

ESSAY/PROJECT COVER SHEET

FULL NAME: Thubelihle Mafu

STUDENT NUMBER: MFXTHU001

CONTACT NUMBER: 0843496211

COURSE CODE: FAM5012W

TOPIC or OPTION No.: Singabantu- a journey to self determination

DUE DATE: 15/03/2022

Lecturer/Supervisor/Marker's Name: Prof Wallace Chuma

Plagiarism Declaration

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.
2. I have used the Harvard convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in this essay from the work(s) of other people has been acknowledged through citation cited and referenced.
3. This essay is my own work.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.
5. I have done the word processing and formatting of this assignment myself.
6. I have used a spell and grammar check with a UK language setting before submitting the essay.
7. I have double-checked all proper names and references.

Signature

Signed by candidate

Date 15/03/2022

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Singabantu (We are people)- A journey to self determination

Zimbabwe, from pre-colonial times to date, has always been viewed as a divided nation. From the onset people were divided according to tribal lines with the Ndebele and Shona tribes dominating the narrative. History of the Ndebele people depicts them as settlers who came from the present-day South Africa and incorporated other tribes on the way to form a Ndebele nation. However, these so-called settlers settled in a place which is now known as present day Matabeleland. Colonialization exacerbated these divisions and although the natives somewhat united during the war of liberation, the divisions continued to manifest after independence. Gukurahundi, which saw to the killings of people in Matabeleland further aggravated the situation and to date there have been outcries that the people of Matabeleland who are predominantly Ndebele are marginalised. The project is based on a blog, Singabantu- A journey to self-determination that seeks to understand how activists view the Matabeleland question and this will ultimately contribute to the digital archiving of these stories that are not adequately covered in the mainstream media. The project seeks to understand perceptions of these activists 40 years after independence and how they envision an ideal Zimbabwe.

Table of Contents

1.Introduction.....	4
2.Literature Review	
2a. Ndebele people, Matabeleland and their Political History.....	5
2b. Gukurahundi and Marginalisation in Zimbabwe.....	7
2c. The subaltern in Zimbabwe.....	9
2d. Zimbabwe’s media landscape.....	11
2e. Alternative media giving a voice to the subaltern.....	12
3.The Creative Project.....	14
3a. Qualitative Research.....	14
3b. Interviews.....	15
3c. Sampling.....	17
3d. Reflexivity.....	18
3e. Ethical Considerations.....	18
4.The Analysis.....	20
4a. Matabeleland as a marginalised community	20
4b. Being a voice for the subaltern	22
4c. Gukurahundi as a reference point	23
4d. Alternative media platforms as subaltern counter-publics.....	25
4e. Can Matabeleland marginalisation be resolved?.....	27
5.Reflections.....	30
6.References.....	32
7. The Creative project link.....	37
8. Appendix 1.....	38

1. Introduction- The politics of marginalisation in Zimbabwe

Singabantu (we are people too)- A journey towards self determination

“We cannot blame colonialism and imperialism for this tragedy. We who fought against these things now practise them. Why? Why? Why? We are enveloped in the politics of hate. The amount of hate that is being preached today in this country is frightful”- Joshua Nkomo.

Growing up in Zimbabwe was always viewed with mixed feelings, as some people found it difficult to belong. Being Ndebele meant you had to accept that you were regarded as the minority. With Matabeleland being viewed as having fewer people, they were always viewed as the other (Eppel, 2008:1). The continued lack of unity within the country has contributed to the divisions that are witnessed within the country which has been ongoing since the 1930s (ibid). There is a clear demarcation between the Ndebele and the Shona people. This was seen in the fact that one has to follow a certain culture, support a particular football team and even speak a certain language. Being Ndebele meant you had to support Highlanders and if you did not conform you were regarded as a Shona¹ person. Although there has been a lot of cross pollination with Shona people marrying Ndebele people, Zimbabwe still has a long way to go in terms of having a unified country.

The thesis which is hinged on a creative project, a blog titled ‘Singabantu- a journey to self-determination’ seeks to outline the history of the Matabeleland region and the Ndebele people and how they view themselves as subalterns due to them being viewed regarded as a minority group in the broader Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has a complex history which is still being debated to date. There is a lot of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ within the corridors of power and in politics in general. In everyday life, even though some people continue to celebrate nationhood, unity and being Zimbabwean, divisions still exist. Due to the different circumstances, the history of violence dating from pre colonialism to date, the continued underdevelopment of other regions, poverty, economic marginalisation, centralisation and other issues, some people have taken it upon themselves to raise their voices on issues that

¹ Ndebele, Shona languages are the umbrella languages that are mostly recognised in Zimbabwe. Ndebele is associated with the Matabeleland region whilst Shona is associated with Mashonaland region.

affect them as people from the region. These marginalised communities have been viewed as the subaltern. The study seeks to understand what these so-called subalterns are doing in their communities in order to advocate for a better Matabeleland, the alternative media platforms they are using to reach out and what their ideal Zimbabwe would look like through telling their own stories.

2. Literature Review

2a. Ndebele people, Matabeleland and their Political History

The Ndebele nation as some people view it has a complex history. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2008: 37):

“Ndebele particularistic ethnic identity has a pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial origin. Its origins are lodged within the complex nation-building project initiated by King Mzilikazi Khumalo and taken further by his son and successor King Lobengula Khumalo.”

The Ndebele people are a result of different circumstances and there has been a lot that has been said and written regarding their origins. What should be noted is that their history dates back to pre-colonialism when Mzilikazi fled from Shaka Zulu in 1817 with a breakaway group (Mazarire, 2006: 2). Some scholars and historians have given several reasons why Mzilikazi left or broke away from Shaka’s kingdom and the major reason is that Mzilikazi was sent by Shaka to raid one of the neighboring communities and he did not hand the loot over to Shaka which led to his fleeing the Zulu nation with some of his people (Child: 1969:6). The breakaway group was viewed as raiders and in the quest for freedom they raided other nations. The Ndebele people were depicted as a people who were warlike in nature and this was seen as being influenced by the Zulu origins. The colonial narrative of the Ndebele people focused on how they raided and stole their neighbors’ cattle and kept them for themselves. (Lindgren, 2002: 53) They fought many groups of people as they made their way to the current Matabeleland area where they later settled. To date this depiction of the Ndebele as being violent and barbaric has dominated Zimbabwean

literature hence this according to Ndebele scholars has perpetuated the continued violence towards the Ndebele people (Gatsheni, 2009:42)

A number of myths surround what has been termed the 'Ndebele people' and these include the fact that being Ndebele is more political than anything else, although the group was made up of mostly the Nguni people at the beginning, the Ndebele kingdom was based on incorporations they adopted other groups like Sotho, Tswana, and the Ndebele nation was more cosmopolitan than some ethnicities (Mazarire, 2008: 4). Lindgren, (2002: 50) reiterates this when he quotes Phathisa Nyathi's 1993 lecture and says, "Mzilikazi had the capacity of moulding a homogenous state from a number of diverse ethnic groups". The Ndebele nation always had an enemy or it always had to defend itself, first it had to flee from Shaka, fight its way all the way to koBulawayo and still fight the white settlers. The nation was deemed as a dangerous group and they were continuously being seen as capable of attacking anytime. This made the other groups such as the Shona and Whites to always stay alert (Mazarire, 2008:34). In this regard scholars such as Hadebe (2017:np) argue that most of the literature found today about the Ndebele people is either fictitious or it does not tell the real story and the reasoning is that most of it is written by non-Ndebele people who portray the nation in a negative light. On the other hand, scholars such as Palmer and Birch, (2002:5) assert that when the Ndebele settled in Bulawayo, they captured the Shona people and their cattle, claimed to be rulers of the country and later the South and North was named after them. These are some of the claims that till today have contributed to the divisions of the country according to tribal lines.

Colonialism sowed the seed of divisions among ethnic groups in Zimbabwe and this then contributed to the imagined superiority and inferiority complexes witnessed today. Unlike the other ethnic groups, the Ndebele people got more attention from the British because they were more resistant to the coloniser's tactics (Gatsheni Ndlovu, 2007:177). Emphasis was on how the Ndebele nation was undemocratic and hence there was a need to intervene. The colonizers had to find ways of ensuring that they conform. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007: 182), "Colonial rule affected all aspects of Ndebele life and redefined the Ndebele as colonial subjects with very limited rights." Although their autonomy was taken by the White settlers, it is believed that this subordination and marginalization has continued to post independence

2b. Gukurahundi and Marginalisation in Zimbabwe

Marginalisation is viewed as the process whereby certain groups of people are looked down upon, disliked and treated as the ‘other’ (Togarasei et al, 2020: 13). The history of marginalisation can be traced to colonialization where groups such as blacks were deliberately excluded from social and economic processes (ibid). To date this marginalisation is still operational through enacting structures that enable a few individual’s interests to be realised. The debate on the marginalisation of Matabeleland has been ongoing for a long time with some people attributing this marginalisation to lack of political will by the ruling party to include the region in its development agenda (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011). This stems from the narrative that was pushed by ZANU PF which focused on the majoritarian concept and saw the Shona people as being the majority and the Ndebeles being the minority (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013: 296). This has led to the marginalisation of Matabeleland which comprises of Bulawayo, Matabeleland South, North and accounts for about 15 to 20 percent of Zimbabwe’s population (Chirisa et, al 2013: 91). Chirisa et al (ibid) note that “While there is turmoil cross cutting political, social and economic spheres, the case of Matabeleland is facing internal colonisation which is aggravating its marginalisation”.

Post-colonial Zimbabwe was envisaged to be more inclusive, bringing people together and ensuring that everyone the gains of independence were for everyone. However soon after independence there was turmoil in some parts of the country. According to Eppel, (2008: 1)

“Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands were subjected to a brutal and hidden period of oppression, in which an estimated 20,000 civilians were massacred and tens of thousands more were tortured by the Fifth Brigade, which answered ultimately to Robert Mugabe.”

This massacre was known as Gukurahundi and the word refers to the first rains that come in spring and they are normally meant to wash away the chaff left over from the harvest.

(ibid) Gukurahundi was meant to remove what was viewed as the unwanted elements with the communities. This conflict started as a clash between ZANU's military wing, ZANLA and the ex-combatants of ZIPRA. This then led to some people being labeled as 'dissidents' and innocent civilians especially those suspected to be aiding the so called 'dissidents' were caught up in this (Murambadoro, 2015: 38). Several stories have been spun regarding the reason for the Gukurahundi and these include, the fact that arms belonging to ZPRRA were found on a farm, Mugabe's need to have a one-party state and some believe it was ethnic driven (Sibanda, 2021: 134).

In a bid to restore cordial relations between Zanu Pf and ZAPU after the Gukurahundi massacres, on 22 December 1987, a Unity Accord was signed. This was meant to restore peace and ensure that the country moves forward and ensure that the government and the people of Matabeleland have an understanding. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2003: 32) "One of the major flaws of the Unity Accord was that it was not a product of a democratic process that included the people. The accord was imposed on the people by the political elite and as such it was one of the authoritarian nation building strategies of ZANU-PF." The Unity Accord did not do much in terms of nation building even though there was a semblance of peace. It did not offer much to the people of Matabeleland but instead it served to annihilate ZAPU and make it less powerful (Eppel, 2009: 9). The Unity Accord was an effort to stop the killings and damage caused by Gukurahundi.

To date the aftermath of Gukurahundi is a subject that is continuously referred as being a major contributor to Matabeleland's marginalization and underdevelopment. Scholars reiterate that while the government concentrated on developing other regions and focusing on building the infrastructure, Matabeleland was in turmoil in what was known as 'Gukurahundi massacres' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012:4). This has contributed to political players, civic society and other groups framing the Matabeleland question in different ways. Marginalisation is one of the frames that have continuously been pushed in social media platforms by activists. Although there are some people who believe that Matabeleland is marginalised, others argue that this is not the case as people from the region are lazy. This was witnessed when the former first lady Grace Mugabe reiterated

the sentiments during an address in Gwanda (Radio Nehanda, 14 October 2014). According to Ngwenya (2018:np)

“People from Matabeleland complain bitterly about economic marginalization. They perceive that they are being deliberately discriminated against when it comes to the sharing of the national cake. They see their region as lagging behind others in every aspect of developmental progress. People point out that there seems to be an unwritten law that people belonging to the Ndebele-speaking group have to be disadvantaged on all fronts.”

People from different sectors comprising of activists, journalists and artists in Matabeleland, bound by the same issues have taken it upon themselves to talk about issues that affect the region. King (2004: 74) notes that, “Activists have the potential to be social actors par excellence; they can provide insights into how identities are managed in order to create social change”. Activism in this instance takes centre stage and what binds all the activists is the issues that affect them. People from Matabeleland who are predominantly Ndebele have been regarded as the subaltern and scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009b) and Lingdren (2002) argue that they are in the margins and the political system has been instrumental in suppressing them. The mainstream media has also contributed to this marginalisation by continuously being mum about poverty and marginalisation issues that are witnessed in Zimbabwe’s marginalised regions. The Zimbabwean media environment is dominated by state media which continuously channels out the ruling party’s ideology and discourses to an extent that there is no objective reporting (Ndlovu 2018:277). The Zimbabwean mainstream media is dominated by discourses and memories that are limited to what Zanu PF defines as nationhood (Ndlovu 2018:111). Using alternative platforms such as online media, dissenting voices are making their way to the people.

2c. The subaltern in Zimbabwe

The subaltern is usually used to refer to those who are in the margins, the periphery and are usually excluded from the mainstream (Banerjee, 2015:39). Taken from Gramsci’s inquisition into Italian history, the notion of viewing people as subaltern has been of

interest to many people. In one of his notebooks and writings he refers to the subaltern as the lower or subordinate social groups. The practise of hegemony plays a critical role in keeping these subordinate groups in check and although they might rebel, they do so fearfully (Green, 2002: 2). The subaltern is regarded as the less powerful and in the context of politics, cultural practises and history, they are always subjected to some form of marginalisation. According to Thomas (2018: 861) “The subaltern is usually understood today as a figure of exclusion, representing the specular opposite of the citizen.”, Spivak (2005:476) on the other hand reiterates that

“Subalternity is a position without identity. It is somewhat like the strict understanding of class. Class is not a cultural origin, it is a sense of economic collectivity, of social relations of formation as the basis of action. Gender is not lived sexual difference. It is a sense of the collective social negotiation of sexual differences as the basis of action. ‘Race’ is not originary; it assumes racism. Subalternity is where social lines of mobility, being elsewhere, do not permit the formation of a recognisable basis of action.”

Subalternity, therefore is based on the notion that those that are the minority cannot speak for themselves, they cannot represent themselves and they possess no agency. Green (2002:11) gives an account of how the subaltern operates whereby there is a change within the society which results in a particular group being subordinated. The group then adhered to the particular order passively or attempts to make its own demands. The “dominant” group then creates systems that ensure that the subaltern group continues to be controlled which then forces the “subordinate” group to have its own platforms and social groupings which will open up spaces for them and ensure they have a voice. This, however does not guarantee that the subaltern group will operate well hence they come up with their own parallel structures. An example is the formation of a revolutionary party that shuns logic (ibid). However, the subaltern does not always find their voice but the consciousness that some have contributes to their agency. Some amongst the subalterns are content with the status quo and some find the need to speak and address their social, political and economic concerns. Subaltern groups are viewed by Gramsci as expressive although those who are

abusing them do not recognize this. Gramsci in his prison books emphasized on the need for subaltern groups to analyse the reason behind their subordination and come up with ways of ensuring these hegemonic institutions do not continue to exert their influence and power (Thomas, 2018:875). The Ndebele people or people from Matabeleland view themselves as the subaltern because they are occasionally seen as the second class within the country. The history of violence in the region has also contributed to the feelings of being subalterns with the Zimbabwean government being less concerned with addressing issues affecting the people in Matabeleland (Murambadoro, 2015: 39). However, lately activists in the various sectors have resorted to alternative media in order to challenge the status quo and talk about issues that are otherwise ignored in the mainstream media. To understand why activists are opting for alternative media, there is a need to briefly understand Zimbabwe's media landscape.

2d. Zimbabwe's media landscape

The Zimbabwe media landscape has always been marred by a number of issues that include polarisation, censorship and being used as a tool that spews propaganda. Although freedom of expression, information and media is clearly enshrined in the Constitution, there is no guarantee that every person can have a voice. This has been on-going since before independence where the colonisers used media to stifle other alternative voices (Moyo, 2003: 2). Ndlovu 2015: 27 highlights that "the media are used to inject ideologies into the psyche of the populace, who end up regurgitating such content without choice." As evidenced in the statement above, there are instances where the Zimbabwean government has utilized the hypodermic needle theory in a bid to build a nation that easily conforms to the status quo. For example, the use of jingles in the 2000s, made citizens to passive and not question the regime even when though the economy was going downhill (Chikerema and Ncube, 2018:69). This is not a new trend as it was a continuation of the Smith regime which used radio for propaganda, jammed nationalist broadcasters and ensured that people in the rural areas only listened to FM (Moyo, 2003:4). For African broadcasting, he ensured that the programmes were more entertainment related whilst for White people critical issues such as politics and current affairs gained prominence (ibid). Even media personnel were wired to behave in a particular way which is a reflection of how political leaders rule

or lead (Hyden et al, 2007:1). During colonization, media was used to assert the white people's hegemony thus soaring divisions amongst the Shona and Ndebele tribes and ensure that people's autonomy is taken away. This did not end then but continued after independence where ZANU PF adopted the Rhodesian way of controlling the media (Raftopoulos and Savage,2005: 123), which resulted in most media self-censoring or conforming to the ideologies that stemmed from the elite few. Moyo (2003: 9) alludes to this and says:

“The structural organization and output of the public media glaringly reflected a strong grip by the new black political elite who showed no remorse in using the public media to push for their class and party interests. To start with, the critical distinction between party and government was blurred with the ruling party directly imposing itself on national institutions, including of course, the national media.”

The Herald and the Chronicle newspapers were used as the ZANU PF mouthpieces whereas the states only television station actively ignored stories that did not align to the ruling party's ideology. To date there are still unresolved issues which affect mainstream media and activists and those who consider themselves as the subaltern are resorting to alternative media.

2e. Alternative media giving a voice to the subaltern

Alternative media is viewed as media that is people oriented, not conforming to the status quo and mostly opposes the “mainstream media” (Atton, 2002:3). Stemming from theories of the press such as development theory and democratic participant theory, alternative media is viewed as the media for people who are otherwise not given space within the mainstream media, it is also seen as being more democratic and allowing dissenting voices to have a say on issues that are pertinent to the communities (ibid:4). It is counter hegemonic in nature and it's a space where the marginalised are able to articulate issues that affect them (Fuschs, 2010:179). The alternative in alternative media is meant to bring about social change and tell stories that do not make news in other media. Hamilton (2000: 363) reiterates that,

“Alternative media therefore must also enable alternative communication which together make possible the articulation of a social order different from and often opposed to the dominant”

Community media, pirate radio stations, protest theatre and online media platforms have been regarded as alternative media as they offer an alternative space to the subaltern or those regarded as the other. Scholars have termed platforms that offer unconventional views especially to the marginalised, subaltern public spheres. They are radical and they conform to the Habermasian public sphere which allows the subaltern to challenge hegemonic discourses and participate freely. Mpofu, (2015:89) argues “that subaltern public spheres usually adopt three basic forms of existence: the enclave, the counter-public and the satellite.” They offer the subaltern an opportunity to have a voice and they are empowered to speak up. Online spaces have offered ostracized groups tools to express themselves and be creative while doing so. The rise of these diverse social media platforms has facilitated a way in which activists, politicians, artists raise awareness on the Matabeleland question, Gukurahundi, and on the plethora of problems that affect the people of Matabeleland. According to Ndlovu 2018: 113 “the internet is one of the cultural spaces through which an independent Ndebele nation is animated and imagined.”

The study seeks to interrogate and understand how activists in Zimbabwe are making prominent, issues that affect them as a people bound together by a shared history. Through profiling activists who have been instrumental in talking about Matabeleland issues and understanding the platforms they use to amplify these issues; the study will contribute to the digital archiving of these issues and contribute to the Matabeleland question.

3. The Creative Project

Having grown up in Matabeleland, studied in Matabeleland and experienced some of the issues affecting the region and the people of the region, I was drawn towards understanding other people's thoughts on what it means to be Ndebele or from Matabeleland. My father before he died was always talking about how he felt he did not belong in Zimbabwe, how he was a victim of Gukurahundi at a young age and what it meant for him to see his children being side lined. My mother on the other hand lost her mum and uncles after they were burnt alive in a hut during the dark years of Gukurahundi. Gukurahundi remains etched into the memories of the victims. According to Mpofo, 2015: 82-83 "It left an indelible mark in the national memory-scape and its effects 'influence the current political situation and ... continue to have far-reaching consequences". Having been born to parents who viewed themselves as victims but did not have a platform or did not discuss such issues beyond the walls of the house, it made me curious enough to want to hear other people's stories. I have been an avid follower of activists in Matabeleland and all have different ways of viewing the Matabeleland question. Although Matabeleland issues were stifled in the media before, with only a few people being bold enough to speak, the few people that openly spoke about these issues became authorities in the Matabeleland issues. However, lately there has been a rise in different voices due to the internet. People are able to tell their stories without fear and this is the reason why Singabantu came about. The word Singabantu denotes that we are people too. The blog titled Singabantu- a journey to self-determination is about understanding what activists from Matabeleland think of issues that affect the people of the region and how their ideal Zimbabwe would look like. The word activist in this instance is used to refer to the people interviewed for the particular project. In order to get information for the blog, qualitative research was used.

3a. Qualitative Research

In order to understand how the world is constructed, qualitative research is conducted in the belief that more information can be unearthed hence leading to a better understanding of the world. Tavallaei and Talib, 2010: 571 note that,

“According to Clissett (2008, p. 100) qualitative research covers a wide range of approaches for the exploration of “human experience, perceptions, motivations and behaviors” and is concerned with the collection and analysis of words whether in the form of speech or writing. In this aspect, qualitative inquiry means to understand what others do and say or to “get grasp, hear, catch and comprehend” what something means (Grant, 2008, p. 1).”

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding people’s feelings about a certain phenomenon and this is done through being amongst those people and having an idea how they live. Qualitative research dwells on analysing and interpreting components of the world and describing them (McLeod, 2001:133). Hence it is viewed as stemming from the interpretivism regime which views reality as socially constructed. The research used qualitative research in the form of interviews and five activists were interviewed in order to understand their stories and what motivates them to speak out. Upadhyay and KC, (2014: 58) note that, “Qualitative researches in Social Sciences interpret cultures and people’s life-ways rather than seeking causal explanations for cultural practices.”

3b. Interviews

The world we live in requires someone to be well informed in order to understand how the world is organised. Interviews are used on a daily basis by people from different fields and this leads to getting answers for ambiguous issues. Mann (2016: 2) highlights that “interviews are widely held to be a fundamentally useful way to understand informants’ beliefs, experiences, and worlds.” The use of interviews is now a regular thing in the societies we live in and they are viewed as a way of negotiating social views between an interviewer and interviewee. There is a belief that interviews are more accurate in data gathering and they are a true reflection of respondent’s lives (Fontana and Fey, 2005: 646). Interviewing therefore is now an everyday occurrence and people from different sectors be it social scientists, the police and other groups are occasionally using interviews to get answers.

In order to operationalise the creative project, individual interviews were conducted with five activists who are bound together by the same issues. Through the use of a blog, the

interviewees were profiled and they each had an opportunity to share their stories and these will contribute to digital archiving of stories from Matebeleland. All five of them feel the need to speak out as they regard themselves as the ‘other’ in Zimbabwe. The othering of the other groups within the nation of Zimbabwe is a reality and this includes excluding individuals because of their group identity and this reinforces the notion of Otherness. Udah and Singh 2019: 86 reiterate that

“Otherness is defined by difference. As a state of being different, Otherness reminds us of the people who are different from us – ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, ‘I’ and ‘You’, ‘Self’ and ‘Other’”

With the concept of Otherness being at the centre of the activists’ narratives, individual interviews were ideal in understanding their different stories.

Due to the disruption of the world order owing to Covid 19, virtual or online interviews were held instead of face-to-face interviews. Online interviews are defined by Salmons, (2014: 3) as “interviews carried out with computer-mediated communication (CMC) to collect data”. Online interviews were used due to Covid 19 and the interviewee could not be physically close to the participants. Because of the nature of the respondents’ jobs, they were able to make time and use their data to conduct the interviews. One should note that online interviews are at times not ideal due to internet connectivity and unavailability of data. This is because the digital divide is a reality and there are some people who are disadvantaged by the internet (Roger, 2001:100). The interview questions used were semi-structured interview questions and they were tailored according to the work that each activist was doing in the different communities. Semi structured interviews are a mixture of structured and unstructured questions and most social scientists tend to prefer such interviews. The interviewer has planned interview questions but allows the interviewee to explain some of the issues that need more information. Using open ended questions is ideal in getting someone to elaborate (Alsaawi, 2014: 151). An example is how each of the interviewees are from different sectors, structured interviews would have been an impediment to the data gathering process. Interviews are criticised for being time consuming and at times the fact that it is the interviewer’s responsibility to transcribe, there

is a possibility of losing some of the intended meaning from the interviewee (ibid: 155). Only five interviews were conducted for the project and sampling played a critical role in the choosing of activists.

3c. Sampling

There is a sizeable number of activists in Matabeleland and these could not be interviewed all at once hence a few had to be selected. Sampling plays a critical role in ensuring that the right people are chosen to participate in a study and because of the nature of qualitative research, the idea is to explore and get as much information from a few individuals (Deacon, et al., 2007:45). Sampling therefore is an important component of the research process. One cannot study everyone in the population hence they settle for a few individuals and these are called a sample. Acharya, et al (2013: 330) posits that, “a sample is a subset of the population, selected so as to be representative of the larger population”. A sample does not always represent the whole population but it can save time and resources used to conduct research. There are various types of sampling which comprise of quota, purposive, stratified and many others. For the purpose of the research purposive sampling otherwise known as judgemental sampling was used. Etikan and Bala, (2017: 1) notes that “the sampling design is based on the judgement of the researcher as to who will provide the best information to succeed for the objectives study.” Since the project was targeting a few individuals who are regarded as activists in their various fields, purposive sampling was ideal in order to have insight into the work they do. Purposive sampling targeted the individuals who had the potential for more generation of knowledge especially looking at their track record in the civil and political space of Zimbabwe. Purposive sampling is ideal as it offers an opportunity to use limited resources effectively when conducting research (Campbell, et al., 2020:654). Some scholars have identified some weaknesses of this sampling design such as that bias cannot be controlled and one cannot generalise the results (Acharya, 2013:332). In order to undertake the study five people were interviewed namely Mbonisi Gumbo, Discent Collins Bajila, Bhekumusa Moyo, Desire Moyoxide Moyo and Busani Sibindi.

3d. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an important concept when conducting research because it is concerned with how the researcher remains self-aware throughout the research, it is about ensuring that the researcher does not include their own feelings and their perceptions do not take away their objectivity (Darawsheh, 2014:516). I have always had an interest in the Matabeleland question for a long time. Growing up in Zimbabwe's Bulawayo city, having to go to the rural areas of Matabeleland where there was no tarred road and having to walk long distances just to get basic commodities, made me question the very notion of being Zimbabwean. However, growing up, and in trying to locate myself in the Matabeleland discourse, I took an interest in following everything that was written around Matabeleland, the history of the Ndebele people, Gukurahundi, marginalisation and other issues. Reflexivity played a critical role in my research because I had to constantly remind myself that it is not about me but about digital archiving and understanding the why in the various stories. Maxey (1999:201) argues that "we are in a sense all activists, as we are all engaged in producing the world. Reflexivity enables us to place ourselves actively within this process". In a nutshell, the first point of call was acknowledging that I am part of the Matabeleland community and that I need to be less subjective and more objective. One way to do that was through asking open ended questions and making my intentions known to my participants. I also kept a journal where I would record my feelings. Transparency plays a critical role in reflexivity and I had to be honest and transparent to myself and the participants.

3e. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were a priority in conducting the research because the topic under review is a sensitive one in Zimbabwe. Most of the activists are already vocal in their different spheres and were willing to participate. As much as the participants are regarded as the subaltern, they somehow possess a certain power in the society hence it is different when interviewing the powerless and those who possess or view themselves as powerful (Cloke et al, 2000: 136). As much as all the respondents are in the public eye, they all to go through the process of informed consent and they agreed to have their interviews and

CENTRE FOR FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

pictures shared on the blog as this was an opportunity to showcase the role they are playing in ensuring that Matabeleland issues are made prominent. The interviewees were informed that they had a right to withdraw their interviews anytime they felt unsafe or felt they were revealing information that would be detrimental to their safety. One female interviewee ended up not participating due to personal reasons.

4. The analysis

The creative project sought to understand why activists from Matabeleland do what they do and their thoughts on the Matabeleland question. Having seen and witnessed the work they are doing in the different communities they live in; it was imperative to understand their motivations. The Matabeleland people are sometimes viewed as the subaltern and they are normally regarded as the other in Zimbabwe due to the fact that the provinces are mostly made up of the Ndebele people who constitute about 20% of the whole population (Eppel, 2008:1), most of them believe that the region is underdeveloped and the government is contributing to their marginalisation. However, the sampled activists have taken it upon themselves to speak out on these inequalities and also do work in the different communities they come from. Using alternative media such as theatre, online platforms they have been instrumental in bringing to the fore issues that affect the Matabeleland community. The blog, Singabantu, was used as an opportunity for them to share the work they do and tell their stories through the interviews conducted with them. Several themes emerged from the interviews conducted during the study.

4a. Matabeleland as a marginalised community

Although the study focused on Matabeleland and the views of activists, the question that was asked regarding the Matabeleland question triggered the same answer. The subject of the marginalisation of Matabeleland is a theme that features across all five interviews conducted with the activists. Matabeleland and is viewed as a minority in the state of Zimbabwe. In most instances minority groups are the most affected by poverty, poor infrastructure and gross human rights abuses. According to Turyatunga, (2010: 58)

“the term ‘minority’ is often used by social scientists to refer to a sociological group that does not constitute a politically dominant voting majority of the total population of a given society.”

The minority groups tend to believe that their rights are infringed on and they face a lot of discrimination from the dominant social groups, their political rights are continuously being overlooked. This is because of their difference in terms of language and culture. In

all the interviews marginalisation of Matabeleland is seen as a reality. When asked what they think of the Matabeleland question, Discent Collins Bajila, who is a politician says,

As long as there are sections of the country who feel that the way that they are being treated is different from other sections of the country, what it will mean is that you are going to perennially have a group of people who feel that they do not belong, who feel that in order for them to belong they either have to create a country of their own or leave this country so that they can exist elsewhere.

He does not outrightly say that Matabeleland is marginalised, whereas Mbonisi Gumbo who is an extremist and is advocating for a separate state highlight that,

My thoughts are that Matabeleland marginalisation is real, and it's done by ZANU PF on behalf of all Shona people who are the beneficiaries of the system and some of them are innocently and ignorantly benefiting.

The is similar to what Busani Sibindi says

Absolutely the system of marginalization has existed since the colonization and conquest of Matabeleland. At first it was meant to destroy Matabele influence in the political administration of the former colony and later it was practised as a system of total annihilation at all levels.

One should note the marginalisation can be subjective and people have different views of it. When analysing the three views from the different activists, one can note that some believe that there are systems that are perpetuating this marginalisation whereas one outrightly believes it is done by ZANU PF in the interests of the Shona people. This resonates with what some scholars have written around the Matabeleland question. The government has actively contributed in perpetuating the marginalisation of Matabeleland economically and whenever there is an outcry on this, state violence is deployed (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012:298). The Matabeleland question in this regard seeks to unravel and uncover the hidden pretence that Zimbabwe is a country united, a country which has systems that ensure there is equality (ibid). Bhukumusa Moyo has a slightly different view and believes the reason why there is disunity is because of colonialism. He says,

I think the whole Zimbabwean government design is premised on deliberate colonialist marginalisation plans
One can note therefore that the issue of marginalisation can be viewed differently depending on a person's convictions.

4b. Being a voice for the subaltern

One theme that is visible across all the interviews, is the need to correct a wrong, the need to do something in the communities because the rest of the population of Matabeleland has their voices stifled. In Gramsci's ideals on the subaltern according to Green (2002:15) he argues that "although subaltern groups face many difficulties, they have the ability to transform their subordinate social positions." This means the subaltern are able to transform their own lives and have a voice. All the activists interviewed emphasised on how they had to step up in order to bring the change that they felt was needed. This resonates with Chandre's idea of resistance where he recounts how scholars such in South Asia studied how subaltern groups were able to resist against domination. Power was central in all the resistance as the subaltern were more concerned with gaining their power and resisting domination. According to Chandre (2015:563)

"Resistance by the subaltern classes and the social bases of power/domination were, therefore, akin to the yin and yang of society–state relations."

The subalterns therefore, have to challenge the hegemonic structures that contribute to their subordination and in the event gain their power. Imbalances of power have been instrumental in the silencing of subaltern voices (Place and Cizek, 2021:3). Most of the activists are therefore in the quest for resisting any kind of domination by speaking out on issues that they think affect the people. This is tied to the notion of activism which is about challenging the status quo. When asked, who they are and what they do, Mbonisi Gumbo highlighted that he is a politician but him and his group decided to focus solely on Matabeleland because they are treated as second class citizens. He says,

Then we realized that when it comes to the issues affecting Matabeleland, we are on our own and all the so-called National parties have one thing in common which is undermining Matabeleland people and treating us as second-class citizens, not

worthy of equal opportunities, we said no to that because we respect ourselves enough to understand that we too deserve better and have a right to fair opportunities.

Emphasis on being the subaltern appears when Bhekumusa Moyo says:

I work closely with Jahunda Community Theatre to develop theatre that is provocative to speak for the people of Matabeleland and against those who are perpetrating evil.

This kind of mindset is what sets activists apart from ordinary people. Chandre calls such people who push political agendas of the subaltern rightful resisters. This is because, according to Chandre, (2015:566) “they recognise the structures of power and domination in society and work within those structures to articulate their claims”. In the interviews conducted, the participants all see the need to be that voice that speaks out against domination, marginalisation and inequalities.

4c. Gukurahundi as a reference point

Gukurahundi which according to Eppel (2008: 1) “is a Shona word meaning: “the first rain of spring that washes away from the fields the chaff left over from the last harvest””, is a recurrent theme in all the interviews. For most of the interviewees, it is an issue which continues to haunt the population of Matabeleland and it is a motivating factor for them to speak out. The genocide caused scars that cannot be healed and the victims continue to feel the pain (Muzondidya, 1999:177). The Gukurahundi genocide continues to wreak havoc over 30 years later and to date activists use it as a point of reference whenever they make a point on how people Matabeleland people are the ‘other’ in Zimbabwe. Using Gukurahundi as motivation, activists then resonate with the different communities they work with. They create and reinforce their identity as the people of Matabeleland or people of Ndebele origins. This somehow Mpofu (2015:94) reiterates that:

“The expression of identity through the memorialisation of Gukurahundi calls our attention to the psycho-social state of those who lost loved ones, who are in perpetual mourning and still haunted by their failure to bury their dead.”

In the interviews held, the participants mention Gukurahundi as a contributing factor in the continued marginalisation and even though it happened a while later it is still contributing to the inequalities within the country. Moyoxide talks of a play he wrote and directed called “Bhalagwe is burning”. The play is relating what happened during Gukurahundi and in a way it is telling the story of the victims. In his interview he mentions that he is motivated by the desire for justice and plays such as Bhalagwe is burning are a reference point for his motivation. He reinforces this through the statement below:

So, realizing the gap that is there, the gap of a lost justice or denied justice, then I took up the challenge to call for justice for Matabeleland.

Similar sentiments are echoed by Busani Sibindi who reiterates that marginalisation is as a result of Gukurahundi

This started with the much-denied Gukurahundi Genocide and has been maintained with the systematic and structural disenfranchisement of the Matabele in the Economic, social and cultural fronts.

Mbonisi Gumbo is also of the idea that what he does in the community is prompted by the desire to get justice.

The Gukurahundi genocide that took place in Matabeleland and remain unsolved up to today became an encouragement for us to continue to do what we do, that is demanding justice for Gukurahundi victims, defending, protecting and promoting Mthwakazi nation.

Bhekumusa also mentions his play (1983- The years before and after) as tool for speaking out on the issue of Gukurahundi which to date is still a sore issue. When referencing to the play he wrote and directed he mentions that:

In 1983-The years before and after, I chose to open a subject that was regarded as untouchable during the Mugabe era. I ruffled feathers by telling a story of an ordinary woman from an ordinary village who did not want to remove ZANU PF or get Mugabe arrested but wanted a National Identity document. Systems fear ordinary people, for, it is the ordinary stories that birth extraordinary revolutions.

In most of the interviews, it can be noted that Gukurahundi is a driver and a motivator in most of the participants day to day activities. Mnangagwa, the current Zimbabwean President who was the Minister of Justice during the Gukurahundi genocide once uttered sentiments which earmarked Gukurahundi as a closed chapter. This can be somewhat viewed as a way of indirectly silencing those that want to memorise Gukurahundi (Ndlovu, 2018:122). Due to these antics used by the government, activists are motivated to use Gukurahundi as a point of reference.

4d. Alternative media platforms as subaltern counter-publics

Alternative media, according to Atton (2002: 4) “provide information about and interpretations of the world which we might not otherwise see and information about the world that we simply will not find anywhere else”. Alternative media has been viewed as a purveyor used to enable social change due to its qualities of being radical, counterhegemonic and its opposition to mainstream media. Alternative media platforms are viewed as democratic and an enabler of democracy (Fuschs, 2010:179). Alternative media has been used by activists to rally other people to buy into their causes in politics and even social movements. This alternative media has been as a result of the rise of internet usage with people becoming bloggers and vloggers and some sharing information via cell phones. Alternative media is sometimes defined as media opposed to mainstream media (Coyer et al, 2007:1). Zimbabwe’s mainstream media has been accused of being polarised and being one sided. Mbonisi echoes these opinions on mainstream media when he says:

The Zimbabwean mainline media is polarized and the media deliberately pretends that it's only ZANU PF and MDCs in their multiple factions and fractions while

they close out other political players outside these, hence we adopted social media as the key to send the message and market our programs.

Moyoxide alludes to this when he says

We also call upon the state media to open space. If you realize during the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair this year, ZBC TV won an award as the best broadcaster, but they are the only players in terms of television stations in the country.

Discent echoes that the Zimbabwean media has been instrumental in perpetuating the othering of other communities. He highlights that

State craft in Zimbabwe is also partly responsible for the perceptions of marginalisation in Matabeleland in the sense that the public media broadcasters have presented a situation whereby in the formal news reading for example you always have Shona as the first language that gets mentioned in anything. If its news you have Shona news first, then Ndebele news. If it is in newspapers, some has done something big, it is always Makorokoto, Amhlophe.

The Zimbabwe media landscape has forced people to look beyond the available media and use other means to spread the word. This is because the mainstream media is dominated by ruling elite voices, ZanuPF propaganda and those that are deemed to be politically correct. This has prompted activists, politicians and other people with dissenting views to find other alternative spaces where they can communicate effectively (Ndelela 2010:87). This is reiterated by Discent Collins Bajila who says

We communicate with them through social media. Our major platforms being WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter.

Creatives such as Bhekumusa and Moyoxide use poetry and theatre to communicate with their audience. This is then shared using social media platforms. Bhekumusa notes that:

I use the stage, theatre. Shakespeare said: The whole world is a stage and we are all actors. I believe stories are better told there. I use poetry, since time immemorial, poetry has played a big role. Of late, I use social media due to Covid19 as a platform but the mediums remain the same.

Moyoxide also reiterates similar sentiments with Bhekumusa and he says most of his work is found online on platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Iltunes. Theatre is another platform he uses to reach out to those that would otherwise not be able to go on Facebook:

I use live theatre platforms among venues around Zimbabwe and mostly around Bulawayo and also of course the visual spaces that are there.

Busani also talks of any space as being an enabler of reaching out to people:

Whatever platform can reach to our people from physical spaces to social media platforms. Even that space is in space we would use it.

It should be noted that, alternative platforms have been the gateway to reaching out to different people, be it to communicate a cause, tell stories and get buy in from ordinary people. In actual fact the subaltern in the quest to finding a voice are using alternative media especially online media. Mpofo (2015: 89) in his article 'When the subaltern speaks' posits that "In cyberspace these ostracised communities have found an avenue for self-expression through unique voices produced with the help of technology."

4e. Can Matabeleland marginalisation be resolved?

Although the activists are all from Matabeleland, they had to answer a question on whether in all their work they do in the different communities, they envisaged a better Matabeleland or ideal Zimbabwe. Mbonisi Gumbo mentioned that there is a need for a federal system in Zimbabwe. His ideal Zimbabwe is based on a Zimbabwe that resolves the issue of Gukurahundi first. He highlighted that:

First it is Mthwakazi Restoration, bringing in an independent international commission of inquiry in as far as the issue of Matabeleland Gukurahundi genocide is concerned.

Busani Sibindi called on all the people of Matabeleland to take issues in to their own hands.

People must rise and stop it. There is no amount of wishful thinking and sugar coating that will make it stop. Together we must rise and do our part no society people or community stays oppressed forever. This as well can be overcome.

This resonates with Gramsci's ideas of the subaltern and according to his writings, the subaltern should be aware of their circumstances, organise themselves and be in a position to change their social position by being a counter-hegemonic group that challenges the group that is dominant in society (Green 2002:21).

Moyoxide in answering the question on his ideal kind of Zimbabwe, he paints a vivid picture of a rainbow nation where there is equality and all tribes are recognised.

My ideal Zimbabwe is a balanced country where all tribes are equal, where all languages, where all people are treated the same, where everything is up just up to standard in terms of equality and equity, where even the national radios you can identify with everything from the statements, where you can identify with all the spaces and opportunities as a child from Matabeleland.

Discent echoes the same sentiments on how to stop marginalisation of Matabeleland and build an ideal Zimbabwe with focus being on devolution of power and how local people have first preference when it comes to opportunities. He reinforces this by saying;

The issues of marginalisation of Matabeleland can be resolved if we change our system of doing things and we deepen devolution of power. First and foremost, we need a law that says that all entry level jobs must be occupied by people who reside in the area. This must not be taken tribally; it must not be taken ethnically; it must be taken within the confines of the definitions of devolution of power.

Bhekumusa, also highlights the need for devolution of power

When other regions and their legislators realise that Devolution is the answer, Zimbabwean petty problems will come to an end that will include Matabeleland problems.

In understanding the subaltern's need to have a voice, to speak and come up with solutions, one has to realise that the people who purport to be activists or the woke public that is ready to speak for and on behalf of the other, all have ideals of what should be done in order to reach the intended goal.

5. Reflections

Singabantu is a word pregnant with meaning, a word which means we are people too. The creative project was based on the premise that there are people in Zimbabwe who to date are still fighting for their rightful place, people who want to be treated as equals, people who want to be seen and heard. I chose to write a blog after realising that a lot of people have a lot to say regarding Matabeleland and they had been raising issues such as Gukurahundi, lack of opportunities for people in Matabeleland, some were advocating for a separate state. The bottom line is most of these people feel they are being excluded, undermined and overlooked as a people. The blog under the name Singabantu was meant to understand what activists are doing in their different communities, their motivations and their thoughts on Matabeleland. This blog is meant to contribute to the digital archiving of stories being from a Matabeleland lens. One of the initial interviewees was meant to be a woman and after setting up an interview, she decided to drop out due to personal reasons.

The Matabeleland question remains a sensitive topic and only a few people are willing to openly talk about issues such as marginalisation and economic exclusion. However, in interviewing the activists for the blog, I realised that they all had one thing in common, being a voice for the Matabeleland people who are sometimes referred to as Ndebele people even though they are made up of different tribes. In their different endeavours, the motivation is to reach out, to fight an already repressive system and to help right wrongs that they feel have been done to the people. Gukurahundi in most cases is used as a reference point in order to push their agendas. However, these are mostly young people who were not born by then but because of the lived realities and the stories they have been told they carry with them generational trauma that continues to haunt them in their young ages.

The interviews were done at a time when Covid 19 was a reality and having to conduct them online took away some of the liberties of seeing facial expressions and it would have been ideal to record podcasts and include them in the blog series. However, this project will continue in the hope that more young people, more activists, more community workers are included. This will help future generations understand the psychology of Matabeleland

young people. For the second part, it would be ideal to interview female activists so we understand 'HerStory', to understand the female lens and how this so-called marginalisation is affecting them and at the same time what they are doing to help other young women in the different communities. Singabantu is a medium for people to assert themselves, to speak out on the social ills and tell their stories, a platform for the future generations.

6. References

- Acharya, A.S., Prakash, A., Saxena, P. and Nigam, A., 2013. Sampling: Why and how of it. *Indian Journal of Medical Specialties*, 4(2), pp.330-333.
- Alsaawi, A., 2014. A critical review of qualitative interviews. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 3(4).
- Atton, C., 2002. *Alternative media*. Sage.
- Banerjee, P., 2015. The subaltern: political subject or protagonist of history?. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38(1), pp.39-49.
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D. and Walker, K., 2020. Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), pp.652-661.
- Chandra, U., 2015. Rethinking subaltern resistance. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 45(4), pp.563-573.
- Chikerema, A.F. and Ncube, T., 2018. A New Wind of Media Freedom: Social Media and Political Participation in Zimbabwe. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(4).
- Chirisa, I., Muzenda, A. and Manyeruke, C., 2013. The devolution debate and the new constitution of Zimbabwe: An exploratory evaluation. *Southern Peace Review Journal*, 2(2), pp.86-103.
- Child, H. 1969. *The History of the amaNdebele*. Salisbury. Ministry of internal Affairs
- Cloke, P., Cooke, P., Cursons, J., Milbourne, P. and Widdowfield, R., 2000. Ethics, reflexivity and research: Encounters with homeless people. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 3(2), pp.133-154.
- Coyer, K., Dowmunt, T. and Fountain, A., 2007. *The alternative media handbook* (Vol. 27). London: Routledge.
- Darawsheh, W., 2014. Reflexivity in research: Promoting rigour, reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International journal of therapy and rehabilitation*, 21(12), pp.560-568.
- Etikan, I. and Bala, K., 2017. Sampling and sampling methods. *Biometrics & Biostatistics International Journal*, 5(6), p.00149.

- Eppel, S., 2008. Matabeleland: Its Struggle for National Legitimacy, and the Relevance of this in the 2008 Election. *Perspectives*, 2(8), pp.1-7.
- Eppel, S., 2009. An overview of the circumstances of the Unity Accord of 1987 in comparison to those of the Global Political Agreement of 2008. *Political Update, Solidarity Peace Trust*, p.8.
- Fontana, A. and Frey, J.H., 2005. The interview. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 3, pp.695-727.
- Fuchs, C., 2010. Alternative media as critical media. *European journal of social theory*, 13(2), pp.173-192.
- Gatsheni, S.J. 2009. The Ndebele Nation: Reflections on Hegemony, Memory and Historiography. Rozenberg:UNISA Press Series.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2003. The post-colonial state and Matabeleland: Regional perceptions of civil-military relations, 1980-2002. *Ourselves to know: Civil-military relations and defence transformation in Southern Africa. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies*, pp.17-38.
- Glesne, C., 2016. *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. Pearson. One Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458.
- Green, M., 2002. Gramsci cannot speak: Presentations and interpretations of Gramsci's concept of the subaltern. *Rethinking Marxism*, 14(3), pp.1-24.
- Hamilton, J., 2000. Alternative media: Conceptual difficulties, critical possibilities. *Journal of communication Inquiry*, 24(4), pp.357-378.
- Hadebe, S., 2007. The significance of Ndebele historical fiction. *MATATU-FRANKFURT THEN AMSTERDAM-*, 34, p.77.
- Harcup, T., 2003. The Unspoken-Said' The Journalism of Alternative Media. *Journalism*, 4(3), pp.356-376.
- Kaarsholm, P., 1992. The past as battlefield in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. In *Collected Seminar Papers. Institute of Commonwealth Studies* (Vol. 42, pp. 156-170). Institute of Commonwealth Studies.

- Lindgren, B., 2002. Power, education, and identity in post-colonial Zimbabwe: The fate of King Lobengula of Matabeleland. *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, 6(1), pp.46-67.
- Madenga, F., 2021. From transparency to opacity: storytelling in Zimbabwe under state surveillance and the internet shutdown. *Information, Communication & Society*, 24(3), pp.400-421.
- Mann, S., 2016. The research interview. *Reflective practice and reflexivity in research processes*.
- Mavengano, E. and Marevesa, T., 2021. A critical discourse analysis of media landscape and political conflict in Zimbabwe from 2000 to the Mnangagwa era. In *Strategic Communications in Africa* (pp. 224-240). Routledge.
- Maxey, I., 1999. Beyond boundaries? Activism, academia, reflexivity and research. *Area*, 31(3), pp.199-208.
- Mazarire, G.C., 2006. Who are the Ndebele and the Kalanga in Zimbabwe?.
- Mazarire, G.C., 2008. Reflections on pre-colonial Zimbabwe, c. 850-1880s. *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to*, pp.1-38.
- Mbiba, B., 2006. Untold stories: The commission for Africa and Zimbabwe. *The Round Table*, 95(384), pp.201-218.
- Moyo, L., 2003. Status of media in Zimbabwe. *Encyclopedia of international media and communication*, 4, pp.667-681.
- Mpofu, S., 2015. When the subaltern speaks: citizen journalism and genocide 'victims''voices online. *African Journalism Studies*, 36(4), pp.82-101.
- Murambadoro, R., 2015. 'We cannot reconcile until the past has been acknowledged': Perspectives on Gukurahundi from Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 15(1), pp.33-57.
- Muzondidya, J. and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S., 2007. 'Echoing Silences\': Ethnicity in post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 7(2), pp.275-297.
- Ndhlovu, F., 2006. Gramsci, Doke and the marginalisation of the Ndebele language in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 27(4), pp.305-318.

- Ndlela, N.M., 2010. Alternative media and the public sphere in Zimbabwe. *Understanding community media*, pp.87-95.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2003. The post-colonial state and Matabeleland: Regional perceptions of civil-military relations, 1980-2002. *Ourselves to know: Civil-military relations and defence transformation in Southern Africa*. Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies, pp.17-38.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2007. Re-thinking the colonial encounter in Zimbabwe in the early twentieth century. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33(1), pp.173-191.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2008. Nation building in Zimbabwe and the challenges of Ndebele particularism. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 8(3), pp.27-56.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2008. For the nation to live the tribe must die: The politics of Ndebele identity and belonging in Zimbabwe. *Society, state and identity in African history*, pp.167-200.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., 2012. Being a Minority in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of the Matabeleland Question. *Nova collectanea africaNa*, p.295.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2012) Rethinking Chimurenga and Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A critique of the Partisan National History. Cambridge University Press, Vol 55, No 3, pp 1-26.
- Ndlovu, E., 2015. Three waves of media repression in Zimbabwe. *African Journalism Studies*, 36(2), pp.25-44.
- Ndlovu, M., 2018. New Media and Ndebele Hiraeth: Memory, Nostalgia and Ndebele Nationalism on Selected News Websites. *African Journalism Studies*, 39(4), pp.109-130.
- Ndlovu, M., 2018. Gukurahundi, new media and the ‘discourses of silence’: The reproduction of the hegemonic narratives of the Matabeleland post-colonial violence on selected Zimbabwean news websites. *African Identities*, 16(3), pp.275-289.
- Ndlovu, M., 2018. New media and Ndebele Hiraeth: Memory, nostalgia and Ndebele Nationalism on selected news websites. *African Journalism Studies*, 39(4), pp.109-130.
- Ngwenya, D., 2018. Background and History of Violence in Matabeleland. In *Healing the Wounds of Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe* (pp. 15-34). Springer, Cham.
- Ngwenya, D.M., 2018. The Gukurahundi Legacy, 35 years later.

- Palmer, R. and Birch, I., 1992. *Zimbabwe: a land divided*. Oxfam GB.
- Patil, D.A., 2014. Exploring the Subaltern Voices: A Study of Community Radio Reporters (CRR's) in Rural India. *Qualitative Report*, 19(33).
- Place, K.R. and Ciszek, E., 2021. Troubling dialogue and digital media: A subaltern critique. *Social Media+ Society*, 7(1), p.2056305120984449.
- Rogers, E.M., 2001. The digital divide. *Convergence*, 7(4), pp.96-111.
- Sibanda, B., 2021. The Language of the Gukurahundi Genocide in Zimbabwe: 1980-1987. *Journal of Literary Studies*, 37(2), pp.129-145.
- Spivak, G.C., 2005. Scattered speculations on the subaltern and the popular. *Postcolonial studies*, 8(4), pp.475-486.
- Tavallaei, M. and Talib, M.A., 2010. A general perspective on role of theory in qualitative research. *Journal of International Social Research*, 3(11).
- Thomas, P.D., 2018. Refiguring the subaltern. *Political Theory*, 46(6), pp.861-884.
- Togarasei, L., Bishau, D. and Chitando, E. eds., 2020. *Religion and Social Marginalization in Zimbabwe* (Vol. 26). University of Bamberg Press.
- Turyatunga, E., 2010. Social exclusion, marginalization and the threat of extinction of ethnic minorities: a case of the Batwa Community in Uganda. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 2(3), pp.57-64.
- Udah, H. and Singh, P., 2019. Identity, othering and belonging: Toward an understanding of difference and the experiences of African immigrants to Australia. *Social Identities*, 25(6), pp.843-859
- Upadhyay, P. and KC, V.K., 2014. Qualitative Researches In Social Sciences. *Janapriya Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 3, pp.54-61.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct8oL4inBtg>

7. The creative project

<http://singabantublog.co.za/>

8. Appendix 1

Discent Collins Bajila

Who is Discent Collins bajila and please tell us about your work especially in Matebeleland?

Discent Collins Bajila wears several hats but let me speak about the work we do with respect to assisting the young people in Matabeleland get to know about opportunities that exist for them and how best they can find themselves occupying those opportunities. In 2019, my friends and I started a process of assisting young people in Matabeleland to apply for positions in the public sector, mainly in Nursing but also with respect to the education sector, to train as teachers and to train as Environment Health Technicians. We have been working hard with respect to these three disciplines and as of now we have more than one hundred and twenty young people whom we have successfully put in these positions in society. So that is what mainly we do and we are in the process of officializing our existence as a formal organization which we are calling Izenzo Kungemazwi Trust, which basically means Deeds and not just words Trust.

What motivates or what motivated you guys to step up and help young people from your communities?

The first issue that motivated us was that sometime in early to mid-2019, the Minister of Women Affairs and Community Development was asked why there were too many vacancies within her Ministry with respect to Matabeleland communities and these vacancies included Youth Ward officers, Ward Women's Officers. Her response was that in most communities she went to they failed to identify young people with 5 O'levels, we knew that was false and there is no community whatsoever you can go to in Matabeleland

and get no one who has 5 O'levels. We began the process of identifying these people community by community and making sure that when positions arise, they apply. Also, it was the issue that in these communities, people who come to do menial jobs, people who come to do entry level jobs, people who come to do jobs that require just basic education are people who are not native or indigenous to those communities and we felt that in the line of the Constitutional provisions of devolution of power, this was wrong. We began to mobilise young people in these communities who qualified to occupy these positions and we said here they are, they are applying, and they are available to do these jobs. That was the basic motive behind what we have done so far.

Going back to the work you do and the recruitment drive that you are involved in, what are the platforms that you use to reach out to young people?

We use social media to communicate with the audience that we need to communicate with. Our major audience are two-fold. The first one is the young people who qualify for these opportunities whom we seek to approach, whom we seek to include in our beneficence programme. The second part of our audience is the well-wishers who put together the resources that make our work possible. We communicate with them through social media. Our major platforms being WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter. These two are the primary audience whom we communicate with. We also have a tertiary audience which is the Ministry of Health and Child Care itself when we are doing these applications. We communicate with it directly through the phone calls, those who pick up their calls when we talk to, and we also communicate with them through Twitter. Usually, our communications with this third group of audience which is the Ministry are when things are not right with respect to deadlines which would have been set, at times the website does not work because the applications are purely online. So, when we discover these issues, we communicate with the Ministry. Although our communications with the Ministry are usually one way, we do not get responses, we just send messages to them and then we see them acting with respect to that. At times they never take the action and at times they do. We will be believing that at every given time, they will have seen our communication, they decide on which ones to act upon and which ones not.

What are your thoughts on the Matabeleland question?

The Matabeleland question is within the greater African context. My thoughts are that Zimbabwe has not existed since time immemorial. Zimbabwe is a colonial construct it was created by colonialist to become the one state it is today, separate from the other African countries but uniting several communities within it so that it becomes the country that it is and state that it is today. That is basically my understanding of what Zimbabwe. With respect to Matabeleland the challenges are this. In order to keep Zimbabwe united into prosperity, to keep Zimbabwe united moving forward, it is very important that authorities make every citizen of Zimbabwe feel that they belong to this country, feel that they are equal, feel that the chances of them getting this opportunity are equal as the chances of the person next to them. As long as there are sections of the country who feel that the way that they are being treated is different from other sections of the country, what it will mean is that you are going to perennially have a group of people who feel that they do not belong, who feel that in order for them to belong they either have to create a country of their own or leave this country so that they can exist elsewhere. The creation of countries itself being an issue of colonial nature with respect to us as Africans.

In terms of the marginalisation of Matabeleland, how do you think it can be resolved?

The issues of marginalisation of Matabeleland can be resolved if we change our system of doing things and we deepen devolution of power. First and foremost, we need a law that says that all entry level jobs must be occupied by people who reside in the area. This must not be taken tribally; it must not be taken ethnically; it must be taken within the confines of the definitions of devolution of power. There are people of every tribe, people of every ethnicity who reside in Bulawayo, who reside in Matabeleland who need to get first preference to these opportunities. However, there are senior level jobs and there are other highly skilled technical positions, Engineers, Doctors, you need to then allow anyone from anywhere to come and occupy that position because it does not make sense for the government to have told people that the land belongs to locals, the land belongs to us as Zimbabweans, but when it comes to job opportunities the job opportunities outside the land do not belong to us anyone can come from anywhere and occupy them. I think the message gets lost over there. So, in order to deal with the issue of marginalisation of Matabeleland

there needs to be that but also beyond that there needs to be the expansion of the economic cake in Matabeleland by building more industries, by building more opportunities for people locally even outside the public sector even in the private sector itself. There is need to entrench those values of ensuring that all entry level jobs are occupied by people who are local. It must be stressed that at times marginalisation becomes a perception so in order to deal with the perception level of marginalisation must be stressed that whether or not you are local, you are native of Matabeleland, if you are able to work in Matabeleland you must be able to communicate with the people of Matabeleland in their languages so that they do not feel that they are talking to an intruder, an outcast or someone who is not part of them. It must be a must that whoever comes to every community immerses themselves in that community, communicate as they do and also defends the interests of that community even if it is not their indigenous community.

State craft in Zimbabwe is also partly responsible for the perceptions of marginalisation in Matabeleland in the sense that the public media broadcasters have presented a situation whereby in the formal news reading for example you always have Shona as the first language that gets mentioned in anything. If its news you have Shona news first, then Ndebele news. If it is in newspapers, some has done something big, it has always Makorokoto, Amhlophe. You have this design of communications in the media that have made sure that Shona always comes first and therefore there is a perception that it is a superior language. The people of Matabeleland are rejecting that, yet in the public service it is what is being used so people in the public service have normalised communications in Shona. You will find that a clinic in Bulawayo is going to have notices about times for example opening hours in Shona, Ndebele and English but when you go to Mashonaland, it is in Shona and English only. That kind of state craft has created a perception amongst people in the public service that Shona is so important, Shona must be used everywhere, it must be infused in every corner of community, but other languages must not. So, in Mashonaland you have two languages being written and spread out, yet elsewhere you are having Shona being put even if is not native, or indigenous in the area. That on its own needs to be dealt with, it needs to be ended because it perpetuates perception, it perpetuates even the realities of marginalisation of Matabeleland given its diversities of languages.

Going back to the work you do and the recruitment drive that you are involved in, what are the platforms that you use to reach out to young people?

We use social media to communicate with the audience that we need communicate with. Our major audience are two-fold. The first one is the young people who qualify for these opportunities whom we seek to approach, whom we seek to include in our beneficitation programme. The second part of our audience is the well-wishers who put together the resources that make our work possible. We communicate with them through social media. Our major platforms being WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter. These two are the primary audience whom we communicate with. We also have a tertiary audience which is the Ministry of Health and Child Care itself when we are doing these applications. We communicate with it directly through the phone calls, those who pick up their calls when we talk to, and we also communicate with them through Twitter. Usually, our communications with this third group of audience which is the Ministry are when things are not right with respect to deadlines which would have been set, at times the website does not work because the applications are purely online. So, when we discover these issues, we communicate with the Ministry. Although our communications with the Ministry are usually one way, we do not get responses, we just send messages to them and then we see them acting with respect to that. At times they never take the action and at times they do. We will be believing that at every given time, they will have seen our communication, they decide on which ones to act upon and which ones not.

How can we achieve an ideal Zimbabwe in terms of equal opportunities and all?

The first thing that the government must do is to attend to the education system. Attending to the education system in a manner that makes every child understand that there is no superior language, every language is important but most importantly that local languages are critical for their self-development and for social engineering purposes. This could be done if the government comes up with a deliberate policy of ensuring that each school at primary and secondary level gives an opportunity for every learner to study two African languages, one their mother tongue, two an additional indigenous language and of course one European language so that they can become true global citizens. We have emphasized global citizenship for too long and made local national citizenship quite a peripheral issue.

So, making sure that every child gets to understand other languages could be the first thing to assist. The second part is to come up with laws that strictly say entry level jobs are reserved for people born and bred in the district where they are available. We do not have any district in Zimbabwe that has no one who can occupy an entry level job. Entry level jobs include being a nurse, teacher, a driver in government, till operator in a shop, shop keeper in the context of rural areas. Let's come up with a law that makes sure that these jobs are reserved for people who are born and bred in the district. People from other districts and countries must be allowed to also come and work in those areas. While they work in those areas they must occupy bigger jobs, they must occupy technical jobs, they must occupy specialist jobs and not any job that is in the entry list but also the first opportunity must be given to locals even with respect to those jobs but however, when it comes to entry level jobs they must be reserved for locals. When we do that, we are going to make our people in the local set ups feel that they own processes, feel that they are local, feel that the country, the state, the government is protecting them and their interests of prosperity. That in my view those two could assist in the long run to make sure that as young people we are resolved from the controversies of today, we live in the tomorrow without the controversies of today.

