. By annexation in 1843, there were already preconceived narratives regarding Natal's African population tailored by various published accounts since 1824. Most earlier writings misunderstood the mobile and

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[21] *Natal Witness* 10 April 1846.
[22] Natal Witness 18 December 1846. No. 43(1).
[23] Government Notice, "Moodie Ordinances Vol.2 1836-1855" (n.d.), NCP, NAB: 230
[24] Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone,* 119.
[25] Chief Tom Fynn papers in Spencer ed., *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 6, 221.
[26] See Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer, "Tribing and Untribing the Archive," in *Tribing and Untribing the Archive, Volume 1*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (University of KWAZULU-NAT, 2016).
[27] Wright, "Making Identities in the Thukela-Mzimvubu Region," 183; Leroy Vail, "Introduction: Ethnicity in Southern African History," in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, ed. Leroy Vail (University of California Press, 1991): 1-18.

fluid political landscape and painted Natal as devastated and depopulated. According to this narrative, most Africans in Natal were not 'aboriginal' or 'indigenous' 'but were 'refugees,' 'invaders' or 'remnants of tribes which formerly inhabited' the region.[28] Throughout the early colonial period, the notions of aboriginal and native often became confused and unclear. Thus, the term "native," as Jeff Guy has explained, 'simply did not apply' in Natal as it generally did in other colonial contexts.[29]

The devastation stereotype guided the development of administrative thinking, planting its roots into one of the earliest tribal lists of Natal. Soon into his post, Cloete — using the estimations of emigrant Dutch and British farmers — created a table — see Figure 1. — of all the 'aboriginal tribes'[30] in Natal.

Names of Chiefs.	Names from which they descend.	Where located.	Remarks.
Makitikili .	Kali . .	Umslanga . .	Almost all these tribes
Umnini . .	Amazuba .	Bluff, near Natal .	are few in number,
Zingolli . .	Embo . .	Umkomaas . .	the largest number-
Umbozie .	Amakie . .	Near Port Natal .	ing about 300 or
Kaan . .	Amsekola .	Ditto . . .	400 persons of both
Donzella .	Amadomgi .	Umzinta . . .	sexes.
Iomi . .	Ditto . .	Umtaphina . .	
Umscala .	Amaniqua .	Near Port Natal .	They are quietly set-
Tried . .	Amalanqueen .	Ditto . . .	tled down upon pla-
Dala . .	Amadulu .	Ditto . . .	ces long since occu-
Soli . .	Umslangu .	Ditto . . .	pied by them, culti-
Maslaume .	Amafootoe .	Ditto . . .	vate land extensively
Makoote .	Ditto . .	Ditto . . .	or are employed by
Gungatie .	Ditto . .	Ditto . . .	the day or week, of
Mapingan .	Ditto . .	Near Pietermaritzburg	neighboring farmers.

Figure 1. Henry Colete's Table showing all the 'aboriginal tribes' in Natal.

The table included fifteen 'aboriginal' groups, amassing no more than five or six thousand people combined. The other 90,000 Africans in Natal—including the Izinkumbi—were

[28] *The Natal Witness*. 18 December 1846. No.43(1).
[29] Jeff Guy, "The Tribal History Project, 1864-4," in *Tribing and Untribing the Archive, Volume 1*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2016): 218.
[30] Henry Cloete statement in James Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission, Vol. 1: Appointed to Inquire Into the Past and Present State of the Kafir in the District of Natal, and to Report Upon Their Future Government, and to Suggest Such Arrangements As Will Tend to Secure the Peace and Welfare Of* (Fb&c Limited, 2017): 26. My emphasis.

considered 'refugees or 'invaders.'[31] Cloete's table failed to list the Izinkumbi or any entities or *ama* groups that would have made up parts of it, such as the amaCele, amaDunge, amaBombo, amaLala, and amaQadi. Instead, the early administration saw these groupings' fluidity, mobility and heterogeneity as chaotic and unusual. The administration could only make sense of the Izinkumbi by classifying them as foreign, outsider, remnant and refugee. African principles of 'first use and reciprocal rights' and *ukukhonza*,[32] did not fit within the colonial model of land as bounded property. Change and movement were, from a colonial perspective, the antithesis of aboriginality.

Navigating the Annexation: Aversion and Strategic Cooperation

By the time the colony was established, the Izinkumbi had undergone significant political changes. Following Frank Fynn's death around 1839, the chieftainship was passed onto Vundhlase, his widow. She gained leadership over the Izinkumbi and inherited Frank's assets, including his estate and several hundred cattle.[33] The Izinkumbi were highly accepting of her transition to power, and her followers supported her until her retirement in the later half of the nineteenth century. According to one of her amaDunge adherents, Mvuyana, the Izinkumbi 'recognised Frank Fynn as their protector […] and so when Vundlazi came, they recognised her in the same manner [and] looked upon her as their Chief.'[34] Several chiefs including 'Undelu,' 'Umtugukeli' 'and others,'[35] remained adhered to Vundhlase via *ukukhonza*. By 1840, her rule spanned over 'at least thirty-two tribes, nearly all of which had inhabited the Natal district before the Zulu wars.'[36] Between 1838 and 1843, Vundhlase's adherents steadily 'continue[d] to

[31] James Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission, Vol. 1: Appointed to Inquire Into the Past and Present State of the Kafir in the District of Natal, and to Report Upon Their Future Government, and to Suggest Suci Arrangements As Will Tend to Secure the Peace and Welfare Of* (Fb&c Limited, 2017): 27.
[32] Kelly, *To Swim with Crocodiles,* 33.
[33] R.J. Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast between Port Natal and the Umzimvooboo" (1852), A1157 Garden Papers vol.2, NAB: 104, 110. See also Eva Jackson, "Familial Authority, Political Authority and the Life of a Female Chief in Colonial Natal," in *Ekhya: The Politics of Home in KwaZulu-Natal*, ed. Meghan Healy-Clancy and Jackson Hickel (UKZN Press, 2014): 53.
[34] Statement of Mvuyana, 21 November 1890. NAB, SNA I/1/132, 1205/1890.
[35] Statement of Mvuyana, 21 November 1890.
[36] Rev Grout in Eva Jackson, "Familial Authority, Political Authority and the Life of a Female Chief in Colonial Natal," in *Ekhya: The Politics of Home in KwaZulu-Natal*, ed. Meghan Healy-Clancy and Jackson Hickel (UKZN Press, 2014): 55. My ventures in locating the original source [labelled as the "Harding Commission Report"] have been unsuccessful.

increase.'[37] By 1843, the Izinkumbi were a paramount chieftaincy over several smaller groups, including the amaNdelu, amaHlubi, amaWongqana, amaBombo, amaHlongwa, amaDala, Ulukyaba and amaDunge.[38]

Given the recency of Vundhlase's chiefly status, protecting her position was a priority. After becoming chief, Vundhlase moved the Izinkumbi further south between the Mtwalume River and what would become known as Hibberdene.[39] Relocating the Izinkumbi was initially Vundlase's way of avoiding possible retaliatory attacks by Dingane. However, she maintained her position after annexation in 1843. Remaining south of the 'Umlazi' location held political and geographical advantages. During this time — and up to the early 1850s —the colony lacked the financial means and resources to expand its authority beyond its southernmost location, 'Umlazi.' The government did not have the financial means to survey southern Natal, which remained blank on Surveyor General maps for the next decade, see Figure 2a-c.

[37] "Vundhlase Statement through Messenger to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs" (May 4, 1865), SNA 1/6/005, NAB.
[38] Eva Jackson, "Familial Authority," 55.
[39] Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell," August 1952, Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts. See also Eva Jackson, "Familial Authority, Political Authority and the Life of a Female Chief in Colonial Natal," in *Ekhya: The Politics of Home in KwaZulu-Natal*, ed. Meghan Healy-Clancy and Jackson Hickel (UKZN Press, 2014): 51-52.

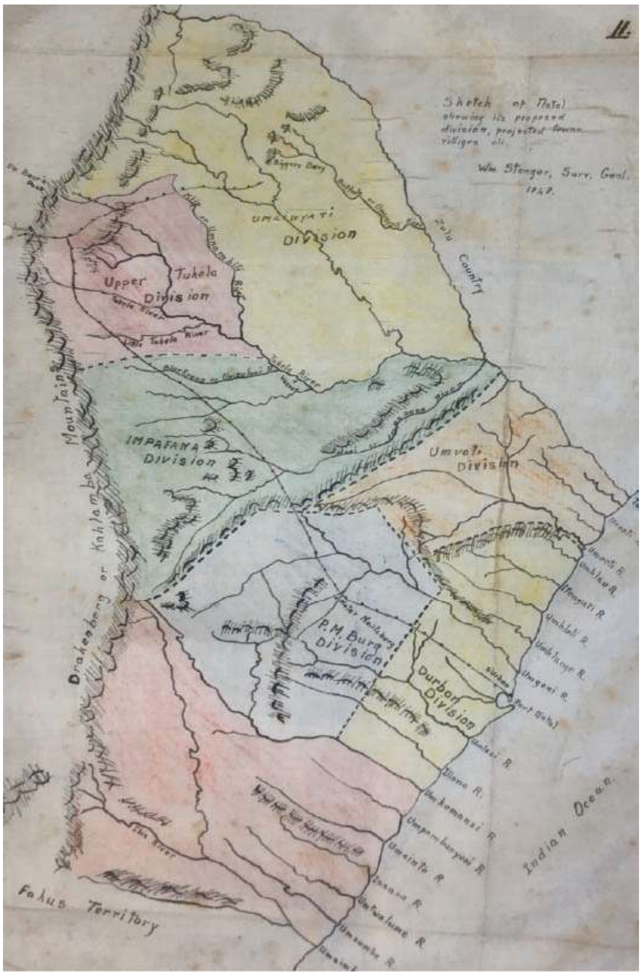

Figure 2a. Surveyor General Stanger 1848 showing the region between the Mkhomazi and Mzimkhulu Rivers as blank. William Stanger, *Sketch of Natal Showing Its Proposed Division, Projected Towns, Villages Etc.*,

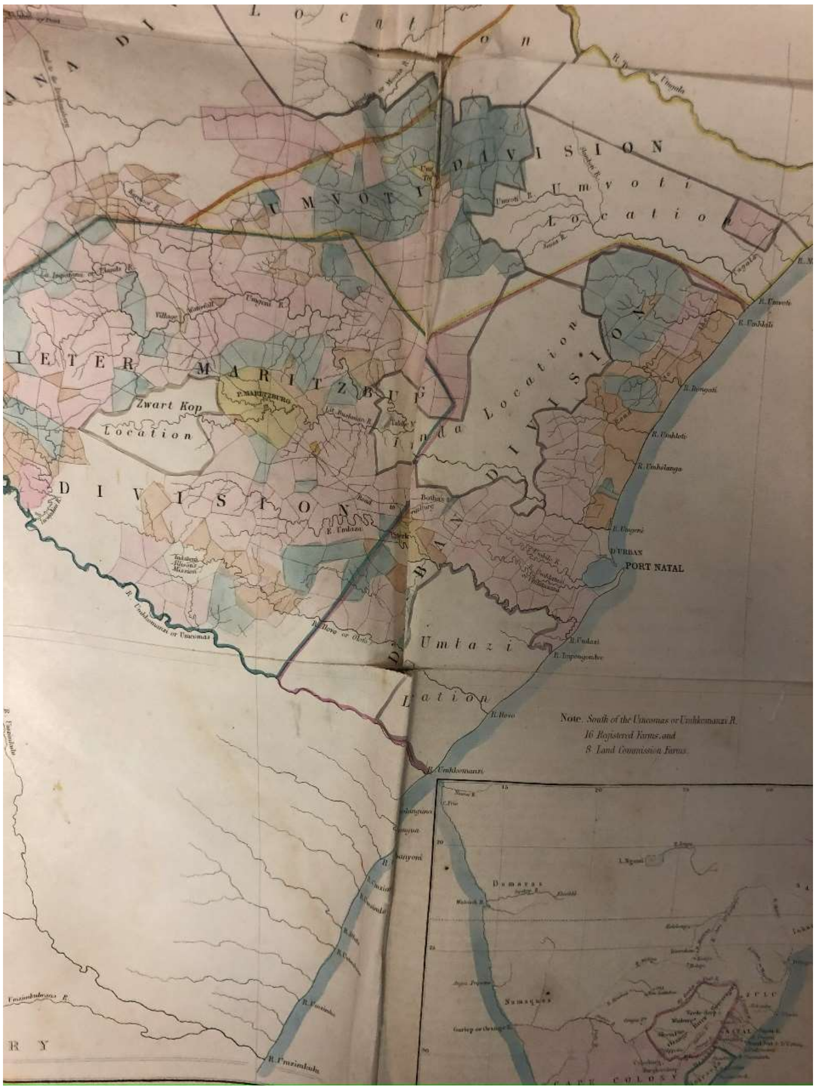

Figure 2b. Surveyor General Stanger 1850. Map showing the region between the Mkhomzai and Mzimkhulu Rivers as blank.

William Stanger, *The District of Natal: Showing Approximately the Number and Situation of the Grants, under the Proclamations of 1843 & 1848, and the Situation of Native Locations, Crown Lands Already Surveyed and the Boundaries of the Divisions*, 1850, 1850, M2/95, NAB.

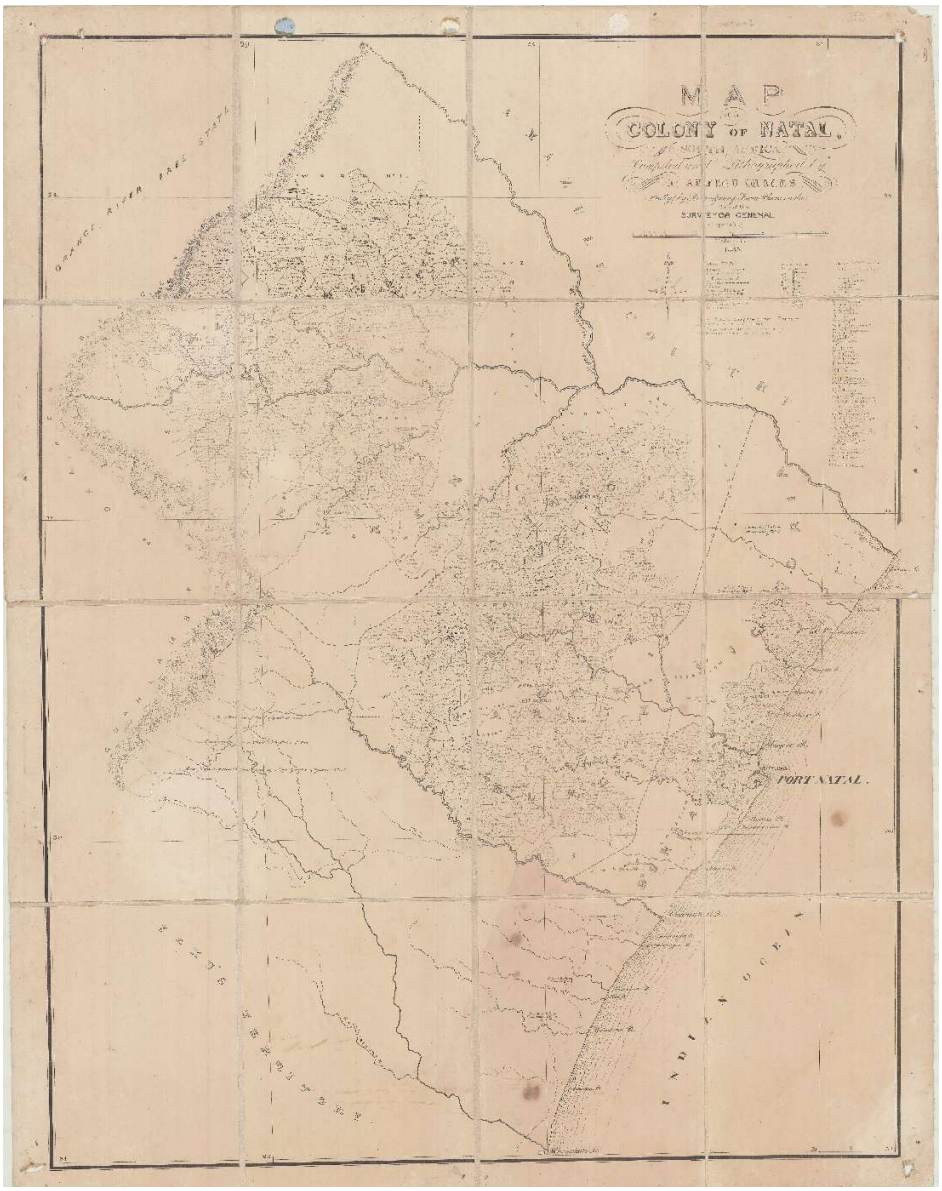

Figure 2c. Surveyor General Alfred Watts, 1855. Map showing the region between the Mkhomazi and Mzimkhulu as blank.

Alfred Watts, *Map of the Colony of Natal, South Africa*, 1855, 1855, https://antiquarianauctions.com/lots/map-of-the-colony-of-natal, AntiquarianAuctions.com.

Vundhlase also had to protect her chief status from patriarchal norms and customs. In the early 1850s, a man part of a colonial road surveying team, R. J. Garden, encountered the Izinkumbi. Between 1851 and 1852, he travelled to and back from the Mzimvubu with Henry Fynn and diarised his journey. Garden and Fynn rested at Vundhlase's place in the Mtwalume region along the journey. After meeting Vundhlase, he wrote:

> We adjourned to the Queen's [Vundhlase] hut which is the largest and best built I have ever seen, altho [sic] only second rate as I was informed. The interior in diameter I should say was about twenty-five feet and about 6 feet high. It would hold easily one hundred persons. It might have been a great deal larger; I did not measure it.[40]

Garden was captivated by her widowhood which she vowed to maintain to death. He romanticised Vundhlase's widowhood, attributing it to her lifelong love and commitment to Frank Fynn, writing that her 'constancy and fidelity to the memory of the departed Lord [Frank Fynn]' made her 'decidedly A1!' and 'deserving' of her status as 'Queen.'[41]

Vundhlase's celibacy was, however, likely more strategic than romantic. Given the patriarchal structure of African societies in Natal, should Vundlase have remarried a senior man, her status over the Izinkumbi would have been transferred, diminishing some of her political leverage, independence and influence. Her authority depended to some extent on her widowhood. Her chiefly powers also allowed her to avoid an arranged or forced marriage, a fate she had escaped in her youth, although she was then — likely with no say — 'allotted to Frank Fynn.'[42] Vundhlase's strategic celibacy — or her 'symbolic celibacy'[43] — formed part of a pattern 'well established by the historiography on female regents in southern Africa.'[44]

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[40] R.J. Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast,"109.
[41] R.J. Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 109.
[42] Henry Francis Fynn, "Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn per His Son H.F. Fynn" (n.d.), Fynn Family Papers File 10: Notes on the Fynn Family Collected by James Stuart and William Bazely, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[43] Jennifer Weir, "'I Shall Need to Use Her to Rule': The Power of 'Royal' Zulu Women in Pre-Colonial Zululand," *South African Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (November 1, 2000): 3–23.
[44] Jackson, "Familial Authority," 58.

Strategic Co-operation with the Colonial Government

Despite remaining outside the colonial government's physical reach, avoiding the emerging colonial administration altogether was impossible for the Izinkumbi. Acknowledging and interacting with the colonial government was important for Vundhlase to maintain her position. Communicating and co-operating with the colonial government would have boosted the Izinkumbi's entitativity to the administration. Being seen as an organised collective was crucial to their survival in the emerging colonial world. Thus, Vundhlase cooperated with the administration in several cases to solidify her chief role and the Izinkumbi's tangibility. However, the need to maintain a constructive relationship with the colonial government and keep her followers happy thrust Vundhalse into a delicate political position.

The Izinkumbi were drawn into the administration's system of indirect rule, which allowed African chiefs to exercise their power over their people by their own — or customary[45] — laws. These chiefs, however, would remain answerable to the colonial government and risked replacement if they 'misused [their] power.'[46] By 1849, Theophilus Shepstone — the Diplomatic Agent and later Secretary for Native Affairs — listed Vundhlase as the ruling chief of the Izinkumbi 'tribe.'[47] Shepstone favoured her capabilities as chief, calling her a 'determined woman.'[48] Under Vundhlase, Shepstone recognised the Izinkumbi as one of 'the most loyal of the Natal chiefdoms.'[49]

The government also implemented the mandatory labour system known as *isibhalo* in 1848 and the notorious hut tax of 1849. *Isibhalo* required young and unmarried African men living in any one of the locations to pay taxes in physical labour.[50] The hut tax required 'tribes' to pay the colonial government taxes per their number of huts. The Izinkumbi were drawn into both of these developing systems. There is some commentary on members of the Izinkumbi's

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[45] Norman Etherington, "The Origins of Indirect Rule in Nineteenth Century Natal," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, no. 47 (1976): 14.
[46] Etherington, "The Origins of Indirect Rule," 14-15.
[47] Unknown [Possibly James Perrin], *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*, 1853, 1853, M2/134, NAB.
[48] Natal Executive Council Records: Vol.3 Report by Shepstone, 20 May 1849: 98-101. Source mentioned in Jackson, "Familial Authority," 62.
[49] R.J. Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 107.
[50] Keletso E. Atkins, *The Moon Is Dead! Give Us Our Money!: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843-1900* (Boydell & Brewer, Limited, 1993): 53.

relationship with *isibhalo.* During his stay at the Mtwalume in 1851, Garden commented on the Izinkumbi's labour contributions to the Natal colony. He stated that some of Vundhlase's children — Robert and Thomas Fynn — were 'out in service in the Natal colony.' [51] Garden, unfortunately, did not specify the nature of their 'service.' Nevertheless, his account shows that the Izinkumbi provided the colony with certain services. He mentioned that the Izinkumbi also eschewed labour for the colony. In the same statement, he wrote that the Izinkumbi were 'generally industrious, some of them ingenious in native arts,' but had little desire to enjoy themselves in colonial service.'[52]

Garden's accounts show that the Izinkumbi contributed to *isibhalo*, although possibly to a smaller extent. However, they were still able to avoid such labour. Private employment with colonial farmers was one way the Izinkumbi avoided isibhalo, as it offered better pay. Even throughout the 1850s and 1860s, private employment was more popular with the Izinkumbi.[53] Garden met another of Vundhlase's sons named Charlie Fynn, mentioning that he could 'drive a wagon' and that to 'persons travelling along that road [through the Mtwalume], he [Charlie] may be found a useful and handy member of society.'[54] His knowledge of the land and his wagon services likely gave him significant financial independence, allowing him to circumvent *isibhalo*. The economic power of wagon services — particularly through the movement and sale of surplus crops — is a well-explored aspect of colonial history.

Garden's statement could also reflect the general economic independence of the Izinkumbi at the time. His labelling of them as 'industrious' and 'ingenious in the native arts' suggests they had significant economic autonomy.[55] While Garden did not elaborate on what he meant by 'native arts,' he possibly referred to the fundamentals of their economy including agriculture, wagon driving, building and herding. The Izinkumbi did comprise over 1000 adherents and would have needed productive farming, building and other specialist practices to maintain themselves. Shirron Bramdeow's research has shown that the Fynn community from the 'Umzimkulwana' —

[51] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 109.
[52] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 109.
[53] See Vundhlase Statement through Messenger to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs" (May 4, 1865), SNA 1/6/005, NAB.
[54] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 109.
[55] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 109.

a river which branches off the Mzimkhulu about 10km inland from what is now Port Shepstone — were primarily 'independent peasant farmers' and 'transport riders,'[56] and they remained so for decades to follow.

The Izinkumbi also controlled significant herds. Garden mentioned that in 1849, at Fynn's request, Vundhlase gifted the Bishop of the Cape Colony 120 head of cattle.[57] While Fynn attributed her gift to his alleged influence over Vundhlase and the Izinkumbi, there is more to say about this transaction. Instead of unquestionable loyalty to Fynn, Vundhlase's willingness to give cattle to the bishop suggests that she had extensive resources that she could use for diplomacy. While these resources gave her some access to economic independence from the growing colonial presence, they also granted her access to colonial politics. Combined, these events suggest that the Izinkumbi likely participated in *isibhalo* but were also in a position to avoid it.

Alongside *isibhalo,* the Izinkumbi also had to pay the Hut Tax. Despite the government initiating *isibhalo,* settlers expressed annoyance over the fact that Africans were not tax-paying members of society.[58] The 'hut tax' was thus introduced by proclamation on 12 July 1849. The system required African men to pay seven shillings per hut they owned, therefore generating income while also limiting polygamy in African communities.[59] The Izinkumbi paid tax as early as 1849, per a tabular statement on a map titled 'Sketch of the District of Natal with its Native Tribes.'[60] The table reflects:

> The Native Tribes Dwelling in the District of Natal in March 1853 with their respective chiefs and the number of huts for which they paid the Government tax for in the year 1849 [illegible damaged] as taken from the Books of the Diplomatic Agent.[61]

Vundhlase's people paid hut tax on 732 huts in 1849, making them the tenth highest tax-paying 'tribe' out of sixty-two.

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[56] Bramdeow, "Henry Francis Fynn," 110.
[57] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 141.
[58] Narissa Ramdhani, "Taxation Without Representation: The Hut Tax System in Colonial Natal 1849–1898," *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 9, no. 1 (January 1, 1986): 14.
[59] Ramdhani, "Taxation Without Representation," 14-16.
[60] Unknown [possibly James Perrin], *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*, 1853, 1853, M2/134, NAB.
[61] Unknown [possibly James Perrin], *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*, 1853, 1853, M2/134, NAB.

Besides labour and tax contributions, the Izinkumbi also provided military aid to the colony. Given the colonial government's substantial lack of resources at the time, Africans were relied on to police the colony, especially in 'subduing recalcitrant chiefdoms.'[62] Vundhlase seems to have had substantial military labour on offer, as the colonial government approached her for military aid twice in three years. In 1849, the Hlongwa in southern Natal resisted colonial authority. Vundhlase agreed to help Shepstone and bring order to the region. She punished the polity by confiscating a number of their cattle.[63]

In 1851, the government used Vundhlase for military assistance on the frontier. Harry Smith — the Governor of the Cape Colony — requested that the Lieutenant Governor of Natal, Benjamin Pine, increase African taxes to aid the colony in the eighth frontier war. Shepstone and many of the Natal colonists challenged the request, and eventually, Pine offered an alternative to Smith: supplying African troops to form a 'Zulu coalition' for the frontier war.[64] In February 1851, Pine wrote to Fynn requesting that he 'gather 3000 men from the tribes around him, and to proceed to Smith's aid.'[65] Although against the military option, Shepstone was tasked with gaining support for the movement. Vundhlase agreed to give troops to Fynn,[66] supplying him with 115 — the fourth most of the twelve involved groups — of her adherents. The other contributing polities included those under chiefs 'Jantzi, Zulu, Amakele, Amakosinguma, Dumesa, Amatukangula, Fodo, Amanda, Amanklonglea, and Amalanga.'[67] The coalition, according to Henry Fynn, 'arrived on the ground' around 19 May 1851, and 'their conduct throughout was most praiseworthy.'[68] The project, however, ended abruptly the same year it was initiated, as the coalition's 'inter-tribal' hostilities promoted its disbandment.[69] Although the project was a

[62] John Lambert, "Chiefship in Early Colonial Natal," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 2 (1995): 275.
[63] Lambert, "Chiefship in Early Colonial Natal," 275.
[64] Jackson, "Familial Authority," 63.
[65] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 6, 232 drawn from The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring People edited and translated by C. de B. Webb and J.B. Wright. (Natal University Press 1976-1986" vols. 1-4.
[66] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast."
[67] Henry Francis Fynn, "Letter from Fynn," May 19, 1851, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 3, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[68] Henry Francis Fynn, "Letter from Fynn," May 19, 1851, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 3, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[69] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 6, 232.

failure, Vundhlase gained renown from it. Her cooperativeness impressed various colonial officials like Shepstone and earned her the reputation of a 'determined woman' who headed a powerful combination of tribes.[70]

Despite gaining political favour from colonial actors, Vundhlase's cooperation placed her in a precarious political position as many of her followers were reluctant to fight in the frontier war. Vundhlase explained to Shepstone that providing the Natal colony with military aid had caused some headmen and followers to question her leadership.[71] This shows that Vundhlase may have made choices she did not truly support to gain colonial favour, as it seems unlikely that she would jeopardise her authority with outright loyalty to the colonial government. While Vundhlase sought to propagate a cooperative relationship with the colonial government within the first decade after annexation, labelling it as 'loyalty' is inaccurate. Vundhlase and the Izinkumbi practised strategic cooperation. She calculated her choices; while she could not outright deny the colonial administration's wishes, she could not fulfil their demands without hesitation, as it would upset her followers. She continually gained followers over this period despite providing the government with taxes, labour, and military aid, which attests to her political prowess and ability to tread the line between colonial and internal politics.

Conclusion

The period between 1839 and 1852 encompassed a great deal of change in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region, including the rise and fall of the short-lived Boer Republic and the founding of the Natal colony. The developing colonial administration began sculpting Natal into a tribalscape. Colonial misunderstandings of Natal's fluid political landscape sparked the onset of attempts to identify so-called aboriginal and foreign 'tribes' in Natal. The colonial administration did not consider the Izinkumbi aboriginal because they believed that mobility and rights to land were mutually exclusive. From here onwards, the administration would struggle with classifying and defining the Izinkumbi and its unusual constituency.

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[70] Natal Executive Council Records: Vol.3 Report by Shepstone, 20 May 1849: 98-101. Source mentioned in Jackson, "Familial Authority," 62-63, but I have been unable to locate the original in NAB.
[71] Natal Executive Council Records: Vol.3 Report by Shepstone, 20 May 1849: 98-101. Source mentioned in Jackson, "Familial Authority," 48–82, but I have been unable to locate the original in NAB.

While these convoluted and confused categorical processes were underway, the Izinkumbi were also drawn into early administrative processes, including indirect rule, *isibhalo* and the Hut Tax. Vundhlase found ways to cooperate with and avoid these processes to maintain a careful political balance with her following and the colonial government. Once chief, Vundhlase moved the Izinkumbi southward closer to the Mzimkhulu. The early colonial administration lacked the funds to properly survey and govern southern Natal, making it an ideal space for those avoiding colonial control. Using distance to her advantage, Vundhlase was free to interact with and avoid the colonial government to a certain extent.

This freedom was particularly apparent in the Izinkumbi's contribution to the *isibhalo* system. The Izinkumbi were not exceedingly cooperative when providing the government with labour. Instead, they maintained their economic independence and sold their labour to private employers. Nevertheless, the Izinkumbi were incorporated into and interacted with the colonial government in specific ways. Vundhlase was required to oversee tax payments and ensure her people were available for labour and other events, including military excursions. Vundhlase did cooperate with the colonial government on these fronts. The Izinkumbi's first Hut Tax payment from 1849 was substantial as their contribution was among the top ten payments out of sixty-two tax-paying 'tribes.' Alongside tax, Vundhlase also presented the colonial government with military aid.

Throughout this period, Izinkumbi politics found ways to adapt to the emerging colonial administration. Vundhlase and the Izinkumbi practised what can be considered strategic cooperation. She was not a loyal vassal of the colonial state per se but maintained a degree of political openness with the government. At the same time, she allowed the Izinkumbi to preserve their economic independence and generally dismissed their ventures in the private labour market.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Tales of Two Travellers, 1848 – 1852

Introduction

Between 1848 and 1852, two travellers in Natal encountered the Izinkumbi and other British trader descendants and adherents. The first was a naturalist and artist named George French Angas, who painted and wrote about one of the British trader's children of African and European descent in 1848 and 1849. The second was Captain Garden, part of a colonial road surveying team. Garden kept a diary which included details of his stay with the Izinkumbi and Henry Francis Fynn's people on his journey to and from the Mzimvubu River between 1851 and 1852.

While these sources provide detailed information about the Izinkumbi and other British trader adherents and descendants, they are limited because they are solely from a colonial perspective. The chapter cautiously approaches these accounts, focusing on their shared discursive themes and motifs. Both were fixed on how the people they wrote about were—according to their ideology—simultaneously civilised and savage, having mixed biological and social characteristics. Angas and Garden commented on their subjects' mixed clothing, architecture and bloodlines, praising what they considered as their acquired '*Europeanness*.' Simultaneously, however, they tied their subjects to 'innate' or 'inherent' savagery, portraying them as stuck to and unable to escape their 'native' ways. Consequently, their accounts are fraught with ambiguity and paradoxical imagery that require attention.

Focusing on these ambiguities, the chapter shows how the Izinkumbi's cultural and social fluidity confused colonial ideology. The Izinkumbi were considered anomalous because they could not be shoehorned into the binary categories of colonial discourse and bias.

Close Encounters: The Artist and the Captain

George French Angas — a painter and explorer — travelled to South Africa in 1846 and published his experiences and paintings in 1849.[1] Angas' work, notably, was highly

[1] George Angas, *The Kaffirs Illustrated* (London: J. Hogarth, 1849).

characteristic of romanticism and thus offers more insight into the 'aesthetic concerns, cultural assumptions and imperialist aspirations of his society' than the African people of Natal.[2] His work should thus be considered a commercial and colonial re-presentation of Natal. His attempt to depict and make sense of a trader descendent may not truly reflect his subject but instead shows how colonial onlookers struggled to categorise people of mixed descent. These moments of confusion in colonial writing can uncover some of the multilayered aspects of these communities. Out of the numerous collections of watercolour plates within his publication, one is of interest here: the painting — plate XXIV — titled '"Charley," a Half-Caste Kafir Boy at Natal.' See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. George French Angas' painting of Charley, a British trader descendant.

[2] S. Klopper, "George French Angas' (Re)Presentation of the Zulu in The Kafirs Illustrated," *South African Journal of Culture and Art History* 3, no. 1 (1989): 63.

The following excerpt accompanied the painting:

> In all parts of the world, but more especially in British colonies, wherever an aboriginal race is found in contact with Europeans, we meet with a half-caste race, which frequently improves the original stock and often exhibits considerable personal beauty. Amongst the Natal Kafirs I have seen many half-castes between Dutch and English and Kafir women, and in one instance, I met with an entire family of nine or ten children, the offspring of one of the earliest settlers by his marriage with a Zulu woman, a relative of the King; they reminded me of the New Zealanders, both in colour and personal appearance.[3]
>
> The boy "Charley," whose portrait is here given on the accompanying Plate, is an orphan, son of the English sailors who came to Natal some years back with Lieut. Farewell. His parents being both dead, he was brought up by his relations in one of the Kraals on the coast, and shortly before my sketch was made, the Rev. Mr Lindley […] took him under his care at Inanda, with a view of educating him. The poor little fellow was as ignorant and wild as the goats he drove out to their daily pastures, but with a sweet and amiable position, that only required education to mould it at will.[4]

This child was possibly John Cane's son, as he was the only Charley who could have been an orphan — at least fatherless — at this time (although it is not entirely certain who his mother was). His age also correlated to that of the child in the painting. Charlie Fynn, in contrast, was significantly older and was not an orphan.[5] Charley Cane was also acquainted with and resided near Rev. Daniel Lindley, who cared for Charley.[6] When Charley's parents passed away, he was placed in the care of relatives, but it is not clear which ones. While Charley was likely not living with the Izinkumbi — he was under the care of Lindley — there are parallels between Angas' and Garden's accounts worth examining. These show how Europeans and colonial actors identified and made sense of groups like Izinkumbi.

During his travels with Fynn between 1851 and 1852, Garden stayed with the Izinkumbi and Fynn's adherents for short periods. Garden diarised his encounters with the Izinkumbi, one of the first being of a nameless woman. In the 1830s, Isaacs had left some of his children in Henry

[3] Plate XXIV in George Angas, *The Kaffirs Illustrated*: 40.
[4] Plate XXIV in George Angas, *The Kaffirs Illustrated*: 40.
[5] Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 4: 34-36; Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol.6: 224-225.
[6] See CSO 90 no.1062 and Deceased Estates 18/121 in Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal v*ol. 4): 34-35.

Fynn's care,[7] and some of them ended up living with Vundhlase after Henry Fynn left Natal. During Garden's first visit with the Izinkumbi, he met Nathaniel Isaacs' daughter — he did not name her — who was living with the Izinkumbi at the time. His remarks on Isaacs' daughter have a very similar tone to Angas' writing. After meeting her, he wrote:

> She is a very good-looking Bastard woman and is married to a kaffir […]. It is insular that with such strong [illegible] of white blood in her veins she should have allied herself to a kaffir instead of to one of her own caste […]. She acquired so bitter a hatred against them [whites] and being naturally of distinct vindictive character she [severed] all connection with the civilized part and allied herself to the savage portion of the community.[8]

Angas' and Garden's Paradoxical Imagery: Neither Savage nor Civilised

Both Angas and Garden's accounts contain key thematic and discursive parallels. They perceived, portrayed and represented their subjects similarly, drawing close attention to their physical traits and behaviours. Both struggled to define their subjects as civilised or savage, creating new ambiguous and confused categories. From their perspective, their subjects were not entirely African or European but something else. Because they could not place these people, Angas and Garden adopted respective auxiliary terms: 'half-caste' and 'bastard.' During the colonial period, the terms 'half-caste' and 'bastard' were reserved for a specific group of people. Peter Aspinall has observed that 'half-caste' was a term particular to nineteenth-century British colonialism and was often reserved for colonised others who were considered to have had measurable degrees of so-called white blood.[9] The term measured a type of social purity — 'caste' coming from the Latin *castus,* which meant pure — and implied that those in the category had greater purity than other Africans. The term 'bastard' — which was often applied to so-called mixed-race people in the Cape Colony originally by the Dutch and later by the British — generally meant 'illegitimate child.' 'Bastard' and 'half-caste' were used interchangeably in colonial South Africa.

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[7] Nathaniel Isaacs, "From Isaacs to Fynn," 1832, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[8] R.J. Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 100-101.
[9] Peter J Aspinall, "The Social Evolution of the Term 'Half-Caste' in Britain: The Paradox of Its Use as Both Derogatory Racial Category and Self-Descriptor," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 26, no. 4 (2013): 503.

Angas and Garden highlighted their subjects' so-called 'half-caste' and 'bastard' characteristics, starting with their physical features. Angas portrayed Charley somewhat differently than his other African subjects. His features were softer than the other male Africans portrayed by Angas; his skin was lighter, his hair finer, and his body less muscular. He was far more effeminate than almost every male representation in the collection in terms of his features and stance. With regards to Isaacs' daughter, the only physical descriptions Garden presented in his writings were her sex — 'woman' — and her being 'good-looking.' Both accounts presented the subjects as desirable to the colonial gaze. Charley's softer, more European appearance and Isaacs' daughter's attractiveness reflected the idea that the presence of white blood in African or native veins increased desirability by quelling what colonists considered their wilder attributes.

At the same time, however, Charley and Isaacs' daughter were represented as having underlying savagery. Garden, for example, was displeased that Isaacs' daughter did not marry 'someone of her own caste' and attributed her choice to marry an African man to her 'naturally vindictive character.' By 'natural,' Garden implied that this so-called non-civilised behaviour — the betrayal to her 'caste' — was inherent or inescapable. Angas also visited the idea of inherent savagery in his painting of Charley. Angas depicted Charley standing between a stream and wild, mixed foliage, between the civilised and uncivilised worlds. He was barefoot, holding a small stick, possibly a knobkerrie or shepherd's staff, and wore a tunic-like European garment. His clothing was frayed at his torso and upper arms, baring his skin. The imagery is paradoxical. On the one hand, he was lighter skinned in comparison to Angas' other drawings of Africans, and he was dressed in 'civilised' clothing. At the same time, however, he clung to — what colonial ideology considered — uncivilised life, holding the stick-like object and having no shoes, and was 'wild as the goats he drove.'[10] His torn garments and exposed skin were representative of his civility hanging on by a thread and the threat of his savagery tearing through at any given moment. Angas even enclosed his name in apostrophes[11] transforming the child's European name into another simple outfit, only dressing up his true nature. He was not Charley, but "Charley" the half-caste, merely wearing the façade of civility.

[10] Plate XXIV in George Angas, *The Kaffirs Illustrated*: 40.
[11] This is the only instance where Angas placed a name in parenthesis in the entire book.

Garden expressed similar views later in his journey after meeting Vundhlase and Frank Fynn's son, Charlie Fynn. He described Charlie as 'a quiet lad — not overbright I should say – who dressed in clothes […].'[12] Unlike his encounter with Isaacs' daughter, Garden did not address Charlie's physical looks or label him a 'bastard.' Although subtle, Garden's reference to Charlie wearing 'clothes' and this being juxtaposed to his alleged lower degree of intelligence reflected similar views to those he had of Isaacs' daughter. By 'clothes,' Garden likely meant European-style garments. He probably drew attention to Charlie's dress style because it would have been — according to the colonial imagination — unusual for Africans to be dressed in what he would have defined as 'clothes.' Coupling Charlie's European garments with his supposed lack of intelligence was Garden's way of saying Charlie was not innately civilised. His clothing or civility was nothing more than a costume.

This barely-civilised-but-still-savage imagery significantly went beyond the concept of 'mixed blood' and was also applied to cultural and social mixing. The Izinkumbi were socially and culturally ambiguous in Garden's writing because they had adopted so-called non-native practices. Garden spoke of their use of European architecture, clothing, and the concept of electricity. He considered these adaptations of European materials more a corruption or imitation of civility than actual civilisation itself, again pointing to the idea of these people being prisoners to — or being held back by — their natural African character. He described a European-style building built by Charlie Fynn as a small, unimpressive 'imitation of the European style.'[13] While he was deeply impressed by Vundhlase's great hut, Garden reduced the European-style building to mere imitation. Garden believed that the Izinkumbi were more naturally capable of specific native practices. Garden indeed described the Izinkumbi as 'ingenious in the native arts.' Any practices that veered away from these so-called native arts or drew from European practices — such as wearing European clothing or adapting their architecture —however, were mimicry. Just as with the clothing on Charley's body, the image Garden created of Charlie Fynn's building was ambiguous; not entirely African nor European.

[12] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 109.
[13] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 109.

Garden also reduced a medicinal practice to imitation on his return to Natal from the Mzimvubu in 1852, accompanied by James Perrin — a naturalist and linguist. He described a structure outside Vundhlase's royal hut comprising five poles connected by a strand of rope. Garden and Perrin initially assumed it was 'for drying clothes' but also believed it 'resembled the rope one sees at a fair, and upon which rope dancers exhibit.'[14] They soon learned that both of these assumptions were incorrect. 'Singcungu,' one of Vundhlase's sons, explained that his mother's *inyanga* had constructed the structure to aid Vundhlase, who had fallen ill. Garden and Perrin — to their amusement — assumed that the rope 'was presumed to have the power of attracting the malady with which the Queen was afflicted and of conveying it out of the kraal.' On this note, Garden remarked that the *inyanga* had 'gained some irregular information respecting the powers of the electric wire and attempted to make use of it in his spells.'[15] Garden and Perrin tried to make sense of something they did not understand using their worldview as a point of reference. Eva Jackson has suggested that the rope was either used for pain relief or to alleviate power concerns, as Henry Fynn was to be employed as a magistrate in the region [see Chapter Six].[16] Whether or not this indeed was the case is challenging to say.

The likelihood of the *inyanga* being inspired by electricity is not so sure. Although electricity was in its experimental phase in the eighteenth century, it only became prevalent in imperial settings in the 'last decades of the nineteenth century.'[17] Other than telegraph lines, it is difficult to pinpoint what electric wire would have been used for in Natal at the time. By the 1840s, telegraph lines had grown in popularity in some colonial settings, particularly those in the Americas.[18] By 1846, however, settlers in Natal were lamenting the absence of electric telegraph systems in Natal,[19] and discussions around introducing electric telegraphs and railways were only underway in 1848.[20] Even by 1852, telegraph lines appeared to be lacking. The situation also seemed to be the same for the Cape Colony, as only in 1855 were advertisements for

[14] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 109 – 112.
[15] Garden, "Ramblings along the Coast," 109.
[16] Jackson, "Familial Authority," 62.
[17] M. Anis Alam, "Imperialism and Science," *Social Scientist* 6, no. 5 (1977): 7.
[18] Brian Winston, *Media,Technology and Society: A History: From the Telegraph to the Internet* (Routledge, 2002): 19-30.
[19] *Natal Witness*, July 17, 1846: 2.
[20] *Natal Witness*, August 11, 1848: 2

lectures describing the mechanics of the electric telegraph.[21] The electric telegraph was likely a new phenomenon to the Natal landscape — by the 1850s at a push — and electrical wire tethered to poles was rare in both the Cape and Natal colonies.

That said, it is doubtful that the ropes and pole Garden described had anything to do with electricity and conductivity. It is far more probable that Garden and Perrin did not understand the mechanism and tried to make sense of it by rooting it in something more familiar. Garden and Perrin quickly reverted to mimicry to explain things they could not comprehend about the Izinkumbi. Garden was so fixated on the fact that the Izinkumbi could adopt and repurpose colonial things and practices — such as names, clothing and buildings — that he believed what he considered to be their unusual practices were not their own but an imitation of colonial life.

Conclusion

Between 1848 and 1852, George French Angas and Captain Garden travelled through southern Natal on separate and unrelated journeys. Both travellers recorded their encounters with communities previously under the British traders, including the Izinkumbi. Ambiguity and paradox stand out in these accounts as Angas and Garden attempted to categorise their subjects according to the colonial binary of civilised and savage. These ambiguities and paradoxes arose from the traveller's attempts to make sense of Izinkumbi's — and other trader descendant's — mobility and fluidity. This colonial binary could not define cultural, social and political fluidity. The Izinkumbi were not one thing or tribe but fluid and adaptive.

Angas and Garden had preconceived European and colonial ideas about how African natives *should* exist in the world. The notion of Africans living in bounded and unchanging tribes was central to their thinking. Concern and confusion arose in the traveller accounts when the Izinkumbi and other trader descendants deviated from these expectations and broke the confines of the tribal stereotype. They were not an abiding, unchanging group living according to European and colonial imagination. They adopted and appropriated different practices and materials, including languages, clothing and architecture. At these moments of categorical defiance, Angas and Garden tried to reaffirm or essentialise their subjects' *nativeness* and

[21] "The Electric Telegraph Described in a Lecture," *Cape Town Mercantile Advertiser*, March 12, 1855: 2.

tribalness by reducing their sociocultural diversity to mimicry and introducing the auxiliary terms *half-caste* and *bastard.*

The categorical confusion expressed by Angas and Garden, as well as the broader developing colonial discourse, not only show the limits of colonial language and ideology. It also reveals the fluid and mobile lifestyles of African communities like the Izinkumbi, showing how the colonial concepts of tribe and 'nativeness' could not encompass these subjects entirely. The Izinkumbi could not be shoehorned into these colonial categories because fluidity and mobility were their core characteristics contributing to their sociocultural heterogeneity.

CHAPTER SIX

Becoming 'Remnants' in the Emerging Colonial Tribalscape, 1852-1853

Introduction

In the early 1850s, the colonial administration continued its efforts to create a clean-cut and well-defined tribalscape in Natal. Doing so would justify European land grabs and make the African population more governable. Natal's tribal discourse took on a unique hue as it not only sought to arrange Africans into rigid, manageable tribes but also categorised these tribes as either aboriginal or foreign. In 1852, the government initiated a commission to 'Inquire into the Past and Present State' of Africans in Natal and determine which African tribes had a claim to Natal.[1] The commission used terms like 'natives' or 'refugees' to classify outsiders and 'aboriginal' to identify which Africans had rights to land in Natal. In 1853, the commission's classifications were represented visually in the first known tribal map of Natal.

Throughout the commission, conversations about the Izinkumbi introduced a degree of confusion, paradox and ambiguity because they did not fit within the tribal discourse. Unlike colonial beliefs about African groups existing as bounded tribes, the Izinkumbi were a collection of various *ama* groupings who maintained their older and new connections simultaneously. Colonial language could not deal with this layeredness and fluidity, however. The commission considered the Izinkumbi a 'new tribe,' contradicting the notion of tribes as archaic and timeless. Despite comprising various longstanding *ama* groupings, the commission overlooked the Izinkumbi's historical connection to Natal because the name 'Izinkumbi' only came into use after Shaka's reign. Consequently, the commission considered them as neither entirely native nor foreign. To mitigate this confusion, the commission introduced new categories for the Izinkumbi, such as 'remnants' or 'leftovers,' creating a sense of in-betweenness.

Chapter Six explores the Izinkumbi's place within this developing administrative discourse. Closely analysing the classification processes and confusion surrounding the Izinkumbi reveals

[1] James Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission: Appointed to Inquire Into the Past and Present State of the Kafir in the District of Natal, and to Report Upon Their Future Government, and to Suggest Suci Arrangements As Will Tend to Secure the Peace and Welfare Of* (Fb&c Limited, 2017).

the intricacies of its fluid social fabric. The Izinkumbi's grouping processes and politics were beyond the colonial government's comprehension. The use of new auxiliary terms in these classification processes was the colonial government's attempt to re-essentialise or reaffirm the Izinkumbi's 'tribal' existence. The Izinkumbi's heterogeneity, political openness, mobility, and varied cultural and social elements defied colonial tribal logic.

Becoming Remnants: The Colonial Discourse in the 1852 Commission

By the 1850s, official discussions on Africans belonging to Natal had become more focused and organised. The tribal arrangement of Africans was underway,[2] but the colonial administration was still trying to understand which Africans — according to colonial logic — had a claim to Natal. The two categories of 'aboriginal' and 'refugee' continually rose in importance, often becoming the central concern in official discussions. The aboriginal and refugee issues usually converged with concerns over African labour shortages, which were generally attributed to the locations being too large, independent, and lucrative.[3] By keeping people in tribes, Africans were retained as a labour pool and were inhibited from competing with settlers for access to land and markets.

Governor Benjamin Pine — who succeeded Martin West in 1850 — deployed a commission in November 1852 to investigate the state of the African population and the lack of labour in Natal. James Archbell published the commission's minutes.[4] Walter Harding, chief justice of Natal, headed the commission. The process was highly skewed, as it only interviewed white male Natal settlers, most of whom shared the same ideas and agendas. However, Shepstone and Reverend Lewis Grout, a missionary, recorded and presented some African accounts to the commission. While the commission focused on the past and present state of Africans in Natal, it was – according to Henry Fynn — primarily concerned with:

> Separating those [Africans] whom they conceive to have just aboriginal claims on the land within this district, from those whom they believe to have no such claim. I admit that with immense labour by competent persons, nearly a correct distinction might be made;

[2] Wright, "Making Identities," 201-202
[3] Jeff Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal: African Autonomy and Settler Colonialism in the Making of Traditional Authority* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013): 195-198,
[4] James Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission, Vol. 1.*

> but when I consider the suspicions which naturally arise in the native mind on such matters […] I am convinced that the evils resulting from such a proceeding would more than counterbalance any amount of good which could reasonably be expected to arise therefrom.[5]

The commission's participants expressed two opposing opinions. First and foremost were those supporting the devastation myth, which suggested that Natal was empty before annexation and that most Africans were foreign. Second were the scarce few who argued for the aboriginality of most Africans in Natal.

The colonial concept of 'aboriginality' was key in easing the labour shortage. Distinguishing 'natives' from 'aboriginals' would have justified diminishing the existing locations and pressuring more Africans into labour. The concepts of 'native' and 'aboriginal' as they existed at the time were confused and messy, often lacking consensus. Commission participants frequently altered these terms' meanings to suit their arguments about and solutions to the labour shortage. The available evidence shows that 'native' was a catchall phrase mostly synonymous with — what the colonists believed were — non-Natal Africans. 'Native' by no means implied an abiding existence in Natal, and therefore — according to colonial understandings — no ownership of its land. Only 'aboriginals' who had supposedly lived in Natal — unchanged — before, during and after Shaka's reign had rights to land in Natal. According to colonial logic, 'natives,' were 'aliens' or 'refugees' who had come into Natal after Shaka's reign. Several commission participants held these views, and some even sought to nullify 'aboriginality' altogether.

Most of the evidence presented sought to prove Natal's emptiness before annexation. Early into the commission, ex-governor Cloete submitted the table he had previously drafted for the government in the 1840s [see chapter 4] after investigating who or 'what might be termed aboriginal tribes.'[6] Cloete's table implied that a mere handful of Natal's Africans truly belonged

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[5] Statement of Henry Francis Fynn in James Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission, Vol. 5: Appointed to Inquire Into the Past and Present State of the Kafir in the District of Natal, and to Report Upon Their Future Government, and to Suggest Suci Arrangements As Will Tend to Secure the Peace and Welfare Of* (Fb&c Limited, 2017): 51.
[6] Statement of Henry Cloete in James Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission, Vol. 1: Appointed to Inquire Into the Past and Present State of the Kafir in the District of Natal, and to Report Upon Their Future Government, and to Suggest Suci Arrangements As Will Tend to Secure the Peace and Welfare Of* (Fb&c Limited, 2017): 26.

in Natal currently and that close to 90,000 were foreigners. Cloete's ideas were not the only ones regarding aboriginal and refugee status. Reverend James Archbell's — a Methodist missionary in Natal — statement reflected the majority opinion regarding so-called 'true aboriginality.' Archbell argued that most Africans had no claim to the land because their occupancy could not be traced past two generations. Archbell also argued that Dingane sold Natal in its entirety to the Boers, which 'was subsequently won by them in the way of conquest.'[7] The Speaker of the Legislative Council of Natal, Walter Macfarlane, argued that Dingane sold Natal to the Boers and thus 'did away with all aboriginal rights or claims.'[8] Macfarlane also argued that the term 'natives' was 'erroneous' because most Africans in Natal 'were almost entirely foreign refugees,'[9] once again showing how these terms — native and aboriginal — were still undergoing formation and were often confused.

These views were very much rooted in Eurocentric notions of sedentism, entirely ignoring the fact that mobility and fluidity played an essential part in Natal's politics and lifestyle. Few, however, argued against this devastation narrative, including Shepstone and Reverend Lewis Grout. Shepstone argued that the locations were running effectively, that there was a good measure of governmental control over them via 'native agency', and that the chiefly controlled locations had proven sufficient.[10] He also went against the devastation narrative, showing that many 'tribes' occupied Natal.[11] Reverend Lewis Grout also countered the devastation stance using the testimonies of those he called 'African historians' who had a range of 'copious historical facts and several extensive narratives.'[12] Based on these sources, Grout argued that Natal was 'still occupied by numerous aboriginal tribes.'[13] He explained that those Africans returning to Natal after annexation 'came not as foreigners and immigrants, but rather as captives and exiles returning from a land of strangers to their own paternal homes.'[14]

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[7] Statement of James Archbell in Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission,* 9.
[8] Statement of Walter Macfarlane in Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission,* 43.
[9] Statement of Walter Macfarlane in Archbell*,* 47.
[10] Statement of Theophilus Shepstone in Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission*.
[11] See Jeff Guy, "The Tribal History Project, 1864-4," in *Tribing and Untribing the Archive, Volume 1*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer (University of KWAZULU-NAT, 2016).
[12] Statement of Rev Lewis Grout in James Archbell*,* 30-31.
[13] Statement of Rev Lewis Grout in James Archbell*,* 23.
[14] Statement of Rev Lewis Grout in James Archbell*,* 30.

Although published three years after the commission, Reverend William Holden's – another missionary – views resonated with Grout's statement. Holden believed that the use of the term 'refugee' was nothing more than a malicious and deliberate misrepresentation. He argued that the colonial categories of 'refugee' and 'Zulu refugees' were fallacies used to justify classifying only 13,000 Africans out of the 100,000 as aboriginals.[15] Holden explained that Natal had several 'tribes' of 'unknown origin, probably belonging to tribes of Aboriginals who were here before Tshaka's invasion.'[16] Presenting these people as 'refugees' was, Holden remarked, dishonest and threatened to sour future relations between the colonists and Africans of Natal.[17]

Grout suggested to the commission that the African inhabitants of Natal could be divided into two major sections: those who were broken up by Shaka's wars and those 'which are now found in something of a tribal state within the district.'[18] Grout believed that groups in Natal — those who maintained their 'tribal' status and those who lost it and reformed new tribes like the trading groups — were all 'bona fide aborigines […] fully entitled to a permanent abode in the colony, to a free ample possession in the soil, and to the blessings of personal liberty.'[19]Any other view of the Africans of Natal, he argued, was nothing more than a gross perversion of truth and a strange abuse of language.'[20]

The Izinkumbi featured in Grout's evidence as one of forty aboriginal 'tribes' with claims to Natal. They belonged in his second category as 'something of a tribal state' instead of an abiding polity. He explained that the Izinkumbi 'tribe' formed after Shaka's invasions — but before the Boers' arrival — and that by 1852, it comprised individuals from at least 32 separate 'tribes.' What is critical about Grout's evidence is that he allegedly spoke to African witnesses, which means he likely interviewed some of the Izinkumbi adherents or their 'African historians.' While he, unfortunately, did not include any original testimonies, his statement could reflect how the Izinkumbi thought about and portrayed themselves, although one should remain wary of Grout's tribal lens. What is interesting is what seems to have been the Izinkumbi's portrayal of

[15] William Clifford Holden, *History of the Colony of Natal, South Africa* (A. Heylin, 1855): 205-207.
[16] Holden, *History of the Colony of Natal,* 206.
[17] Holden, *History of the Colony of Natal,* 207.
[18] Statement of Rev Lewis Grout in James Archbell*,* 32.
[19] Statement of Rev Lewis Grout in James Archbell*,* 56.
[20] Statement of Rev Lewis Grout in James Archbell*,* 56-57.

themselves as a grouping comprised of several other groups; a collective of collectives or *ama* groups. Grout interpreted this as them being a group of separate 'tribes,' or a collective of people with various *ama* allegiances. Grout's account gives some sense of the Izinkumbi's layeredness, highlighting their mobility and political fluidity.

These contradictory views revealed a sense of colonial 'doublethink.' On the one hand, the counterpoints to the dominant devastation views somewhat recognised African polities' mobility not as an erasure of their past but as their form of continuation. At the same time, however, they believed that aboriginal African groupings moved around as solid, unchanging masses, maintaining an archaic identity. They thus allowed for movement, so long as that group moved as an unchanging 'tribe.' Despite these viewpoints, most of the commission continued down the devastation path, and groups like the Izinkumbi — as will be shown — were not considered aboriginal.

Fynn's Evidence

One more contributor to the commission is worth considering as they provide further information on the Izinkumbi and other trading groups. This contributor was Henry Fynn, who was recently made assistant Resident Magistrate for Pietermaritzburg. Fynn's statement to the commission was published in different media, including an edition of the *Natal Mercury*.[21] In this instance, his evidence was reshaped, with specific points he made to the commission omitted or rearranged. Thus, it is better to use his direct statement from the documents that James Archbell compiled.[22] It appears, however, that even this edition also has missing information. Within Archbell's compilation, Fynn mentioned that he annexed 'two maps with lists and a tabular statement'[23] but they were not included in the publication. The whereabouts of these maps are currently unknown.

[21] See "Evidence of H. F. Fynn 1852 Commission.," *Natal Mercury*, April 14, 1853, Fynn Family Papers File 8, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[22] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission, Vol. 5,* 46.
[23] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, 46.

Out of the 80,000 – 100,000 Africans living in Natal, Fynn supported the devastation stance, arguing that only 'a few thousand natives [were] admitted as rightful claimants for land.'[24] He presented a list of the thirteen 'tribes' living between the Zulu Kingdom and the Mzimkhulu River in 1834. See Figure 4 below.

Tribe.	Chief.
Amabiya	Umabiya
Amabombo	Umtukuteli
Amacwabi	A portion only of this tribe were here as stragglers.
Amaduma	Dumisa
Amadunge	Dontsela
Enhlangwini	Fodo
Amahlongwa	Umjulela
Amakanya	Umakuta
Amalanga	Ufiyedwa, Regent
Amanyafu	Umkalipi
Izinkumbi	Consisting of remnants of tribes under one chief, Vunthlazi
Abasembotweni	Umahizo
Amatuli	Umatubani, Regent.

Figure 4. Fynn's list of African tribes living in Natal in 1834

Fynn's list was a gross underrepresentation when compared to Shepstone's list of tribes published just a decade later, which showed that there were, in fact, over 90 different 'tribes' in Natal at that time.[25] Fynn suggested that all Natal Africans should fall into either one of three categories:

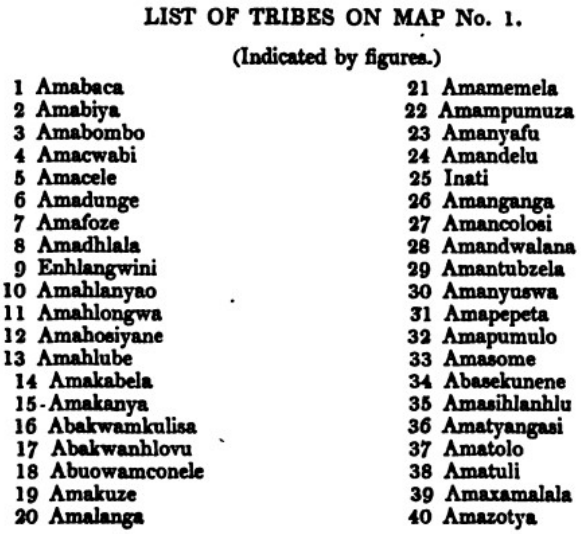
> 1. Those who for many generations have continued on their native soil under all difficulties of war and famine.
> 2. Those tribes who formerly occupied this country, were driven from it by the wars of Chaka, and returned to it either under the first English Settlers, the Dutch Boers, or the present government.
> 3.Those who dwelt originally beyond this district, but have entered it from time to time as refugees.[26]

[24] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, 51.
[25] See Guy, "The Tribal History Project."
[26] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, 51.

In other words, there would have been 1) those who were aboriginal, 2) those who were *sort of* aboriginal, and 3) those who were foreign. Fynn's first two divisions were similar to Grout's: those living in Natal and those who were 'in something of a tribal state' in Natal after Shaka. Interestingly, Grout and Fynn's in-between categories were made for those who did not quite fit within the parameters for aboriginal or foreign. Fynn placed the Izinkumbi under his second category, explaining that they were a collection of 'remnants of tribes' under Vundhlase. The very existence of these 'remnants' or 'something of a tribal state' categories introduced ambiguity, showing that there were instances where groups could not fit into existing rigid categories that were subsequently altered to accommodate the misfits.

Fynn presented the commission with 'unpublished maps' that he 'illustrated before the commission.'[27] The maps were intended to assist in identifying the 'native tribes which dwelt originally' in Natal and those currently living there in 1852. These maps were not included in Archbell's publication. Nevertheless, Fynn's descriptions of his maps are detailed enough to work with here. The first map represented — in blue — the 'tribes' in Fynn's first category, and it showed where 'they dwelt immediately previous to the Zulu invasion in the reign of Chaka.'[28] 'There were many other tribes,' Fynn stated, 'existing here at that period, but there are now only a few kraals scattered throughout the country.'[29] A list of the 40 'tribes' on this map was included.[30] See Figure 5 below.

[27] See "Evidence of H. F. Fynn 1852 Commission.," *Natal Mercury*, April 14, 1853, Fynn Family Papers File 8, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[28] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, 46.
[29] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, 46.
[30] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, 47.



LIST OF TRIBES ON MAP No. 1.

(Indicated by figures.)

1 Amabaca	21 Amamemela
2 Amabiya	22 Amampumuza
3 Amabombo	23 Amanyafu
4 Amacwabi	24 Amandelu
5 Amacele	25 Inati
6 Amadunge	26 Amanganga
7 Amafoze	27 Amancolosi
8 Amadhlala	28 Amandwalana
9 Enhlangwini	29 Amantubzela
10 Amahlanyao	30 Amanyuswa
11 Amahlongwa	31 Amapepeta
12 Amahosiyane	32 Amapumulo
13 Amahlube	33 Amasome
14 Amakabela	34 Abasekunene
15 Amakanya	35 Amasihlanhlu
16 Abakwamkulisa	36 Amatyangasi
17 Abakwanhlovu	37 Amatolo
18 Abuowamconele	38 Amatuli
19 Amakuze	39 Amaxamalala
20 Amalanga	40 Amazotya

Figure 5. Fynn's list of African tribes living in Natal before Shaka's incursion.

In red, Fynn's second map showed 'the present position of all the native tribes in Natal, specifying those [a mere fourteen 'tribes'] which dwelt beyond its boundaries just before the Zulu invasion.'[31] The accompanying list contained 'all the native tribes now residing in this District, with the names of their respective chiefs, the localities they occupied immediately before the Zulu invasion, and their position at the present time.' The 'tribes' included on Fynn's second map are shown in Figure 6 below.

[31] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, *Proceedings of the Commission, Vol. 5*, 46.

LIST OF TRIBES INDICATED BY FIGURES ON MAP No. 2, WITH THE NAMES OF THEIR CHIEFS.

TRIBE. CHIEF.

1 Amabaca—Dushani
2 Amabazo—Dabankulu
3 Amabiya—Mabiya
4 Amabombo—Mtukuteli
5 Amabomvu—Somahatye
6 Amacwabi { Musi / Mafangonyana / Zulu (Indúna)
7 Amacele { Makitikiti / Xabash
8 Amacunu—Pakade
9 Amadube—Mahlukana (Regent)
10 Amaduma—Dumisa

11 Amadunge—Dontsela
12 Amafoze—Nocasa
13 Amagoba—Moyeni
14 Amadhdala—Gatyu
15 Enhlangwini { Fodo / Sidoi / Gubevu / Maiza / Bihla / Zwidi
16 Amanhlanyao—Gwadu
17 Amahlongwa { Joli / Mgau
18 Amahosiyane—Matyisa
19 Amahlube { Langalibalele / Hlwatika (late Sowetye)
20 Amakabaala—Makedama
21 Amakanya—Makutu
22 Abakwamkulisa—Matyinga
23 Abakwanhlovu—Nondabula
24 Abakwazwana—Cengizi
25 Abakwamcosene—Simikiwana
26 Amakuze { Kukulela / Ciyana
27 Amalanga—Mancengeza
28 Amalatu—Pahlwa
29 Amangwane—Zikali
30 Amamemela—Tyukangubo
31 Amampumuzu—Didileku
32 Amanyafu—Kalipi
33 Amundelu Ndelu
34 Inati { Tyns / Dibilika
35 Izi[illegible]kumbi—Vunthlazi
36 Amanganga—Manzini

37 Amancoloei { Faku / Bacela
38 Amandwalana—Gugemela
39 Amanbuzela
40 Amangogoma—Sipanhla
41 Umwuxayo—Sotondoza
42 Amanyuswa { Dubulana / Gapangapa / Kakai / Qume
43 Amapepeta { Umyeka / Macala / Umkizwane
44 Amampumulo { Matyiman / Mkonto
45 Amaqanyeni—Ngoza
46 Amasome { Moraule / Noyangwane / Kude
47 Abasembotweni—Mgici
48 Abasekunene—Luhlala
49 Amasihlanhla or Abambu { Siyingela / Potshana

50 Amatyingasi—Mgone
51 Abatembu—Nodada
52 Amatolo—Diginhlela
53 Amatuli—Umnini
54 Amaximba—Jantye
55 Amaxamalala Gatyu—Gaju
Amazotya—Nomabunga

N. B.—The Tribes numbered 2, 5, 8, 9, 13, 24, 28, 29, 40, 41, 45, 47 51, & 54, dwelt beyond the boundaries of this District at the time of the Zulu nvasion.

Figure 6. Fynn's list of African tribes living in Natal in 1852

As per Fynn's second map, he explained that there were 'forty tribes […] who having been driven from this country by war, have returned to this their native soil, either under the first English settlers, the Dutch, or during British possession.'[32]

The Izinkumbi were listed as 'tribe 35,' naming Vundhlase as their current chief in 1852. It marked their current location within Natal as 'Ifafa to Umzumbe, on the coast.' It added an extra note on the Izinkumbi stating that they were the 'remnant of about 34 tribes, the first of whom returned to Natal in 1834, and Aborigines between Umvoti and Utukela […].'[33] Fynn failed to mention that the Izinkumbi had begun aggregating in the 1820s despite having moved in and out of the region over the years to avoid conflict with Shaka and Dingane. Nevertheless, he mentioned that the Izinkumbi comprised various tribes and 'aborigines.'

The 1852 commission was a discursive colonial space meant to refine Natal into a tribalscape. The statements and evidence presented reflect how most colonial administrators and agents thought about and represented the African population of Natal at this time. Land and labour were of great concern to the colony, and defining African belonging would have mitigated labour shortages. Most of the commission participants bought into and argued for the devastation narrative, which concluded that most Africans in Natal were foreigners. Such an argument would justify diminishing the locations, making Africans more susceptible to *isibhalo.* Distinguishing which Africans were aboriginal and which were 'refugees' was thus of great importance.

However, this new colonial polarity of aboriginal and foreign could not encompass the Izinkumbi. They were ambiguous because of the limitations of colonial classificatory discourse. Colonial notions of tribes saw change, movement, and fluidity as markers of foreignness and detrimental to a group's integrity. For a group to be aboriginal, they had to remain the same since their inception. The Izinkumbi were not one homogenous group or *ama.* They comprised parts of several groupings, some of which had lived in the Natal space since the late eighteenth century. The commission thus adopted other descriptions for the Izinkumbi, such as 'remnants' to make

[32] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, 52.
[33] Statement of Henry Fynn in Archbell, 50.

sense of their social and spatial dynamism. They were essentially considered to be made up of the leftovers of 'older tribes' and thus in 'something of a tribal state.'

Visualising the Tribalscape: The First Tribal Map of the Natal Colony

Following the commission, in 1853, one of the earliest tribal maps of Natal was completed under the title 'Sketch of the District of Natal with its Native Tribes' see Figure 7 below.[34]

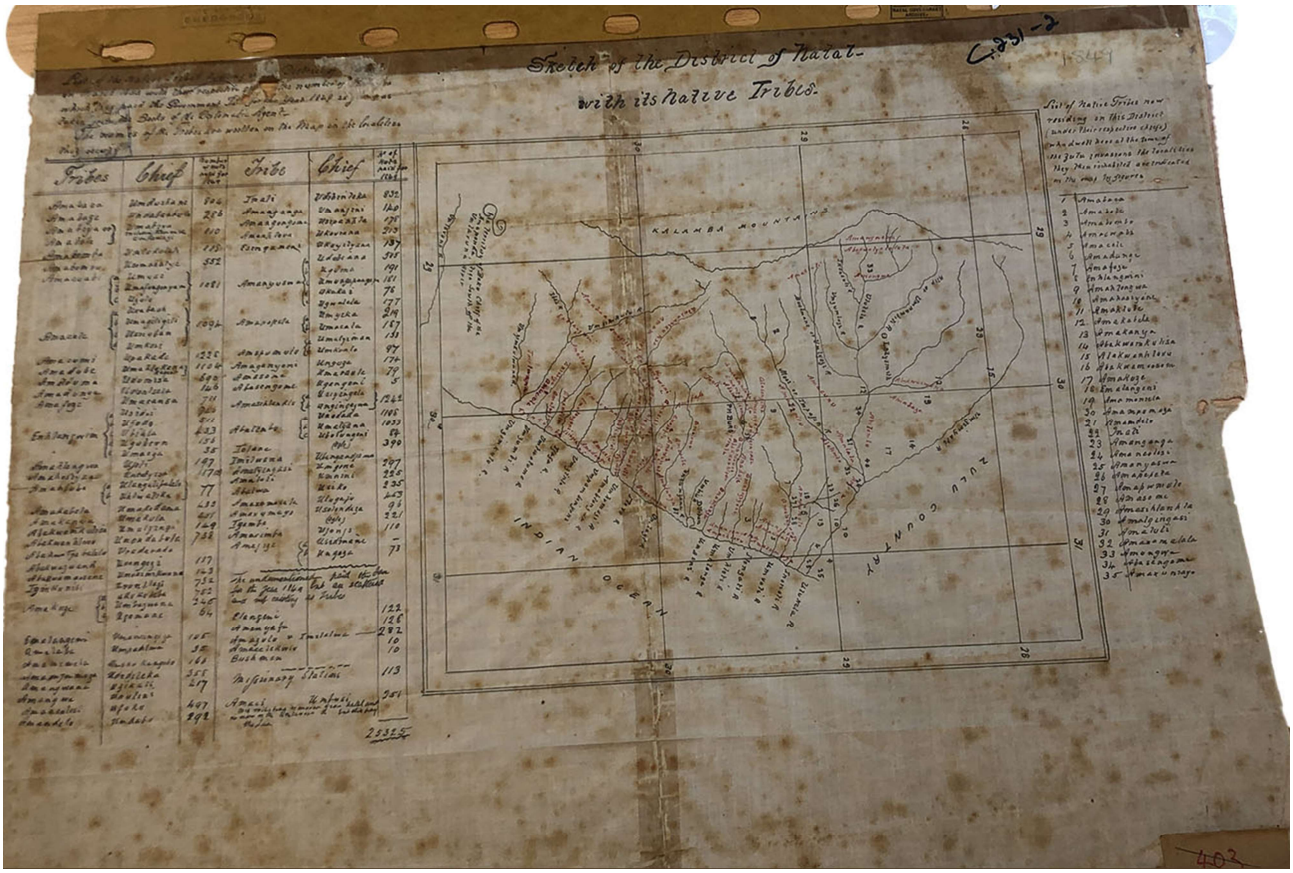


Figure 7. Sketch of the District of Natal with its Native Tribes. Unknown (possibly James Perrin), *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*, 1853, 1853, M2/134, NAB.

[34] Unknown (possibly James Perrin), *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*, 1853, 1853, M2/134, NAB.

The map depicted the ‘tribes’ across Natal, representing them with written names or numbers in red or black ink.[35] The map included the Izinkumbi and placed them along the southern Natal coastline between the Mzimkhulu and Ifafa Rivers, see figure 8.

Figure 8. The Izinkumbi on the tribal map (their name is along the coast line, shown by the arrow). Unknown (possibly James Perrin), *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*, 1853, 1853, M2/134, NAB.

[35] Unknown (possibly James Perrin), *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*, 1853, 1853, M2/134, NAB.

Despite having no mark of its author, James Perrin likely drafted the map. James Perrin was a trader in Pondoland and a lexicographer who began working on an *isiZulu* dictionary in Natal in the 1850s.[36] He was also allegedly an amanuensis for Henry Fynn throughout the 1850s and clerk for the Secretary for Native Affairs in 1856.[37] Several snippets of evidence show that he likely crafted this map or had some influence over it. Documents compiled by linguist Wilhelm Bleek and sent to German cartographer A. Petermann in the 1850s contained some of Perrin's documents.In 1856, Petermann used these documents to compile a map almost identical to Perrin's.[38] Furthermore, a letter from Perrin to Garden dated 11 March 1853 substantiates Perrin's involvement in the map's creation. Perrin wrote:

> I beg to hand you a map of the Native Tribes of Natal which is more correct than the first as I have been unable to investigate the subject more thoroughly lately, it is an exceedingly difficult affair, to obtain absolute correctness.[39]

Perin's views on Natal were very tribal-centric. He researched the 'tribes' of Natal and their placement within the colony, and he made at least two maps to represent the information he had acquired. Hints within the map suggest that Perrin supported the aboriginal-refugee dichotomy. First are the two tabular statements framing the actual map. The statement on the left marked the

> Native Tribes dwelling in the District of Natal in March 1853 with their respective [chiefs], the number of [huts] which they paid the Government taxes for in the year 1849 [illegible] as taken from the Books of the Diplomatic Agent. The names of the Tribes are written on the map in the localities they occupy.[40]

The right table was slightly different, as it only showed the

> Native Tribes now residing in this District (under their respective chiefs) who dwelt here at the time of the Zulu invasions the localities they inhabited are indicated on the map by figures [numbers].[41]

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[36] James Perrin, *An English-Kafir Dictionary of the Zulu-Kafir Language, as Spoken by the Tribes of the Colony of Natal: Church of England Missions* (May & Davis, 1855).
[37] Fynn, "Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn per His Son H.F. Fynn," 7.
[38] See A Peterman, *Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthes' geographischer Anstalt über wichtige neue Erforschungen auf dem Gesammtgebiete der Geographie von A. Petermann* (Justus Perthes, 1856): 362-375; see also Wilhelm Heinrich Immanuel Bleek, *Zulu Legends. Edited by J.A. Engelbrecht. [An Edition of a Manuscript Dated 1857, Entitled "Inhlamvu Ezikulunywayo Gabantu BakwaZulu. Thirty Chapters of Zulu Traditions and Customs. In the Original Language, with an English Translation and Notes. By Wm. H.I. Bleek." With Plates, Including a Portrait.].* (Pretoria; Morija [printed], 1952).
[39] R.J. Garden, "Letter from James Perrin March 1853" (1853), A1157 Garden Papers vol.1, NAB.
[40] Unknown, *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*.
[41] Unknown, *Sketch of the District of Natal with Its Native Tribes*.

Perrin's map not only arranged African people into 'tribes' but subdivided these tribes into those who had been in Natal since a certain period — the 'true aboriginals' — and those who had come afterwards, or refugees. Just as in the 1852 commission, the map left no room for mobility and change and instead likened these qualities to social erasure. The people living in Natal before the 1820s — as marked by numbers — were much fewer than those who came after, marked in red. Hence, the map reinforced the absence of people, showing that most of Natal had been empty as per the myth of devastation.

The Izinkumbi were only included in the first list, which classified them as refugees or non-aboriginals, a group that spontaneously found its way into Natal. This suggested that they did not yet exist during Shaka's invasions or throughout his reign, although the various polities that would later form the Izinkumbi were around at the time. The map failed to account for the period between the 1820s and 1843, and instead, it painted a static image of Natal, suggesting that there were no social and political changes to the landscape over these two decades. If African polities had moved out of the Natal borders — which would not have even existed at the time — during or after Shaka's reign, they were made absent from the landscape. Similarly, Africans were considered non-aboriginal if groupings joined different chiefs and formed new alliances under new collective names. Again, this demonstrates how the colonial milieu and representation of things completely disregarded the political fluidity and mobility of the African communities in Natal. Yet the movement between different leaders and groups, as we have seen, was a crucial part of precolonial Natal's social landscape.

Conclusion

In 1852, a colonial commission sought to arrange Africans into a tribalscape to solve land and labour issues. The commission was guided by tribal stereotypes that saw African groups as timeless and bound by the same unchanging language, kinship, history, and traditions. Once tribal groupings were established, the commission introduced subcategories— such as native, refugee and aboriginal — which distinguished indigenous Africans from those they considered to be outsiders. As per the devastation narrative, most commission participants concluded that Natal was mostly empty by annexation, and the vast majority of Africans in Natal had no claim to it.

Throughout the commission, the Izinkumbi sparked confusion and ambiguity because these categories could not encompass them entirely. Closely examining the ambiguities in these categorisation processes reveals how the Izinkumbi forged and shaped connections in pre and early colonial Natal. These cases highlight political fluidity, showing how different *ama* groupings could mix and be part of other grouping processes.

The Izinkumbi did not meet the prerequisites for the colonial category of 'aboriginal tribe,' which included sedentism, fixity, and permanence. The colonial administration could not comprehend the Izinkumbi as a fluid and ongoing process. For them, a grouping existed in an unchanging state before or after Shaka. Yet, the Izinkumbi comprised various *ama* groupings that existed before Shaka. The Izinkumbi grouping was not one homogenous collection of people but a process of using mobility and political fluidity to shape and reshape themselves and their connections to others. Colonial onlookers thus considered the Izinkumbi anomalous and unusual; both old and new, and aboriginal and foreign. Their existence as a 'new tribe' was highly paradoxical to standard definitions of the category as fixed and permanent. Commission participants and the administration had no choice but to turn to auxiliary labels such as 'leftovers' or 'remnants' from that time, forming 'something of a tribal state.' The first tribal map of Natal echoed these sentiments.

The administration's discursive difficulties reveal the social and political structures of the Izinkumbi. Political openness, mobility and fluidity were dominant strategies employed within the precolonial Natal landscape. These trading groups were not 'remnants of earlier social formation[s]' that were 'left behind.' They intentionally shaped themselves in multifaceted and fluid ways to avoid absorption or coercion into past and newly forming states, becoming 'in-between' in the colonial perspective. These so-called 'in-between' people created a sense of administrative anxiety because they blurred the lines and definitions that colonial discourse was so desperately trying to set in place.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Strategic Cooperation and Covert Resistance: Navigating the new 'Lower Umkomanzi' District, 1853-1863

Introduction

By the 1850s, the colony's future was uncertain; stunted settler population growth and meagre exportations placed Natal on the edge of financial ruin. Native administration, the burgeoning labour gap, and ongoing cattle raids from Nomansland – the stretch of land between Natal and Mpondoland – added to these pressures. The colonial government attempted to address these issues throughout the decade by closing the southern frontier and establishing commercial agriculture. These concerns intersected in southern Natal — between the Mkhomazi and Mzimkhulu Rivers — as the region held agricultural potential and could be used to police the border. The government established the 'Lower Umkomanzi District' in southern Natal and instated Henry Fynn as its first magistrate, hoping his self-proclaimed influence over the region would bring order to the border and drive cotton farming experiments.

During these events, the Izinkumbi maintained their system of strategic cooperation with the colonial government. Vundhlase took advantage of Shepstone and Fynn's political rivalry to undermine Fynn's control. Vundhlase aided in bringing control to the southern border by extending her control over Fynn's past adherents, whom she dubbed the 'Nsimbi.' She got the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi to participate in the cotton farm experiments — initiated by the government over the 1850s —, which were generally successful. At the same time, however, she continued overlooking those of her followers who evaded *isibhalo.* The Izinkumbi also exploited the government's jurisdictional limitations. They had a hand in colonial resistance operations — what the colony would have labelled illicit activities — in Nomansland, such as gunrunning. They also used the border to mitigate colonial interference with their politics. Chapter Seven shows how the Izinkumbi navigated the changing political landscape between 1853 and 1856. Because colonial control was still limited in the region, the Izinkumbi could operate through strategic cooperation and evasion.

Natal in Distress

For the first decade after Natal's establishment, native administration and the burgeoning labour question placed agricultural pursuits on hold. Settler growth slowed drastically as several existing settlers deserted Natal and potential settlers moved to other colonies because of cattle raiding. By 1856, Natal's settler population totalled a meagre 8000.[1] 'Without immigration,' a *Natal Witness* article lamented, 'we despair of achieving anything like reasonable success within the compass of the present generation.'[2] Plagued by this 'social starvation,'[3] Natal's 'endless tracts of land, a good climate, fertile soil, and rich crops of sugar, coffee, cotton and wool' were 'all useless.'[4] The absence of a lucrative export and native labour slowed immigration and trapped Natal in a 'depressed state of commerce' that threatened the colony's 'inevitable' ruin.[5]

Ongoing cattle raids from Nomansland — what the colony considered as the 'lawless' stretch of land between Faku's Kingdom and the colony of Natal — worsened the situation. Since its inception, the Natal colony fell on the receiving end of the livestock theft trade to the south and along its western borders. The mountainous landscape of this interstice made it easy for raiders to descend onto Natal's peripheral farms — particularly those on the colony's western border near the Bushman's River — and steal livestock. The government and local farmers accused Bushmen and their African associates — such as the amaBhaca — of organising and participating in these raids. Given the raids' spontaneity, farmers were often unable to recover stolen stock or prevent future raids. There are a handful of cases where the government responded to raids, namely with small military expeditions to reclaim cattle and attack those they suspected of raiding. While these smaller measures sometimes recovered stolen stock, they appear to have had little or no effect on the frequency of raids.[6] A mere dozen cases had reached the courts by the mid-1850s, and of these, only three Africans faced conviction.[7]

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[1] George McCall Theal, *History of South Africa since 1795 Vol.3* (C. Struik, 1964): 247.
[2] "The Prospects of the Country," *Natal Witness*, May 14, 1852: 2.
[3] "Pietermaritzburg: Friday, October 16th, 1857," *Natal Witness*, October 16, 1857: 3.
[4] "Pietermaritzburg: Friday, October 16th, 1857," *Natal Witness*, October 16, 1857: 3.
[5] "The Prospects of the Country," 2; Theal, *History of South Africa,* 220-221.
[6] Theal, *History of South Africa since,* 230; John B. Wright, *Bushman Raiders of the Drakensberg, 1840-1870: A Study of Their Conflict with Stock-Keeping Peoples in Natal* (University of Natal Press, 1971): 41, 52-54, 84; Patricia Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland: Rock Paintings of the Drakensberg Bushmen as a Reflection of Their Life and Thought* (Witwatersrand University Press Publications, 2010): 27-29, 55-59.
[7] "Pietermaritzburg, 17 November, 1854 from Cloete," *Natal Witness*, December 1, 1854.

By the end of the 1840s, raids increased in intensity as Chief Faku of the Pondos withdrew from the Maitland Treaty of 1844, which offered him control over the land between the Mzimkhulu and Mtata Rivers in exchange for him finding and returning stolen cattle to the colony. Faku never held any authority over the raiding communities, and his repeated failures to control them only impacted him financially, as the colonial government took his cattle as compensation. By 1848, Faku ceded the land between the Mthamvuma and Mzimvubu Rivers to the Natal colony, which only officially annexed it in the 1860s.[8]

Without Faku, the government required alternate means to reduce the frequency of these raids, although it seems that Faku's involvement was never entirely sufficient. In 1849, the colony introduced buffer locations at different raiding hotspots, slotting African communities between white farms and Nomansland to curb cattle raiding. By the 1850s, however, raiding had grown so troublesome that several farmers deserted the colony for better prospects overseas.[9] The government adopted two avenues to address the various financial and security issues: increasing security along the southern border and experimenting with commercial farming.

Securing the Southern Border

Between 1851 and 1855, the colony passed three ordinances to increase security. Ordinance No. 5 of 1851 focused on ending the illegal gun trade, threatening perpetrators with the death sentence.[10] According to the *Natal Witness,* Africans were 'provided with arms' to great numbers 'by the smuggling of English traders.'[11] The ordinance did little to curb the gun trade, which continued to thrive because the southern border was so unguarded. The trade became so lucrative in the next decade or so that an estimated 100,000 guns had reached African hands in 1872 and that Natal had 'contributed a fair proportion' to this illegal trade.[12] Ordinance No.8 of November 17, 1854, aimed 'to promote the establishment of Volunteer Corps for the Defense of the

[8] Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland,* 55-59.
[9] Wright, *Bushman Raiders,* 102-103.
[10] "Ordinance No. 5 of 1851: Parties selling game or ammunition to natives," in Dunbar Moodie ed, *Ordinances, Proclamations Relating to the Colony of Natal 1836-1855 Vol. 1.* (Pietermaritzburg: May and Davis, 1856): 532.
[11] "Overberg News," *Natal Witness*, October 22, 1852: 2
[12] *Natal Witness*, December 31, 1872: 4

District.'[13] This volunteer protection would mostly bring 'better control of the native population,'[14] and 'check and punish the Stealing of cattle.'[15] Finally, the Natal government established a new southerly district, the 'Lower Umkomas District,' between the Mkhomazi to the Mzimkhulu Rivers. The government instated Henry Fynn as a magistrate, hoping his self-proclaimed influence over the region would help with governance.

According to Duncan Du Bois, this district's establishment marked the first time southern Natal came under official colonial control.[16] While the region was given a name, designated borders and assigned a magistrate, this hardly constituted any tangible colonial control. Indeed, colonial administration over this district took a decade to establish a decent foothold. Fynn even described the region as 'entirely occupied by natives,' having virtually no settler presence until 1857.[17] Alfred Watts'—the current surveyor general's—1855 map of Natal left southern Natal as a blank space, just as earlier surveyor general maps had done, showing the continued lack of knowledge and control over the region.[18] See Figures 9 and 10 below.

[13] Ordinance No. 8, 1854. "Ordinance to promote the establishment of volunteer corps for the defence of the district," in Charles Cadiz and Robert Lyon, eds., *Natal Ordinances, Laws and Proclamations*, vol. 1 (Pietermaritzburg: Government Printer, 1910): 174.
[14] "From the Government Gazette, Oct. 31, 1854," *Natal Witness*, November 17, 1854: 4.
[15] Ordinance No. 1, 1855, 'Ordinance to more effectually check and punish the stealing of cattle,' in Cadiz and Lyon, eds., *Natal Ordinances,* 175.
[16] Duncan Du Bois, "A Sketch of Colonial Umkomaas," *Natalia* 45 (2015): 26–38.
[17] "H.F. Fynn to Mr Hawkins," November 9, 1859, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[18] Alfred Watts, *Map of the Colony of Natal, South Africa*, 1855, 1855, https://antiquarianauctions.com/lots/map-of-the-colony-of-natal, AntiquarianAuctions.com.

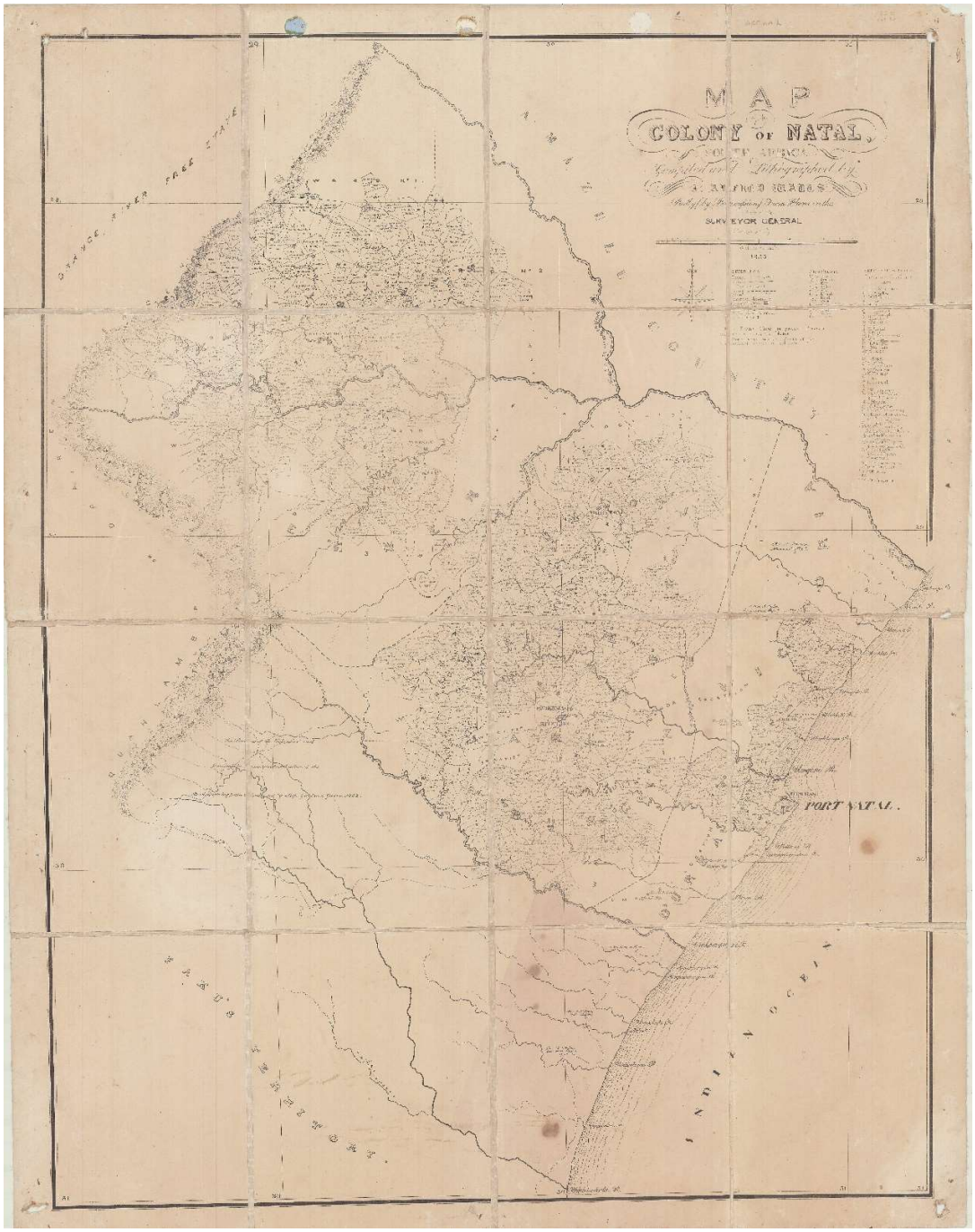
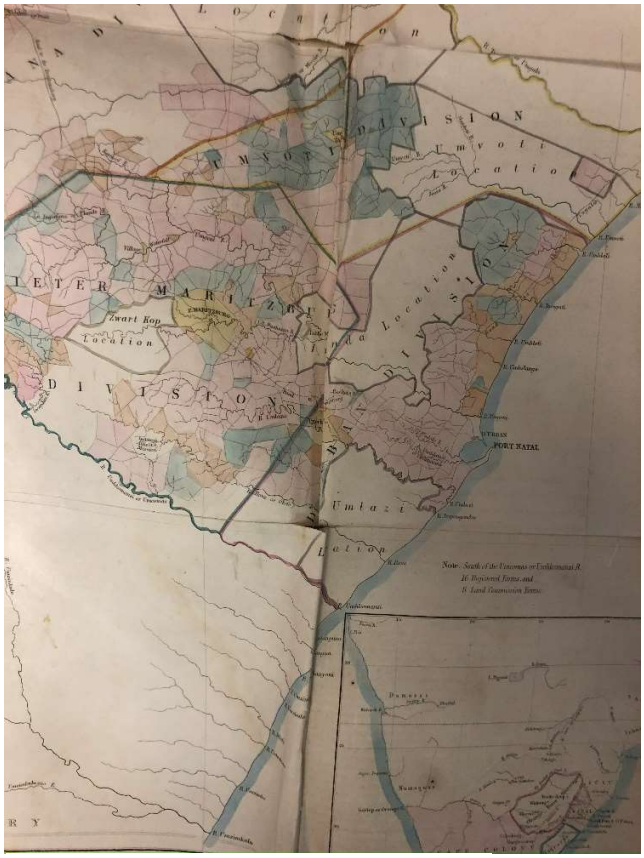


Figure 9. Alfred Watts, *Map of the Colony of Natal, South Africa*, 1855, https://antiquarianauctions.com/lots/map-of-the-colony-of-natal, AntiquarianAuctions.com.

a. William Stanger, 1848



b. William Stanger, 1850

Figure 10. Maps of Surveyor General William Stanger from 1848 and 1850 depicting southern Natal as a blank space. Map a: William Stanger, *Sketch of Natal Showing Its Proposed Division, Projected Towns, Villages Etc.*, 1848, 1848, M2 130, NAB. Map b: William Stanger, *The District of Natal: Showing Approximately the Number and Situation of the Grants, under the Proclamations of 1843 & 1848, and the Situation of Native Locations, Crown Lands Already Surveyed and the Boundaries of the Divisions*, 1850, 1850, M2/95, NAB.

Fynn's primary objective was to procure African labour.[19] Financial and workforce constraints, however, severely hindered the first few years of his magisterial duties. Throughout his five years as a resident magistrate, Fynn complained about the poor conditions, writing:

> As His Excellency did not visit this district, I had no alternative than to build an office at my own cost in the central part of my division best adapted to the wants of the Europeans living in it […] The extent of this Division in its length is equal to any other division within the Colony for all which, with the exception of this, they are provided with the necessary aid for the Magistrate's performance of his duties.[20]

Alongside securing labourers, Fynn was tasked with '[fulfilling] all the requirements of the Audit Office' and addressing the influx of Africans into Natal.[21] Yet, no detailed records of the southern region were in place to define who belonged where and throughout Fynn's time as a magistrate, no land had been set aside for intended locations.[22] Without plans for these confinements, it would have been virtually impossible to police the population this way. In reality, Fynn was stretched thin and was 'fully of the opinion that this Division's duties [could not] be effectually carried out by one Magistrate or by the necessary border agent.'[23] Nevertheless, he continued his duties, attempting to supply the colony with labourers and bring administrative control to the south.

Locating the Izinkumbi in the Lower Umkomazi District

The Izinkumbi responded to the onset of the new district in various ways. Just before Fynn was officially installed as the new Magistrate, Vundhlase left her Mthwalume homestead in 1853, crossing the border into Nomansland to live with one of her sons until about 1860.[24] She

[19] "H.F. Fynn to Mr Hawkins," November 9, 1859, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[20] "H.F. Fynn to Mr Hawkins."
[21] "H.F. Fynn to Mr Hawkins."
[22] "Despatch from Sir G. Grey to Lord J Russell, December 3 1855. In Legislative Council No. 22" (1890), NCP, NAB.
[23] Henry Francis Fynn, "Undated Letter from Henry Francis Fynn," n.d., Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts: 200.
[24] H.C. Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell," August 1952, Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.

maintained her chiefly status over the Izinkumbi — although from a distance — and her adherents often travelled between Nomansland and the Mthwalume to relay important information to her. Her move to Nomansland had no negative impacts on the Izinkumbi, which continued to grow as a polity over the next decade. By 1855, more followers had settled under Vundhlase, now known as, according to Reverend Holden, the 'queen' over a 'thousand people' and a hundred kraals.'[25]

Vundhlase's southerly movement was possibly her way of avoiding Fynn's control. A researcher named H.C. Karlson explained in a letter to Killie Campbell that Fynn descendants from the 1950s — whom he had interviewed — credited Vundhlase's dislike of Fynn as the motive for her movement.[26] While the archive holds no tangible evidence showing that the Izinkumbi and Vundhlase were aware of the changes coming to the south, Vundhlase would likely have gained some information on these developments. Indeed, Shepstone had already established relations with the Izinkumbi, given that they were paying the hut tax and had acted on several of his requests [see Chapter 4 and Chapter 6].

Subsequent researchers have since echoed Karlson's observations that Vundhlase 'reacted [to Fynn's employment] by leaving the colony.'[27] These arguments, however, have somewhat reduced Vundhlase's decisions to be reactionary or purely emotional as opposed to measured and calculated. Since becoming chief, Vundhlase circumvented specific threats to her leadership. While she may not have liked Fynn and other colonial authorities, she did not express these feelings outright. Until then, Vundhlase had accommodated Fynn, offering him shelter on his journeys to and from Mpondoland and even offered him forces for Harry Smith's failed 'Zulu contingent.' Vundhlase's latest dealings with Fynn show her response was more calculated than reactionary. She was aware of the value of diplomacy and slowly built it up with significant figures.

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[25] William Clifford Holden, *History of the Colony of Natal, South Africa* (A. Heylin, 1855): 44.
[26] See H.C. Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell," August 1952, Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of Karlson's interview transcripts are currently unknown.
[27] Jackson, "Familial Authority, 63-65. Jackson cites Spencer and Karlson. See Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal,* vol. 6, 222-223.

At the same time, however, Fynn's methods were quite intrusive. Fynn, according to his European son Fynn jnr, advocated 'to keep natives entirely to their own customs' as doing the opposite would 'leave them to stroll away from any control benefitting them.'[28] However, Fynn already had a reputation for invasive tactics. His latest political display occurred between 1848 and 1849 when he illegally confiscated cattle from the amaBhaca in Nomansland.[29] Vundhlase certainly would have been wary of his upcoming position in southern Natal. As a magistrate, Fynn would have been a new threat to her position. He would have the power to interfere in her dealings and could even call for her deposal. Her absence from the Mtwalume would not have prevented this, and she still needed to answer to Fynn's magistracy, even if by proxy.

Yet, her movement should not be entirely attributed to her relationship with Fynn. Vundhlase also played with colonial politics and administrative needs to gain distance from Fynn. Shepstone needed to increase security further south, and he believed that Henry Fynn's past adherents — then living near the Mzimvubu River — were out of control. After fleeing Natal in the 1830s, Henry Fynn left his adherents under the care of his *induna* Mvundhla. Over time, Fynn's African wives remarried and moved away, leaving his children to fend for themselves.[30] Fynn's descendants were involved in what the colony considered illicit activities, such as illegally occupying missionary land in Nomansland alongside other supposed 'abomination[s],' including dealings with a notorious raider and gunrunner named Hans Lochenberg.[31] Henry Fynn's son, Duka, even travelled to 'Hans Lochenberg's residence between Mtata and St. Johns and married his daughter Susa' or 'MaHansie.'[32]

In the early 1850s, Shepstone placed Vundhlase in charge over Fynn's past adherents, hoping she would bring order to them.[33] Vundhlase agreed to help Shepstone by bringing Fynn's adherents under her control. Interestingly, Fynn was not offered this task, given that they were his people. This highlights the political relationship between Vundhlase and Shepstone and attests to

[28] "Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn per His Son HF Fynn.".
[29] Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland,* 59-61.
[30] Secretary for Native Affairs 1/1/13 and 1/1/6 in Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal,* vol. 6, 238.
[31] T. Wakeford, "Letter from T. Wakeford to Henry Francis Fynn," August 20, 1850, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 1, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[32] "Statement of Maguntsha E'Nsimbini to James Stuart and William Bazley" (January 1907), Fynn Family Papers File 10: Notes on the Fynn Family Collected by James Stuart and William Bazely, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[33] Secretary for Native Affairs 1/1/13 and 1/1/6 Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal* vol. 6, 238.

Vundhlase's influence over the southern Natal region and beyond the Mthamvuma River. Vundhlase used her connection with Shepstone and her renown in southern Natal as a physical and political buffer against Fynn's magisterial authority.

After becoming regent over Henry Fynn's adherents, Vundhlase formed a new homestead for them, and their grouping became known as 'Nsimbi,' which translates to 'iron.'[34] According to H.C. Karlson, Vundhlase called Fynn's children Nsimbi because she 'told them, "If they stuck together, they would be strong as iron and could walk in the sunlight."'[35] According to a Nsimbi adherent named 'Maguntsha,' whom James Stuart interviewed in 1907, Vundhlase:

> Ordered Magopeni [Fynn's *induna*] to form the children into a section of the Izinkumbi to be known as Nsimbi and he established them in *kraals* at a place called Mhlangamkulu just south of the Mtwalume river, an area which Vundhlase held rule. Later on, they were again moved across the Mzimkulu River.'[36]

Interestingly, several past accounts mentioning the Nsimbi used 'Nsimbini' as their collective name, translating to 'place of iron.'[37] Even in his statement to James Stuart, Maguntsha used Nsimbi and Nsimbini interchangeably.[38] Official documents and dispatches, however, did use 'Nsimbi' or 'Insimbi.'[39] The collective of Nsimbi kraals under the Izinkumbi likely became called *Nsimbini.* Existing documentation did not use any prefixes to Nsimbi or Nsimbini. It appears from here onward, those of Henry Fynn's descendants who lived under Vundhalse took on the collective name, 'Nsimbi' or 'Nsimbini,' although several of these adherents also simultaneously identified as amaVundhla after their *induna,* Mavundhla. The amaVundhla, nevertheless, remained attached to Vundhlase via *ukukhonza*. The willingness of Fynn's past adherents to join Vundhlase attests to the political openness of the Izinkumbi and Vundhlase's influence over southern Natal. Social and political fluidity was crucial to the forging of the

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[34] George Dent, *Scholar's Zulu Dictionary: English-Zulu, Zulu-English* (Shuter and Shooter, 2009): 135.
[35] H.C. Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell," August 1952, Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[36] "Statement of Maguntsha E'Nsimbini.".
[37] There are several examples in the Fynn Family Papers. See H.C. Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell," August 1952, Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts; "Statement of Maguntsha E'Nsimbini to James Stuart and William Bazley" (January 1907), Fynn Family Papers File 10: Notes on the Fynn Family Collected by James Stuart and William Bazely, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[38] "Statement of Maguntsha E'Nsimbini."
[39] See "The Governor to the Secretary of State" (1908), Natal Further Correspondence Relating to Native Affairs, British Parliamentary Papers.

Nsimbi because it required the Izinkumbi to take in an entirely new group. It also shows that Vundhlase likely had some relationship with Fynn's people and that they took her leadership seriously.

Thus, Vundhlase was crucial to the government's attempts to bring order to southern Natal. Because of her influence, she could easily take responsibility for Fynn's adherents. Chiefless groups were of great concern to Shepstone because they threatened instability.[40] The Mvundhlas could not keep their subjects under control, at least according to colonial standards. Until the 1850s, Vundhlase had demonstrated her ability to rule her people. Interestingly, Fynn had no say in what happened to his people. On various occasions, different people — the latest being Thomas Wakeford — called for Fynn to bring order to his people, but he never did.[41] The eventual turn to Vundhlase reveals the more fabled or fanciful nature of Fynn's so-called chiefly influence over the southern region. Vundhlase's authority, in contrast, was far more tangible. The move to install Vundhlase as leader over Fynn's people speaks to Shepstone's faith in Vundhlase and Vundhlase's overall ability and influence.

Planting the Seeds of Control: Cotton, Corroboration and Opposition

As these events unfolded, the colony investigated southern Natal's agricultural potential.[42] Many settlers and legislative council members believed commercial crops would give Natal the financial boost it needed and that 'sugar and coffee, rice, arrowroot, ginger, tobacco' could 'be grown to a considerable extent.'[43] In the early 1850s, several samples, such as corn and cotton, were grown in different regions to measure their cultivational potential in other parts of the colony.[44] With news spreading that crops including cotton and sugar were 'prove[n], beyond a doubt, to be the staple articles of Natal's prosperity,'[45] coastal land prices began increasing in 1852. Agricultural proposals featured in the *Natal Witness* suggested that African labour on commercial farms be an available substitute for the hut tax. If implemented, 'sugar plantations would spring up in every direction, the cultivation of cotton would soon follow, the [Natal

[40] See Government Notice, "Moodie Ordinances Vol.2 1836-1855" (n.d.), NCP, NAB: 230
[41] T Wakeford, "Letter from T. Wakeford to Henry Francis Fynn."
[42] "Lecture on Natal," *Natal Witness*, August 4, 1854: 3.
[43] "The Prospects of the Country," *Natal Witness*, May 14, 1852: 2.
[44] See, for example, "The May Fair," *Natal Witness*, May 21, 1852: 2.
[45] "Sale of Coastal Land," *Natal Witness*, July 9, 1852: 2.

Africans] would be taught habits of industry […] and this beautiful colony saved from impending ruin.'[46]

Southern Natal's agricultural benefits had been discussed just before the district's establishment. In 1852, William Holden highlighted southern Natal's commercial potential, stating that the Mkhomazi's environment was so perfect that cultivation would be effortless.[47] That same year, the *Natal Observer* considered the prospects of cotton farming in the Mkhomazi region. [48] The cotton experiment began in 1856, after the passing of the Natal Charter, which granted the colony an annual sum of £5000 for the native administration.[49] The new Natal governor, John Scott, fixed his attention in this matter on cotton, explaining that the colony was 'suited' to cotton exports, that its cultivation was 'peculiarly suited to our native population' and that with the aid of 'zealous officers' and 'Christian Missionaries' the goal of cotton exports would become obtainable.[50] In his motivation to the Council of the Cotton Supply Association, he wrote:

> Shortly after assuming this Government, my attention was drawn to the importance of introducing the cultivation of cotton amongst the natives, and I commissioned a merchant in Cape Town to procure me from America a small quantity of seeds of several varieties.[51]

Governor Scott also proposed using cotton as hut tax alternative to answer the labour question.[52] He intended:

> To instruct each tribe inhabiting a suitable locality to produce a certain quantity of cotton, which I would accept at a reasonable price, and in lieu of any equivalent amount of hut tax, and then dispose it to merchants [residing] here.[53]

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[46] R. C., "The Sugar Company: Letter to the Editor," *Natal Witness*, February 4, 1853: 4.
[47] Holden, *History of the Colony of Natal,* 266.
[48] Holden, *History of the Colony of Natal,* 266.
[49] Guy, *Theophilus Shepstone and the Forging of Natal,* 242.
[50] "Legislative Council," *Natal Witness*, November 19, 1858: 3.
[51] "Despatch from Liuetenant Governor Scott to the Right Honourable H. Labouchere." (n.d.), Correspondence of the Subject of the Growth of Cotton, U.K. Parliamentary Papers.
[52] "Despatch from Liuetenant Governor Scott.
[53] "Despatch from Liuetenant Governor Scott.

Under Shepstone's leadership, the cotton project would soon be underway in southern Natal. The area was chosen for its favourable climate, and the labour Fynn's so-called influence in the area promised to deliver. Shepstone formed a small team to oversee the project. Robert Struthers — a Scottish hunter — '[directed] proceedings,' John Shepstone — brother of Theophilus Shepsonte — would manage the project, and Fynn — given his 30-year relationship with the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi — was to '[visit] the tribes in person and [urge] them in cultivation.'[54] The Mthwalume area was selected as the primary growth site, and the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi were to provide the labour. As per one of Fynn's proposals, a 'Native Industrial Village' was to be added to the site to train Africans in cotton farming and production.[55]

The cotton project saw bouts of success and failure in its first few years. Vundhlase agreed to provide Shepstone with labourers for the cotton project, and the Izinkumbi were willing participants. The experiment was off to a good start, according to *The Natal Witness*:

> Towards the Umcomas, farmers are busy as bees. As sheep cannot be got for love or money, they are going to grow wool on trees in the form of cotton. Hopes of success are bright in this sphere, and the enterprise is stimulated by the government's having succeeded in prevailing on the natives to invest their industry in raising this valuable product.[56]

While the excerpt attributes this success to the government's ability to harness African labour power, Vundhlase's influence and leadership were highly significant in these processes. By the end of 1858, Vundhlase's followers produced 35,000 healthy cotton plants, grown food for the labourers, and erected several buildings essential to the endeavour. In just over two years, the Izinkumbi gained a reputation as having the 'largest and best cotton fields,'[57] amassing over 30 acres. The native cotton farms were highly celebrated at this time as they were considered a significant 'stride in progress.'[58] Vundhlase also got the Nsimbi to participate in cotton growing,

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[54] "H.F. Fynn to Mr Hawkins," November 9, 1859, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[55] Letter from Henry Francis Fynn in Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal, 1824-1857: A Biographical Register*, vol. 6 (University of Natal Press, 1981): 233.
[56] "Pietermaritzburg: Friday, July 5th, 1859," *Natal Witness*, July 15, 1859.
[57] Henry Francis Fynn, "Undated Letter from Henry Francis Fynn," n.d., Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[58] "Pietermaritzburg: November 25th, 1859," *Natal Witness*, November 25, 1859: 2.

and by just one year later, Duka Fynn of the Nsimbi had 'a fine field planted with cotton […] about five acres.'[59] Later, in 1859, the *Natal Witness* reported the 'arrival of the first shipment of the cotton grown by the natives of this colony', which did have 'defects, vis., the irregularity in the length of the staple, and dinginess in the colour' but that the 'venture will be highly satisfactory.'[60] By the end of 1860, prospects looked good as 'the natives' were

> bringing in their crops of cotton, which this year are considerably larger than those of last. From one field about enough is said to have been gathered to pay for a couple of ploughs advanced to stimulate this department of agricultural industry among the natives.[61]

Governor Scott had also set funds aside for a cotton gin in the new district.[62]

In the same breath, however, the cultivation project experienced difficulties. The first harvest was considered insignificant as seasonal rains delayed the planting process. Besides logistical issues, Fynn's magistracy faced labour issues. General cultivation, it appears, was slowed by the 'uncertainty' of African labour, and the current state of the African labour system threatened to reduce cotton to 'a decided failure.'[63] Fynn linked cotton-related labour issues to two primary causes. The first was African 'superstitions.'[64] Fynn never detailed what constituted these superstitions, but based on Keletso Atkin's work, we could assume they were likely grounded in the beliefs that only women could work fields and that working after sunset opened them to the dangers of *abathakathi* or evildoers.[65]

The second reason was, according to Fynn, because of 'the disappointment the natives would feel in not receiving a value [equal to] the urgency necessarily used to urge them to adopt its

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[59] R.B. Struthers, "Letter from R.B. Struthers" (December 11, 1859), Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 1, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[60] "Natal Cotton Grown by the Natives," *Natal Witness*, October 7, 1859: 2.
[61] "Pietermaritzburg: Nov 21st, 1860.," *Natal Witness*, November 23, 1860: 3.
[62] Scott, "Liuet. Govenor Scott to His Grace the Duke of Newcastle," December 31, 1859, Correspondence of the Subject of the Growth of Cotton, U.K. Parliamentary Papers.
[63] Alfred Southam, "Cotton Cultivation at Port Natal: To the Council of the Cotton Supply Association," *Natal Witness*, January 29, 1858: 4.
[64] "H.F. Fynn to Mr Hawkins," November 9, 1859, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[65] Keletso E. Atkins, *The Moon Is Dead! Give Us Our Money!: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843-1900* (Boydell & Brewer, Limited, 1993): 80-86.

culture.'[66] The Izinkumbi and Nsimbini workers were underpaid and often resorted to more rewarding work under private farmers. Fynn lamented that the influence he built with the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi over a 'period of thirty years' was being 'destroyed by private Europeans paying money to the chiefs'[67] to work on their land. In reality, the Izinkumbi were never under Fynn's influence, and they had been working for private farmers since the colony's establishment two decades prior. Vundhlase continued maintaining the balance between colonial cooperation and her leadership. She complied with the colony at arm's length, providing enough labour to satisfy the government. At the same time, she allowed her people to maintain economic independence.

Fynn was increasingly frustrated with chiefly independence in southern Natal. In a report on the state of the 'tribes' in the Lower Umkomazi district, Fynn wrote:

> The Tribes within the Lower Umkomas Div. consist principally of remnants of tribes who collected in Natal after the arrival of the first Europeans in 1824 – throughout the division there is not a chief worthy of the name nor have they reasonable control over their followers […].[68]

Fynn wrote that Vundhlase could not keep her followers 'in order,' and concluded it was 'advisable […] to divide […] her tribe to occupy three separate reserves.'[69] Confusingly, in the same statement, Fynn contradicted himself, stating that Vundhlase's 'conduct has always been good, and she has been desirous of forwarding everything proposed to her for the improvement of her tribe, such as cultivation, etc.'[70] Fynn's confusion reflects Izinkumbi's practice of strategic cooperation. They only cooperated to the minimum required to avoid repercussion.

Fynn viewed the Nsimbi in a similar light, writing that they were:

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[66] "H.F. Fynn to Mr Hawkins," November 9, 1859, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[67] "H.F. Fynn to Mr Hawkins," November 9, 1859, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[68] "Fynn Correspondence [Unspecified Recepient]," n.d., Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[69] "Fynn Correspondence [Unspecified Recepient]."
[70] "Fynn Correspondence [Unspecified Recepient]."

> Straggling individuals of tribes collected by one of the earliest colonists in 1828. They call themselves a tribe under Umtanyan who had been appointed their Captain from the time they were collected — he has little or no control over them — they must of necessity break up and if they can be led to occupy farms of the colonists the sooner the better.[71]

Fynn's remarks here completely disregarded Vundhlase's leadership role over the Nsimbini, possibly because he rejected the role Shepstone had created for her.

Fynn's calls to dissolve chiefly rule in the Lower Umkomanzi District went unanswered, and he made no significant changes to the labour situation. In a letter addressed to Hawkins in 1859, just before his retirement, Fynn lamented losing his influence over Vundhlase to private farmers who offered higher pay for labour.[72] In a different letter to Shepstone, Fynn explained that 'private individuals' offered:

> Chiefs handsome presents to send them 30 or 40 labourers at once, and also to the fact that private individuals give higher wages generally, equally good food, and to the Natives work of a more agreeable character.[73]

Fynn's calls for labour were often met with a response that he had termed 'the one reply' which was 'all their young men are gone out to service.'[74]

Fynn's contradictory remarks about Vundhlase being loyal and non-compliant shed light on the Izinkumbi's politics with encroaching colonial powers at the time. During this time, the Izinkumbi were still able to engage in strategic cooperation. Their balance of evasion and cooperation — avoiding *isibhalo* and participating in the cotton project — allowed them to maintain some political and economic independence. They also found creative ways to use the colony's borders against it.

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[71] "Fynn Correspondence [Unspecified Recepient]."
[72] "H.F. Fynn to Mr Hawkins," November 9, 1859, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[73] "To the Secretary for Native Affairs," September 20, 1859, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 4, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[74] "To the Secretary for Native Affairs."

Covert Resistance: The Izinkumbi in Nomansland

Nomansland was vital to the Izinkumbi because it fell beyond colonial jurisdiction. The Izinkumbi and the Nsimbi were no strangers to Nomansland, and some evidence suggests that they were involved in — what colonists considered — illicit activities in the region. In 1850, a missionary named Thomas Wakeford wrote a complaint to Henry Fynn demanding that he control the people bearing the 'Fynn' name who had been 'carrying out wicked customs' and were squatting on his mission lands. He concluded in stating that Fynn:

> Would be surprised if you knew the abomination a number of people calling themselves your people are guilty of. I must candidly state that it is my opinion that you (being now informed on the subject) ought to interfere to put a stop to such things if they wish to be your people, they ought to be under your eye, and not spread all over the country.[75]

While Wakeford did not describe the 'abomination' these Fynns were allegedly guilty of, other accounts could shed more light on the matter.

One of the major issues plaguing Natal was gunrunning in Nomansland. Firearms reached Nomansland via naval and overland journeys. Most firearms were shipped into what was then known as 'Kaffraria' from the Cape colony. Smaller cargo schooners used rivers like the Chalumna just north of Grahamstown to smuggle guns into Nomansland.[76] Buyers could source illegal guns from traders in Grahamstown, and a trading line had even been traced to some residents of the Kat River missionary settlement in the 1830s.[77] Given the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi's proximity to Nomansland, it seems that some of them became involved in gunrunning.

Governor Scott allegedly 'took a poor view of Henry Fynn's inability to control his sons and for not raising them to observe the laws and be an example to the natives.'[78] In a letter to Killie Campbell, H. Karlson wrote that, in 1856, Colonel John Maclean — the Chief Commissioner in

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[75] T Wakeford, "Letter from T. Wakeford to Henry Francis Fynn," August 20, 1850, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 1, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[76] W. L. Speight, "Gun-Running in South Africa," *Royal United Services Institution* 79, no. 516 (1934): 765.
[77] W. L. Speight, "Gun-Running in South Africa," *Royal United Services Institution* 79, no. 516 (1934): 765.
[78] H.C. Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell," August 1952, Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.

'British Kaffraria' — gave 'the best description of the methods of the gunrunners of this time.'[79] According to Karlson, Maclean mentioned that one of Henry Fynn's so-called 'illegitimate' sons was involved in — as well as one of the leaders of — the 'Rudd and Andrews gang', which conducted itself between the Natal and Umtata regions.[80] These insights resonate with a map from the 1860s—see Figure 11 below—which shows a Fynn or Nsimbi presence between the Mthatha and Mzimvubu Rivers.[81] This presence was at the root of Wakeford's complaints to Henry Francis Fynn.

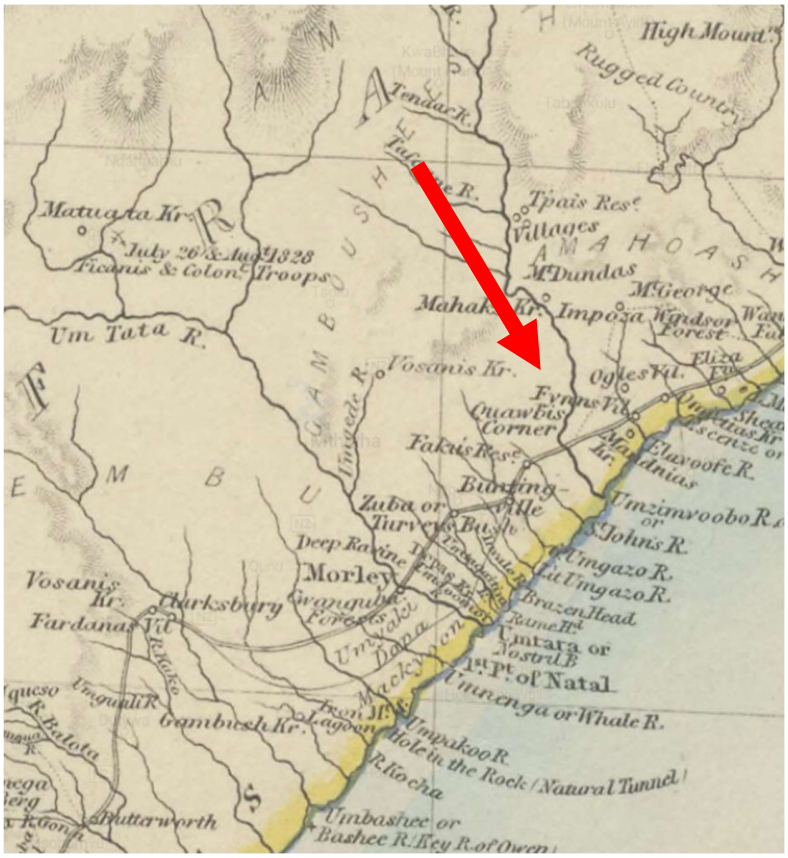

Figure 11. Map showing a 'Fynn Village' near the Mzimvubu River. James Wyld, *South Africa*, 1:2565000 (London, 1860), Ackersdijck Collection, https://uu.oldmapsonline.org/maps/7ffad40b-7129-5607-9d82-758e3dce8eb6/.

[79] Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell," August 1952, Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts. Karlson did not mention where he located Maclean's insights making it difficult to locate the original source. My search in the NAB archive has been unsuccessful.
[80] Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell."
[81] James Wyld, *South Africa*, 1:2565000 (London, 1860), Ackersdijck Collection, https://uu.oldmapsonline.org/maps/7ffad40b-7129-5607-9d82-758e3dce8eb6/. Accessed 13 June 2023.

The Izinkumbi and Nsimbi even established familial relationships in Nomansland, particularly with Hans Lochenberg, notorious for conducting cattle raids and gunrunning as forms of colonial resistance.[82] Lochenberg was experienced in gun running and cattle raids as he headed a formidable force of, in his own words, 'two hundred guns, and nine hundred shields.'[83] Several other witness testimonies mentioned that Lochenberg had access to a significant number of guns.[84] By the late 1840s and early 1850s, Lochenberg lived in Nomansland around the Tina and Itsitsa Rivers as chief over what he described as 'a small tribe of Mfengus.'[85] His brother, Willem, was a catechist at a nearby missionary station on the northern side of the Mzimvubu — at the Tina River confluence point — called Palmerton, which was established in the early 1840s.

The mission station and Lochenberg's main dwelling were very close to the settlements of the Izinkumbi and the people who became Nsimbi.[86] Given the short distance to Palmerton from southern Natal, the Izinkumbi and the Nsimbi easily established relations with Hans Lochenberg and his followers. In 1840, Duka Fynn married Lochenberg's daughter, Susan or 'Ma Hansie.'[87] One of Vundhlase's sons, Charles Fynn, also joined the Lochenberg family by marrying Mary Lochenberg, Willem Lochenberg's daughter.[88]

Some of Henry Fynn's children along with Hans Lochenberg were accused of participating in illegal dealings in Nomansland. A striking piece of evidence links fragments of the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi to Hans Lochenberg's resistance operations, although vaguely. Within the same letter that Thomas Wakeford sent Henry Francis Fynn in 1850, Wakeford described African people calling 'themselves by William Lockenberg's name' and simultaneously calling

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[82] See Geoffrey Blundell, Angela Ferreira, and Troy Meyers, "'Mijnheer Lochenberg': On the Construction of Khoesan as a Criminal Class," *Southern African Humanities* 35, no. 1 (December 2022): 31–70.
[83] S. A. Rochlin and Leah Levy, "Correspondence," *African Studies* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 1956): 36–36.
[84] See for example Thomas Baines, "Hans Lochenberg and His after Rider" (Sketch, c. -1852 1848), Thomas Baines Collection, Brenthurst Library. See Henry Francis Fynn, "Extract from Fynn Diary of 10 April 1849, with Mandindy's Statement of His Observations on the Movement of Cattle" (April 10, 1849), Western Cape Archives and Records Service.
[85] Walter Harding, "Statement of Hans Lochenberg Made to the Harding Enquiry, Wednesday 3 April 1850" (n.d.), Harding Commission Papers, Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Cape Town.
[86] See *Missionskarte von Sud-Afrika Nach Der Karte in Stieler's Hand-Atlas* (Gotha: Justus Perthes, n.d.), BM96186, Basel Mission Archives.
[87] Harding Death Records in Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal,* 239.
[88] Harding Death Records in Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal,* 225.

themselves Fynns. These people refused to move off missionary land, using the names of Lochenberg and Fynn to justify their noncompliance. Wakeford then stated that under Fynn's name, these people had been committing 'wicked customs' and that Fynn's people 'ought to be under your [Fynn's] eye, and not spread all over the country.[89]

Wakeford's letter shows that 'Fynns' and 'Lochenbergs' were travelling and working together, using their names interchangeably. These Fynns — either the Izinkumbi or the Nsimbi or both — operated deep inside Nomansland, as far south as Beechamwood mission station, which was situated on the Mbhashe River, about 50km away from the Mzimvubu. The source thus suggests that the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi had possible economic, social and political connections with the Lochenbergs, and one can only assume that the 'abomination' that those involved in Nomansland were 'guilty of' was in line with Hans Lochenberg's dealings.

Gunrunning in southern Natal outlived Fynn's magistracy. When Captain G. Lucas became Magistrate of the Lower Umkomanzi Division — following Fynn's death in 1861 — he mentioned that various Fynns from the Mzimkhulu region used their knowledge of the region to assist renowned European gun smugglers. The next magistrate, Dunbar Moodie, made similar complaints.[90] In 1868, John Maclean — who was then employed as the Deputy Clerk of Peace — reported that one 'Emile Schriber residing at the "Umtamvula" River' was 'in the habit of making guns and selling the same to natives on the other side of the boundary.' He did so, according to Maclean, by cutting a 'gratuity of gas piping […] into lengths' and making them into guns. Maclean also mentioned that Schriber kept 'the contraband goods such as gun locks, gas piping and firearms in a chest which is hid in the bush […] and is let into the ground.'[91] Schriber's setup was very close to the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi. This shows that gun-related matters had existed in southern Natal for some time, and that the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi were near — and possibly engaged in — these activities.

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[89] T Wakeford, "Letter from T. Wakeford to Henry Francis Fynn," August 20, 1850, Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 1, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[90] Karlson, "Letter from Karlson to Killie Campbell," August 1952, Fynn Family Papers Misc. Vol. 2, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[91] John Maclean, "Information for Resident Magistrate," 1868, AGO 1810: 87A, NAB.

Years later, in conversation with James Stuart, Henry Fynn junior — the son of Henry Francis Fynn — confirmed the illegal gun trade in the south, saying that one of his father's clerks named 'Nkayitshana' — he could not recall his European name — 'repaired guns on the south bank of the Umzimkulu' and was 'connected with gun-running.'[92] According to a list from the Killie Campbell archive mentioning the 'native names' of 'whites' in Natal, Nkyitshana was Tom Beningfield,[93] one of Fynn's clerks who specialised in 'gun work' in southern Natal.[94] These accounts show that southern Natal functioned not only as an avenue for guns into Natal but also as a workstation for the creation of illegal makeshift guns. Parts of the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi were likely involved in concealing and transporting these guns.

The Izinkumbi also used Nomansland to maintain some political independence. After annexation, the Izinkumbi used Nomansland to exploit the colony's jurisdictional limitations and avoid colonial interference in their internal affairs. In 1857, the Izinkumbi and the Ogles – another trader adherent collective – sought to settle a dispute by their – not colonial – terms. In an urgent letter to Shepstone, James Perrin mentioned that Chief John Ogle and Duka Fynn and Charlie Fynn of the Nsimbi and Izinkumbi groupings were readying for battle over a culmination of 'various circumstances.'[95] Generally, the Natal Government would have prevented violent confrontations between African polities, often through magisterial measures. In this case, however, the Izinkumbi, Nsimbi and the Ogles — all with armed adherents — would settle their differences in a space away from colonial reach 'beyond the [southern] boundary' in Nomansland.[96]

Perrin called for the government to prevent these events from unfolding. He was most concerned not with the potential casualties of war but with the precedent that such an occurrence would set, exposing the limitations of the colony's jurisdiction. He wrote that if this event were to go

[92] "Notes on the Life of Henry Francis Fynn per His Son HF Fynn" (n.d.), Fynn Family Papers File 10: Notes on the Fynn Family Collected by James Stuart and William Bazely, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[93] "Native Names of Europeans" (n.d.), Fynn Family Papers, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[94] Natal Independent in Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal, 1824-1857: A Biographical Register Babbs-Bolton*, vol. 2, 8 vols. (University of Natal Press, 1981): 65.
[95] James Perrin, "Letter from James Perrin to the Hon. Secretary for Native Affairs" (May 25, 1857), Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 1, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.
[96] James Perrin, "Letter from James Perrin to the Hon. Secretary for Native Affairs" (May 25, 1857), Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 1, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.

unchecked and 'uncontradicted,' it would 'lead to the most mischievous result,' noting that it would be 'unnecessary' for him to 'allude to the very injurious effect which such an example of settling quarrels, just beyond the boundary with the aid of armed bodies of natives must have on the entire population of Natal.'[97] While it appears that this fight between the Ogles and Fynns did not take place, the nature of these politics is important.

These events show that colonial authority in southern Natal was underdeveloped at this time, and groupings like the Izinkumbi could exploit the new district's inefficiency. While the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi were clandestinely involved in illicit or resistance activities, they also took overt and aggressive measures to avoid colonial control, such as crossing the border into Nomansland. Through a careful balance of compliance and disobedience, the Izinkumbi maintained their economic, political, and social independence—to some degree—after the administration established the Umkomanzi District.

Conclusion

Between 1853 and 1863, the colonial administration became more present in southern Natal. The region's strategic advantage – for security against raids – and its agricultural potential encouraged the government to establish the Lower Umkomanzi District. Fynn was appointed magistrate, and the district soon embarked on an ambitious cotton project that sought to use Izinkumbi labour. The chapter reveals the limitations of colonial influence in southern Natal and shows how the Izinkumbi took advantage of them. The district held little control over the Izinkumbi and other polities in the area because it was underfunded, under-resourced, and at the mercy of political differences. Additionally, the colony's jurisdictional restraints meant that it could not govern the Izinkumbi's actions and relationships in Nomansland.

Over this decade, the Izinkumbi cooperated with the colonial government but still maintained their independence to an extent. Vundhlase took advantage of Shepstone and Fynn's political rivalry by taking in Fynn's past following. She called this grouping the Nsimbi, and they became part of the Izinkumbi. Vundhlase supported the cotton project, providing Izinkumbi labour where

[97] James Perrin, "Letter from James Perrin to the Hon. Secretary for Native Affairs" (May 25, 1857), Fynn Family Papers Correspondence Vol. 1, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.

it was needed. At the same time, she and her followers continued working with private farmers to avoid *isibhalo.* The Izinkumbi and Nsimbi also exploited the colonial administration's jurisdictional limitations. They took some of their political matters over the southern border into Nomansland, where the government had no authority. There is also evidence that suggests they and the Nsimbi were involved in some way in gunrunning activities.

While the Izinkumbi's mixed social and cultural traits confused colonial classification processes, their politics also generated magisterial confusion at this time. Fynn's magisterial accounts about the Izinkumbi's loyalty to the colony were contradictory. He painted the Izinkumbi as cooperative but non-compliant, praising them yet arguing for Vundhlase's deposition. Fynn's paradoxical views reveal that the encroaching colonial government had not established absolute control over southern Natal, and groupings like the Izinkumbi still exercised strategic cooperation.

CONCLUSION

This thesis explored the history of a people called the Izinkumbi between 1824 and 1864 using various available archive sources. It addressed a significant gap in historical research on the Izinkumbi living in the southern part of what is today known as KwaZulu-Natal, between the Mkhomazi and Mzimkhulu Rivers. The thesis covers how the Izinkumbi forged, changed and maintained social, cultural and political connections over time, highlighting mobility and political fluidity as central to these processes. The thesis is split into two broad sections. The first section covers the late precolonial period between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This section shows how the fluid and mobile political landscape of the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region and the practice of ukukhonza were crucial in grouping processes. The second section, covering the early colonial period between 1839 and 1864, uses confusion and ambiguity in the emerging colonial discourse to show how the Izinkumbi maintained their political fluidity. Groupings such as the Izinkumbi were ongoing processes that responded to the immediate political climate by using mobility and political fluidity.

The Late Precolonial Period c. 1780 – 1838

Chapter One gave an overview of the political landscape of the precolonial Natal region, showing how mobility and political fluidity were central to African communities' formation and continuation. The late precolonial period saw the forging of large groupings and kingdoms, such as the Mthethwa, Thuli, Zulu and Qwabe. Many smaller polities responded to their emergence by moving southward— between the Thukela and Mzimkhulu Rivers— to what later became Natal. Entering the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region in 1824, the British traders experienced the tail end of almost a century of political dynamism. They incorrectly described the area as barren and devastated by King Shaka's hand alone because they did not understand the region's fluid and mobile political landscape.

The traders and Shaka entered a political and economic relationship by the latter half of 1824. Shaka allowed the British traders to live under his protection, trade and receive African followers

at Port Natal. The traders had likely engaged in the social practice of *ukukhonza* but misunderstood it as purchasing Natal from Shaka. In addition to this misconception, the traders also exaggerated their role as saviours to the Africans in the region. The traders believed they were *taking in* destitute and displaced peoples who had nowhere else to go, portraying them as agentless. In reality, these people exercised their mobility and political fluidity through *ukukhonza.* There was no saviour-saved dynamic at Port Natal as the traders would have had it. Instead, it was a cooperative relationship based on *ukukhonza* wherein the adherents offered their labour power in exchange for the traders' security.

Chapter Two focused on Port Natal during the first half of Dingane's reign, between 1828 and 1835. It first explored different accounts of European — primarily missionary — gossip about the traders at Port Natal. These various cases of gossip by people who had lived with the traders — such as Gardiner — and those who had never set foot in Port Natal — such as Archbell, Kay and Haddy—shared similar ambiguous descriptions of the Port Natal communities. On the surface, the gossip showed these missionaries' judgements and anxieties about their ideas of civilisation and barbarity. However, the actions that incited the gossip are crucial to the chapter. This approach showed how this gossip is a rich source of information about the mixing of incoming European ideas, practices, and material life with local African ones, highlighting the early onset of groupness at Port Natal. European onlookers struggled to classify and categorise these early Port Natal communities because — by their definitions — they were neither savage nor civilised. These ambiguities would continue to perplex Europeans and, later, colonial officials.

The chapter then explored Isaacs' accounts of forming a 'senate' at Port Natal. By the early 1830s, the population growth at Port Natal necessitated establishing what Isaacs termed a 'senate' to enforce specific communal laws. Before analysing the 'senate' hearings, which Isaacs recalled, the section first highlighted the issues with his accounts, specifically his agenda. How Isaacs presented trader involvement in processes of order and punishment, and even his use of the word 'senate' shows that he attempted to protect himself and the other traders from British censure. He portrayed the traders as receptors of existing African justice systems, not enforcers of British ones. While they could try to introduce their morals and rules, Isaacs' portrayal

suggests to his readers that African chiefs primarily outnumbered the British traders in the ‘senate.’ Considering these shortcomings, the chapter could still use these cases to reveal essential factors behind the early connections and power dynamics forming at Port Natal. First, Isaacs’ accounts showed that the British traders’ chief status was limited to the confines of preexisting African regulations and beliefs. The traders mostly adopted African laws and rules instead of imposing their ideals. Second, the presence of shared laws and practices showed that the people at Port Natal gradually established a shared set of norms and a sense of belonging. Chapter Two combined these gossip cases and ‘senate' hearings to show how groupness and collectiveness were ongoing processes. The people at Port Natal mixed specific social, material, and political practices, creating loose boundaries for belonging.

Chapter Three covered the second half of Dingane’s reign from 1828 to 1838. It examines how conflict and social tension necessitated boosted groupness between different *ama* groupings. In this period, the aggregation under Frank Fynn came to call itself and be called ‘Izinkumbi’ or ‘locusts.’ The chapter explored the circumstances behind the emergence of the ‘Izinkumbi.’ It looked at the rise of tensions between Dingane and the traders and the resulting war between them. Frank Fynn’s adherents needed to arrange and portray themselves as a collective to protect themselves from Zulu attacks. They used material items, stories and symbolism — such as flags, war songs and memory or remembering — to boost their sense of collectivity and perceived entitativity and outsiders' perceptions of their groupness. The chapter showed how groupness and collectivity were processes that people *did* instead of something they innately *had* and that these actions combined immediate circumstances and agency.

The first section of the thesis showed that the emergence of the Izinkumbi group was neither spontaneous nor instantaneous. Decades of political, social, and economic shifts and changes created a specific social environment in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region in the early nineteenth century. Mobility and political fluidity were central to the Izinkumbi as their emergence was rooted in the sharing and mixing of social, political and cultural elements such as language, clothing and systems of order and punishment. By the later 1830s, tensions with Dingane necessitated the boosting of groupness. Some adherents and traders increased their groupings’ tangibility through symbolism such as flags, war songs and collective names. ‘Izinkumbi’ was

the product of these people's agency and their need to increase their internal and perceived groupness for survival.

The Early Colonial Period 1843 - 1864

Section Two explored how the newly formed Izinkumbi shaped themselves and navigated the emerging colonial landscape between 1843 and 1864. Over this period, the colonial government began sculpting Natal into a tribalscape to identify African groups and measure their level of aborigineity. The Izinkumbi often sparked confusion and ambiguity throughout these processes because the dominant tribal discourse could not readily categorise them. This linguistic confusion revealed limitations in colonial discourse and highlighted the fluidity and mobility of African groups living in colonial Natal.

Chapter Four examined how the Izinkumbi, under their new chieftainess Vundhlase, dealt with the early colonial administration between 1843 and 1852. It covered early *tribing* processes in the colony, which not only arranged Africans into tribes but sought to determine which tribes were aboriginal and which were foreign. The colonial administration's classification processes drew entirely from the devastation narrative, which painted Natal as mostly empty of African inhabitants. The administration believed that barely a fraction of the Africans in Natal were indigenous. In the first decade of colonial rule, the Izinkumbi did not feature in colonial discussions on tribes and aboriginality. They formed an administrative blind spot partly because the colonial government lacked the resources to survey and govern southern Natal.

While these administrative processes unfolded, Vundhlase established herself as leader over the Izinkumbi following Frank Fynn's death, deftly managing the group's status as local and unusual. After the traders' attack on Dingane, Vundhlase moved the Izinkumbi further south to the Mzimkhulu to avoid a possible retaliatory attack. Vundhlase's relationship with the developing administration was strategically cooperative. As chief, she had to maintain a careful political balance and keep her followers and the colonial government happy. She adopted several strategies to maintain a sense of political stability. Vundhalse kept the Izinkumbi further south after annexation. The Izinkumbi used their distance from the administrative centers of colonial

power to their advantage to avoid colonial affairs to some extent. While they were expected to participate in the colonial labour system known as *isibhalo,* they could sometimes avoid it and maintain their economic independence. By 1847, however, they were cooperating with the colonial government in several matters, such as paying the hut tax and providing military aid. The chapter thus showed that the Izinkumbi could still avoid direct colonial control but also maintained political openness with the colonial administration to protect Vundhlase's chiefly status and maintain the political and economic independence they had left.

Chapters Five and Six explored the confusion in personal and administrative accounts of the Izinkumbi. Chapter Five examined the writings of George French Angas and Captain Garden, who interacted with the Izinkumbi and other trader descendants between 1848 and 1852. 'Tribal' discourse and the civilised-savage polarity were central to Angas and Garden's accounts. Thus, they became confused by their subjects' blending of European and African materials and practices. They could not fit these groupings' mixed traits into the colonial polarities of civilised or savage. Instead, they introduced auxiliary terms such as *half-caste* and *bastard* to address their ambiguity. Using these instances of confusion and ambiguity within these accounts, the chapter showed that the Izinkumbi's social and political fluidity made them an anomaly in the European and colonial gaze because it prevented the unfolding tribalscape from enveloping them entirely.

Chapter Six shows that the colonial administration experienced similar confusion regarding the Izinkumbi. An 1852 commission that sought to highlight which Africans were aboriginal and which were foreign could not place the Izinkumbi into either of these categories. The Izinkumbi's existence also contradicted the colonial idea of 'tribe,' which painted African groupings as timeless and unchanging. The Izinkumbi were both recent and old, and incorporated various *ama* groupings from inside and outside the borders of the Natal colony. Colonial agents also used auxiliary terms such as 'remnant' to make sense of the Izinkumbi's ambiguity and unusualness. Chapters Five and Six used these ambiguities and flaws in the colonial discourse to show how mobility and political fluidity were central to the Izinkumbi. The Izinkumbi shaped themselves in multifaceted and fluid ways to avoid absorption or coercion into past and newly forming states, becoming 'in-between' in the colonial perspective.

Finally, Chapter Seven looked at the Izinkumbi's political relationship with the encroaching colonial government between 1853 and 1863. In the early 1850s, the colonial government established the Lower Umkomazi District — and instated Henty Fynn as magistrate — to address financial and security concerns and explore the prospects for commercial agriculture. The Izinkumbi became involved in both avenues. The administration saw the need to organise the 'chiefless' communities around the Mzimvubu. Vundhlase – at Shepstone's request – took in Henry Fynn's adherents and designated them as the Nsimbi. Additionally, the government launched a cotton experiment in southern Natal, where the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi were its central workforce. Under Vundhlase's influence and leadership, the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi produced significant cotton fields. Despite the colonial administration expanding into southern Natal, Vundhlase and the Izinkumbi maintained their system of strategic cooperation with the colonial government. They still took advantage of their distance from the colonial centre and exploited the colonial concept of borders. The Lower Umkomanzi District was severely under-resourced, and consequently, Fynn struggled to bring African groupings under stringent control. The Izinkumbi continued working for private farmers to avoid being exploited by *isibhalo.*

Vundhlase and her followers were aware and took advantage of the colony's jurisdictional limitations. They kept the colonial government out of some of their politics by taking matters over the border into Nomansland. They also had links to Nomansland. They established relations with Hans Lochenberg and likely aided his colonial resistance efforts. Throughout these years, the Izinkumbi's interactions with the colonial administration oscillated between willing — out of strategy, not loyalty — and evasive. Fynn described the Izinkumbi and Vundhlase as simultaneously cooperative and non-compliant. The chapter's juxtaposition of cooperation and non-compliance highlighted the intricacies of Izinkumbi politics, showing how they continued their strategic cooperation policy to shape their relationship with the expanding colonial government.

Izinkumbi as an Ongoing Process

These seven chapters show that the Izinkumbi were an ongoing process from the early nineteenth century. Mobility, political fluidity and *ukukhonza* were at the centre of the Izinkumbi grouping process, facilitating the coming together of different peoples. Shaka's diplomacy with the British

traders gave room for new social opportunities in Natal, ultimately enabling the forging of new connections and settlements. In time, these aggregations blended certain African and European social and material elements, such as clothing and language. As more people settled in Port Natal, those living there began establishing conditions for insiderness and belonging through developing shared practices, including languages and laws and punishment. With the war between Port Natal and the Zulu Kingdom on the horizon in the late 1830s, there was a greater need for these aggregations to bolster collective organisation. The people living under Frank Fynn melded their shared history and political disdain for Dingane into what became called 'Izinkumbi.' These adherents continued using 'Izinkumbi' as a name for their grouping processes for the rest of the colonial period.

After annexation and throughout the early colonial period – 1843 -1863 – the Izinkumbi faced the developing colonial discourse and politics. In its pursuits to make Natal into a tribalscape, the colonial administration struggled to make sense of the Izinkumbi. They viewed the Izinkumbi's mobility and fluidity as evidence of the grander devastation narrative, arguing that their highly mobile way of being contrasted with indigeneity. Yet, the administration still found it challenging to place the Izinkumbi into either of the categories it had created. The Izinkumbi's blended sociocultural and political elements, their multilayered and multi-*ama* — what the government would have considered multi*tribal* — constitution and the simultaneous presence of older and more recent groupings confused the administration. Most of the government's attempts to address the Izinkumbi's *unusualness* ended in paradox and ambiguity, necessitating auxiliary and in-between descriptions.

While the administration fashioned its tribalscape, the Izinkumbi — under Vundhlase — started a system of strategic cooperation with the colonial government. They complied with the government in several instances, such as paying taxes, providing labour and military aid, and participating in the cotton experiments. Simultaneously, however, they took advantage of the colony's financial and jurisdictional limitations to maintain their political and economic independence to a degree. They worked for private farmers to avoid *isibhalo* and used Nomansland as a political buffer against colonial interference. As colonial powers began closing

in on southern Natal in the early 1860s, the Izinkumbi still maintained their practice of strategic cooperation.

This history shows that being Izinkumbi was a social process rooted in mobility, political fluidity and the practice of *ukukhonza*. Izinkumbi was never one definable thing at one moment in time but a dynamic culmination of peoples' interactions and responses to past and immediate circumstances over time.

EPILOGUE

The Encroachment Continues

From the later 1860s onwards, the colonial government gained further rule over southern Natal and parts of Nomansland. With the new sugar boom along the coast, which resulted from the importation of Indian indentured labourers, the colony now had the resources to extend its rule to further reaches.[1] In 1865, Shepstone and Lieutenant Governor Bisset led an annexation team to the Mzimvubu River, and by January 1866, the commemoration for the 'taking possession of Nomansland' began.[2] H.K. Wilson was declared the magistrate of the newly acquired territory called 'Alfred' after the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Alfred County was located along the coast between the Mzimvubu and Ilovo Rivers. See Figure 12 below.

Figure 12. Map of Alfred County from *To the Hon. T. Shepstone from Henry. K. Wilson in Remembrance of a Very Pleasant Trip to Adam Kok's and Pondoland in February 1867.* Bryant Ernest Camp File 9, Killie Campbell Manuscripts.

[1] See Ashwin Desai and Goolam H. Vahed, *Inside Indian Indenture: A South African Story, 1860-1914* (HSRC Press, 2010).
[2] Bryant Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred" (n.d.), Bryant Ernest Camp File 9, Killie Campbell Manuscripts: 8.

Alfred County encompassed several entities, including the Maci, Jali, Nyuswa, Mboto, Dumisa, Cele, Ehlangwini, Izinkumbi and Nsimbini. The annexation party also named the mouth of the Umzimkhulu River 'Port Shepstone.'[3] The Magistracy was initially established at the region called Murchison, close to the Izinkumbi.

Meanwhile, the Izinkumbi were less able to practice strategic cooperation, and Vundhlase's rule was under scrutiny. According to Norman Etherington, between 1864 and January 1865, Dunbar Moodie — the Resident Magistrate of Alexander County[4] — 'imposed a £20 fine [on Vundhlase] for an unnamed act of disobedience.' In response, Vundhlase — whom Etherington mistakes as Henry Fynn's widow — handed in her resignation to avoid 'bankrupt[ing] the whole family.'[5] Etherington used this example to argue that the expanding colonial administration was highly orderly, 'operating through designated magistrates, chiefs, *indunas,* clerks, constables and other functionaries.'[6] Yet, in his endnote on this matter, he wrote that 'the outcome' of this incident with Vundhlase was 'not recorded.'[7]

While the incident with Moodie does show that Vundhlase and the Izinkumbi had come under scrutiny and were not impervious to colonial punishment, there are examples to show that they could challenge and avoid encroachment. Later, in 1865, Vundhlase — still as chief, perhaps having revoked her resignation — complained to Shepstone:

> I come to His Excellency to express my dissatisfaction at a course of proceedings recently adopted by the Rev. H. A. Wilden of the Umtwalume, who about 5 weeks ago called a meeting of my people without regard to me and advised them to become individual purchasers of the land on which they were located, and they might pay the purchase money to him. My principal men answered him that they thought their chieftess (myself) should have been informed of this meeting that she might have been present at the consideration of so important a subject, and one so nearly [affects] her. He told them that he was no enemy to me, but wished that the natives might hold their land by such a right as that of purchase so as to prevent the encroachment of the Whites.

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[3] Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred," 10-11.
[4] The new name applied to the Mzinto-Mzimkhulu region.
[5] Norman Etherington, "Jeff Guy's Theophilus Shepstone: A Study in Character," *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 90, no. 1 (2016): 65. Original source is listed as Moodie, Annual Report of Lower Umkomanzi Division 14 Jan. 1865, SNA 3/15.
[6] Etherington, "Jeff Guy's Theophilus Shepstone," 65
[7] Etherington, "Jeff Guy's Theophilus Shepstone," 77.

> Two days after receiving this information I went to Mr. Wilden and received from him a similar account of the meeting. I asked how he proposed bringing about his new measure since he had commenced it entirely regardless of the principal of the tribe. He answered that he was in no way opposed to me, but that the AmaKolwa at his station had pointed to several different lands which their fathers had lived on and said that they intended buying them, and that he wanted to prevent the rising of any disputes or ill feelings between AmaKolwa and the heathens around them in consequence of land. I told him that no measure however good in itself would be [illegible] by my people unless sanctioned by me, and that while I perfectly agreed with his object I could not but express my dissatisfaction at his mode of action. I asked him where the money was to be paid.
> He said he would receive it. I told him that the AmaKolwa who had talked of buying land formerly occupied by their fathers had no right to it as I had picked their fathers up and afforded them protection and sustenance when they were in a starving state and I did not think that my act of kindness to them gave them a right over my property as Chieftess of the Izinkumbi.
> Since before the time of the war with the Boers I have consistently with my people occupied the coastland between Ifafa and Umzimkulu, and though the number of my adherents was at first small yet they greatly increased and still continue to increase. I am but a woman, and the task of ruling a people is no enviable one. Yet I [illegible] that I have properly controlled my people and taught them strict obedience to the British Government.
> I have always welcomed the arrival of missionaries among my people, but when I see any attempt on their part to hold lightly my position as Chieftess by acting exclusive of me I feel the pleasure of their presence greatly diminished.
> I [hope] that His Excellency will protect my tribe from being at the mercy of White settlers, and from being driven off by AmaKolwa by [illegible] for them the country in which they lived before the colony was a colony.[8]

This letter does not reflect the voice of someone who had just resigned as chief. Vundhlase remained assertive and protected her authority. She understood her people's claim on southern Natal and knew the correct administrative procedures regarding land purchases. Her continued relationship with Shepstone proved useful as he favoured her in his response:

> Inform Mr. Wilden that Vundhlase has complained of the steps taken by him in reference to the lands reserved for natives around his station being purchased by them and remind him that the trust deed reserves the rights of all natives residing on the Reserve at the time of the grant.[9]

Vundhlase ended her complaint to Shepstone writing:

> Another matter I wish His Excellency instructions upon- When orders are sent me by the magistrate to provide as many men for Government works, I go immediately to [illegible] them. It not unfrequently happens that those who have not worked for some time, immediately take fright and go into the service of any of the neighbouring whites and

[8] "Vundhlase to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs" (May 4, 1865), SNA 1/6/005, NAB.
[9] "Response to Vundhlase's complaint," SNA 1/6/005, NAB.

> then under the plea "I am working by a white man" set me at [defiance] and reduce my supply of men. What is the remedy?

This statement could suggest that Vundhlase faced contention and attempted to reassert her position. Yet, given the tone of the rest of the letter, this is unlikely. Vundhlase was highly aware of her value in southern Natal as she influenced her people's labour power. The end of her letter is contradictory as she asserts her authority on the one hand, yet she mentions her lack of control over her people at the end. The letter clarifies that Vundhlase did not accommodate defiance and treachery from missionaries and colonial agents. Having maintained her chiefly status since before annexation attested to her ability to control her followers. This ending statement was insincere, a front to the true nature of her relationship with her followers. Ending a demanding letter to Shepstone asking how she could better aid the government shows she maintained her strategic cooperation with the government. The fact that the Izinkumbi still avoided *isibhalo* at this time also shows that they could still circumvent absolute colonial control, perhaps to a lesser extent.

Colonial control in the 1870s

In 1873, H.C. Shepstone — the eldest son of Theophilus Shepstone, who held various government posts in Natal, including Secretary for Native Affairs — moved the magistracy of Alfred to Harding, which was initially a military outpost but also the new capital of Alfred.[10] Relocating the magistracy likely contributed to unrest at East Griqualand's border and was the Natal Government's attempt to maintain order over the southern borders.[11] The year following Harding's establishment, the Natal Government founded a Harding sect of the Natal Mounted Police comprising 25 Europeans.[12] This force was meant to maintain stability and prevent gunrunning over Natal's border. It was the only sect that was never removed from its post to contribute to conflicts with the Zulu Kingdom in the late 1870s.[13]

[10] Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred," 11.
[11] Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred," 11.
[12] Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred," 16.
[13] Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred," 21.

During Alfred's establishment, the administrative powers were concerned with creating and maintaining tribal boundaries, which offered to bring decent control to the area.[14] The Natal Government created a corridor of white farms from Harding to the Mtamvuna River to drive a wedge between the rivalled Maci and Jali 'tribes.'[15] The Cele and Maci groups were also adjoined and needed to be separated because of their conflicts. Hence, the Government relocated the Izinkumbi — then under the son of Vundhlase, Tom Fynn — to a stretch of Crown Lands — lots 8, 9 and 10 — creating a 'Fynn location' between the feuding Cele and Maci.[16] Tom Fynn was subsequently appointed district chief in the 1880s.[17]

Moving into the twentieth century, particularly after the Union in 1910, the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi became locked into another liminal or ambiguous space in government discourse. With the international explosion of social Darwinism and scientific racism, the government's categorisation practices began taking on a more racial stance. By the 1910s, the official discourse introduced 'coloured' alongside 'half-caste' to describe the 'mixed-race' identity of the Izinkumbi and Nsimbi.[18] In the twenty-first century, several Izinkumbi, Nsimbi and other trader descendants are challenging the coloured category and looking to reinvent and reidentify themselves as Khoesan. No historical research has explored the emergence of 'coloured' among the Izinkumbi and Nsimbini in the twentieth century. A more in-depth look at the developing racial discourse of the twentieth century — the rise of the coloured identity and its subsequent revision — will undoubtedly enrich current historical understandings of Natal and broader research on racial identity in South Africa.

[14] Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred," 20.
[15] Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred," 21.
[16] Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred," 21.
[17] Camp, "A History of the District of Alfred," 60.
[18] "Fynn Family Trust" (n.d.), CNC 44A, NAB; "Residence of Coloureds and Halfcasts in Native Areas" (n.d.), CNC 44A, NAB.

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