

**CONTESTED CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE
OF SOUTH AFRICA: THE CASE OF THE STATUE OF KING
NGHUNGHUNYANI**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Dolphin Mabale, hereby declare that this dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree at the University of Venda, has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature.....Date.....

DEDICATION

For my favourite guardian angels:

My niece, my star, Nyeleti Venus Mabale (1990-2014)

My brother and my best friend, Godfrey Mabale (1965-2012)

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ABSTRACT

Commemorative structures like walls of remembrance, statues and monuments are representatives of social narratives and they usually represent the current political order. They also represent heroes deemed important by the current political regime. These structures, together with the corresponding narrative, can either be of local, regional or national importance. Nghunghunyani was a Gaza Nguni king who reigned in southern Mozambique in 19th century. His statue in the town of Giyani is a case in point. Nghunghunyani fought wars and entered into negotiations with the Portuguese in southern Mozambique in order to keep the land of his forefathers. However, the erection of his statue sparked controversy and has been met with resentment and rejection among the people of the region where it has been placed. This study aimed to elucidate the reasons behind the resentment and the rejection of the statue. This was done by examining the history of the homeland of Gazankulu and of the clans of the region in order to understand the ethnic enclaves of the Tsonga and the Shangaan, and the political undercurrents involved in the erection of a statue which is undeniably of national significance, but problematic locally and regionally. As heroes are imbedded in collective memory and collective narratives, the theory of collective memory following on Maurice Halbwachs was used. The discussion on ethnicity was directed by the ethnicity theories of Webber and Geertz. The interview was employed as the tool for collecting data, which elucidated that Nghunghunyani is not part of their founding heroes and that their praise poems do not include this historical figure. It appears that in as much as Nghunghunyani is a regional hero, his representation in Giyani is clouding the real history of the region and the debates are clouding the hero that King Nghunghunyani was. The study unveiled that Nghunghunyani is a nationally celebrated hero who cannot be contextualised positively in the local context amongst Tsonga speaking tribes and chiefdoms due to the nature of the hostile historical relationship between the ancestors of these groups and the Gaza Nguni.

GLOSSARY

difacane: the disturbances that occurred when Zulu warriors migrated northwards from Zululand and subjugated northern tribes and chiefdoms under the leadership of Manukosi (Soshangana) and Zwangendaba.

impi: war (Nguni)

i vaka betsa ra matsalatsala: ‘They are children of Betsa, son of Matsalatsala’

Ka-: at- with reference to a place, for example *ka-Zulu*

n’anga: traditional healer or spiritual medium

Nkala: Meerkat

swihluke swa: offshoots of...

u hi lamulerile: ‘he has relieved us’

Umdabula u dabula emakhanda ezindlovu: ‘Mudabula the one who skins heads of elephants’ (Nguni).

vamabulandlhela: pathfinders

vatukulu va: descendants of...

xivongo: surname or clan name; plural form *-swivongo*

ACRONYMS

HOD : Head of Department

MA : Master of Arts

MEC : Member of the Executive Council

MTA : Matshangana Territorial Authority

NMC : National Monuments Council

SAC : Department of Sports, Arts and Culture

TRC : Truth and Reconciliation Commission

ZAR : Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

This study endeavours to understand the debates that ensued after the erection of the statue of King Nghunghunyani. Various parties, including academics and local traditional leaders from Tsonga-speaking communities, raised their objections to the statue's location, stating various reasons for their view. As part of this inquiry, the study also takes a look at why the Limpopo Provincial Government decided to honour King Nghunghunyani and eight other warrior kings with life size statues. The study examines factors that lead to the rejection of the statue of King Nghunghunyani, including the fact that the statue is positioned in the town of Giyani, which was once the capital of a former homeland. The homeland itself was constructed as a result of a compromise reached between disparate Tsonga groups, allowing them to unite and form the homeland (Rikhotso, 1984). However, the very things that formed the bases of the compromise, became the catalysts for renewed ethnic differentiation between Tsonga and Sgaan once the need for a homeland became futile when South Africa became a democratic republic in 1994.

Literature on collective memory (see Hutchinson & Smith, 1996) and commemorative practices driven by public memory (see Braun, 1994; Radstone & Hodgkin, 2003) inspired the researcher to look into the historical background of the Tsonga people in South Africa. The abovementioned literature informs us that heroes are part of a social narrative, and that the social narrative becomes the social group's founding myth. Heroes are often commemorated and honoured by means of commemorative structures like statues. As such,

this study aims to elucidate the interconnectedness between the Tsonga narrative(s) and the heroic figure represented by Nghunghunyani, whose statue has been erected amongst them.

In addition to collective memory and commemorative practices, this study presents a literature survey on the formation of ethnic groups and ethnic identity (Barth, 1969, cited in Hutchinson & Smith; Fenton, 1994; Ericksen 2010) in an effort to address the research question about ethnicity.

Background

It is common practice for new political regimes worldwide to try to change the old political landscape. This often involves the construction of new social narratives, the alteration of public spaces, and the introduction of new commemorative practices that are in tune with the new political regime (Foote *et al.*, 2000). Public spaces are subsequently adorned with new statues, monuments and walls of remembrance to replace the old ones. The constructed new narratives are usually of national and regional significance. In essence, all commemorative structures, be it statues, monuments or walls of remembrance, correspond with the narratives of the day.

The South African democratic government that took office in 1994 made redress the guiding principle for the construction of new national and regional narratives. This action was aimed at banishing the legacy of apartheid (Rassol, 2001). In Limpopo, the regional narratives provide information about warrior leaders who fought resistance battles against the European settlers or Boers who tried to take land from the indigenous people. These narratives are the heart of the doctoral thesis of scholar and researcher, Tlou Setumu. His work highlights the attitudes common to the leaders of the former Northern Transvaal in the 1800's (Setumu. Pers. Com. 10 November 2011). The sentiment that stood out most prominently among these

leaders was resistance against colonial invasion. The warrior leaders included chiefs such as Makhado, Malebogo, Mokopane and Sekhukhune, whose statues now adorn public spaces in several towns. The provincial Department of Sports, Arts and Culture used Setumu's work as basis for the erection of statues all over Limpopo (Setumu Pers. Com. 10 November 2011). The *Mapungubwe News Heritage Month Souvenir Edition* of 2009 cited a speech by former MEC of Sports, Arts and Culture, Mrs Happy Joyce Mashamba. She stated that during the five preceding years the department had been involved in rolling out a programme to honour warrior kings.



**Fig. 1 The statue of king Nghunghunyani at the Tourist Information Centre in Giyani
(Photographed by researcher)**

At the time of her speech, the statue of King Makgoba was yet to be erected and unveiled, and she remarked that the programme was not complete until that task had been seen through. She then added that the department would "...launch Warrior Kings Day to commemorate their fearless and ferocious resilience in the crucible of resistance to savage imperialist conquest, dispossession and settler colonial domination" (*Mapungubwe News Heritage*

Month Souvenir Edition, 2009). She then thanked Tlou Setumu for allowing the department to utilise his historical records. The same heritage publication pays tribute to several kings and offers exclusives into how these warrior leaders resisted both the Portuguese invasion in Mozambique and the Voortrekker military advances in South Africa.

These kings include King Malebogo of the Bahananwa tribe, whose statue was unveiled on Heritage Day, 24 September 2006; King Mokopane of the Matabele of Kekana; and King Makhado of the Venda, whose statue was unveiled on 8 September 2005 (Khangale, 2005). The statue of King Makhado was unveiled by the then Premier of Limpopo, Sello Moloto. Also honoured with statues are King Sekhukhune of the Bapedi, Rain Queen Modjadji of the Balobedu, King Makgoba of the Batlhalerwa, and finally, King Nghunghunyani of the Tsonga.

The reasons for commissioning the statue of Nghunghunyani, who was the monarch of the legendary Gaza Empire in what is now the Gaza province of Mozambique, was explained in the *Mapungubwe Newsletter* (Heritage Month Souvenir Edition, 2009). Nghunghunyani resisted Portuguese imperialism in the early 1800s and fought several battles against them. The statue of Nghunghunyani was unveiled in December 2006 by the former MEC of the provincial Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture, Mrs Happy Joyce Mashamba in the town of Giyani, the capital of the former homeland of Gazankulu.

The erection of the statue of Nghunghunyani was met with a varied response, including suspicion and protest from academics, Tsonga traditional leaders, as well as ordinary citizens from the Tsonga-speaking communities. These various groups argued that the statue should not be located in Giyani as the Nguni leader it depicts never led the chiefs of the region. Four academics created a blog that was initially aimed at contesting the Tsonga-Shangana

kingship, alluding to how the statue of Nghunghunyani is misleading with regard to the history of the region (Mathebula *et al*, 2007).

Several articles were written about people's dissatisfaction about the statue. An article in the *Daily Sun* of 6 December 2005 titled "*The statue of the king is wrong*" reported that both Shangaan and Vatsonga leaders indicated that it was wrong for the government to erect a statue in honour of Nghunghunyani (AENS, 2005). The *Capricorn Voice* of 13 October 2013 published an article titled "*Nghunghunyani was never a Tsonga king*", which was not only an objection to the statue of Nghunghunyani under discussion here, but it also questioned whether Nghunghunyani and his descendants should be celebrated by present-day Tsonga speakers in South Africa at all (Chauke, 2013). The opposers claimed that inasmuch as they recognise that Nghunghunyani was a great leader and a hero, he never ruled over those people within the borders of South Africa. The spokesperson of the protesters, Hosi Muhlava, pointed out that government failed to consult with them before erecting the statue and claimed that the statue belongs in Mozambique.

In response to the protestations, the then spokesperson for the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, Mmbangiseni Masia, announced that "King Nghunghunyani is undoubtedly a hero who fought colonialism. Our government is honouring such leaders and will continue to build monuments to (sic) the wars of resistance" (AENS, 2005). The erection of all the statues dedicated to the warrior kings was explained in full in the *Mapungubwe Newsletter* (2009 Heritage Month Souvenir Edition), in which the then MEC of Arts, Sports, and Culture explained at length the need for the Limpopo provincial government to honour all warrior kings. The entire (Heritage Month Edition is dedicated to the history of all the warrior kings, including Nghunghunyani.

The problems partially have to do with the history of Gazankulu itself. The homeland of Gazankulu was set up to unite groups of people with a historic affinity such as common language. Of note were the Tsonga-speaking groups from the Bolebedu region, namely the Baloyi and Nkuna, as well as groups from the north-eastern Transvaal and the Soutpansberg regions who were neighbours of the Venda groups. Both groups had migrated into the interior from the eastern coastal lowveld, fleeing the Nguni invasion of the mid-nineteenth century. The invasion was led by Manukusi, also known as Soshangana. He was a general of the Zulu king Shaka. He established the Gaza Empire in Mozambique (Rikhotso, 1984; Harries, cited in Vail, 1989; Halala, 2012).

The two groups that fled the Nguni invasion later created an alliance with the Shangaan-speaking group, *Amashangana*, from the Bushbuckridge region, led by the Nxumalo clan. The Shangaan language, spoken by the group from the Bushbuckridge region, is an alloy of two languages, namely Ronga, a Tsonga dialect spoken in southern Mozambique, and Zulu. The *Amashangana* as a people are a remnant of the former Gaza Empire established by Soshangana in Mozambique in the nineteenth century. They migrated into the interior after being defeated by the Portuguese.

Commemorative structures such as walls of remembrance, memorials and statues are essentially visual products of collective memory. They are silent representations of the narratives of any given society. Proud, silent and towering high, they tell the story of the land they represent. These narratives are proffered and forged to suit the prevailing political order (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003; Stolten, 2007).

Presently, the statue of King Ngunghunyani is meant to epitomise the regional narratives of the Tsonga-speaking people that he ruled from his Gaza Empire in present-day Mozambique.

Nghunghunyani was a great emperor of the 19th century who fought for his native land against the Portuguese. It is paradoxical that his statue, the epitome of his narrative, is rejected by his own descendants. Instead, there are assertions of the ethnic enclaves of the Tsonga and Shangaan in the region. This problem brings about division and debate surrounding, in the first place, government erection of the statue, and its rejection by the local Tsonga-speaking chiefs and communities. Government's erection of the statue of King Nghunghunyani and the ensuing rejection by the community constitute the basis for this study.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the complex causes of the resistance against the erection of the abovementioned statue. As such, the objectives of the study are threefold; firstly, to elucidate the fact that the former homeland of Gazankulu was created as a result of a great deal of compromise, resulting in some ethnic boundaries stretched to accommodate several groups to form a single community, thus fashioning a new collective narrative. The statue of Nghunghunyani, which is in itself a national heritage, was a catalyst in revealing the compromise.

Secondly, the study aims to highlight the fact that commemorative structures may be of national importance, but they have the potential to cause divisions between the different ethnic groups in a region and to strip away the very social bonds that initially brought disparate groups together. Along this vein, the statue of Nghunghunyani revealed the undercurrents to regional ethnic differences.

Thirdly, this study seeks to explain the fact that inasmuch as the heritage represented by the statue of Nghunghunyani is of national significance, representing a narrative of national importance, it is not necessarily acceptable in the region.

Research Questions

The research was guided by the questions that formed the basis for the interviews with the respondents who participated in the study. First, the research has to identify the compromises that underlaid the creation of the former homeland of Gazankulu. The second question addresses the undercurrents of ethnic differences that came to the fore after the unveiling of the statue, and lastly, the question of whether it is possible to have some kind of heritage that would be locally acceptable and that would address the regional needs.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature discussed in this chapter is aimed at introducing the arguments available on commemorative practices in the current body of academic literature. A general idea of the various frameworks of commemorative practices is generated here. The debate surrounding the statue of Nghunghunyani is then contextualised within a wider framework of other discussions on such practices. The purpose of the erection of the statue by the Limpopo provincial government is rooted in literature that discusses why new regimes erect new statues, walls of remembrance and other commemorative structures. The literature then unfolds with a discussion of how the commemorative structures are related to the formation of new social narratives. The chapter also discusses the meaning and causes of ethnic friction in societies. This discussion is quite relevant to the study since the erection of the statue has given rise to ethnic conflict in the region. In addition, there is an interesting interface between collective social narratives and ethnicity. The discussions on ethnicity later elucidates why the local people reject the statue of Nghunghunyani. Ethnicity is often used as a basis on which societies communicate differences to one another. It is therefore interesting to note that both ethnicity and collective memory can be used as tools of either inclusion or exclusion of individuals or groups from specific societies.

2.2 Collective Memory

Literature on commemorative practices is rooted in the theoretical framework on collective memory. Collective memories within social groups give rise to collective social narratives, which are basically stories of remembered pasts, customarily including heroes or heroines

and prominent public figures from those pasts. Commemorative structures are usually dedicated to persons or leaders who have a collective historical significance in a particular group.

2.2.1 Theoretical Framework

A study on collective memory would be incomplete without the introduction of the theoretical framework that gave rise to the term, one inspired by the scholarly constructs of French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945). Maurice Halbwachs has been described as a Durkheimian (Coser, 1992; Pléh, 2000), in other words a follower of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). His first influence however, was Emile Bergson, whose philosophy on collective psychology he later abandoned to follow Durkheim. Halbwachs's theory on collective memory was actually structured along the lines of Bergson's philosophy. Later it developed to incorporate Durkheim's theory on society and the social context of memory.

In his analysis of Durkheim's theory on society, Thompson (2004) states that society exists because of the very institutions of life that constitute a whole, for example, the religious, political, and economic aspects of society (see also Coser, 1992:22). Remembering stems from those individual institutions as they are contextualised. These institutions would not exist if there was no society, and when taken together, they form "civilization", which can only be propelled forward if what is known (knowledge experiences) in one generation is transmitted to the next generation and combined with what that current generation knows.

These knowledge experiences are what gave rise to Halbwachs's theory. Durkheim's theory refers to social groups as "society", and this is where, according to Coser (1992:22), Halbwachs departs from Durkheim by replacing "society" with "groups". He then further developed Durkheim's thought and applied it to the question of historical continuity (Coser,

1992:25). The replacement of “knowledge experiences” discussed above with “collective memory” is noted in Halbwachs’s theory. He emphasises that these knowledge experiences establish historical continuity. As with Durkheim, Halbwachs (in Coser, 1992:26) believes that there should be a constant intersection between old and new currents for the sake of historical continuity. He affirms that “collective memory cannot serve a distinct prop to the prevailing historical period if the past is seen as totally alien”.

Pléh (2000) offers an analysis of Halbwachs’s work in which he states that Halbwachs sees the starting point of collective memory as the individual. He attests that collective memory is given structure and content within the framework of a group of individuals, but it is actually individuals who remember as members of particular groups. Simplified further, group memories are crafted out of individual memories, but the individual remembers from the standpoint of the group. With this point of departure in mind, it seems only fair to deduce that collective group memories are group specific and can only be understood by those concerned. As such memories have the potential to act as a barrier between groups. In addition, individuals are either part of a group that shares the memories or not. There is no flexibility. Thus, collective memory can be a source of either inclusion or exclusion of individuals from groups. Collective memory can only exist when the body of people, which is a given group, is coherent. This is extremely important, as the memory is given structure and strength by a specific coherent group. Further, remembering is for individuals, and then when those individuals come together with that which is remembered, collective remembering (memory) occurs (Coser, 1992).

Halbwachs (in Coser, 1992:24; and later Wilson, 2005) differentiates between autobiographical memory, where individuals deal with personal events like anniversaries, and historical memory. He states that when it comes to historical memory, individuals do not

remember directly as with personal events in the past, but rather such remembering is stimulated indirectly through commemorations and of course, celebrating “...common deeds and accomplishments...” with other members of the group, thereby restoring and interpreting the past through such institutions.

When discussing the reconstruction of the past, Halbwachs (in Coser, 1992:47) maintains that in essence, social groups have to maintain a constant relationship with the past or at least with memories that constructed the past. As such memories function to perpetuate the validation of identity. He further proposes that since moments and memories of the past do not have the ability to impose themselves on societies, such memories and moments are flexible. It then accounts for the rationality of societies immersing themselves in such moments and memories in thought, since it is easier to choose the period into which the immersion occurs. Such flexibility is further manifested in the fact that if memories from the past are, according to Halbwachs (in Coser 1992: 50), “...inconvenient or burden...”, they are dealt away with or rather separated from realities essential in present life. So, that said, societies are at liberty to identify with the time period in the past which is favourable for the present purposes. The present is rigid, imposes itself, and the circumstances are definite and real, but in memories society is liberated in moments and memories through thought.

2.2.2 Ties that Bind

People from different cultural groupings and nationalities forge group identities based on a shared history or heritage. That shared heritage becomes an adhesive of the nation or group at large, as it is something that everyone has in common. In this study, heritage is defined as both a shared past and that history that all members of a group or community or nation can identify with. It seems that heritage is not necessarily abstract, as indicated by Schumaker and McGregor (2006:650), who define heritage as a group’s means of relating to the past. In their

definition, they point out that whatever communities utilise as a link to the past is their heritage, the same way post-apartheid South Africa uses walls of remembrance and other forms of commemorative structures dedicated to struggle heroes.

Not all events and individuals that featured in the past translate into heritage, as only those memories that are desirable finds its way into the future. In their extensive discussion on the meaning of heritage, Kockel *et al.* (2007) observe that heritage is time specific, evolves, and can be remodelled in new contexts. This description entails that heritage is dynamic and can never be static. The same authors also indicate, borrowing from Graham *et al.* (2004, cited in Kockel 2007), that heritage is that part of the past that is chosen to make sense of our present for contemporary purposes. This further illustrates that heritage is about aspects of the past that are chosen for their special link to the present. Those aspects of the past that are not so important are then omitted. Whatever part of the past is accorded importance is selected as a tool for nation building as a narrative. Stolten (2007) discusses how even the South African history curriculum was rewritten after the demise of Apartheid. The new history omits that which is no longer acceptable and discusses that which is in line with the present democracy and the new narrative of the nation.

It appears that the past has a role to play in the foundation of heritage and the construction of identities. Inasmuch as heritage is representative of the past, the past is also the main tool for the construction of identities. For example, Harvey (2001, cited in Smith 2006) notes that people use their pasts to construct ideas about group identities through which they achieve survival. Group identity is further enhanced by collective memory, which is narrative crafted by a group to inform the members about the group's history. Fentress (in Esselen, 2007:20) describes collective memory as expressing collective experiences, giving rise to a sense of a shared past. A collective memory, public collective memory (Johnson, 2002:294) or public

memory (Baines 2003:8) "...is a body of beliefs and ideas about the past, present, and by implication, its future". Leibowitz's (2008) discussion states that collective memory is a product of memories of the past that serve as a foundation for the new political order, thereby creating a new national narrative. It is, therefore, only selected sections of history that are brought together to form a national narrative, more so because the selection serves the purpose of the new social order (Baines, 2003:4).

When it comes to collective narratives, it appears that there could be instances where some narratives are fabrications that are supposed to represent the past, and for as long as that fabrication is in line with a group's beliefs and aspirations, there is no need to validate the "truth" behind the narrative. Fentress (in Esselen, 2007:36) observes that whatever truth a group chooses to adhere to, is more important than historical truth. When discussing collective memory, Hodgkin and Radstone (2003) add two valid facts. First, the selected stories for collective memories are always connected to a specific landscape. Second, it should be taken into account that the materials available for the memories have to be revived constantly for the narrative to remain relevant even in the face of changing priorities.

There are scholars that regard collective memory as a shared history constructed for various purposes, the main one being for group cohesion. For instance, Anderson (1991, in Baines 2003:3) regards collective memory as a shared history without which the construction of the "imagined community" could prove impossible; a community formed from such selected sections of a nation's past. Therefore, the main reason for the selection of histories is to create an envisioned community, which with the inclusion of the omitted sections would not be desirable under any circumstances. In short, when communities make selections for a desired present and future out of sections of their histories, they are playing amnesia (Johnson, 2002:295) for those sections they choose to omit. Baines (2003:4) attributes the selection to

the fact that older versions of the past no longer fit into the picture, as they are either redundant or unacceptable.

When discussing historical representation, Braun (1994:177) makes a direct link between commemorative ceremonies and narratives, adding that commemorative ceremonies serve to “perform the narrative of the past in the form of ritual” and that the narrative “represents historical events transfigured into permanent structures and placed in the metaphysical present of historical constants: struggle, sacrifice, and history”. Further emphasis states the importance of the narrative by asserting that the loss of the original narrative threatens the existence of the community, hence continued rituals and commemoration. Tomaselli *et al.* (1993:6) refer to such commemorations as ritual enactments.

Hodgkin and Radstone (2003) have a rather interesting fact about national or public memory. They claim that it appears as if there are instances and contexts where these memories function to conceal the divisions and tensions within groups, regardless of whether it is purposeful or not, for as long as there is a common uniting memory. It is noteworthy that the very idea that brought disparate groups together could become a potential source of tension when the narrative is not re-fashioned as mentioned earlier, or when it expires.

2.2.3 Visualising Myths

A group’s foundation myth is always represented and commemorated through monuments, whether as memorials or statues. Johnson (2002: 294) notes that memory is significant to the extent that it is “...anchored in places past and visualised in masonry and bronze”. Young (in Esselen 2007:36) also notes the connection between myth and monument as reflected in his statement that “...monuments bury history in myth, asserting a historical ‘truth’ on the public memory”. Tomaselli *et al.* (1993:5) define monuments as one way that preferred cultural meanings about history and power are articulated into a group’s consciousness. Memorials

remember the past according to a variety of national myths, ideals and political needs. Memorials also remember war casualties, resistance, mass murder and others (Young, 1993).

Monuments are intended to communicate messages silently as noted by Carrier's (2005) discussion that monuments have been and are still being used as a form of social and political communication. They are also products and reflections of historical contexts. Carrier (*ibid*) proposes three determinants of the production and reception of monuments, which are: diachronical moments; the moment of the historical event or figure conceived and constructed; the moment at which the monument was conceived and constructed; and the moment of its reception when subjected to interpretation or debate due to its renewed political relevance, a decision to renovate or demolish the monument, or even validation. Monuments act as media between the historical events that produced them and the spectators' eye.

When political events change, and nations do away with the past, the past is erased together with the commemorative structures that used to represent it. In South Africa only a few public monuments were removed after the demise of Apartheid. The statue of former South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd was removed from public display in the city of Bloemfontein. In post-independence Zimbabwe the statue of Cecil John Rhodes was removed in Harare. This is also true with monuments of former rulers in Hungary (Foote *et al.*, 2000) and Russia (Vladislavic, 1996).

2.2.4 Resilient Monuments

It should be noted that when regimes come into power, they bring in new national narratives that are aimed at replacing the old ones, as monuments are only relevant to the prevailing regimes. Such replacements are canonised in memorials, statues, monuments or any other

forms of public art. In Europe, the fall of communism saw the replacement of old monuments dedicated to communist leaders, most notably in Hungary (Foote *et al*, 2000). This is because monuments represent foundation myths. When new regimes take over, monuments from old regimes become irrelevant or expire.

However, there are some monuments, which, even after a new political order has been achieved, remain standing, some even much taller. The Voortrekker Monument (Grundling, 2001) is a case in point in post-apartheid South Africa, as are various other monuments, statues, and memorials dating back to the apartheid era. This prompted Pieter Dirk Uys (in Coombes 2006:21) to remark that all Afrikaner monuments should be removed and placed in prison cells on Robben Island and the island should be renamed “Boerassic Park”, as illustrated by Shapiro (in Coombes, *ibid*).

The Hungarian reasoning behind the removal and the relocation of communist propagandistic statues from Budapest to Statue Park, which is quite far from the city centre, was that of physical as well as symbolic removal (Foote *et al*, 2000:308). In post-apartheid South Africa, pre-democracy commemorative structures have been left standing and were not removed or replaced as in Hungary.

2.2.5 Commemorative practices in post-apartheid South Africa

Post-apartheid South Africa also created narratives and stories for the people to go hand-in-hand with the recent changes in the political settings of the country. The rewriting of the history of the country included renaming towns like Louis Trichardt to Makhado in honour of the late Venda king, Makhado. The renaming is in line with the countrywide phenomenon of forgotten heroes whose contributions and significance had been marginalised by the apartheid regime. Thotse (2010) also notes the emergence of a socio-political agenda that is prioritising

towns and cities as places of commemoration. The statue of king Makhado is at the Information Centre in Makhado, and the statue of Nghunghunyani was similarly erected at the Information Centre in Giyani. Both statues have been met with controversy in the regions where they are erected. Palonen (2008) observes that a change in memorials, street names and more in the aftermath of a political transition is not usually without contention, and one notes the same in the Romanian capital city of Budapest in Hungary in the aftermath of communism.

In post-apartheid South Africa, city-texts and history have been rewritten to replace the history that corresponded with the collective memory of the Great Trek. Rewriting the history of South Africa has been more about redress (Rassool, 2000:1), considering that inequality was evident even when it came to declaration of monuments by the National Monuments Council (NMC) (Baines, 2003). The NMC was the statutory body of the apartheid government that was responsible for the declaration of national monuments.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has been instrumental in aiding the rewriting of the South African collective narrative (Rassool, 2000; Baines, 2003; O'Reilly, 2004), by recording the experiences of those affected by the oppression of the apartheid regime. Nuttal and Coetzee (1998:1) call the TRC the "...repository of South African memory". Their work, *Negotiating the Past* is a compilation of writings about how the South African narrative was formed.

Memories of the colonial past and apartheid now form the basis of the new national narrative, including oppression, massacre and resistance. Hlongwane (2008) notes that the Soweto student uprising of June 16, 1976 has been commemorated since 1977, but is now officially commemorated at the Hector Peterson Memorial in Orlando West, Soweto. However, Rassool (2000) notes that of all the memories that served to form the basis of the new

national narrative, the Nelson Mandela narrative was central to the new South African history. Therefore, as with all new political orders elsewhere, monuments and memorials of the memories have been erected to inscribe a new national identity on the landscape (Foote *et al.*, 2000). Such, amongst others, are the Walter Sisulu Memorial in Kliptown, Steve Biko statue in King Williams Town, Constitution Hill in Braamfontein and Hector Peterson Memorial in Soweto. The people who died in Sharpeville during protests against the pass laws on 21 March 1960 were immortalised in a monument. There are memorials dedicated to sites of massacres and human rights violations during the apartheid rule, including the Sharpeville Memorial and the Bisho Massacre. Robben Island and Constitution Hill are also heritage sites that tell the story of suffering and torture during the former regime.

Any new national narrative is incomplete without the people who made possible the new political order. Others are significant by virtue of having been victims of the struggle. Some fought off colonial rule. They are significant and regarded as ‘heroes’ of the past who had been marginalised by the apartheid regime (Rassool, 2000:10). The latter can be illustrated by the statue of King Makhado in the town of Makhado (Thotse, 2010). All these people, as they are part of the foundation myth, are canonised by statues.

2.3 Ethnicity

The introduction to this chapter intimated that there is a strong interface between collective social narratives and ethnicity. Social narratives as discussed above bring about social cohesion out of which group identities are shaped. Social narratives are also responsible for the formation of ethnic identities. Common histories and narratives are some of the building blocks of ethnic identity. A strong ethnic identity has the potential to lead to that identity being jealously guarded by the individuals in the group, leading further to ethnocentrism. In his discussion of ethnic identity, Marc Howard Ross (2001) states that individuals are

connected through common past experiences and expectations of a shared future. Such a common past can be regarded as a heritage. When this heritage is jealously guarded and used as a gauge of who belongs to a group and who does not, ethnocentrism starts to occur. From this, it can be said that ethnocentrism is prompted by group experiences and intra-group bonds.

2.3.1 Theoretical Frameworks

Discussions on ethnicity and ethnic groups are immersed in various theories of both, including the formation of ethnic identity. Ethnic groups, according to Weber's (1978 in Hutchison & Smith, 1996:35-36) theory of ethnicity, differ from kinship groups in that in the latter, identity is not presumed, but prompted by common descent and thus concrete. Ethnic groups, on the other hand, are interwoven artificially by for example, common memories and beliefs that are at the heart of group formation. Such memories and beliefs are not shared by outsiders. According to this explanation, the formation of such groups are supposed to be so powerful that their memories must resonate through the generations and can be resuscitated for as long as there are individuals from the mother community that formed the group.

In another theory echoing the emphasis of social differences, Clifford Geertz (1963 in Hutchison & Smith, 1996: 40) refers to ethnic groups as having ethnic relations, which are primordial ties. These primordial ties serve to give that particular group distinction so that it stands out among the rest. This distinction can only be achieved when whatever is rendering that group different from the others is emphasised and nurtured. Primordialism as discussed here is further defined by Eller and Coughlan (in Hutchison & Smith, 1996:45), who in addition to Geertz's theory, stress powerful individual attachment to groups as a source of group longevity.

Ethnic groups are social groups that have been formed according to three attributes, namely objective, subjective and lastly behavioural attributes. Of relevance to this study is the latter, which stipulates that for as long as there are codes of behaviour that are clearly set out as cultural markers, ethnic groups will exist (Brass, 1991:18). These cultural markers are then used for identification purposes, whereby differences between groups are communicated. The problem of ethnic identification, as well as the inclusion or exclusion of individuals in social groups as in above, has been widely discussed in scholarly circles, for example, by Ericksen (2010:23) and Fenton (2010).

2.3.2 Defining Ethnicity

Ericksen (1991; 1993) defines ethnicity as a process through which societies and individuals communicate cultural differences to one another. This then means that for as long as there are differences that exist between groups, such differences will be communicated should a need arise. He further asserts that “...the application of systematic distinctions between insiders and outsiders” is the first fact of ethnicity (Ericksen, 2010:23).

Geertz (1963 in Yinger, 1985) simplifies ethnicity as when groups strive not to belong to any other group, thus retaining their authenticity and identity. This means that groups strive to retain and hold on to their cultural traits. Yinger (1985: 161) discusses ethnicity as “...a primordial sentiment, an emotional attachment to ‘my people’ and a valuable tool for the protection or enhancement of status”. Ethnicity is seen as a way of expressing a sense of belonging. It is important in cultural groups as a survival mode and should a group be absorbed into another, the common reaction is to stress the distinctiveness of group history and culture.

In any group, should members be faced with fears of drifting apart, they place emphasis on myths of common origin to remind one another of their identity (Horowitz, 1977). This sentiment is also noted by Barth's (1969) discussion of ethnic groups where he defines it as a group that maintains its identity when members interact with others.

Steve Fenton (1988; 2010) sees ethnicity as grounded in ancestry and kinship. People with an assumed common ancestry are drawn together, thus forging contemporary identity even where the connection may be remote. People believe they belong together if they share a common background or a common connection to someone with a noble past, like a hero who could have died at the hands of enemies or who might have died fighting off enemies. These people qualify as ancestors (Jenkins, 1997). This can be illustrated by Shermerhorn's (in Hutchinson & Smith, 1996) definition of an ethnic group as "...a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood". These symbolic elements amongst others include kinship patterns. In addition to this, a shared language and ritual fuel ethnic identity. Ethnicity also defines that "which characterises other people rather than ourselves" (Jenkins, 1997:14).

It should, however, also be noted that ethnicity is not always readily visible when different groups seem culturally similar. It is not unusual to find that such groups have a socially highly relevant or volatile interethnic relationship between them. This leads one to the assertion that sometimes ethnicity can only be noted by those cultural groups involved, and rarely by outsiders. Still, the existence of cultural differences does not necessarily lead to ethnocentrism. It is only when such differences are made socially relevant that ethnocentrism will occur (Ericksen, 2010).

2.3.3 Ethnic boundaries

Ethnic boundaries are defined by Nash (1989) and by Fenton (2010) as cultural markers of difference between groups and the most common of these are physical features, kinship, language, dress, common religious cult, house construction and lifestyle, as well as moral values and standards. The distinction in these markers is jealously guarded by groups, thereby constituting ethnic boundaries. Fenton (*ibid*) further attests that even small markers can be decisive in determining boundaries.

Nagel's (1994) discussion of the construction of ethnicity states that it is given structure by identity and culture. Ethnic boundaries are constructed for the purpose of determining designated membership within groups and according to Fenton (2010), such boundaries should be maintained. Interestingly, admission of individuals and groups to ethnic categories is determined by factors surrounding the ethnic group in space and time. That said, it means that various factors can change boundaries at any time, and whatever is admissible now may not necessarily be admissible a few years on (Horowitz, 1977).

The same has been noted by Pebley *et al.* (2005), whose study of indigenous Guatemalans indicates that ethnic boundaries are more likely to decline with a marked rise in economic opportunities. Conversely, ethnic boundaries have the potential to be reinforced with denial of economic opportunities, as well as any other external threat prompting ethnic solidarity.

2.3.4 Symbolic Ethnicity

Of note is what Nagel (1994) has labelled "symbolic ethnicity". This can be noted among people of European descent in the United States of America. Symbolic ethnicity occurs in pluralistic societies where ethnic boundaries have been weakened by such factors as amongst others, intermarriage, religious conversion, as well as the gradual loss of language. Still, even

in the midst of such weakened ethnic boundaries one cannot help but notice that there is a different type of ethnicity at play and on the rise, one fuelled by nostalgic allegiance with the culture of the immigrant generation. The example offered by Nagel is an interesting one; of American-born Armenians who regard themselves as every bit Armenian. Even those who have never been to Armenia, nor speak Armenian adhere to an Armenian identity. They may belong to Armenian associations and even attend an Armenian church. This means that groups may relax ethnic boundaries in pluralistic societies, but such a relaxation will be compensated for by the construction of ethnic identity (Nagel, 1994).

2.3.5 Ethnicity as situational

Ethnicity is problematic in that it is constructed by groups and individuals as well as by various external agents and organisations. Groups and individuals may carry with them various ethnic identities that may either be overt or inhibited depending on the situation they are faced with. This has also been noted by MacGonagle (2008:30), who states that “Identities are not static, for they change...subject to numerous influences”. In addition, these ethnic identities may either be presented or inhibited depending on the audience. As audiences change, it is not unusual for the ethnic identity change as well.

Sometimes ethnic identities are assumed for the benefits such identities may come with, while on the other hand, some ethnic identities may be inhibited for the degree of stigma they may carry with them. One of the benefits of the assumption of some ethnic identities may be political access. This then simply means that the construction of ethnic identity is a conscious individual or group choice (Nagel, 1994; Horowitz, 1977).

2.3.6 Ethnicity and migration

Fenton (2010) extensively discusses how migration plays a vital role in the creation of both ethnic markers and boundaries. When people move to new territories where they are the minority group, they are more likely to stress their identities via cultural markers and to create ethnic boundaries that identify them as belonging to a specific group. The stressing of such identities can be the result of a number of issues, including threat of extinction or, conversely, assimilation. Yinger (1985:154) defines assimilation as “...a process of boundary reduction that can occur when members of two or more societies, of ethnic groups, or of smaller social groups meet”.

Summary

This chapter discussed the literature and theoretical frameworks on the building blocks of collective narratives, which are given structure by collective memory. In some social groups, the formation of collective memory can be a source of either inclusion or exclusion of individuals from such groups. This is often the case with ethnicity. Memory gives rise to narrative(s), with the heroes in these narratives becoming icons who are then commemorated and memorialised. Nghunghunyani obviously falls into this category, so the statue is the result of this process. This indicates that statues are subject to foundation myths, collective social memory and social narratives.

The literature on commemorative practices is intertwined with that collective memory. Collective memories within social groups give rise to collective social narratives, which are basically stories of remembered pasts, customarily including heroes or heroines and prominent public figures from those pasts. Commemorative structures are usually dedicated to persons or leaders who have a collective historical significance for a particular group.

Nationalities and cultural groups are shaped by a shared history or heritage, which is reflected in the collective social narrative. Shared history and a common language can both be bases for social cohesion. Social cohesion in turn affect how groups interact with one another and whether groups or individuals are allowed access into other groups. This, as literature indicates, is what ethnic identity entails, and ethnicity has the potential to lead to strife. Commemorative structures dedicated to heroes and antagonists arise from selections of histories. This may mean that heroes and antagonists have to be chosen carefully from “relevant” sections of history to avoid strife in the form of ethnic conflict.

The chapter also focused on the literature and the theories on the formation of ethnic groups and ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is situational, as ethnic groups relax and tighten their ethnic boundaries for various reasons and situations to either include or exclude individuals from their groups. When groups and individuals are excluded from groups, the actions include the emphasis of either historical or cultural differences so that a situation of ‘us and them’ is clearly delineated.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 offers insight into the methodology of this inquiry. In an effort to clearly present the debate surrounding the King Nghunghunyani statue, the researcher adopted and applied a qualitative research design for this study. This design was chosen because it can quite clearly address the debate and information provided by people both for and against the erection of the statue. The study combined a case study and narrative research design. The case study design made it possible to focus on the debates surrounding the statue, while narrative research made it possible for the study to follow the social collective narratives of the Tsonga groups selected for the study. The respondents were selected using non-probability and purposeful sampling procedures so that a unique sample was drawn to represent the rest of the groups. The data was elicited from the respondents with the use of the face-to-face interviewing method. The respondents were introduced to the study using an information sheet explaining the details of the study, including a few sample questions. Thereafter their consent was sought for ethics purposes by means of a consent form which they read and signed.

3.1 Qualitative Research

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavey (2006), qualitative research is when the researchers are concerned with text and word as opposed to numbers and with how those informing the researcher narrate their story, more so because researchers are after meaning in context (Merriam, 2009).

For this qualitative study, the researcher examined narratives related by informants. Government officials were selected to elicit information pertaining to the reasons behind the erection of the statue. A government newsletter dedicated to honouring Limpopo warrior kings was consulted to further elucidate the accounts by government officials regarding the reasons behind the erection of the statue. A selection of local Tsonga chiefs and a local academic were selected to contribute to this study so that they could provide the reasons behind the rejection of the statue.

According to Jan Niewenhuis (in Maree, 2010), the qualitative approach seeks to “...collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied”, with emphasis on the quality and depth of information rather than on the scope or breadth of the information as one would with quantitative research. In the later edition (in Maree, 2012: 50), however, Niewenhuis emphasises that there is in fact more to qualitative research than mere collection of rich descriptive data, as this approach is “...concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underline various behavioural patterns and is mostly concerned with exploring the ‘why’ questions of research” (in Maree, 2012:51). Merriam (2009) notes that since qualitative inquiry is focused on meaning, it requires a data collection method or instrument that is sensitive to the underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) refer to qualitative research as research that never tries to simplify what is observed, but rather recognises that the issues under study are multi-dimensional and multi-layered. Such a study attempts to portray the multi-faceted form of the phenomenon exactly the way it is in the study. In addition, according to Henning *et al.* (2004), qualitative research aims for depth rather than determining quantities.

In summary, Niewenhuis (in Maree, 2012: 51) adopts Holloway and Wheeler's (1996) view that qualitative research studies people or systems by interacting with them in their natural environment where they are observed to gather information by paying attention to their experiences of meaning and their interpretations. This is called "seeing through the eyes of the participant". Here then, the scope and breadth (quantity) of the information is irrelevant, since the emphasis and focus is on quality and depth of the information. By locating the actions of individuals within their cultural contexts, qualitative research is more suitable for social research since social meanings are embedded in cultural contexts.

3.2 Research Design

This study combined two research designs for gathering the desired data. Firstly, it is a case study because it focuses specifically on the debate surrounding the statue of King Nghunghunyani, and secondly, it follows a narrative research method as it solicited and analysed oral history from respondents.

3.2.1 Case Study

A case study, according to Niewenhuis (in Maree, 2012: 75), is a study of a set of related events aimed at describing and explaining the phenomenon of interest. With the case study research design, a phenomenon is studied in-depth for a defined period, while collecting extensive data on the phenomenon being studied (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010: 135). In the case of this study, the erection of the statue of Nghunghunyani and the reactions following it are studied as a case of contested heritage in Limpopo. Data on the social groups rejecting the statue and the historical background leading up to the erection of the statue was collected, reflecting Leedy and Ormrod's view that details about the context surrounding the case

should be recorded. Data collection data was aimed at contextualising the debates and the statue itself within the region where it was erected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010: 135).

3.2.2 Narrative Research

According to Creswell (2012: 502), a narrative research design is about stories as it focuses on narratives. These stories are narrated to the researcher by informants who then record the narrated events to be used as data (Merriam, 2009: 32). The type of narrative research adopted for this purpose is inquiry into oral histories, which is basically collective narratives or group origins and histories. The approach draws from Creswell's description of oral histories (Creswell, 2012: 504). Hesse-Bieber and Leavy (2006: 152) describe oral history as a special method of interview where the researcher and research participants spend extended time together engaged in a process of storytelling and listening. The oral histories were then analysed for the meanings they possess, following Merriam's (2009: 32) approach.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

A research sample is defined as those people who represent and reflect the ideas and thoughts of the main populations involved (Tayie, 2005). Niewenhuis (in Maree, 2012) defines sampling as the process researchers use to select a portion of the population for study to make generalisations to the rest of the population. Neuman (2014: 246) defines a sample as small cases selected from the main pool for intensive study so that the rest of the population can be generalised from such a study. Researchers may employ either one of two methods, these being probability sampling, which is sampling using statistics, or rather mathematical variables, to arrive at desired results, and non-probability sampling, which focuses on non-mathematical or qualitative data to arrive at desired results. This study adopted and applied non-probability sampling.

3.3.1 Non-probability Sampling

Non-probability sampling, according to Babbie (2013: 128), is used by researchers who rely on the available respondents. Merriam (2009: 77) explains that anthropologists prefer this sampling procedure to solve qualitative problems that are not focused on using the data to answer “how much?” and “how often?” research questions, meaning that this method is only applicable for the solicitation of qualitative data. There are a number of non-probability samples (see Creswell, 2012; Maree, 2012; Babbie, 2013; Neuman, 2014), but for the purpose of this study, purposive or judgemental sampling was used to select the respondents.

3.3.2 Purposive Sampling

The respondents of this research were selected specifically for qualities that the researcher felt made them holders of the information needed for the study. This type of sampling procedure is labelled purposive (Tayie, 2005; Dawson, 2006; Creswell, 2012; Niewenhuis in Maree, 2012) as it is directed at the relevant respondents only. It usually involves a small sample size. This type of sampling was suitable for this study as it was cost-effective and time-saving.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure where the respondents are selected intentionally based on the researcher’s judgement, hence it is also known as judgemental sampling (Babbie, 2013: 128-129; Creswell, 2012: 206). Purposeful sampling, according to Merriam (2009: 77), is used when the researcher selects respondents for the specific qualities they possess. It may be a special experience or competence. LeCompte and Pressile (in Merriam, 299: 77) prefer to label this type of non-probability sampling ‘criterion-based selection’ where only the respondents selected possess attributes and fit a specific

criterion essential to the researcher's study (see also Marre & Pietersen in Maree, 2012: 178). Creswell (2012: 208) labels this sampling procedure homogenous sampling.

Traditional leaders (chiefs) were the first respondents to be interviewed. They are regarded here as the custodians of the social narratives of their respective chiefdoms. The histories of their chiefdoms, including the antagonist heroes and heroines, are embedded within the social narratives, including battles fought, won or lost. The histories always include movements of people over time. Clan totems and clan praises usually contain in them information about the origins of groups.

Such information is passed on orally from one generation to the next, and these oral accounts form an integral part of the oral history of the group. Information was obtained via interviews from four Tsonga royal houses. Only one chief was interviewed, while the other three directed the researcher to their "libraries" as they called them, or their personal representatives. These respondents were interviewed with the aim of obtaining their histories and family praise songs or poems for use in the elucidation of the collective Tsonga history of the region.

Mr. Tlou Setumu was also interviewed as the person responsible for the erection of the statue and for writing informative literature on the former traditional leaders, including Nghunghunyani, Sekhukhune, Makhado and Malebogo. He did this to commemorate them and he was key to the erection of statues in their honour. He elaborated on the justification of the erection of the statue among a group of people who consider themselves a different group.

Mr. Isaiah Ndhambi, an academic and retired director of Library and Information in Limpopo, was interviewed about the history of the association between the Tsonga and Shangana cultural groups, providing clues as to their rejection of the statue.

The former MEC of the Limpopo Department of Sports, Arts and Culture (SAC), Mr. Joe Maswanganyi, was interviewed concerning the justifications for the erection of the Nghunghunyani statue in Giyani.

3.4 Data Collection

The research data for this study was collected using the interview as the only instrument for data collection. Greef (in de Vos *et al*, 2013: 342) states that the interview is the predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research. For the purposes of this study the interview is defined as "...a social relationship designed to exchange information between the participant and the researcher". An interview is a face-to-face verbal interaction between the researcher and respondents. It is a unique method in that there is a continuous monologue by the respondent on the topic of the research (Goddard & Melville, 2001; Creswell, 2007; Creswell, 2012) while the researcher records the answers. According to Greef (in de Vos *et al*, 2013), the quality and quantity of the information obtained during an interview depends on the manner in which the researcher manages the relationship.

There are, according to Greef (in de Vos *et al*, 2013), five types of one-on-one interviews, meaning that the respondents are engaged one at a time. The different types include the unstructured, the semi-structured, the ethnographic, the telephonic, and email interviews. For this study, an interview schedule was compiled (Dawson, 2006; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Greef, *ibid*). The interviews with the respondents were semi-structured to allow for central questions, and to a certain extent open-ended to allow for a free flow of information and spontaneity. The interviews were intensive and exploratory in nature and there were follow-ups on the interviews. Tayie (2005) states that intensive interviewing is a good way to gather extremely detailed information from a small sample of respondents. Semi-structured

interviews are also, according to Dawson (2006), the best way to obtain information for a comparative analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data elicited was analysed according to the following steps in Creswell (2012; 2007), and later Neuman (2014), organising and preparing the data for analysis, reading through all the data, using the data from informants to generate themes for analysis, advancing how the themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative, and lastly, interpreting the data.

The data had a strong emphasis on a few common themes. Some elements were stronger among clan representatives, while some elements were general and pertained to all respondents. These include: histories of clans, tracing movements of clans over time, the clan praise poem or song. Wherever possible, family trees illustrating the history of the family in a manner that made it possible to trace the history through generations over time, to trace the history of the former homeland of Gazankulu, and lastly, to understand the debates and controversies surrounding the statue of Nghunghunyani.

The above elements were used to create qualitative narratives that were analysed through a process known as discourse analysis. According to Maree (2012:102), discourse analysis is when a researcher studies and analyses "...written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias, and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed with specific social, economic, political and historical contexts". Furthermore, with discourse analysis it is possible to reveal how dominant forces in society construct versions of realities and truths that favour their own interests.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The interviews were conducted in adherence to the guidelines by Leedy and Ormrod (2010) and Rubin and Rubin (2005). The researcher also adhered to the ethical considerations mentioned by Goddard and Melville (1992). Such ethical considerations include not harming the participants in any way; gaining informed consent from the participants; not sharing their identities in the event that they have requested to remain anonymous. The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of Venda Higher Degrees Committee so that interviews would adhere to codes of ethics that served to protect the participants' integrity. The purpose of the interview and all other relevant information was fully explained to participants (see Annexure 1). Furthermore, the participants provided informed consent (Annexure 2) to participate in the interview by means of a signed consent and indemnity form.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the research methods used to accomplish this goal of the study. The qualitative research design was used to collect the data for this study. Qualitative research, this project included, seek to understand meaning in context, so the best method to elicit contextual information is through the use of an interview as the main research instrument. This has enabled the researcher to gather data that indicated the reasons why the statue in question was erected, as well as the subsequent rejection of it locally. The study combined the case study and narrative research designs. As a case study, it remained focused on the debates surrounding the statue, while the narrative research made it possible for the study to follow the social collective narratives of the Tsonga groups selected for the study. Study respondents were selected by means of purposive sampling so that a unique sample was drawn for interviews, all the while adhering to the best ethical practices for social research.

Chapter 4

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

A discussion of the different Tsonga ethnic groupings would seem rather incomplete without a concise discussion of the historical background of the groups. As per the theoretical frameworks that shape this study, this exercise reveals how these groups view themselves as a collective entity, and how they formed collective memories. In addition, the historical background sheds light on the reasons for the rise of ethnic divisions. The reasons for the rejection of the statue can be traced back to the historical background of the Tsonga-speaking communities in Limpopo, as well as the historical background of the Gaza Nguni. The historical background of the former homeland of Gazankulu also offers a glimpse into the reasons behind the rejection of the statue by the local people.

4.1 Introducing the Gaza Nguni and the social narrative of King Nghunghunyani

It is rather impossible to discuss King Nghunghunyani and the Gaza Nguni without discussing their history and heritage. The narrative is traced back to the *mfecane*, a period of turmoil and disturbances during the 1920's (Harries in Vail, 1989) in Zululand after King Shaka succeeded his father as the Zulu king. The *mfecane* was marked with numerous migrations of off-shoots of the Zulu warriors and groups, some fleeing from Shaka, while some were subjects that had been entrusted with fighting other clans in an attempt to expand the Zulu Kingdom. Nghunghunyane was the grandson of the Zulu warrior Manukosi, or Soshangana.

4.1.1 The northwards migrations

There are various accounts of how the Zulu warrior Manukusi, also known as Soshangana, arrived in southern Mozambique. One of the accounts (Jaques, 1982) states that he and another, known as Songandaba, had been sent on a mission by their leader Shaka to attack the Amatonga, who occupied the area between Maputo and Zululand. The two warriors, together with a strong battalion, did attack the Tonga, but instead of reporting back to Shaka, they continued northwards past Maputo, fighting and subjugating all the clans they came across. Other sources (Van Warmelo, 1935) indicate that Songandaba even reached Central Africa. In a fit of anger over their defiance, Shaka sent a battalion after the two, but these men never caught up with Soshangana's warriors as most of them perished from disease and hunger and the group subsequently went back to Shaka.

Harries's account (in Vail, 1989) of the arrival of Soshangana in southern Mozambique states that he took advantage of the declining Zulu power after their defeat in the battle of Blood River in the 1930s and led a group to the lower Limpopo.

Soshangana and his people fled from Shaka in 1819 after the latter defeated Zwide and incorporated his people into the Zulu Kingdom. Zwide was Soshangana's cousin and the two were not Zulu, but amaNdwandwe. Soshangana's group fled northwards into Tonga territory. This account states that the group was attacked by Shaka's warriors in 1828, causing them to move further northwards into the area known as Bileni. This is where he established his capital Chayimite. His followers became known as amaShangana, named after him. The amaShangana kingdom was named Gaza after one of Soshangana's ancestors (Setumu, 2005). The amaShangana continued to fight and displace people in southern Mozambique, and this caused the first waves of eastward migration of a number of clans. The Nkuna, together with their chief, Shilubana, moved west to the Transvaal and settled among the

Bakgaga. The Baloyi followed suit, but settled next to the people of Queen Modjadji (Jaques, 1984). Harries (1981a) offers an account of these migrations, mentioning that the Nkuna were forced out of the lower Limpopo [by the Gaza Nguni] in 1838-1839, and that they were never at any time an integral part of the Gaza Empire.

4.1.2 The death of Soshangana and the Nguni wars of succession

King Soshangana died in 1858 at Chayimite. His death was followed by wars of succession between his sons Muzila and Mawewe, which continued for ten years (Setumu 2005). This caused a second wave of eastwards migrations (Harries, 1989; Van Warmelo, 1935) after originally immigrating into the Transvaal on account of the war of succession and ecological issues such as drought, famine and smallpox around 1858-62 (Harries, *ibid*). Even though the legitimate heir to the throne was Mawewe, son of the Great Wife as per Nguni custom, Mzila ascended to the throne and ultimately managed to get rid of his brother. The defeated Mawewe and his people left the Gaza Empire and fled to Swaziland (Jaques, 1984; Wheeler, 1968). Mzila's reign coincided with the introduction of a monetary economy and the intensification of Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique. The colonial government had him sign treaties delineating the areas that he and his people could occupy. This culminated in several wars with the Portuguese, as Mzila transgressed the treaties several times. He died in 1884. The Gaza wars of succession had Mzila reconsider and change the Nguni law of succession, namely that only the son of the Great Wife is the rightful successor to the throne. The new law required that the first-born son, regardless of who his mother was, would be the rightful successor to the throne following the king's death. This law was adopted from the Tsonga and Sotho customs (Jaques, 1984).

4.1.3 King Nghunghunyani of the Gaza Empire

Mzila was succeeded by his son Mdungazi, who subsequently named himself Nghunghunyani (Jaques, 1984). He was a strong leader who, just like his father and grandfather before him, reigned with terror, tyranny and subjugated other clans. According to Wheeler (1968) Nghunghunyani had a fearful military reputation that landed him the name “the Lion of Gaza”. One thing about him was certain though, he was different from his father in that he valued his independence. That is why he disregarded most of the treaties that his father, Mzila, had signed with the Portuguese colonial government. He was unhappy with the Portuguese encroachment of what should be his territories. He forged alliances with the British, and in one of his correspondences with them, he complained that white people were occupying his land and farming without his permission (Wheeler, 1968: 595).

Unlike his father before him, his fierce independence meant that he had to stay abreast of the Portuguese at all times. This meant that he had to establish a network of intelligence or a far-reaching espionage system throughout southern Mozambique (Wheeler, 1968: 597). This network helped him to live as he pleased within the Empire, regardless of any treaties that could have been signed between the Gaza Empire and the Portuguese. It is this quest for freedom that proved to be the demise of his rule. A conglomeration of issues led to the demise of the Lion of Gaza. These included, amongst others, “...his aggressive retinue...labour migration, disease and ...disunity among the Shangana” (Wheeler, 1968: 600-602). In a final attempt to salvage the Gaza Empire from colonialists, he perfected highly polished negotiating skills. He had to employ this skill in his repeated negotiations with the Portuguese. However, this diplomacy was undermined by the fact that the Portuguese had superior abilities in the use of firearms. This, together with the other factors mentioned earlier, led to the defeat of the Lion of Gaza by the Portuguese in 1895. He was captured

together with two of his sons and other people close to him, including some of his wives. They were sent to Portugal, where Nghunghunyani died in 1906 (Setumu, 2005).

4.1.4 The legacy of the Gaza Nguni

Throughout their reign of terror, the Gaza Nguni, together with their leaders, were despots who killed other groups, burned their villages, took their women and children, and practiced slavery (Setumu, 2005). The Empire also participated in the east coast slave trade where prisoners of war from defeated clans were taken as slaves. Clans that assumed the Nguni culture were acculturated and incorporated into the Gaza Nguni, and their girls supplied the much needed wives that would perpetuate and maintain the purity of the Nguni. This was a deliberate act that served to exclude non-Nguni from social and economic benefits. There are, however, people who resisted incorporation into the Nguni. According to Harries (1981a), these people were easily recognisable because they stuck to their own customs and spoke their language. These people were regarded by the Gaza Nguni as *amatonga* and were subjected to extreme exploitation. *Amatonga* was a pejorative term meaning slave or dog, and such persons had no human rights whatsoever. The Nguni regarded both the *amatonga* and the Chopi as subhuman and as such, a justifiable source of slaves (Harries, 1981a).

4.2 The clans of southern Mozambique, anthropological classifications and the “Tsonga”

The people of southern Mozambique were subjected to Nguni occupation, and some of them even to slavery (Harries, 1981a). Smith’s (1973) historical survey of the area indicates that these peoples were organised into clans and chiefdoms, like the Makwakwa, Bila, Hlengwe, Sono, Tembe and others. They spoke dialects of the same language, and these dialects easily

gave away both the clan and the region of the speakers. Dialects included for example the N'walungu (northern) dialect, the Dzonga (southern) dialect, the Ronga (eastern) dialect and the Hlanganu dialect. Even though these people had somewhat similar customs, the culture differed from clan to clan. Anthropologists, in their quest for and obsession with classifications and particularisation, grouped these tribes together and attributed names like Tsonga, Chopi and Tonga. However, these groups all had different historical experiences and should not have been grouped together based on what anthropologists regarded as similarities. Although these groups were in some ways related at some time and had cultural connections that could not be ignored, they nevertheless saw each other as complete strangers.

The similarities in material culture and customs of the people of southern Mozambique, according to Smith (1973), prompted anthropologists to study them as interrelated and not as isolated, a conception that is rather flawed. Still, the similarities in both language and material culture prompted anthropologists like Henri A. Junod (Harries, 1981b) to impose a singular grammar on the clans. Junod was a Swiss missionary stationed in southern Mozambique who turned his attention to anthropology out of interest and due to the influences of European trends at the time.

Junod's application of the labels "Tonga" and "Tsonga" are indeed problematic, as they are both Nguni derogative terms meaning 'dog' 'slave' or 'servant' (Harries, in Vail 1989). They are words used by the Nguni for people who were not Nguni or who refused acculturation by the Gaza Nguni. This clearly indicates that missionaries and anthropologists working in southern Mozambique applied names to groups as related to them by those outside the groups (etic), instead of relying on information from within (emic) the group. Harris (1981b) observes this a reliance on the etic in the work of Henri A. Junod, who employed social

interpreters. Furthermore, Harries (1981b: 45) notes that Junod practised ethnocentric anthropology as he regarded the very same people he was gathering data about as “...primitive...inferior...”

Smith (1973) and Harries (1981b) note that the imposed labels on the people of Mozambique, like Chopi and Tsonga/Tonga, date from the arrival of the Nguni in southern Mozambique. Applying an ethnic label to a group does not necessarily mean that the group accepts the label or that the label represents the group aptly. There are instances where ethnic labels come with histories and narratives that some groups would rather not be associated with. Ethnic labels may tend towards negative connotations.

Spanish-speaking communities in the USA prefer to be called Latino rather than Hispanic (Peña-Pérez, 2000). Harries (1981b; 1989) notes the same in the case of the Tonga, as they rejected and refused to be labelled as such. The Natal colonialists were aware of the term and they adopted it to refer to people living north of Zululand. It is somewhat trivial that even though Smith (1973) notes this as an imposition, the terms are applied throughout the discussion to denote particular groups from specified territories in southern Mozambique. Harries (1981b) also notes the problem of grouping together people of different political, cultural and physical origin and attributing to them a singular label based merely on linguistic criteria. He either ignored or dismissed the fact that the people themselves used clan names or “*swivongo*” to identify themselves and their origins.

Henri Berthoud, another Swiss missionary stationed in the Transvaal, opposed Junod’s labels for the people of southern Mozambique (Harries, in Vail 1989), arguing against the option of imposing ethnic labels on the clans. Berthoud had already noted that the Tsonga were in fact made up of clans that were subdivided into several clans, each with its own proper name - “*xivongo*”.

4.3 Southern Mozambican Refugees and Immigrants in the Transvaal

The people classified as the Tsonga are believed to have entered the Transvaal in two major waves of migration. The first wave migrated in the 1830s when groups fled the destructive intrusion of the Nguni led by Soshangana into southern Mozambique (Setumu, 2005). Of note were the Nkuna, who moved into the Transvaal around 1838-9 and subsequently settled in the Bakgaga region (Jaques, 1984; Harries, 1981b). Government archival documents on the history of the Mamitwa, dated 1st March 1907, states that the Mamitwa people of the Baloyi family left Portuguese East Africa “to escape the rule of the Zulus” and settled near the Modjadji and became their vassals. In an interview dated 6 October 1906, Chief Mawawa Mamitwa stated that his father arrived in Transvaal before Albasini and his people (File GOV 1086 Ref PS 50/8/07).

The war of succession of the 1850s between Manukosi’s sons Muzila and Mawewe marked the onset of the second wave of migrations of the people of southern Mozambique into the Transvaal. Harries (in Vail, 1989) indicates that the migrations were also caused by environmental conditions, including diseases. However, there are oral accounts (Halala, 2012: 96) that the Levubu-Limpopo confluence has been home to some Tsonga-speaking groups like the Makuleke for centuries.

The people who entered the Transvaal during the second wave of migrations and later, were refugees and not powerful clans with rulers or leaders of their own (Van Warmelo, 1935) and this prompted them to settle virtually under any chief to whom they could offer services and pay tribute to (Harries in Vail 1989). Their only quest was finding a place to live. They came from various cultural traditions and their roots could not be linked to any single clan or chief. Chiefs competed to attract them and their loyalty shifted from leader to leader, depending on shifts in where the leadership power in the Transvaal was vested. One of the leaders whom

these people served under was the Portuguese Joao Albasini, who controlled the Spelonken area in the Soutpansberg. Harries (in Vail, 1989: 84) asserts that Albasini was the favourite choice of chief as he “...allowed his followers to retain their clan names and material culture...”. Some of the immigrants occupied land that had been uninhabitable due to environmental factors. Regardless of where they settled, these newcomers kept their cultural traditions and foods as they were not in any way culturally homogenous, but “...a conglomeration of people from various coastal chiefdoms” (Harries, in Vail, 1989: 84). The refugees came to be known by a number of various labels, including “Gwamba”, “Tsonga”, “Shangaan” and “Knobnoses”.

4.4 Swiss mission and the rise of the Tsonga petty bourgeoisie

When the chiefs lost their powers in terms of the Native Land Act of 1910, the petty bourgeoisie emerged as an alternative expression of political power among the Tsonga. The bourgeoisie was made up of the educated elite who received their formal education at the Lemana College, founded by the Swiss missionaries in the late 1800’s. The college was the only institution of higher learning in the north-eastern Transvaal at the time. This educated bourgeoisie brought about a Tsonga-Shangana consciousness in a country that was rapidly accepting the division of races and ethnic groups based on colour. The Tsonga and Shangana bourgeoisie spoke of a “Tsonga-Shangana” national pride that was based on similarities in language. These people were literate in Tsonga, the *lingua franca* created by the Swiss mission. The language united all the educated bourgeoisie who had once been refugees from southern Mozambique. According to Halala (2012), the bourgeoisie strongly discouraged other groups from referring to the Tsonga by separate names. They pointed out that since they spoke the same language, they were one people.

The division of rural South Africa into ethnically defined units as self-governing homelands was formalised by the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951. This led to the formation of the Matshangana Territorial Authority, which was the self-governing unit of the Tsonga and Shangana speakers in the Transvaal. This authority, formed in 1962 (Harries in Vail, 1989), brought together disparate groups of Tsonga speakers from four regions of the Transvaal: Spelonken and Giyani, Malamulele, the areas around Letaba, and the Shangana in Bushbuckridge.

4.5 The foundation of the Gazankulu Homeland

The formation of the homeland was traced in a short history documented by Freddy Rikhotso, as well as archival records from Giyani and Pretoria. The year 1957 saw the beginning of segregated territorial governments in South Africa. The then Prime Minister, H.F. Verwoerd, invited chiefs from around the northern Transvaal, including the chiefs of the Venda, Tsonga, Shangana and Pedi. His intention was to discuss the beginning of territorial authorities. The plan had already been drafted for such territorial authorities in the northern Transvaal, but it unfortunately did not include an authority for Tsonga communities. The Tsonga-speaking communities were considered a minority and they occupied areas ruled by chiefs of either Venda- or Pedi-speaking communities. Their numbers did not allow for the formation of a territorial authority, even if they all settled somewhere homogenously (Harries, 1989; Rikhotso, 1984)

This meant that the Tsonga communities from various regions were to be assimilated into major cultural groups in their various regions to form territorial authorities. For example, the Tsonga of Baloyi, who occupied the region near the Balobedu, were to be merged with the Pedi of the Balobedu region to form a single authority. The same can be said for the Tsonga of the Malamulele region who were meant to be assimilated into a territory meant largely to

be under the control of the Venda. The plan also meant that the minority Shangana groups from the Bushbuckridge area were to be grouped with and controlled by the majority Sotho group of the Mapulaneng region in Bushbuckridge (Rikhotso, 1984).

The idea did not settle well with the Tsonga/Shangana representatives, Chief Adolph Sundhuza Mhinga and Regent Chief Isaac Khetho Nxumalo. They both disliked the idea of the Tsonga/Shangana groups being divided and assimilated into majority groups. They then decided to mobilise the Tsonga and Shangana chiefs from the various regions within the northern Transvaal to form an alliance and protest against the plan.

On the 23rd July 1961, 15 chiefs and many headmen and councillors from all over the area occupied by Tsonga/Shangana people, as far as Bushbuckridge, held a meeting at Chief Mamitwa's kraal to discuss their predicament. Among other things discussed, it was agreed at that meeting that they should from there onwards call themselves the Shangaan people and refrain from the use of 'Tsonga' after a complaint by Chief Nxumalo that the use of Tsonga is segregatory towards the people from Bushbuckridge (File NTS 321 Ref 23/55). The chiefs from the Bushbuckridge and Malamulele, Giyani and Letaba regions bought into the idea of sending delegates to Pretoria to ask for a Tsonga/Shangana territorial authority so that the Tsonga and Shangana could group themselves together and form a single territory.

Chief A.S. Mhinga, together with four other local chiefs, wrote a letter to the then Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, dated 1960. The contents of the letter outline their grievances with regard to Tsonga people and their headmen under Venda chiefs. The main complaint was that the Venda chiefs did not treat the Tsonga people under their rule with fairness and that they should be separated (File NTS 9103 Ref 423/362).

Two years later a number of chiefs lobbied the then Bantu Native Commissioner, J.H. Alberts, on the 13th February 1962 (File: NTS 9103 Ref: 423/362) for their own territory. The lobby included a discussion of the terms of the boundaries between themselves and the vhaVenda.

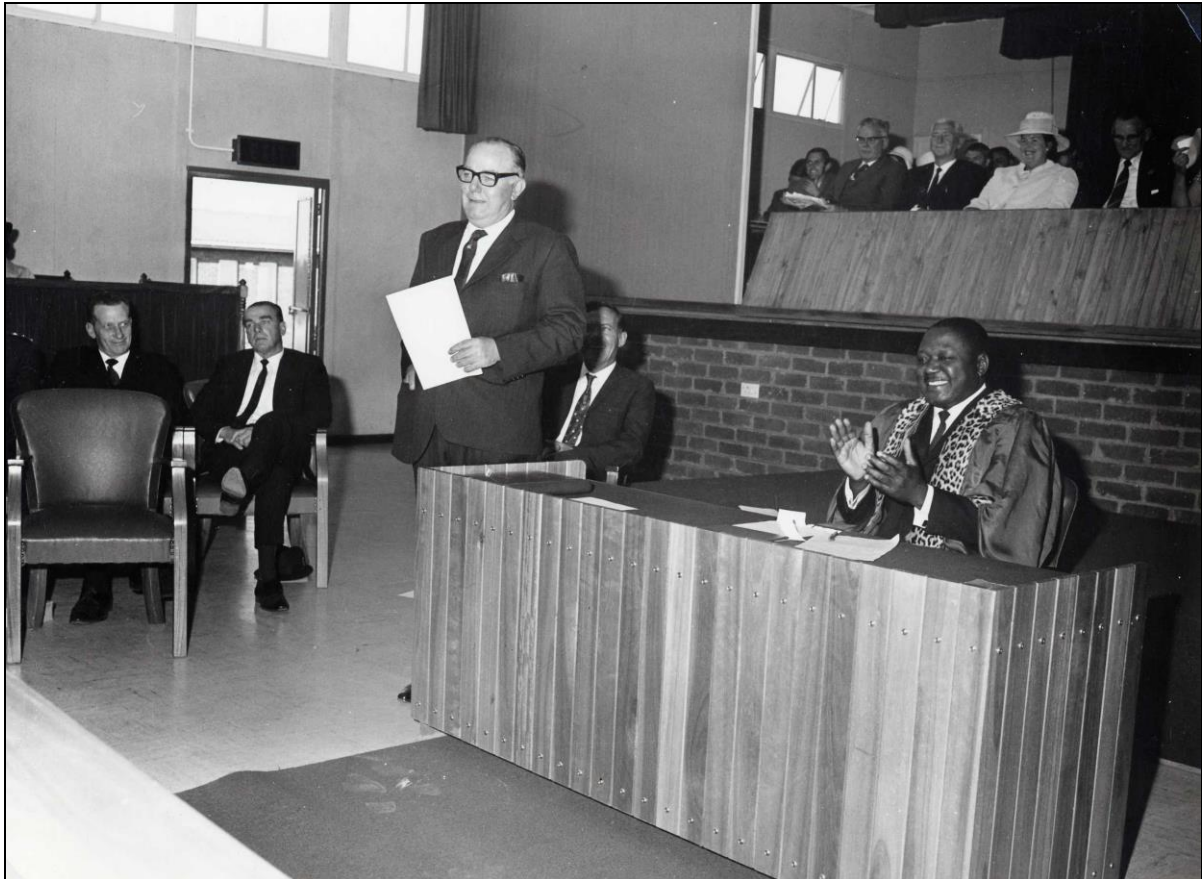


Fig 2: The Prime Minister of South Africa, Mr B.J. Vorster addressing the first Legislative Assembly of the Machanga, Tsonga at Giyani. (SAB 18361; 1971)

Archival documents, more notably File NTS 423 Ref 423/362, discuss the circumstances surrounding the Tsonga quest for a separate territorial authority. It applies, among other things, the findings of Van Warmelo's (1935) survey of the peoples of the Transvaal. Van Warmelo's findings formed the basis of the concession to grant the Tsonga speakers an own territorial authority. File NTS 321 Ref 23/55 includes a letter signed by Chief A.S. Mhinga, written by ten chiefs to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner on the 18th August 1962. The letter

outlines the terms of the boundary between the Tsonga and the Venda south of the Levubu River, and stresses that no Venda chief may rule over any Tsonga headman.



Fig 3: Members of the Machanga Executive Committee with the Prime Minister of South Africa, Mr. B.J. Vorster in discussion about constitutional matters in Cape Town. In front left to right: Mr M. Mtsetweni (chairperson), Prof H.W.E. Ntsan'wisi (head council member), Mr B.J. Vorster, Head Chief A.S. Mhinga and council member I.K. Nxumalo (SAB 16446; 1971)

After several meetings in 1962, the government of South Africa announced that the Tsonga/Shangana would have their own territorial authority. Their territory came to be known as the Matshangana Territorial Authority (hereafter, MTA). This authority was established at Berlin near Tzaneen, on the 19th December 1962, and Chief A.S. Mhinga was elected to be the chairperson. The territorial authority had five districts, namely Malamulele, Louis Trichardt, Mokoena-Tshangana Nhlangu (in the Bushbuckridge area), Ndlopfu (in the region adjacent to the Balobedu), and Bankuna in the Letaba/Tzaneen region.

Berlin, the place where the declaration of the MTA was announced, was initially suggested as the capital of the MTA, but because there were more chiefs in the north, that idea was abandoned as it would have proven to be logistically challenging for those chiefs. An area close to Bend Store, apparently where the delegates were briefed, was selected as the capital of the MTA. That area was built up and later called Giyani (Rikhotso, 1984).

The name Giyani was decided at a special meeting of the General Assembly of the MTA held at the Nkowankowa Presbyterian Church hall on the 13th February 1968. It was chosen ahead of such names as Fumani, Phaphama, Vuxaka, Kaya, Ganyani, Tsakani and several others submitted by the general public.

The names were, however, discussed at length until Professor H.W.E. Ntsan'wisi supported Giyani, which means “to dance in celebration”, as the people were dancing with joy. The name was supported by Chief R. Mamitwa, because for him it was similar to when a person had succeeded in crossing a flooded river and then danced with joy (File: RSA 1976 MTA).

The MTA functioned until 1971. In 1973, the area became the self-governing homeland of Gazankulu (Harries, 1989). The name Gazankulu was derived from the Gaza Empire of the 1800s initially ruled by Manukosi, or Soshangana, a Zulu warrior who had broken away from the Zulu Kingdom and established an empire to the north in the present-day Mozambique (Rikhotso, 1984). His warriors fought and defeated the Tsonga clans they came across and later moved around due to conflict. His followers were later called the Matshangana after his name, Soshangana.

Interesting to note is the fact that the formation of the Matshangana Territorial Authority and subsequently the Gazankulu homeland was based on an emphasis of similarities. These

similarities were stressed for the sake of the survival of a group made up of disparate clans and chiefdoms that would not have previously considered themselves part of a single entity.

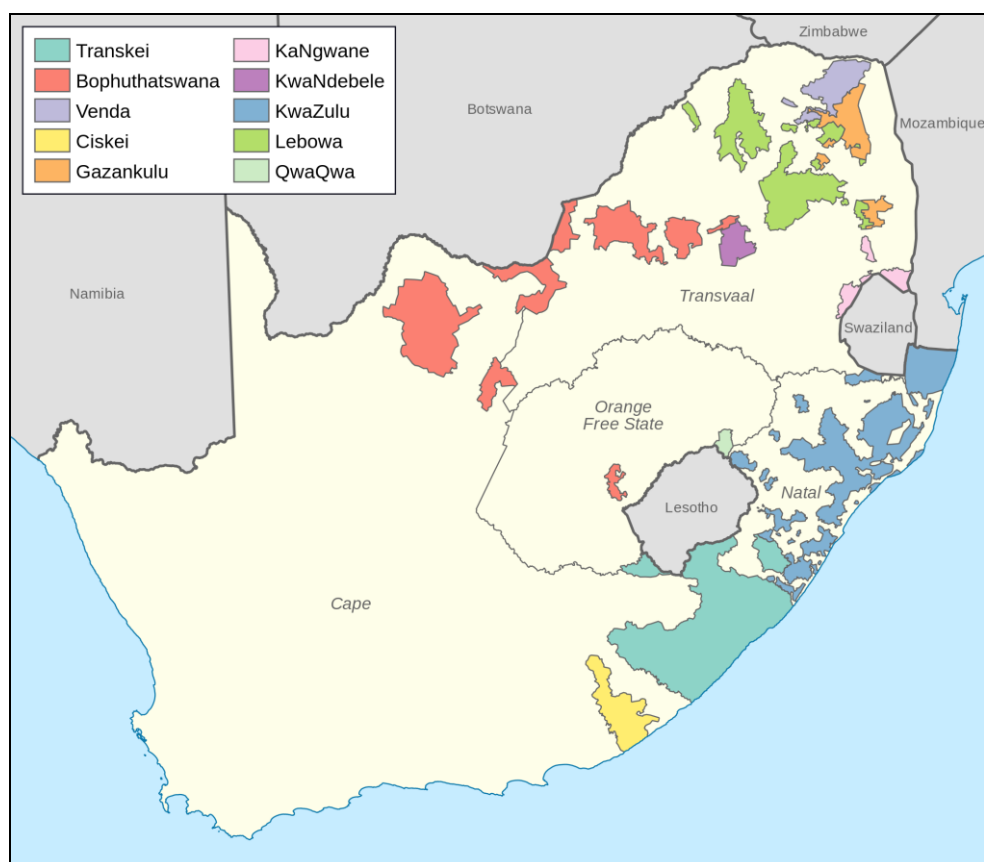


Fig 4: Map of pre-1994 South Africa indicating the position of the former Gazankulu homeland (Google Images)

The heterogeneous tribal authorities within the newly formed homeland were bound together by an ethnic identity that emphasises a common history, customs, language, religion, and a common way of life (Harries, 1989).

Summary

This chapter introduced the historical background of the Tsonga-speaking groups in South Africa and elaborated on the relationship between the Gaza Nguni, who are represented by the statue of Nghunghunyani, and the Tsonga-speaking people in South Africa. The discussion started off by introducing who the Gaza Nguni within the context of southern

Africa. The ancestors of Nghunghunyani started an empire named Gaza in what is now the Gaza province of Mozambique. The empire resulted from movements of people during mass migrations from northern Natal into inland territories, including what is now Zimbabwe and Zambia. The Ndwandwe defeated Tsonga-speaking tribes in southern Mozambique and settled there, where they became powerful. The social events following the Ndwandwe occupation included wars of succession and atrocities committed against those defeated, leading to mass migrations of Tsonga-speaking people of various chiefdoms and subsequent tribe affiliation in the Transvaal. The last emperor of Gaza was Nghunghunyani, who was exiled by the Portuguese, leading to the disintegration of the Gaza Empire.

The chapter also focussed on the predicament of labelling Tsonga-speaking people, both in Mozambique and more especially here in South Africa. The historical data reveal that Tsonga-speaking groups arrived in South Africa as disparate groups from various chiefdoms and tribal affiliations. Therefore, the South African anthropological classification of “Tsonga” as a homogenous tribe or chiefdom, is misleading. Barth’s theory of ethnicity (see Chapter 2) is applicable to the Tsonga-speakers. On arrival in the Transvaal a need arose for a homeland, so different peoples came together for their survival and then stressed their historical similarities such as language to form the Gazankulu Homeland.

Chapter 5

DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

The data collection was aimed at bringing the debates surrounding the statue of Nghunghunyani to the fore. The data was collected from two sets of sources, with one set focusing on the oral narratives that participants use to justify their rejection of the statue, and the other set focusing on what the government had originally planned when they erected the statue. The idea was not to document the histories of chiefdoms and tribes, but rather to listen to their social narratives with the emphasis on the heroes and antagonists that these groups regard as ancestors who feature powerfully in these narratives. These narratives can clarify whether the “Tsonga” have a collective narrative with covering antagonists like Nghunghunyani. The collected data included family or clan praise poems. These have been included because they are known to include accounts of the histories of the leaders to whom the singers or reciters are dedicated.

The data were gathered by means of interviews guided by an interview schedule with predetermined questions (see Annexure 1 for a sample of the questions). The questions were formulated in such a fashion that they would address the research questions and would create a clear picture of the debate.

Data were collected from seven sources, namely four clan representatives with knowledge of their oral histories, one scholar who is a retired government official with extensive knowledge of the history of the former homeland of Gazankulu, one scholar who is also a government official, and a former MEC of the Limpopo Department of Sports, Arts and Culture.

The identities of some of the sources are withheld to uphold the ethical standard and to respect the right of the informants to anonymity as discussed in the methodology chapter. Family and clan histories and where possible, family poems or descriptions of visual totems, were collected from participants from four different Tsonga clans. The researcher sought permission to collect the data by means interviews from the clan leaders, and in all these cases, the leaders were the chiefs of the clans. All but one of the situations were similar. In most cases there was an individual within the clan who is the designated family historian and who has been entrusted with the history. Once the chiefs granted their permission, they referred the researcher to the historian.

5.1 Mudavula (Vahlengwe)

What is your family history?

Our original home is ka-Xioki, in present day Mozambique. There is still a place called ka-Mudavula back in Mozambique even today. We still have connections there and still visit. The region is now known as Hlengweni. The Chauke people are part of a large group with tribal ties that extend to as far as present day Zimbabwe.

We left roughly during the year 1700. We had a reason to leave and settle this side. We came with Joao Albasini. He was an elephant hunter. He had guns. He was an adventurer, an explorer. He was a pocket friend of Mudavula.

On leaving Mozambique, we had a strong following from many clans and groups. There were the Manganyi, Ndhambi, Hlungwani our grandfathers.

We hunted elephants together. Mudavula as a name started there, he loved elephant hides. “Umdabula u dabula emakhanda ezindlovu”, meaning “Mudabula, the one who skins heads of elephants” in Nguni.

Albasini was a Tsonga chief even though he was Portuguese. He came with Mudavula. We settled next to where the dam is today. There were whites already occupying the area. We did not settle for long there. We moved to where Mashao is today, and to Valdezia and then Mambedi.

While there, we fought with Boers and vhaVenda. Mudavula was helping the Venda, defeating the whites. Vhavenda lived in the mountains. We occupied all hills in the regions. It was a military strategy for us. On leaving Mashao, around 1800, before the Anglo Boer war, we settled here at Mudavula. Mudavula went back to Mozambique. His grave is there in Mozambique. He had left his younger brother there, called Shandlale, who had a son, George Salani Mudavula. George visited Paul Kruger before 1898. He had white friends, and was an avid speaker. One day he was invited by whites complaining of veld fires, and he responded by saying that whites were the ones smoking pipes and cigarettes and throwing them away, causing fires, while blacks took snuff.

George had settled with the Nemavhulana, Nedzivhi, Netshilindi. The Nemavhulana were a small clan.

Because Mudavula had returned home, there was a need for a chief to lead six villages, Xihosana, Machele, Xikhulu, Mbhalati, Salani and Hasani Dakari next to the Levubu River. Salani George became the chief and was installed by the then British commissioner. It was before 1898. The current Chief Mudavula's father was born in 1907; he was George Salani's son.

What is your family praise poem or song?

*Hi mina...Mdun'wasi
wa Mbhedhle
wa Malayi (George Salani Mudavula)
wa Shandlale
wa Machele
wa Banga
wa Mihingu
wa Zari
wa Manguli
wa Mantsena
wa Bangwani
wa Xinyori
xinyori xo gangandzela eribyeni
xa mumu wa tolo
xo kanda Chavani xi chava mahika eka Xioki
ensinyeni wa muvungu eka Mudavula
Umdubula wo dabula makhanda ezindlovu
eka Mabasa
Umabasa u Basa emlilo utshisayo
Yatshisaaaa.....! Hiii!!! Muiyo...!!!*

Translation of the praise:

*I am...Mdunwasi
Son of Mbhedhle
Son of Malayi (George Salani Mudavula)
Son of Shandlale
Son of Machele
Son of Banga
Son of Mihingu
Son of Zari
Son of Manguli
Son of Mantsena
Son of Bangwani
Son of Xinyori
Xinyori, who remains firm by the rock
...of yesterday's heat,
who grinded Chavani, scared of his bravery at Xioki
...by the "Muvungu" tree at Mudavula.
Mudavula, the one who skins heads of elephants
at Mabasa's homestead.
Mabasa starts very hot fires
The fire....! Hiii!!!! It is hot...!!!*

What are your feelings about the statue of Nghunghunyani that has been erected in Giyani? What are your thoughts about the controversy that was sparked by the statue, more especially the controversy surrounding the history of the Tsonga/Shangana? Would you say their objections are justified? Why?

Nghunghunyani was a Shangaan. He is connected to the Nxumalo people. We are not connected to him. We are Tsonga.

Objections against the statue are justified. It does not represent our history. It does not belong here, it should be taken to the people it represents, where it belongs.

What is your knowledge of the Tsonga/Shangana history, including the history of the homeland of Gazankulu?

My knowledge of the history of the homeland of Gazankulu is that Vatsonga and Machanga worked together to form the homeland.

5.2 Muhlava (Vankuna)

What is your family history?

We came from ka-Zulu. From there some went to Mozambique. Along the way battles were fought with other groups, more especially the Gaza Nguni. This prompted for us to leave Mozambique in different directions. Some of our people went to Rhodesia. Some settled with Joao Albasini. Some of us settled in Bushbuckridge. Some went and came back via Modjadji

and Politsi. We left and settled at Monareng with the Mmamatola. That's where Shiluvani died. We then settled at Bokgakga under Hosi Maake and established a very good relationship with them. We were given a place to settle there. Later, Shiluvani's son Muhlava became chief.

We had good relations with the people of Maake. On leaving Mozambique, our n'anga had informed us that we would encounter the land of a female chief who will take care of us, and that we should not pass there, but settle.

We also had good relationship at first with the Banareng, but things later changed. Shiluvani had requested that Banareng look after his son. He did. The relationship changed only much later.

What is your family praise poem or song?

There are currently three Nkuna praise poems. The first one is a general praise for all the Vankuna people, while the second is dedicated to Hosi Muhlava I and third is dedicated to Hosi Muhlava II. For the purpose of this study, only the second praise is documented here with permission from Mr Rhulani N'wahungana Brown Muhlav, the custodian of the praise poems. The reason is that only one of these songs that can be partially translated. The other two are in a language that no longer in use and they cannot be deciphered.

Vankuna Royal Praise (Hosi Muhlava II)

*Hi seswo whe Nkhwashu wa pindza mahalambeni,
Gegetsu ra nhlonge xilwa na dzana,
Khume ri lwa ni matoya ni mayeka.
Muhosi a va potsi ku potsa Vankulunge wa tsune.
N'wapala ra ndlopfu ro tsandza ni timhisi eku kutsa.*

*Hi sweswo whe Nkuna-nkulu, Nkuna lonene,
Ku nga ri hi ku khonza, kambe hi xinkavana eka Nkuna.
Makombela mati u nga ri na torha,
U kombelele ku fundza u halata.*

*Hi sweswo whe Mpumulana wa Oubas na N'wa-Ngove.
Whe xitlhangu xikulu,
Mavhikela Nkuna miseve ya vamatiko.
Whe hosi Muhlava wa vumbirhi,*

*Whe Ndhabezitha!
Ku nga ri hi ku vona ngohe ya wena,
Ni loko u ndzi fularherile ndzi ri Ndhava!*

*Whe nghumula matoya eka Shiluvana,
Malovisi !
Muheti wa vuthu raka Nkuna eswibodlhweni,
Eka Tsatsawana.
A ku loku ni vusiku!
Shiluvana wa Mbangwa o va ni nkelunkelu,
A swi twa leswo ku na swin'wana swi nga fambiki kahle etikweni.
Hiloko hi mahlamba-ndlopfu, a pfuka a huwelela,
A ku: “ Hee Mpumulanoo! Hee Mpumulanoo! Hee Mpumulanoo!!”*

*Va langutana!
Va khwenutana!
Va hlevahleva!
Va chava e ku vula.*

*Kambe lava a va ri va yehe,
Va kanye timbilu, va hlamula va ku:
“Mpumulana u hlome nyimpi, vusiku bya tolo Ndhabezitha!
Hiloko hi ku hlundzuka a yi tsuvula e ya yehe nanga eMsa ka Mbangwa!*

*A yi rija kambirhi, kanharhu !
Yi twala hi mahlamba-ndlopfu yi ku Fete! Fete! Fete!
A byi fundza, a byi tshutela ebyala-vusila.
A huwalela! a phahla! aku :
“Ndzi ri a va ye evuhelwa! Laha Nkuna a vengiwaka koho!*

*Hakunene, languteloo! languteloo !
Mpumulana u ta vuya, kambe do! Ko fana ni kwala.
Vavasati va ka Nkuna va sala va rila,
Va ri karhi va hima hi swivuri ehansi,
Va nwi gandzela, va ku:
“Nyankhandle, murhambi ni murhurheri wa Vunoni etikweni ra ka Nkuna”*

*Kambe namuntlha whe Mpumulana ha ku khensa,
Hikuva a wa ha ri Malovisi,
Kambe u Mahanyisi.
Bayethi Ndhabezitha !*

*E tolo ni tolweni e nkondzo wa Mugabi- ke -Ndaba a wu nga kohli munhu,
Va N'wavughweghwe,
Va Xipungu,
Va Phangasasa n'weti wa ku pela,
Va Cata na va Mthothomba,
Va wu vone ne nhlangasini, hikuva timpfula a ti nga si na swinene.*

*U ta ku swi yini whe Mpumulana mbuyangwana,
Namuntlha timpfula ta koho ti na ni hi vuxika,
Ti na hi xiphangho ni moya.
Kungu ra koho ku ri ku seletela nkondzo wa kokwa waku,
Leswaku u nga ha wu voni ni ku wulandzelela.
Kambe ndzi ri i Mbunwa !
Hambi ko ba lexi dumaka,
E nkondzo wa Mugabi-ke-Ndaba a wu nge suleki ni siku ni rin 'we.
Wa ha vonaka e rikhwrheni ni le maribyeni.*

*Swi le ka wehe whe Mpumulana!
Swi le ka wehe whe Ndabezitha!
E ku wu pfluxeta, u tlhela u wu landzelerisa,
Hikuva ni Ribye riri ri lava eku wu vona.
U nga pfumeri ri mbombomela emavokweni ya wehe e ra ka Nkuna.*

Translation of the praise poem or song

The praise can roughly be translated as follows:

*Here's to you Nkhwashu,
the one who fights with hundreds,
ten men fight with cowards and the useless.
You are an elephant pole that not even hyenas can sink their teeth into.*

*Here's to you, the great Nkuna, the kind Nkuna,
not that we are paying tribute, but that Nkuna is indeed your birthright.
You the one who asks for water even when not thirsty,
You simply ask just for the fun of it, and then spill.*

*Here's to you Mpumulana son of Oubas and N'wa-Ngove.
You great sheild,
you protect the Nkuna from foreign arrows.
You Chief Muhlava II,
you great One!
I pay tribute to you Ndhava regardless,
Even when you have your back to me, facing away from me!*

*You who deal with cowards amongst the Shiluvana,
the destroyer!
You refine the Nkuna battalion,
...at Tsatsawana.
In the still of the night!
When Shiluvana son of Mbangwa is sleepless,
and feel that there is something amiss in his chieftdom.
Then, he wakes up before the breaking dawn and shouts:
He says: "Hee Mpumulanoo! Hee Mpumulanoo! Hee Mpumulanoo!!"*

*They stare at one another!
They tease!
They whisper to one another!
Scared to say anything!*

*But those who are loyal to him,
braved up to him, and replied:
“Mpumulana has prepared for battle last night Great one!
Then in anger the son of Mbangwa uprooted his reed pipe!*

*Played it twice or thrice!
Before the break of dawn it could be heard, Fete! Fete! Fete!
He took a sip of sorghum beer, then splashed it out again.
Shouting, libating, saying:
“They should go wherever Nkuna is hated!*

*Indeed, they waited, and waited!
For Mpumulana’s return, but to no avail.
Nkuna women were left weeping,
hitting their heels to the ground,
cursing him, saying:
“You evil one, who brings about evil people amongst the Nkuna people”*

*But we are thankful to you today Mpumulana,
because you are still that destroyer,
but you are the healer.
We salute you!*

*Yeasterday, and the day before, the footprint of Mugabi-ke-Ndaba was easily recognisable,
N’wavughweghwe and his company,
Xipungu and his company,
Phangasasa, the setting moon,
Cata and Mthothomba’ company,
They even saw his footprint in the swamp,
because the rains were scarce.*

*What can you say poor Mpumulana?
Today the rains even fall in winter,
falling with hail and great winds
just to make your grandfather’s footprint disappear,
so that you can no longer see it, nor follow it.
But I verily say to you!
No matter what,
Mugabi-ke-Ndaba’s footprint will never be erased.
It is still visible in the valley and on rocks.*

*It is up to you Mpumulana!
It is up to you Great One!
To renew it, and then follow it,*

*because even stones are demanding to see it.
Never allow the Nkuna chiefdom to sink down in your hands.*

What are your feelings about the statue of Nghunghunyani that has been erected at Giyani? What are your thoughts about the controversy that was sparked by the statue, more especially the controversy surrounding the history of the Tsonga/Shangana? Would you say their objections are justified? Why?

Nghunghunyani's role in resisting the Portuguese until he was exiled is important. He was unknown until fairly recently. The apartheid government clouded his history. His statue is important as part of history and liberation. It may only be the place where it is erected that is controversial; otherwise, his record of resistance is indisputable.

What is your knowledge of the Tsonga/Shangana history, including the history of the homeland of Gazankulu?

The then government initially wanted chiefs to rule the homelands. It was then noted that educated people were needed. The capital was supposed to be at Berlin, but the area was already developed. He suggested that Giyani should be the capital so that those areas could be developed. Ntsanwisi was a neutral academic who brought all people together, from Bushbuckridge to ka-Mhinga.

Machangana-Vatsonga: different people have different views on the significance of being Tsonga or Shangaan. Shangaan is a culture, Tsonga is language.

5.3 Van'wanati

What is your family history?

The Van'wanati are Vatsonga. We trace their existence back to 1200 when we left the great lakes. We belong to the beja-thonga group of the great lakes. Van'wanati "i vaka betsa ra matsalatsala". That is how we pride ourselves. The totem from the great lakes was a lion, standing for kings. In southern Africa we are called Van'wanati, Nkala. We also have another southern African totem, the elephant. The kingdom we belonged to of the Monomotapa Empire, we were under Utheve. After the collapse of the empire, the Van'wanati became prominent, and defeated a number of people including the Vacopi. Van'wanati clans are numerous; including the Makwakwa people, the Mkhwananzi,

Masangu, Vambhani, Makhubele, and Maluleke. The Maluleke group is the only one that retained the Vunwanati, due to migrations, assimilations and other problems. It is also possible to find a Maluleke in Swaziland. The area from what is today KZN up to the Zambezi was Tsonga territory. Vatsonga are traders.

All the N'wanati branches were started by a man known as Malenga. When that man passed away his sons dispersed throughout southeastern Africa. The areas around the present day Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, one finds three common names; Majeje, Nkuri, Mhinga. The one common in Malawi is Xikama.

Malenga left N'wanati and started a kingdom in Pfhukwe, around [the] 1550s. He was succeeded by his third son Maxakadzi who established his head kraal at Nyandwini, at Shingwedzi in the area that is now the Kruger National Park in 1640.

Maxakadzi was succeeded by Ximambani. His kraal [was] established at Phafuri where Thulamela is today.

Nkuri took over after Ximambani. His kraal was at Dzundzwini, on a hill, in the area that is now the Kruger National Park.

All the sons of Ximambani (Mavuva, Nkomisi, Hohlwani, Tsuvuka, Matsilele At Valdezia, Xigalo, Nkuri, Mulamula, Mhinga, Xikole (also known as Vambani), Xihahele, Makuleke, Malavi, Xikhumba At Phafuri, Matsilele in southern Mozambique. We had land and our own kingdom. The area from the east coast up to Vleifontein belongs to the Van'wanati, including the area of the Dwars River. The Van'wanati chiefs, two of them, married Vatlokwa women, and scared of returning home, they settled at the area that is now Mokopane even up to Zebediela and Buckenburg. When the Maluleke of the 1500s found the Vangona at Giyani, they defeated Nemadzivhangombe and drove his people back and took the land.

In settlement of war and peace seeking, the Mphaphuri gave Mhinga women and cattle and much more. The Maluleke were in South Africa long before Jan van Riebeck. The Maluleke killed Boers and the van Rensburgs. Maluleke branches into Ximambani which gave rise to the Mhinga and Guyu. The Maluleke have never been under any polity except for the Utheve.

Under the Van'wanati there is only one group, the Makwakwa that was defeated and conquered by the Nguni of Soshangana. This group is found at Bileni in Mozambique. The

Maluleke were in South Africa by 1630 long before the arrival of the Nguni in Mozambique. Nghunghunyani is a king that lived and ruled in Mozambique, not South Africa. When the Gaza Nguni were defeated in 1895 they fled and in 1897 then settled at Bushbuckridge. Some of them settled at Xikundu in the north, with their leader Gija. This group had tried to settle at Ximbupfe, but could not pay tribute and, instead, moved to Xikundu.

People like Mashava, Xirinda, Mavambe, Chauke, Hlomela, and others were subjects of the Van'wanati. Malamulele came into being because Mhinga rebelled against the Venda. "Mhinga, u hi lamulerile". Gamba was an N'wanati who drove out Vangona at Giyani. Most of the land belonged to Vangona.

What is your family praise poem or song?

This is how the N'wanati people recite their family praise:

*Hina Van'wanati hi vadyi va bangu hina...
Hi vaka nkala na visi bya yona...
Vaka tindlopfu ati luvani, ti luvana hi minxakwa...
Vaka macimba ya tihuku ya lema rihlelo...
Hi vaka xinyela-babeni hina...
Hi vaka xixanga xile xi-endla magego...
Vaka betsa ra matsala-tsala...
Va mafula hi xivuri hi tshika nyundu...
Vaka timamba ati luvani ti luvana hi mincila...
Mayeke!
N'wanati!*

Translation of the praise poem or song

*We are Van'wanati, those who eat a strong war concoction...
We are children of the meerkat and its cream...
We are children of the elephants, who do not pay tribute to each other but trade with trunks...
We are sons of chicken stools that are used as adhesive for the winnowing tray...
We are Xinyela-babeni's children...
We are Xixanga's children, who make weapons...
We are Betsa of Matsala-tsala's children ...
We are the ones who fight with our bare fists instead of spears...
We are Mamba's children...mambas do not pay tribute to one another but pay with tails...
Mayeke (Maluleke)!*

The participant explained the praise poem further and it indicated the animal totems of the N'wanati people:

***Bangu** is a concoction that we drank and it made us brave in war.*

***Nkala** is a meerkat; it explains that we stayed in caves.*

***Maxakadzi** (an ancestor) was an elephant hunter/trader in ivory. The trading post at Vilankulu/Nyembani belonged to us.*

***Xinyela-babeni** was Gunyule's other name.*

*“**Xi-enda**” (a person that makes...) means us, the people that can fashion out the bow and arrow.*

***Betsa** (possibly corrupted later into Beja) ra matsalatsala, from a distance ancestor, Beja son of Tsonga.*

***Vamafula hi xivuri**...we would usually fight with bare hands after taking **bangu**.*

***Vaka timamba**...(the “mamba” snake) this came after Ximambana.*

Malenga had the following sons; namely, Muswana, Nxelwa, and Maxakadzi. When Muswana died, Nxelwa refused to inherit his wife and throne. Maxakadzi ascended the throne as a result.

What are your feelings about the statue of Nghunghunyani that has been erected at Giyani? What are your thoughts about the controversy that was sparked by the statue, more especially the controversy surrounding the history of the Tsonga/Shangana? Would you say their objections are justified? Why?

Personally, the statue of Nghunghunyani represents history. It is supposed to remind the Vatsonga of the cruelty (raiding, slavery and looting/ the empire) of Nghunghunyani and why their forefathers left Mozambique. It does not represent any kingdom. The chiefs that were under the leadership of the Gaza Nguni were left behind in Mozambique when their descendants came to South Africa. Vatsonga even ululated when Nghunghunyani was shipped off to Portugal.

The Gaza Nguni were assimilated into Tsonga culture, including ascension to power by Muzila. The Gaza Nguni could not perpetuate the Nguni culture and language. Women and children spoke Tsonga. People need to be informed about Nghunghunyani and his history before protesting. The statue can be a huge learning curve for people.

What is your knowledge of the Tsonga/Shangana history, including the history of the homeland of Gazankulu?

The Malamulele people were led by Hosi Mhinga to Pretoria. They then incorporated the people from Bushbuckridge who asked for compensation that they be incorporated into the new homeland. The name Gazankulu was then adopted in line with the former Gaza Empire of the ancestors of the Nxumalos/Mpisanes. The name itself was a unifying symbol.

Ntsan'wisi came into power because his grandfather was a subject under Hosi Mhinga. The missionaries left ka-Mhinga and settled at Shiluvani, with a convert, Ntsanwisi, who was H.W.E. Ntsan'wisi's grandfather. These people (the Ntsan'wisi) are Vanwanati of Majeje.

Ntsan'wisi was convinced to be Prime Minister by E.P.P. Mhinga and I.K. Nxumalo. He was reluctant but was given power by being promised that he would rule forever. Lulekani town was established so that Tsonga people of Phalaborwa could have their own land.

5.4 Valoyi (N'wamitwa)

What is the history of the Valoyi people?

The Valoyi belong to the kingdom of the Munomotapa. When Changameri died in Zimbabwe the Valoyi moved to Vutsonga. In around the year 1818 the Mfecane upheavals started, and Soshangana moved to Mozambique. He wanted to incorporate clans.

In 1825 the Valoyi then moved to the Transvaal, refusing to be incorporated into the kingdom that Soshangana was building up starting at the confluence of the Levubu and Limpopo rivers. Under the leadership of Mbhekwana, the Valoyi had the following six regiments:

N'wakhada

N'wamitwa

N'waxihuku

N'wavucema

Mavokweni

Mirurhu

The regiments represent the sons of Mbhekwana.

The following is how the Valoyi trace their decent back to Changamere:

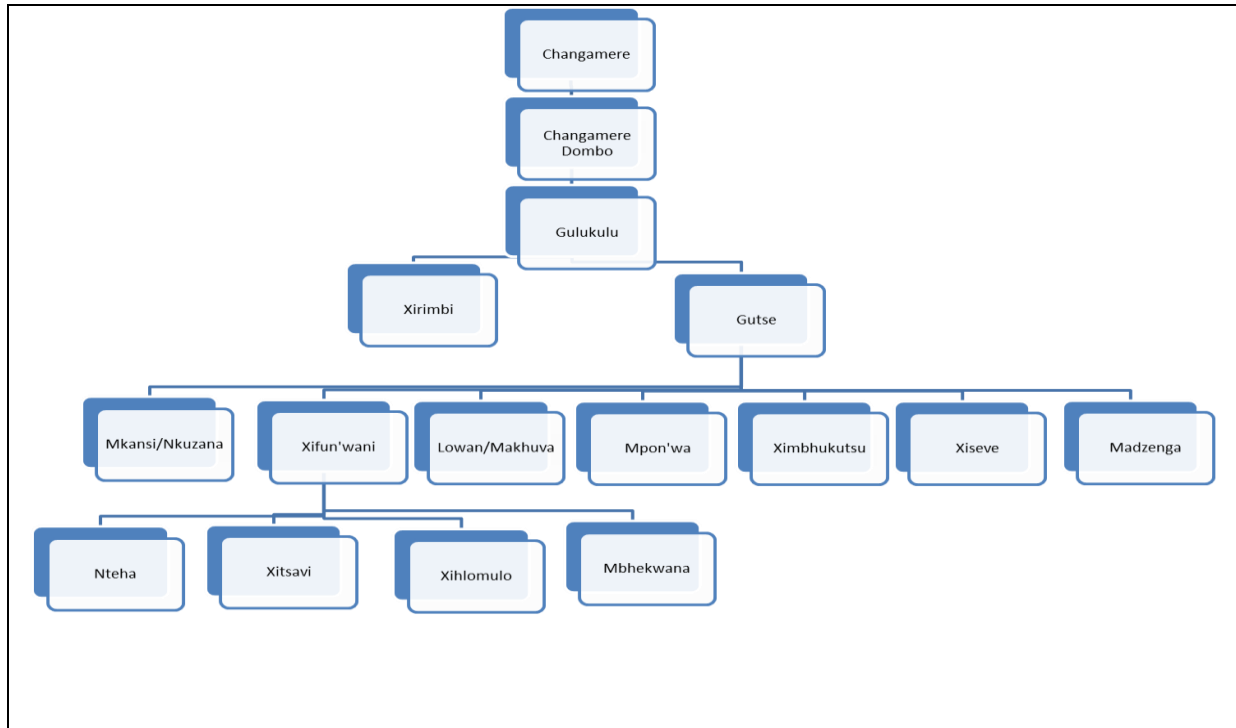


Figure 5: The genealogy of the N'wamitwa Valoyi (Supplied by the N'wamitwa Family)

Hosi N'wamitwa Valoyi had married four wives. His second wife Phangasasa bore him a son, Mahwahwa N'wamitwa. He was a tall handsome man who was also a great dancer. He loved marula beer as well. He mingled with all people of all statuses, disregarding his own status. He ruled among his people for three years only, from 1919 to 1912, then he died from poisoning. In 1911 Mahwahwa convinced his father to welcome Christianity when the Swiss arrived. The missionaries brought along healthcare, education, as well as the reading of the Bible. The pathfinders, "vamabulandlhela" were church scouts.

Following is the hierarchy of the sons of Hosi Mbhekwana Valoyi:

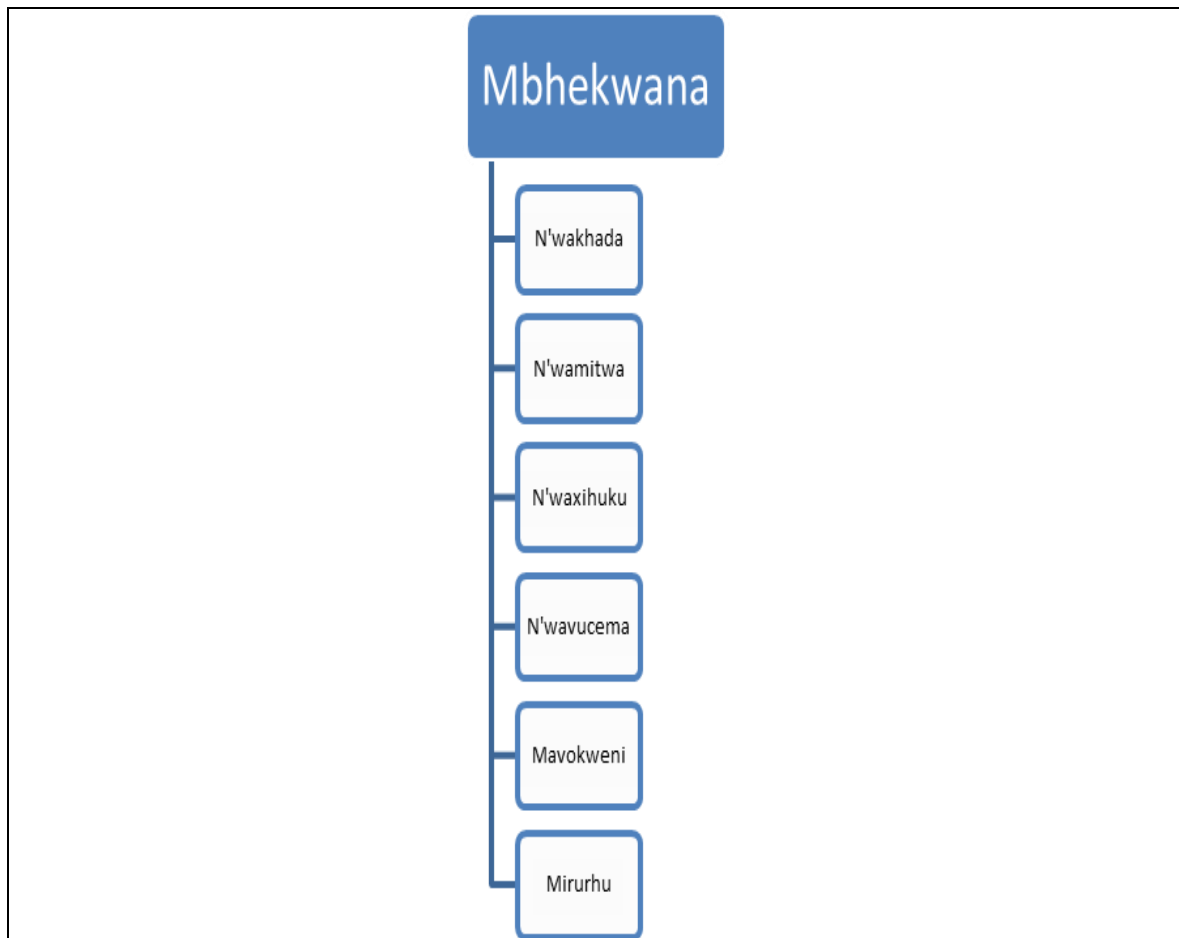


Figure 6: Diagrammatical Representation of Mbhekwana Valoyi's sons

By the time of Mahwahwa's death in 1922, his son Fofozu was still young, so Mhwahwa's brother Mahlevezulu acted as regent. Fofozu ascended the throne in 1948. He passed away in 1968. Fofozu's younger brother Richard acted as regent until he passed away in 2001.

In 2002 Hosi Philia N'wamitwa II claimed the right to the throne. She was challenged by her cousin brother who is Richard's son. On the 4th of June 2005 the Constitutional Court of South Africa ruled in Hosi N'wamitwa II's favour and confirmed that the daughter of Fofozu N'wamitwa had the right to ascend her father's throne. She was inaugurated on the 29th of August 2009.

What is your family praise song or poem?

Following is the family praise song of the Valoyi. Their totem is the baboon.

Hina vaka Valoyi...

*Va ncila ava ololi...
Va gada nsinya va chika hi rhavi...
Hi vadyi va swipame...
Loko hi nghena ensin 'wini...
I phatlu-phatlu!!!
Kambe ahi humi na nchumu...
Hina hinga dyondzisa mulungu ku tshama exitulwini...
Thevu!!!! Valoyi!!!!
Thevu!!!! Valoyi!!!!
Ncila ava ololi...
Loko wo olola wuta tshoveka!!!!!!!!!!!!*

Translation of the praise song or poem

*We are the Valoyi...the baboon
Children of “the curled tail” (of the baboon) that is not supposed to be straightened...
We clamber up a tree and jump off from the branch...
We are scorpion eaters...
When we enter a field (corn field)...
All you hear is snap-snap!!!
But we leave empty handed...
We are ones who taught the white man to sit on a chair...
Thevu (Mathebula)!!!! Valoyi (the baboon)!!!!
Thevu!!!! Valoyi!!!!
The unstraightened tail (of the baboon which is always curled up)...
If you straighten it, it will break!!!!!!!!!!!!*

What are your feelings about the statue of Nghunghunyani that has been erected at Giyani? What are your thoughts about the controversy that was sparked by the statue, more especially the controversy surrounding the history of the Tsonga/Shangana? Would you say their objections are justified? Why?

What is your knowledge of the Tsonga/Shangana history, including the history of the homeland of Gazankulu?

The participant did not answer the above questions. He abstained as per the information sheet and consent form.

5.5 Isaiah Ndhambi

Mr. Isaiah Ndhambi is an anthropologist and a former school teacher. He held the following positions in Limpopo:

1995-1998: Chief Director of the Department of Education in Limpopo

1999-2003: HoD of SAC in Limpopo

What is your knowledge of the Tsonga/Shangana history, including the history of the homeland of Gazankulu?

The homeland system for people to be grouped according to ethnicity brought a challenge to Tsonga people. There are various dialects amongst the Tsonga speakers of the Transvaal. Two streams of people had migrated into South Africa from Mozambique, namely, the Eastern (Rhonga) and the North West (N'walungu) streams. When the MTA was established, there was challenge as to what to call the the new amalgamation of the people. The name Gazankulu was derived from Gaza, the Gaza Empire, as well as the Gaza province in Mozambique.

The first stream of Tsonga-speaking people are found in the Bushbuckridge area and have a strong Nguni influence. Even their surnames are Nguni, for instance, Usinga, Khoza, Hlatshwayo, Nxumalo, Mnisi to name a few.

The second stream of Tsonga speakers, the N'walungu, also known as Magwamba, are found in the north of the Transvaal in Spelonken.

What are your feelings about the statue of Nghunghunyani that has been erected at Giyani? What are your thoughts about the controversy that was sparked by the statue, more especially the controversy surrounding the history of the Tsonga/Shangana? Would you say their objections are justified? Why?

Nghunghunyani was a leader who clashed with the Portuguese and was arrested. His people then moved to the eastern Transvaal. They did not have a leader after his arrest, so they looked for someone who was a direct descendant of Nghunghunyani. They chose Mpisane to be their leader.

In an attempt to restructure ethnic cultures, some people took a conviction that Nghunghunyani was a leader of all people who are Tsonga speakers in the Transvaal back then. The statue is misappropriated in Giyani. It belongs with the Machangana Tribal Authority where his descendants are. That is why the people of Giyani, who are Easterners (Rhonga) and N'walungu do not recognise the statue.

Before the formation of the Gazankulu homeland, the Tsonga lived under various chiefs in Mozambique and South Africa. The Swiss missionaries and other churches arrived in southern Africa at that time. The whole area from Phafuri to Soekmekaar boarding the

eastern part of Zimbabwe and away from the Soutpansberg was known as Gwambe territory. That is why the praise poetry of the former homeland of Gazankulu included the phrase “vatukulu va Gwambe na Dzavana” meaning the grandchildren of Gwambe and Dzavana. It is believed that the Tsonga people originated from an ancestor, Gwambe, and his wife Dzavana. For the amalgamation of the Bushbuckridge people into the new homeland, they included another phrase, “swihuke swa Nghunghunyani”, meaning descendants of Nghunghunyani so that the homeland was covered by two founding ancestors representing the two streams of Tsonga speakers.

In the absence of the apartheid policies, the two parties would not have merged and would have remained parallel. The Gazankulu government that brought the Tsonga and the Machangana together was a construct of the apartheid government, with an understanding that these two can form a single cultural group. It can not be denied that the two share cultural elements, for instance, dancing during the marula festival even though the Machangana moves are more Zulu in nature. Tsonga boys go to initiation school, but Machangana do not. Both pay a bride’s price, consult with traditional healers, and have similar superstitions and beliefs of witchcraft and magic.

The formation of the Gazankulu homeland, then known as the Matshangana Tribal Authority (MTA) came after the Tomlinson Commission of the National Party. It stated that Black people should govern themselves according to cultural similarity. The Commission divided Blacks into nine areas according to language. The Machangana and Tsonga spoke almost the same language even though the Machangana speak with an Nguni dialect, a corrupted Tsonga language.

The Machangana and Tsonga were further away from one another even with distance. The two, since they spoke the same language, forged a unity to form a single territorial authority which later became Gazankulu. The MTA was established in 1969 and Chief Mhinga was its first chairperson.

5.6 Tlou Setumu

Tlou Setumu is a historian employed by the Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture (SAC). He has written a total of ten books about African leaders who fought to resist colonial

invasion. His questions were slightly different from the set of questions directed at the clan or chiefdom representatives, since he was responding as a government official. The questions were nonetheless aimed at answering the research questions.

What was your involvement in the erection of the statue of King Nghunghunyani?

My involvement in the erection of the statue of king Nghunghunyani was sparked off by my scholarly research. My MA research in History involved researching about African leaders in the former Northern Transvaal. I focused on leaders like Sekhukhune, Malebogo, Nghunghunyani, and seven others.

While studying, I noted a common element among all the leaders I was researching into, namely that of the resistance against colonial invasion. I became interested in that common element and decided to write the volumes on kings who resisted colonial invasion, of which the history of king Nghunghunyani is volume I. In writing the history of the African leaders, I was demonstrating the fact that resistance started long before apartheid.

The Limpopo provincial department of Sports, Arts, and Culture (SAC) became interested in my work, more especially my seniors at work, including former MEC of SAC Mr. Joe Maswanganyi. My work was then used as their basis for a mandate of honouring the kings. Initially, I was requested to produce shortened versions of the history of the kings in Xitsonga, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Venda and English. These were produced for distribution of information within all the regions of Limpopo.

When the leaders of the SAC, including then MEC of SAC, Joe Maswanganyi, the Head of Department (HOD), as well as the then Premier realised the role these African leaders played in resisting colonial invasion, they decided to implement the project of erecting the statues. The initial project was the erection of the statue of king Sekhukhune in 2004. The following kings were honoured with statues; Sekhukhune, Mokopane, Nghunghunyani, Makhado, Malebogo, Malebogo, and Makgoba.

(At the time of the recording of this interview the following leaders still did not have statues in their honour: Mankopane, Modjadji, Matlala, and Piet Joubert).

My ten volumes include the history of commander general Piet Joubert of the Zuid Afrikanse Republiek (ZAR) forces who led an attack against king Ngunghunyani and other African leaders. This volume sparked off controversy and raised eyebrows amongst politicians. Setumu explained that the volumes were written from a scholarly point of view. General Joubert's information is important from a scholarly point of view. I am a historian not a politician, and since history is about what happened, I wrote about what happened in the past. There is nothing like bad history; meaning that history is about salient truths. Piet Joubert was a commander general for the ZAR forces who led an attack against the other leaders like Ngunghunyani, and such information is important for a historian.

Is there a government policy that governs the erection of statues and other structures of commemoration?

I am not aware of any policies governing the erection of statues in Limpopo. I assume that such a function follows from one of the mandates of the SAC; that of preserving heritage. This department has a Heritage Division within its branches, and its vision is preserving heritage and erecting statues is in its own right the preservation of heritage.

The statues that were the mandate of SAC were created for leaders who resisted colonial rule and that is how Ngunghunyani qualified for selection. His spirit of resistance positions him amongst those who deserve recognition. Furthermore, his kingdom was in the east, the present-day Mozambique and further west and north. It needs to be stated that "South Africa" is a concept that came into being only in 1910, the year in which the Union of South Africa was formed. In addition, there was no South Africa before the arrival of Europeans. There were only African kingdoms; for example, the Basotho Mountain Kingdom, the Zulu Kingdom, and the Gaza Empire of Ngunghunyani.

What is your knowledge of the history of the Gaza Nguni, and that of Ngunghunyani in particular?

Ngunghunyani was a grandson of Manukosi or Soshangana, a Zulu warrior who fled from Zululand due to squabbles. He established an empire to the north of Zululand, thereafter the Gaza Empire. His son inherited his throne after him, and then later his grandson, Ngunghunyani. The Gaza Empire expanded as far north as present-day Zimbabwe, and as far west as the former northern Transvaal in South Africa. Setumu emphasised that should he say that the Gaza Empire was in Mozambique, he could fall into the trap of the Berlin Congress of 1885, where Europeans divided the African continent amongst themselves. When

they dissected the continent, they disregarded the kingdoms in their sharing of the loot, the African continent. These were non-existent as far as they were concerned. One of the kingdoms that were affected by the dissection of the continent as per the Berlin Congress was the Gaza Empire whose far western communities fell inside the borders of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and ZAR respectively. Setumu's aim of discussing the Berlin Congress is to elucidate that colonial borders are recent. He regards them as "artificial boundaries" that left communities on either side of the fence; a situation that meant that should one wish to visit their relatives on the other side of the boundaries, they needed a passport since their relatives had become citizens of a different country.

Why was Giyani chosen as the destination for the statue of King Nghunghunyani?

I cannot clearly explain why Giyani was the chosen destination for the statue of king Nghunghunyani. My only explanation is that it could have been anywhere since the Gaza Empire expanded all the way into present-day South Africa. My involvement was only up to the research, there are people who were further responsible for the commissioning and erection of the statue. The SAC was involved in an intensive consultation process with the direct descendants of the king.

The Gaza Empire stretched into parts of what is Zimbabwe (southern Rhodesia), South Africa, and Mozambique. It needs to be taken into consideration that those states did not exist at the time and the "artificial borders" came into being after the Congress of Berlin. That Congress, resulted in the dividing up of the African continent into several European colonies. That affected the Empire and parts of it were ultimately left in the ZAR, southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and most of the Empire was left in Mozambique.

When the people or leaders of Mozambique, or Zimbabwe, or South Africa feel the need to honour Nghunghunyani, there is nothing wrong in that. Scholars must be wary of falling into the trap of colonial borders of those who did not recognise the Gaza Empire. Communities were affected by these colonial borders; for example, there are people whose communities were cut in half for borders between Botswana and South Africa, Mozambique and South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and so forth, including Swaziland and South Africa.

5.7 Joe Maswanganyi

Mr. Joe Maswanganyi is the former MEC of SAC. He was the MEC when the decision to honour Nghunghunyani with a statue was made.

According to him, "...the site of the statue in Giyani was a political decision arrived at between the SAC and the the Nxumalo family. Hosi Nxumalo was consulted and it was agreed that Giyani should be the location of the statue. The political past of Giyani gives it political weight for the town to qualify as the location of the statue.

Nghunghunyani was a king of all Shangaan people and they are more populated in Limpopo and Giyani is at the centre of these Shangaan people. Tsonga is a standardised language. All people were Shangaan until recently. When one tribe defeats and subjugate another, they assimilate them.

It should be noted that those in contestation are still contesting the impi's (wars) of old. Their forefathers were defeated. The mistake people make is to link the statue with issues of claiming the kingdom.

Giyani is regarded as a centre where Shangaan people converge and do cultural ceremonies. In addition to that, the role Giyani played in the past as the capital of the then homeland is taken into consideration. Thus, Giyani has a political significance. Those who contest only think they can challenge history.

Those in contestation include the following tihosi (chiefs); Mudavula, Mhinga, Muhlava, N'wamitwa, Hlaneki, and Ntsan'wisi (Majeje).

The above formed the delegation to the then premier and MEC of SAC. At the time I, Joe Maswanganyi, was the MEC of SAC and the premier of the province (Limpopo) was Mr. Sello Moloto. Those in contestation thought the statue boosted the case of the Nxumalo's or kingship of the Shangaan people.

It is surprising that it is only now that people have issues with being either Shangaan or Tsonga. The speeches of the Prime Minister of Gazankulu, Professor H.W.E. Ntsan'wisi, bear reference to the people of the homeland as Vatsonga-Machangana. Why did no one

protest at the time? Why did no one protest to the name “Gazankulu”? Why did people refrain from protesting the name “Matshangana Territorial Authority”?

The aim of erecting the statue was to preserve heritage so that people can know where they come from”.

Summary

The data collected were aimed at answering some of the research questions and to solicit data in line with the theoretical framework on collective social narratives and ethnicity. The data indicate that each and every Tsonga-speaking group or clan or tribe, has its own distinct foundation myth with heroes that they look up to. For instance, the Vankuna mention Chief Shilubana as their founding hero. The Van’wanati people have a hero in Malenga, who is their founding father. The N’wanati praise poem contains four totems, namely the meerkat, the elephant, the lion and the mamba. The lion totem seems to be old as the family traces it back to the Great Lakes, while the other three seem to be recent as they are traced to southern Africa. When the praise is explained in detail, it reveals some interesting information, like the fact that one of the N’wanati leaders was Maxakadzi, an ivory trader whose trading post was at Nyembani (Inhambane, Mozambique). The Valoyi mention Changamere and Mbhekwana as their founding figures. Their narrative is also completely unique when compared to the others.

Regarding the additional sources outside of the clans, Ndhambi’s contribution sought to explain the difference between Tsonga and Shangaan, which is an indication of the different interests the two groups have today. The differences are an indication of the existence of ethnic differences.

Additional data were solicited from Tlou Setumu, who indicated that he was fulfilling the mandate of the SAC. The commissioning MEC, Joe Maswanganyi, defended the statue and his former office by indicating that there were consultations before the statue was erected, and that Nghunghunyani was king of all Shangaans during his rule, and that all Tsonga-speaking people had been assimilated into the rule of the Gaza Empire.

Chapter 6

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The data collected was elicited from the participants in a manner that brought the statue debate forward to answer following the research questions:

Firstly, what compromise underlies the creation of the former homeland of Gazankulu? Secondly, what undercurrents of ethnic differences came to the fore after the unveiling of the statue, and lastly, is it possible to have some kind of heritage that is locally acceptable and addresses regional needs?

The data was then analysed and sorted into themes that are aligned to the above research questions, since the interview questions themselves were fashioned from the research questions. The data analysis focused the information that emerged from the respondents who represented the clans of the participants and the information from the other two sources, both of whom are against the statue. In addition, the data from the government officials who are defending the statue were analyzed. The section below summarises the three different positions with regard to the statue, followed by a discussion of the overarching themes that emerged from the data.

6.1 Summary of the data elicited from those against the statue

6.1.1 The Muhlava (Vankuna)

The Vankuna people are originally from the Zululand region; they are Nguni in origin. Upon leaving the Zululand region, they went northwards into what is the present-day Mozambique. On their way they encountered the Gaza Nguni who fought with them, and as a result they

scattered into several directions: Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Bushbuckridge, some went into the Transvaal with Joao Albasini, while some went to Modjadji in the Transvaal via Politsi and settled in the Tzaneen region.

The Vankuna first settled among the Banareng people. This is where their leader Hosi Shiluvani died. They then moved on and settled with the Bakgakga people, under Maake, who offered them land. It appears the Vankuna people had good relationships with both these peoples they encountered, the Banareng and the Maake.

The Vankuna have several praise poems. They have a collective family praise poem that all of them use, and they have other praise poems. However, of utmost importance are two royal praises, namely the one that used to be performed to praise the late Hosi Muhlava I, and the one praising the current chief, Hosi Muhlava II.

The collective family praise poem is entirely in Tsonga. This indicates that the praise poem could be fairly recent since the Vankuna are originally Nguni. It could have been composed after the Vankuna left Zululand and settled amongst Tsonga speakers in Mozambique, who it appears acculturated them. The Tsonga language to this day remains the language of the Vankuna people of the Tzaneen region.

The royal praise dedicated to the current chief, Hosi Muhlava II is, just like the collective family praise, entirely in Tsonga. This can be attributed to the fact that the chief was instated as a Tsonga chief after the Vankuna were acculturated by the Tsonga people.

The royal praise dedicated to the late Hosi Muhlava I is entirely in the Nguni language. The assumption is that the praise was originally dedicated to Hosi Shiluvani and the other leaders before him, who were, in fact, Nguni-speaking. Surprisingly, the family remember the praise poem and it has been passed down through the generations even though the group members

have lost their knowledge of the Nguni language. It is only fairly recently that the current royal poet, N’wahungana Rhulani Muhlava, wrote the praise down so that it should not be lost.

The participant’s remarks regarding Nghunghunyani’s role in resisting the Portuguese is important. Nghunghunyani’s history was overlooked by the apartheid government. The participant felt that his statue should be regarded as an important part of history and liberation. It may only be the place where it is erected that is controversial, otherwise his history of resistance is important.

Regarding the homeland of Gazankulu, the respondent pointed out that Ntsanwisi was a neutral academic who brought all people together after the formation of the Gazankulu Homeland, from Bushbuckridge to ka Mhinga. He also pointed out that different people have different views on what it means to be Tsonga or Shangaan. According to him, Shangaan is a culture, while Tsonga is language.

6.1.2 Mudavula (Vahlengwe)

The Vahlengwe are very clear about their origins and how they arrived at their present territory. Their oral account claims that they originated from a place known as *ka-Xioki* in present-day Mozambique. The Mudavula people still have connections with their place of origin, known even to this day as *Hlengweni*, which means “the area of the Hlengwe people”. It is in southeastern Zimbabwe.

The Mudavula people arrived in South Africa with the Portuguese explorer and elephant trader Joao Albasini. Mudavula was his “best friend”, or more likely his right-hand man. Albasini had a large following, a conglomeration of people from southeastern Mozambican

clans. Among them were the Manganyi, Ndhambi and Hlungwani. These people were his servants and helped him in his elephant trade, probably in exchange for protection as he might have had contemporary Western weapons. This would account for them helping the Venda people defeat the Boers. Albasini and his people first settled at the place where Albasini Dam is today, then moved to Valdezia, Mambedi and Mashao.

Mudavula was a prominent elephant hunter and that is how he earned his name *mudavula*, “one who skins...” He was known as “*Umdabula u dabula amakhanda ezindlovu*”. This literally means “Mudavula, the one who skins heads of elephants”. Mudavula and his followers settled at the area the Mudavula people occupy up to this day. This was before the Anglo Boer War. Later Mudavula returned to Mozambique, leaving behind his younger brother Shandlale. Shandlale had a son, George Salani, who led the Mudavula people after he was sworn in and instated as chief by the then British Commissioner.

The Mudavula people settled with the Nemavhulana, Nedzivha, and the Netshilindi. The family praise poem of the current Chief Mudavula lists up to eleven generations. It starts out in Tsonga, but later diverts into a Nguni dialect praising Mudabula, then another of their prominent leaders, *Mabasa* (the fire starter in Nguni), “*Mabasa u basa umlilo utshisayo*” meaning “Mabasa, the one who starts hot fires”. This indicates that at some point in their history, the Mudabula people had a Nguni linguistic influence.

According to the source, Nghunghunyani was a Shangaan who was connected to the Nxumalo people. The participant felt that objections against the statue are justified as it (the statue) does not represent their history. It represents other people’s history. According to his information, the homeland of Gazankulu was formed when Vatsonga and Machangana worked together.

6.1.3 Isaiah Ndhambi

The name Gazankulu was derived from Gaza, referring to the Gaza Empire and the Gaza province in Mozambique. Gazankulu was formed by throwing together two lines of Tsonga speakers from the northern and eastern Transvaal. The people of Giyani do not relate with the statue, it represents an ancestor of the Machangana Tribal Authority.

Before the formation of the Gazankulu homeland, the whole area from Phafuri to Soekmekaar, bordering the eastern part of Zimbabwe and stretching from the Soutpansberg, was known as Gwambe territory. That is why the praise poetry of the former homeland of Gazankulu included the phrase “*vatukulu va Gwambe na Dzavana*”, meaning the grandchildren of Gwambe and Dzavana. It is believed that the Tsonga people originated from an ancestor, Gwambe, and his wife Dzavana. As an acknowledgement of the integration of the Bushbuckridge people into the new homeland, they included another line, “*swihuke swa Nghunghunyani*”, meaning descendants of Nghunghunyani, so that the homeland was inhabited by two founding ancestors representing the two lines of Tsonga speakers.

Ndhambi insists that these two groups would not have forged any unity had it not been for the apartheid policies. However, the respondent added that it cannot be denied that there are similarities in cultural patterning between the two.

6.2 Summary of the data from those defending the statue

6.2.1 Van’wanati

The Van’wanati oral tradition traces the history of the Van’wanati back to as early as 1200, when they were still in the Great Lakes. It is rather insignificant how the date was established, since the oral tradition came before the written record of this region. In any case, the oral history traces the Van’wanati back to the Monomotapa Empire, under Utheve. It

appears the Van'wanati could have migrated southeastwards from the Great Lakes after the collapse of the empire, as they mention that they defeated the Vacopi (Chopi), who are known to have occupied the coastal regions for centuries.

It may appear that the Van'wanati people are found in several southern African states like the present-day Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. This is evident from three N'wanati surnames that are common in those states, namely Majeje, Nkuri and Mhinga.

The N'wanati branches/clans owe their origin to a man known as Malenga, whose sons dispersed throughout southeastern Africa after his death. There were originally several Van'wanati clans, but only the Maluleke have remained as proper N'wanati people, as the other clans could not retain their *vun'wanati* due to assimilations, migrations and other problems.

The recent history of the Van'wanati, which is claimed to precede the arrival of the Dutch East India Company, can be mapped across southeastern Africa, but mainly encompasses the area that is the northeast of Limpopo in South Africa, covering most of what is now the Kruger National Park, into present-day Mozambique. When the N'wanati people settled in the area that became the Transvaal, they encountered several other groups. Of note are the Ngoni people, who occupied the hills of the present-day Giyani town, the Van Rensburgs, and the Mphaphuri.

The Van'wanati people are adamant that they left the east coast long before the arrival of the Gaza Nguni in southern Mozambique, and that they have never been under any polity. The only N'wanati group that was subdued and conquered by the Gaza Nguni was the

Makwakwa, who occupy the area known as Bileni in Mozambique. The Van'wanati had several subjects, among them are Mashava, Xirinda, Mavambe, Chauke and Hlomela.

The N'wanati praise mentions four totems, namely the meerkat, the elephant, the lion and the mamba. The lion totem seems to be old, as the family traces it back to the Great Lakes, while the other three seem to be more recent as they are traced to southern Africa. When the praise is explained in detail, it reveals some interesting information, like the fact that one of the N'wanati leaders was Maxakadzi, and he was an ivory trader whose trading post was at Nyembani (Inhambane, Mozambique). It appears that the Van'wanati people practice levirate marriage. This is noted by the account where Nxelwa refused to inherit his brother Muswani's widow and assume leadership. Maxakadzi beat him to it and assumed kingship over the N'wanati people.

This respondent views the statue of Nghunghunyani as merely something that represents history. He sees it as important in that it should serve to remind the Vatsonga of the cruelty (raiding, slavery and looting/the empire) of Nghunghunyani and why their forefathers left Mozambique. It is not in any way a representation of any kingdom here and now. The respondent mentioned that people need to be informed about Nghunghunyani and his history before protesting. The statue can be a huge learning curve.

The Malamulele people and all the other peoples in the northern Transvaal forged a union with those from the Bushbuckridge region to form the homeland. The Bushbuckridge people requested a favour from the other group in return for their incorporation: that the homeland is named Gazankulu after the empire of the forefathers.

6.2.2 Tlou Setumu

Tlou Setumu's involvement in the erection was purely academic in nature. His volume on the resistance leaders gave rise to the idea of honouring those leaders. Nghunghunyani was one of those leaders. His work was then used by the SAC to embark on a project of erecting statues throughout Limpopo. The initial project was the erection of the statue of king Sekhukhune in 2004. Nghunghunayi's spirit of resistance positions him amongst those who deserve recognition.

It appears the scholar does not have any objections with Giyani as the location of the statue, judging by his statement that the Gaza Empire did not know any borders as there were no colonial divisions of southern Africa at the time. He feels that there is nothing wrong in honouring and celebrating a figure like Nghunghunyani.

6.2.3 Joe Maswanganyi

The Nxumalo family was consulted for the erection of the statue in Giyani. Giyani was viewed as appropriate given its political history as the capital that united the Tsonga and Shangaan peoples. Those disgruntled by the location of the statue are recalling old battles during which their forefathers were defeated and subjugated by the Gaza Nguni. In addition, there are some people who link the statue with issues concerning claims to Tsonga-Shangaan kingship.

According to Maswanganyi, Giyani qualifies as the location because it is where Shangaan people converge for cultural ceremonies, so the statue should be at the centre of the ceremonies. At the time Joe Maswanganyi was the MEC of SAC and the premier of Limpopo

was Mr. Sello Moloto. Those in contestation thought the statue boosted the case of the Nxumalo's or the kingship of the Shangaan people.

Maswanganyi cannot comprehend that people now suddenly have issues with being either Shangaan or Tsonga, as even the former Prime Minister of Gazankulu, Professor H.W.E. Ntsan'wisi, constantly referred to the people in the homeland as Vatsonga-Machangana. He is baffled by the fact that none of the people who are protesting now had any objections to either the name "Gazankulu" or "Matshangana Territorial Authority". According to him, the aim of erecting the statue was to preserve heritage so that people can know where they come from.

6.3 Summary of the data from respondents that refrained from commenting about the statue

6.3.1 Valoyi (N'wamitwa)

The Valoyi, just like the Van'wanati, also claim to trace their origins to the Monomotapa Empire. It appears that they migrated to Zimbabwe, where Changameri died. Soon afterwards they moved southeastwards into what was Tsonga territory, which they call *Vutsonga*.

When Manukosi/Soshangana moved into Vutsonga with aspirations to incorporate clans, the Valoyi resisted the incorporation and fled into the Transvaal with their leader, Mbhekwana. There is, however, a lack of oral information about how they settled in their present territory in the vicinity of the territory of the rain queen, Modjadji. The emphasis, however, is on succession, which is recounted proudly.

The totem of the Valoyi is the baboon. The family praise starts with "...ncila ava ololi...", "the curled up tail of the baboon". It is not clear how they arrived at this totem, or how long they have had it, but one thing is for certain: the praise is recited in Tsonga with no hint of

any other language whatsoever. This may be a strong indication of the acculturation of a people who were not Tsonga in origin. The contact with the Tsonga would have had to be long for acculturation to take place.

The participant declined to comment about the issues surrounding the statue, citing reasons related to politics.

6.4 Analysis of the themes that emerged from the field data

The themes that emerged from the data seem to indicate patterns of migrations into present-day South Africa by Tsonga-speaking clans and tribes. The migration itself is used by the clans to solidify their rejection of the statue and to point out how Tsonga is different from Shangaan. This differences between Tsonga and Shangaan is directly related to the research question on ethnic differences in the region. In addition, the narration of the different migrations all culminate into the formation of the homeland of Gazankulu, thereby addressing the first research question. This constitutes a recurring theme of the debates about the statue and the formation of the homeland of Gazankulu.

6.4.1 Northwards migrations into South Africa via southeastern Mozambique

This theme was introduced by the Vankuna people, who migrated northwards from Zululand into Mozambique, but later on migrated downwards into the Transvaal after their unfortunate encounter with the regiments of Soshangana. Their migration was involuntary, a type of a forced migration catalyzed by war. They arrived in South Africa as Tsonga-speaking refugees. These people were Nguni in origin and spoke the Nguni language prior to their acculturation by Tsonga-speaking groups in Mozambique. This is evident from the old praise poem dedicated to their late leader Hosi Muhlava I, which is entirely in the Nguni language,

even though the Vankuna have now lost both the knowledge and the usage of the language. The poem has survived through the centuries in the oral tradition and was only recorded recently by the current royal poet N'wahungana Rhulani Muhlava.

In as much as the Vankuna were Nguni in origin, it is evident that they never formed part of, nor were they subjects of the Gaza Empire, since their arrival into the Transvaal was prompted by the *difacane*. This affirmation partly gives rise to the reasons behind the Vankuna's rejection of the statue on the grounds that they were never a part of the Gaza Empire, and as such, they see the statue as offensive.

6.4.2 Southwards migrations into South Africa via southeastern Mozambique

Two groups raised this theme, namely the Valoyi and the Van'wanati. They both claim to be connected to the Monomotapa Empire that was in the north. It is not necessarily clear when either of them migrated into the territory of Tsonga speakers in southeastern Mozambique, but it appears the Van'wanati could have preceded the Valoyi in both their southward migration as well as the eastwards migration into the Transvaal. This assumption is based on the fact that the Van'wanati had a trade post in southeastern Mozambique probably long before the *difacane* migrations. There are indications that the Van'wanati could have occupied a large area that extended from the inland of what became the South African Transvaal all the way to the coast, since they were traders.

The Valoyi settled in southeastern Mozambique and probably parts of southern Rhodesia, but were prompted to migrate into the Transvaal as refugees after the arrival of Soshangana in their region. In any case, it is evident that neither one of the two groups descend from the Nguni, nor did they form part of the Nguni Gaza Empire as subjects of Soshangana and later Nghunghunyani. This fact explains the rejection of the statue by both clans.

6.4.3 Migrations of Tsonga-speaking people into South Africa from southeastern Mozambique

The last group under discussion, constituted of the Vahlengwe of Mudavula, is peculiar in that the group's history reveals a theme of migrations by people who arrived into the Transvaal not as refugees, but as subjects of Chief Joao Albasini, a Portuguese trader and explorer. The date of the arrival of Joao Albasini mentioned in the oral account is somewhat dubious as oral accounts of this type of history generally do not include dates as the dates were not documented by the families. In any case, the Vahlengwe of Mudavula, together with all the followers of Joao Albasini, seem to be later immigrants into the Transvaal and could possibly have been subjects of the Gaza Empire. This can be attributed to the fact that the group that came with Albasini would rather have left home under the leadership of a man of foreign origin than to stay behind in the Gaza Empire where there was unrest at the time. The rejection of the statue of Mudavula by the Hlengwe is not perplexing given that they were most probably subjects of the Gaza Empire initially. It is assumed here that they preferred to migrate with a leader of foreign origin to escaping the problems created by the Gaza Nguni at the time.

6.4.4 The statue of Nghunghunyani

There are more voices that call for the statue to be precisely where it is, in Giyani. There are varying reasons for this viewpoint. Firstly, the statue of Nghunghunyani represents history and should be viewed in that light only. This view also advocates that the statue is a learning curve for those Tsonga descendants unfamiliar with the history behind Nghunghunyani, as members of the different groups will become acquainted with the history of the cruelty of the Gaza Nguni. People could also learn about the fact that they were originally immigrants and refugees in South Africa after their forefathers fled the Gaza Empire. This view also states

that the statue does not represent any kingdom whatsoever, and that people should not protest unless they are educated enough about the history of the man the statue represents.

There are three viewpoints that regard Nghunghunyani's statue as representing resistance against colonial invasion. The first view is of the opinion that Nghunghunyani's history was disavowed by the apartheid government, but that it should now be regarded as an important part of history and liberation. However, this same view does not support the location of the statue, even though it represents an important leader in history.

The second view holds that the statue could have been erected anywhere as the Gaza Empire knew no colonial borders. On the other hand, there is evidence that the descendants of the King were consulted, and they suggested and supported Giyani as the perfect location for the statue. Giyani was viewed as appropriate given its political history as the capital that united the Tsonga and Shangaan. In the opinion of these respondents, the statue has got nothing to do with contestations of the Tsonga-Shangaan kingship.

The last view is of the opinion that Giyani qualifies as the location because it is where Shangaan people converge for cultural ceremonies and the statue should be at the centre of those ceremonies.

The former MEC of SAC and the former spokesperson support the view that warrior kings fought colonialism and they should duly be honoured with statues.

There are only two viewpoints that do not support the statue's location in Giyani. Both these sources regard the location as misappropriated and offensive as the descendants of Nghunghunyani are in Bushbuckridge. They both suggest that Bushbuckridge is where it should have been erected and that the objections against the statue are justified as it (the statue) does not represent local history, but other people's (the Bushbuckridge people) history.

6.4.5 The Formation of the Gazankulu Homeland

There is a consensus about the formation of the former homeland of Gazankulu. The compromise reached to secure the self-governing authority and later homeland was that the Tsonga-speaking people of the Bushbuckridge region and the Tsonga-speaking people of Spelonken or Northern Transvaal amalgamate to form a single unit or a united front. This unity was based on similarities in language and cultural patterning. The unity is even evident in the founding phrases of the former homeland, namely, “*vatukulu va Gwambe na Dzavana*” and “*swihluke swa Nghunghunyani*” respectively. The first phrase is about mythical ancestors of the Tsonga-speaking people of the Northern Transvaal, while the second simply states that the Bushbuckridge people are offshoots of Nghunghunyani, which is basically true. Paradoxically, the unity referred to here is somewhat similar to the “*Unity in Diversity*”, the founding phrase of the current South African regime.

Conclusion

The data indicates that the people known as the Tsonga in South African arrived in waves of migrations, mainly from southern Mozambique, with the N’wanati being the only exception, as their oral tradition indicates that they have always occupied the areas that they still occupy today. The data is very clear about the fact that the homeland of Gazankulu was formed by two groups that were related linguistically, namely the Tsonga and the Shangana. It accounts for the double founding myth of the homeland, “*vatukulu va Gwambe na Dzavana*” and “*swihluke swa Nghunghunyani*”.

The objections are not against the statue *per se*, but against the location, citing reasons such as that it misrepresents the history of the region. It seems to represent one part of the former

homeland's founding myth, and that part is located elsewhere in the province, in Buckbuckridge. There seems to be a somewhat unanimous view about the importance of the statue and the history it represents though. It is viewed a learning curve representing the history of liberation, while on the other hand, it is also viewed as a learning curve representing the legacy of the rule of the Gaza Nguni amongst the people they assimilated. The location of the statue is defended by the testimony of Tlou Setumu, who advocates that the Gaza Empire was expansive and stretched across land that transcends the existing national boundaries of Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa. This, according to Setumu, means that the statue could have been erected anywhere within the area that used to fall under the jurisdiction of the Empire.

Chapter 7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter concludes this study by emphasising the discussions on commemoration in South Africa. It concludes by revisiting the various objections against and subsequent rejection of the Nghunghunyani statue by Tsonga-speaking communities. The reasons mentioned are in correspondence with current literature on ethnicity and public art. The chapter concludes with recommendations from the researcher.

The dawn of democracy in South Africa has witnessed the creation of new narratives that centre on heroes of the struggle against apartheid. Earlier figures like King Makhado and King Nghunghunyani who resisted the takeover of land by Europeans in southern Africa, as well as later heroes who fought for the liberation of Black people from apartheid, have become the heroes of the new narratives that have been created to strengthen the new regime. These narratives have been translated and immortalised in statues honouring those individuals.

It cannot be disputed that Nghunghunyani is a great historical figure. He fought off Portuguese rule and the conquest of his Gaza Empire in Mozambique in the late nineteenth century. Former president Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki mentioned Nghunghunyani as one of his ancestors in his “I am an African”-speech at the adoption of The Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill on 8 May 1996 in Cape Town. It comes as no surprise that Nghunghunyani features in the South African national narrative, and as such, his greatness, together with that of all other heroes, deserves to be memorialised in public art. His statue in the town of Giyani in Limpopo serves that purpose.

7.1 The Nghunghunyani Narrative and the Omissions of Undesirable Sections of History

Based on the accounts of Jaques (1984), Wheeler (1968), and Harries (1981a), the legacy of the Gaza Nguni, of which Nghunghunyani was part, is notorious. They were a feared people in southern Mozambique as they had a reign of terror, tyranny and subjugation of other clans. According to Setumu (2005), the Gaza Nguni were despots who killed other groups, burned their villages and took their women and children, and worse, practised slavery and allegedly participated in the East Coast Slave Trade. The slaves were acquired as prisoners of war from defeated clans.

It may also appear that the name “*Tsonga*” is a derivative of the term “*tonga*”, which is a Nguni derogative term meaning ‘*dog*’, ‘*slave*’ or ‘*servant*’, all of which were in reference to people who were not Nguni, like the Thonga, Chopi and others in the Gaza Empire.

The glorification of King Nghunghunyani in the South African narrative, which omits the displacement of other clans, terror, tyranny, and slavery, is well in line with the discussions on heritage, more especially in Kockel *et al.* (2007), who observed that heritage, in this case the legacy of King Nghunghunyani, is time-specific, evolves, and can be remodelled with new contexts.

Graham *et al.* (2004 in Kockel, 2007) define heritage as that part of the past that is chosen to make sense of our present for contemporary purposes. This further illustrates that heritage is about aspects of the past that are chosen because of their special connotation to the present, in this case Nghunghunyani’s defiance of Portugal. Those aspects of the past that are not so important, as mentioned above, are omitted. Whatever part of the past is accorded importance, that past is set aside as a tool for nation building as narrative. When communities make selections out of sections of their histories for a desired present and future, they are

playing amnesia (Johnson, 2002:295) for those sections they choose to omit. Baines (2003) attributes the selection to the fact that older versions of the past no longer fit into the picture, as they are either redundant or unacceptable.

The discussion above illustrates the fact that the South African narrative offers a sanitised version of the Nghunghunyani narrative, omitting the whole legacy of the Gaza Nguni in the process. In addition, it omits that the people amongst whom the statue has been erected are descendants of the displaced inhabitants of southern Mozambique who fled from the rule of the Gaza Nguni nearly two centuries ago, and whose social narrative is sans the hero that Nghunghunyani is supposed to represent in the region.

The question therefore remains whether the present site of the statue is suitable for the memorial and if its erection is in line with the regional narratives of the area. More importantly, is it in line with the history of the people amongst whom it has been erected. A discussion of the historical background of Tsonga-speakers in South Africa is relevant at this point for the clarification of the above question.

7.2 The Historical Background of Tsonga-speaking Groups in South Africa

When tapping into the historical background of the Tsonga-speaking people of the region (Halala, 2012; Harries, 1989) and cross-referencing that with their oral data, it is obvious that one is dealing with a conglomeration of people from various backgrounds whose common denominator is language. Also, an analysis of the oral data indicates that most of the Tsonga-speaking groups that migrated into South Africa, the Vankuna and the Valoyi, for instance, were at one point or the other assimilated into Tsonga society and adopted the Tsonga culture and language (see Section 5.2 and 5.4). The oral data of the Valoyi indicates that they migrated southwards from the Great Lakes. They were part of the Monomotapa dynasty, which indicates that they most probably spoke languages other than Tsonga, and their cultural

pattern was also different. They were assimilated into the Tsonga tribes while in southern Mozambique.

The Vankuna are no different from the Valoyi in the sense that they had their own cultural patterns and language, but they too were assimilated into Tsonga while in southern Mozambique. All that remains of their origins is the Hosi Muhlava I praise poem, more than a centuries old and in the Nguni language (see Section 5.2).

The central concern here is not whether these clans or tribes in question are Tsonga or have been assimilated into Tsonga, but whether their oral traditions include Nghunghunyani, whose statue has been erected amongst them. The answer lies in the oral traditions and the historical backgrounds themselves (Halala, 2010; Harries, 1989; Jaque, 1984). It paints a colourful picture of people on the move, migrating whenever the situation is not favourable. The Vankuna, the Vahlengwe and the Valoyi fit into this description. The Van'wanati's oral history, on the other hand, points to the fact that they have been settled in this region for centuries before the Nguni conquest of southern Mozambique.

The oral histories of both the Vankuna and the Valoyi indicate that they arrived in South Africa fleeing the Nguni *impis* or wars. In as much as both their narratives omit the fact that they were terrified of the Gaza Nguni, sources (for example Setumu, 2005; Wheeler, 1968) indicate that the Nguni had a reign of terror in southern Mozambique. Harries (in Vail, 1989) discusses these waves of migrations into South Africa. Some arrived earlier than others, fleeing the first group of Nguni's with their leader Soshangana, while others arrived later during the Gaza civil war (Harries in Vail, 1989; Setumu, 2005).

In his discussion of refugees of war from southern Mozambique, Harries (in Vail, 1989) mentions that they had no chiefdoms and paid allegiance to any chief who accommodated

them, including Venda chiefs and the Portuguese Albasini. The different groups of migrants were not related, and they came from different regions with their different *swivongo*. According to Smith (1973), *xivongo* like Khosa, Hlengwe, Tembe, Sono and others indicated the tribe name and region of an individual, for instance one could be from *ka Tembe*, indicating their *xivongo* and region simultaneously. Smith (1973) also points out that the people of southern Mozambique recognised their differences and spoke dialects of the same language like *N'walungu* (north), *Ronga* (east), *Dzonga* (south) and *Hlanganu*. Dialects and slight differences in material culture functioned as some of the boundary markers to communicate their differences. Praise poems with embedded heroes and antagonists are also used as boundary markers to indicate which Tsonga *xivongo* (clans, tribes and chiefdoms) one belongs to or comes from. These are jealously guarded and a source of pride.

The discussion on the whole exercise of the collection of the praise poems in Chapter 5 is very relevant at this point. It has indicated that these groups have antagonists of their own, and Nghunghunyani is none of those. This is not to dispute the greatness of this historical emperor, but applied here to demonstrate the hostility towards the statue. Inasmuch as Nghunghunyani is a regional hero, his representation in Giyani is clouding the real history of the region and the debates surrounding his statue are clouding the hero that King Nghunghunyani was. It should also be noted that Nghunghunyani is a nationally celebrated hero who cannot be contextualised positively in the local context amongst Tsonga speaking tribes and chiefdoms due to the nature of the hostile historical relationship between the ancestors of these groups and the Gaza Nguni, of which he was part.

7.3 The formation of the MTA, the compromises and ethnicity

Nonetheless, when the Tsonga-speaking migrants arrived in South Africa, they were all assigned the name '*knobneuse*' because of their tattoos. They were also known as

“*Magwamba*” by their neighbours (Harries in Vail, 1989). In the absence of obvious differences, they were all grouped together as *Shangaan*, people from Soshangana. It is only later with the arrival of the Swiss missionaries that they came to be known as Tsonga, after Junod (in Harries, 1981b). Tsonga consciousness was instilled and heightened at the Lemana Training Institute (Halala, 2012; Harries, 1989). This consciousness turned into an ethnic identity during the formation of territorial authorities. Tsonga-speaking communities who were mainly in multi-ethnic regions were supposed to be incorporated into Sotho and Venda territorial authorities.

It is interesting to note that even though Tsonga-speaking communities came from different backgrounds, had migrated into South Africa at different times under similar or different conditions, came to see one another as allies. They started to draw up boundaries of acceptance of one another and ethnic boundaries of exclusion of Sotho- and Venda-speaking people, all the while occupying the same territory, mostly under the same chiefs. The drawing up of boundaries for exclusion of others by these groups based on the sharing of a common language, which is their heritage, prompts the occurrence of ethnic differentiation, which then culminates in the formation of ethnic identity (Fenton, 2010; Nagel, 1994; Nash, 1989). According to Ross (2001), such a heritage is jealously guarded and used as a gauge as to who belongs to a group and who does not.

It is not surprising that Tsonga-speaking communities or groups started to assert their ethnic identity towards their hosts. This is quite normal according to Ericksen (1991; 1993), who defines ethnicity as a process through which groups communicate cultural differences to one another. He notes that for as long there are differences that exist between groups, such differences will be communicated should a need arise, as in the case of a need for a territorial authority. In a way a territorial authority meant independence. The same is observed by

Yinger (1985), who also notes that ethnicity is a way of expressing a sense of belonging and is important in cultural groups as a survival mode. Should a group be absorbed into another, the common reaction is to stress the distinctiveness of group history and culture.

At about the same time that Tsonga-speaking people were delineating ethnic boundaries of exclusion of people who are different from them based on language, their various groups from four areas of the Transvaal were relaxing their own boundaries of inclusion for the possible formation of a territorial authority. In any group, should members be faced with fears of drifting apart, they place emphasis on myths of common origin to remind one another of their identity (Horowitz, 1977). Amongst the Tsonga-speaking groups, there is a common language, and for most part a common history as they were all once faced with a common predicament: the Gaza Nguni.

In addition, it should be pointed out that the descendants of the Gaza Nguni who are based in the Bushbuckridge area were part of the newly formed alliance, and that further signifies that these groups had to stick to the uniting factors only for survival. This idea is shared by Shermerhorn's (in Hutchinson & Smith, 1996) emphasis on "...memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their people-hood".

The idea of the formation of the homeland of Gazankulu, formerly the Matshangana Territorial Authority, saw the relaxation of intra-ethnic boundaries for the inclusion of disparate groups in view of the formation of a seemingly united group. That is why in the MTA meeting of 23rd July 1961 one of the issues discussed at length was the name of the group, since they came from different backgrounds. All agreed that they should call themselves *Shangaan* and refrain from the use of *Tsonga*, after a complaint by Chief Nxumalo that the use of Tsonga excludes the people from Buckbuckridge (File NTS 321 Ref

23/55), who are descendants of Soshangana, and as such, are Shangaan. The Tsonga-Shangaan group had to show a united front for the purpose of being granted a homeland, which at the time meant independence from possible rule by people of Sotho and Venda origin.

The former homeland of Gazankulu subsequently had two founding myths stemming from the unification of two groups, as alluded by Isaiah Ndhambi in his discussion. The first myth, “*vatukulu va Gwanbe na Dzavana*” originated from the belief that all Tsonga people descended from a common ancestor, Gwanbe and his wife Dzavana, while the second myth, “*swihluke swa Nghunghunyani*” means “offshoots of Nghunghunyani”, and it was the motto of those from the Bushbuckridge region who are, in fact, offshoots of the Gaza Empire.

7.4 The Formation of Tsonga Ethnic Identity for Specific Audiences

The inclusions and exclusions discussed above echo MacGonagle’s observation that ethnic identities may either be presented or inhibited depending on the audience. The audience here was the South African government, who would not have granted the homeland had the numbers of individuals calling themselves Vatsonga or Matshangana been low enough that they could be absorbed elsewhere, which was the original idea. Subsequent to the formation of the homeland, the groups called themselves Vatsonga (Tsonga) or Matshangana (Shangaan) interchangeably and proudly.

The formation of the homeland prompted a foundation myth. According to Rikhotso (1984), the foundation myth of the Gazakulu homeland was that they were “*vatukulu va Gwanbe na Dzavana-swihluke swa Nghunghunyani*” (the grandchildren of Gwanbe and Dzavana and offshoots/descendants of Nghunghunyani). The adopted name of *Gazankulu* (The Greater Gaza) was based on the Gaza Empire, Nghunghunyani’s Gaza Empire.

7.5 The demise of apartheid and the dissolution of the Tsonga-Shangaan Union

The dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 brought on the demise of apartheid and the end of the homeland system. In the homeland that used to be Gazankulu, ethnic boundaries re-emerged to exclude people that are now called *Shangaan/Tshangana* from the main group of people, known as *Vatsonga*. For outsiders the distinction between the two groups is obscure, since both groups have always been known as either *Tsonga* or *Shangaan* interchangeably. In his discussion of ethnicity, Ericksen (2010) notes that it is not always readily visible with groups that may seem culturally similar, but it is not unusual to find that such groups have a socially highly relevant or volatile interethnic relationship between them. This leads one to the assertion that sometimes ethnic differences can only be noted by those cultural groups involved, and rarely by outsiders. Still, the existence of cultural differences does not necessarily lead to ethnic differentiation. It is only when such differences are made socially relevant that a unique ethnic identity will occur.

Interestingly, an individual's admission of ethnic categories is determined by factors surrounding the ethnic group in space and time. It means that various factors can change boundaries at any time, and whatever is admissible now may not necessarily be admissible a few years on (Horowitz, 1977). MacGonagle (2008: 30) notes this as well when he states that "identities are not static, for they change...subject to numerous influences". There are various reasons for the dissolving of the ties between Tsonga and Shangaan, including land claims, leadership issues, as well as the Tsonga-Shangaan kingship debate that was resolved by the Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims. The Commission was appointed in 2004 by the State President of the Republic of South Africa. The Commission was established in terms of section 22(1) of the Traditional Leadership and Governance

Framework Act 41 of 2003 to restore the status of traditional leadership affected by the Black Administration Act 38 of 1927 and other apartheid laws. The submission by Nxumalo is included in the report under “Determination on the Amashangane Kingship Claim” on pp.534-563.

With regard to audiences, as discussed earlier and adopted from MacGonagle (2008), the audience for which the marriage between the Tsonga and Shangaan had been entered into has vanished with the demise of apartheid. The new audience is now democratic and advocates freedom and equality and would not have social groups enter into unions for the sake of their survival.

7.6 The Statue of Nghunghunyani, the Expired Narrative and Foundation Myth

Hodgkin and Radstone (2003) mention rather interesting facts about national or public memory. They claim that there are instances and contexts where these memories function to conceal the divisions and tensions within groups, regardless of whether it is purposeful or not, for as long as there is a common uniting memory. It is noteworthy that the very idea that brought disparate groups together could become a potential source of tension when the narrative is not re-fashioned as mentioned earlier, or when it expires. The Nghunghunyani narrative that was attached to the Gazankulu homeland has expired and there is no need to re-fashion it, as observed by Hodgkin and Radstone above.

Conclusion

Societies use collective memory as a foundation for the any new political order, thereby creating a new national narrative (Leibowitz, 2008). The memory of Nghunghunyani in post-apartheid South Africa as a leader who resisted colonial invasion is a powerful one. The narratives of post-apartheid South Africa are all about heroes like Nghunghunyani. These

heroes are awarded walls of remembrance and dedication, statues and other public spaces dedicated to them, as is done all over the world.

The memory of Nghunghunyani as a colonial resistance leader is definitely of national significance. His statue has been erected at a locality where Nghunghunyani was regarded as one of the founding ancestors until recently. Politicians believe his memorialisation is suitable where it is, but the data reveals regional tensions. It may appear that in as much as Nghunghunyani is a regional hero, his representation in Giyani is clouding the real history of the region and the debates are clouding the hero that King Nghunghunyani was.

The people who make up the community of Tsonga speakers in Limpopo consist of clans, tribes, and chiefdoms, each of which has its own founding myth and heroes. The statue of Nghunghunyani overshadows that fact, as it misleads people to think that all Tsonga speakers of Limpopo belong to a single polity and had a unifying figure like Nghunghunyani, as in the case of Makhado amongst the Vhavenda people. This idea of the statue as misleading and somewhat distorting the history of the region has been highlighted by the four scholars, Maluleke, Nkuna, Mathebula, and Mabasa (give an author and year in brackets here, the web address never comes into the text).

Nghunghunyani was shipped off to exile in Portugal for resisting Portuguese invasion of the Gaza Empire. He perished in exile and never set foot on African soil again. It is only logical for our regime to honour a leader of his calibre who died fighting for his native land. However, the statue of this important figure could have been erected where his narrative is embraced and widely acknowledged, where it does not cause tension. His statue could probably have been included at the Heroes Acre as his narrative is of national significance and since his statue causes friction locally where it has been erected.

It is a pity that there does not seem to be clear policy regarding the erection of statues in post-apartheid South Africa. Such a policy could help to avoid such occurrences as the case under discussion. Rigorous research into who the Tsonga-speaking people of Limpopo are in relation to Nghunghunyani would have avoided the controversies surrounding the statue.

In as much as we need to celebrate figures like Nghunghunyani in the changed political order (which disregarded his history) to redress the past neglect, omitting the history between the local people and that of the Gaza Nguni is not the best place to start.

There are deep resentments between the descendants of the Gaza Nguni and the descendants of the refugees who fled Gaza rule. It is rather a complex issue that the descendants of the subjudicators, enslavers and despots would recommend the statue of their ancestor to be erected amongst the descendants of those who were enslaved and treated with cruelty.

This dissertation was finalised at a time when there were brewing controversies about the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town. There are parallels between these two controversies. Both Nghunghunyani and Rhodes are historic figures who played a role in shaping southern Africa. Their statues are controversial different ways, Nghunghunyani regionally in Limpopo, while the Rhodes controversy is of national magnitude. The only difference between the two is that Nghunghunyani is part of the current national narrative, is regarded as a warrior king, while Rhodes's legacy is part of a past that the new regime of South Africa would prefer to reshape. Sometimes people are so preoccupied with reshaping the past they neglect to focus on the bigger picture. The legacies of Rhodes and Nghunghunyani are real, regardless of whether they have been immortalised in commemorative practices or not. There is nothing that anyone can do to change history, regardless of how "bad" it may seem. Afterall, there is nothing like "bad history".

RECOMMENDATIONS

The statue of King Nghunghunyani would be better understood if accompanied by a full history of the rise of the Gaza Empire. The Giyani Information Centre could include a library/museum section that functions to remind people of the waves of migrations of Tsonga-speaking people from southern Mozambique, highlighting the extent of the *difacane* in which Nghunghunyani and his ancestors played a huge part. The library/museum could explicitly include literature on how the Gaza Nguni acquired their empire amongst Tsonga-speaking tribes of southern Mozambique, including trade in slavery. The highlight of the museum/library could be Nghunghunyani's charisma and courage in dealing with the Portuguese invasion of Gaza, and how he ended up in exile where he perished, culminating in his national recognition as a warrior king. There is a need for clear national and provincial policy on the erection of statues and any other public art. Such policies should be designed to vigorously interrogate the narrative(s) behind commemorative practices to eliminating controversy such as the one in the study. Such interrogation should be in conjunction with thorough public participation and research until any objections have been heard and thoroughly dealt with before any commemorative monuments are erected and presented to the public.

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2. Archives

2.1 Giyani Archives

NTS 9103 Ref: 423/362

NTS 321 Ref: 23/55

RSA 1976 Matshangana Territorial Authority

2.2 National Archives and Records Service (NARS) Pretoria

GOV 1086 Ref: PS 50/8/07

NAR: Photograph, SAB 16446. 1971. Donated by the Bureau of Information. Size: 15cm x 20cm

NAR: Photograph, SAB 18361. 1971. Donated by the Bureau of Information. Size: 15cm x 20cm

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ANNEXURE 1

Information Sheet

School of Human & Social Sciences

Centre for African Studies

University of Venda

Private Bag x 5050

Thohoyandou

0950

Telephone +27 (0) 15 962 8342

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Dolphin Mabale, a Master of Arts candidate in the School of Human and Social Sciences at the University of Venda. I am currently conducting research on the following topic: **Contested Cultural Heritage in Limpopo in South Africa: The case of the Statue of King Nghunghunyani**

I kindly request your voluntary participation in the above-mentioned research by sharing your knowledge during a 45-minute informal interview session. Some of the questions to be asked are listed below:

- What are your feelings about the statue of Nghunghunyani that has been erected in Giyani?

- What are your thoughts about the controversy that was sparked by the statue, more especially the controversy surrounding the history of the Tsonga/Shangana? Would you say their objections are justified? Why?
- What is your knowledge of the Tsonga/Shangana history, including the history of the homeland of Gazankulu?
- What is your family praise poem or song?
- What is your family history?

Please note that the information shared with the researcher will be treated as confidential. No special benefits whatsoever, either in the form of money or otherwise, will be granted by the researcher as a form of gratitude for your participation in the research. You have the option to remain anonymous and any notes taken by the researcher are for the sole use of the researcher and will not be made accessible to any other party. The information will not be used for commercial benefit because it is aimed solely for the purpose of academic research.

Should you at any given time during the interview feel any discomfort, you are free to discontinue your participation. You are not obliged to answer any questions should you feel uncomfortable doing so.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. J-M. Dederen

Centre for African Studies

Office No. 42 School of Human & Social Sciences

University of Venda

Thohoyandou

0950

ANNEXURE 2

Letter of Indemnity/ Participants' Interview Consent form

I -----, hereby agree to voluntarily participate in the research. I am willing to provide any knowledge pertaining to the statue of King Nghunghunyani through interviews with the researcher.

I have read the procedures in the information sheet I understand that participation is voluntary; that I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer particular questions. I have also been informed by the researcher that all information provided will be treated as confidential and that I have the freedom to remain anonymous in this research.

Participant's Signature-----Date-----

Researcher's Signature-----Date-----