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# *Azibuye Emasisweni*: Exploring Everyday Notions of Zulu Nationalism Through the Women in the Hostels of Alexandra Township.

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the lives of four women who ethnically identify as Zulu within the hostels of Alexandra. Hostels, which refer to the housing compounds that were established as ethnically segregated and gender-distinguished spheres for the colonial migrant labour system, have become an essential axis for Zulu nationalist revival away from Kwa-Zulu Natal. Through participant observation and semi-structured interviews, I examine how Mam'Dlamini (57 years), the Nduna of Madala hostel and three hostel residents: Nokukhanya (23years), Mam'Nzama (55 years), Nokwazi (21 years), engage and shape forms of Zulu nationalism within their everyday life. I further engaged in autoethnography, whereby I positioned myself as the fifth participant, undertaking self-reflexivity about my identification as a Zulu woman. My work is invested in *ukuzwa ngenkaba*, listening with the umbilical cord, which is to say, centring African epistemologies in the ways we research (Mkhize 2023). In this way, I think through Fox and Miller-Idriss' (2008) four modalities of everyday nationhood (talking, choosing, consuming and performing the nation) within Zulu conceptual frames. In my research, I found that in "talking the nation" women used *ulimi* and *ukuncelisa* both literally and figuratively to signal membership and centre the role of mothers in shaping Zulu subjectivity. The framing of choices as national is understood by participants as more than individual articulations of personal agency but importantly incorporates inherited traditions. Ordinary people are not simply uncritical consumers of the nation; they are simultaneously its creative producers through everyday acts of consumption (Fox et al 2008, 505). My research shows how rituals become fertile sites for enacting Zulu personhood through specific forms of consumption and production. Performing the nation was evidenced through the women's embodied expressions of *inhlonipho*. These themes have allowed for the understanding of how women do not remain hidden within notions of co-constituting but rather preserve this order from and beyond their matriarchal hold of the hostel.

## Acknowledgements

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To my friends and my soul sisters, I will forever cherish the times we spend together, thinking through concepts and finding new ways to transgress and subvert the system.

This project would not exist without the women in my family. I owe all that I am to each and every one of you. Ningikhulisile, nangenza umuntu. Finally, I would like to thank my sweet, sweet grandmother, Nokuthula Judith Xaba. I thank Abadala for placing us on the same timeline, one where I get to be your granddaughter. You mean more to me than words can hold and express, griza lami.

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# Introduction

## Research Rationale

The reason I identify as ethnically Zulu was never a point of contention, having grown up in Kwa-Zulu Natal and growing within a home that spoke isiZulu and engaged in practices I understood to be traditionally Zulu traditions and practices. For a long time, practices almost seemed innate to my life and existence and would go on and remain unquestioned. by myself. Dlamini (1996) mentions this illusion of a naturalised identity in how the apartheid regime imposed ideas of an ethnic identity that was ascribed at birth, which could be derived from kin and made to seem fixed or permanent. This often made the accompanying ritual engagements, such as *imcimbi* at my grandmother's house, an affirming practice to this naturalised idea. During this process of ritual engagement, I noticed how there was a constant interplay between my gendered and ethnicised identity. During this time, I noticed that tasks were assigned according to gender. The task of *ukuhlinza*, which took place during extraordinary ritual times, was prescribed to the men in my family. Yet, every day, the cooking and cleaning duties were left to the women. Furthermore, this led me to question why my status as a young Zulu woman often relegated me from the men and older women within the social order within the household. When I enquired about these hierarchies and discrepancies in power and privilege, I was told it was because we are Zulu.

This got me thinking about the role and place of women in Zulu nationalism. From the activities that the women in my family took on, I wondered if there had been explorations into the ways that they actively shape collective sensibilities that come to be imagined as the Zulu nation by so many. If so, I questioned how the role of women's everyday practices and talk shaped this particular imaginary.

Additionally, I thought about the significance of spaces such as my grandmother's house and how it could be perceived as a microcosm for Zulu nationalist articulations. Yet, I also realised that the productions which occurred within the boundaries of our family home seemed parallel to those undertaken by many families around and beyond our little neighbourhood of Umlazi. Although this was still in Kwa-Zulu Natal, which, according to the nationalist movements such as the IFP, was known as the centre for Zulu nationalist productions, it piqued my interest to

try and understand how women outside of Kwa-Zulu Natal featured within nationalist discourse (Dlamini 2005). This further raised the question of how this feature of womanhood has been co-constituted alongside changing notions of Zulu ethnic identity within and outside of KZN. This became another attempt at understanding the role of women in crafting nationalist sensibilities and elaborating further on how they maintain these interconnections away from KZN. This is what Schiller and Wimmer (2002) refer to as long-distance nationalism, the ideology of belonging that extends beyond what is conceived as the 'homeland' and the centre for nationalist productions.

Lastly, this research becomes a critical expansion to the existing writing on Zulu women. Within this work, I aim to adapt the notion posed by Gqola (2001, 12) about Black women by zoning into Zulu women and how they choose to occupy subject positions and define the structures and meanings of their lives. Having been raised by women, I recognised that the women in my family have predominantly inculcated my knowledge and what I deem as Zulu cultural traditions. This contrasts the androcentric biases posed by nationalism, which have relegated narratives of women's active contributions to the discourse of Zulu subjectivity. Therefore, this research paper becomes a disruptive course of action that aims to expose the contradictions of patriarchies that continue to discriminate against women within the existing knowledge of nationalism (Amadiume 1987).

In this chapter, I began by introducing my research project by explaining my rationale for undertaking it and its significance. In the second section, "Thina/Nabo", I examine how nationalism creates boundaries between an "us " and "them" that are evoked through a selection of symbols. I then move on to the third section, "Where are the women?" where I discuss the notion of gendered nationalism to foreground the erasure of women from the official narratives of Zulu nationalist discourse. Thereafter, I end with a section outlining the arguments for each chapter in this research paper.

## Thina/Bona

It was Thursday afternoon, and I was meeting uMam'Dlamini, the Nduna[1] of Madala hostel. On this day, we decided to have our conversation in one of the rooms that operated as a meeting space for the hostel residents. Once we entered, we were greeted by a big election poster hanging in front of the room depicting Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. The caption reads: "*Sethembe…, Votela IFP*"[2]. "Hawu, uMangosuthu!" I remarked, staring at the poster. I was surprised to see a party political poster in what is ostensibly a common room for all residents, regardless of political affiliation. It was clear that this poster was not seen as partisan or problematic in this space, making me think that this hostel's residents were unbothered by the centring of the IFP in a common room. This was made clear to me when Mam' Dlamini responded with "Yebo, uShenge, uGatsha wethu"[3], almost pledging allegiance to this figure that floated right above us.

I thought about the use of '*wethu*'[4] within our conversation regarding Mangosuthu Buthelezi. I wondered if this sense of recognition and ownership, coupled with a feeling of familiarity towards this figure, stemmed from our shared ethnic identity as Zulu. This thought drew me to the ideas presented by Benedict Anderson (1983) in "Imagined Communities" and whether this association spoke to the deep and horizontal connections experienced through symbols and figures. This demonstrated how one individual could evoke a sense of collectiveness through their mere visibility, contributing substantially to modes of meaning-making within the Zulu nation.

As I observed uGatsha become a metonym for Zulu nationalist ideas, it became visible that symbols also evoked a sense of belonging and membership. Hobsbawm (1990) posits that ideas of membership, as relayed in this context, are evoked through the use of symbols. These symbols enable individuals to envision themselves as part of an imaginary community. This was an attachment that went beyond this room, and through these shared sentiments, an idea

[1] The term Induna comes from the Zulu political structure, and it was used to refer to the headman or councillor within the Zulu political system. Induna is also the central authority of the hostel. According to Mamdani (1996), after the hostels were established in Johannesburg, they reflected a similar version of the indirect rule system that operated on the reserves.

[2] Translation: Trust us, Vote IFP

[3] Translation: Yes, uShenge, our Gatsha". Shenge and Gatsha are the clan names associated with the Mangosuthu surname.

[4] Wethu is a possessive pronoun which directly translates to 'Our' in IsiZulu

of membership which includes me and Mam'Dlamini, the idea of an 'us' is created. Through this collective of an 'us', otherness is simultaneously created in order to mean anyone that exists outside of this boundary.

But as we sat in that room as women, I questioned what this sense of ownership and statement meant for both of us as women. This figure, a man, evoked a sense of collectiveness that bound us, demonstrating the heterogeneity that often masks the differentiated experiences of men and women within nationhood discourse.

## Where are the women?

Nira-Yuval Davis (1993) raises the question of why women continue to be hidden within spaces of theorising around nationalist engagement. It can be argued that nationalism is gendered and within its gendered nature, women feature in ways that facilitate masculinist narratives. If not excluded altogether, women are trapped within facile tropes, captured as auxiliary and supportive participants. McClintock (1991) illustrates how women's contributions to nationalism are often tied to the ideas of serving their husbands and children. Moreover, there's an erasure of the woman's autonomy and agency in their association with nationalist engagement. Presumably, even within a predominantly women-centred household like my grandmother's, the women's participation within such discourses would be tied to a male-centred narrative, with the women's direct choice and contributions to the nation made to seem peripheral.

Yuval-Davis (1993) further emphasises this relegation, as women are seen as biologically, culturally and symbolically relevant to the productions of the nation but seldom foregrounded in the official articulation of narratives of the nation in the political sense. This separation of realms, which I demonstrate throughout my paper, is a result of the privatised work that women do within the household. As Oyewumi (1997) heeds us to pay notice of these dichotomies that come to be within the African context, and for my research, demonstrating the political nature of women's engagement and participation within the nation becomes an important engagement.

Our conversation piqued my interest in how heteropatriarchal representations such as the late Mangosuthu could serve as an all-encompassing symbol that contributed to an imagination in which women felt they belonged. I was also reminded of Anderson's (1983) work and why he characterises nationalism as imagined because by invoking the nation, which fosters a shared

sense of connection, this idea of a collective overshadows the nature of differences and inequalities that exist between those who identify with the imaginary. However, my research does not aim to reify the ideas posed by classical nationalist scholars, as I believe that they fall short in capturing the differentiated experiences of individuals due to how they conceptualise ideas of nationalism on a grand scale. For me, it was important to think about how the nation is shaped in the everyday. Thus, my quest is to understand how women come to be excluded from the centre of these productions and to further gauge how they see themselves and their contributions within the nationalist frameworks despite the occlusion of their visibility. Thinking these questions outside of the "homeland" of KwaZulu, in Alexandra, allows me to pay attention to how ideas of Zuluhood travel across space, disrupting Apartheid's insistence on territorially bound ethnicities and women bound to male-centric notions of nationhood.

In our conversation, Mam'Dlamini and I were able to conjure up the Zulu nation through everyday routine talk that allowed me to see the nation as a socially and relationally constructed subject which is evoked and made visible through quotidian practice. Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) coin the term "everyday nationhood" to rethink nationalism from "below". This formulation forms the cornerstone of my theoretical framework. If, indeed, the nation is not "simply the product of macro-structural forces; [but] is simultaneously the practical accomplishment of ordinary people engaging in routine activities" (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008, 537), then my work extends this to show how Zulu women co-constitute Zuluness alongside hegemonic masculine centric Zulu nationalist narratives. I take my cue from Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) and explore "practices through which ordinary people engage and enact (and ignore and deflect) nationhood and nationalism in the varied contexts of their everyday lives" (2008, 537). In doing so, I aim to document the lived articulations carried out by the women and how they exercise their agency to negotiate and, at times, subvert macro-nationalist imaginations.

## Chapter outline

In the following chapter, Bakhona Abafazi (women are here), I provide a historiography of women from the emergence of the Zulu 'state' in the early 18th century. Within this chapter I demonstrate how conquest and the presence of the British coincide with the 'disappearance' and erasure of women's work within Zulu nationalist discourse.

Moving away from what is deemed at the centre of nationalist discourse, I arrive at Alexandra in the third chapter. Here, I will explore the histories of women in Alexandra, doing so by problematising the notion of the 'home'. This is followed by a discussion of my methods and why they were compatible with this site as a space for women-driven constitutions of the nation.

Thereafter, we're introduced to two ethnographic chapters that detail the spoken and embodied contributions towards the construction of a Zulu nation. This can be found in chapter four, where I engaged the notion of talk and choice when it comes to the mundane social processes carried out by women. Lastly, I explore the concept of performing and consuming the nation through how women evoke and embody nationalist sensibilities through practices.

# Chapter Two: Bakhona Abafazi!

Understanding the past, much like the theorising around nationalism, is entangled in racialised and masculinised interpretations of historical accounts. In this chapter entitled *Bakhona Abafazi!* which translates to "The Women are Present!" I speak to the ever-so-present contributions of women within Zulu historical accounts. In this chapter, I discuss the role in creating collective sentiments that can be read through nationalist writing in the 19th Century. Thereafter, I foreground the deliberate erasure of women within historical documentation from the early 20th century onwards. It is my contention that this erasure of Zulu women's role in shaping the imagining of the Zulu nation in the 20th century was no mistake, but rather coincided with the violent imperialism by the British empire during this period. Demonstrating how this violent conquest saw the simultaneous inculcation of ideas that changed the position of women and deemed them as inessential mediators of the nation. I focus on the nationalist movements from this century and use Gellner's (1983) concepts of 'high culture' and 'low culture' nationalism to demonstrate how Zulu political elites entrenched a nationalism that was both patriarchal and class based.

For this exploration into the histories of Zulu women, I am guided by Athambile Masola's concepts of *ukuzilanda*. Masola (2020) describes ukuzilanda as memory work, a way of disrupting ahistorical accounts of contemporary African meaning-making practices. This process of weaving histories can be seen as a confrontational practice towards the erasure of Zulu women within frameworks of nationhood.

## The Early History of Women in KwaZulu

Early depictions of women in KwaZulu exist within a nexus of colonial and masculine framing. According to Hanretta (1998, 391), women have been captured within these early depictions as either unwilling participants within the social and political makings of the Zulu state or framing their 'subordination' as a social position that women were content with. Zulu women are often portrayed as a singular and homogenous entity, categorised as either 'oppressed,' content, or lacking agency to shape social processes. If gender is indeed a category of historical analysis (Boydston 2008), then it is imperative not to treat it as a transhistorical or metaphysical construct (Magubane 2001).

We know that Zulu women have long been integral in the making of the Zulu nation. An example of this is the visibility and participation of women in the making of the Zulu state, such as Queen *Nandi* and *Mkabayi kaJama* within the expansion and consolidation of the Zulu state (Hanretta 2008, 401). Mkabayi, for example, is often written within the history books through her association with the male figures in her life, as advisor to her brother *uSenzangakhona KaJama* and later to her nephew *uShaka kaSenzangakhona.* Mkabayi was more than a footnote to her male counterparts. Her aversion to marriage runs counter to socially acceptable roles for women in a patriarchal society (Shamase 2014, 2). This alone becomes a critical example of the erasure of *Mkabayi's* chosen life and path for herself. For *uNandi*, mother to *uShaka*, her story is trapped in her role as a maternal figure but never in her negotiations of choice, which she exemplifies throughout her life. An example is her choice to defy the arranged betrothal by her parents, Chief Bhebe and her mother, Mfundi of Elangeni (Shamase 2014, 2). Both women's refusals to marry are significant, as they allow me to centre their agency and political negotiations alongside uShaka, who, too, refused the obligation of marriage. To read these women as analogous in political participation runs counter to how the story of the Zulu nation is often narrated.

In Ngobese's work (2016), *Women Power: A Contribution to the Role of African Women During and After Anglo-Zulu Conflicts of the 19th Century and Beyond,* I get a closer picture of the everyday roles of Zulu women who actively shaped the Zulu nation. This strand of analysis highlights the formidable impact of everyday women beyond the presented iconographies of *Mkabayi* and *Nandi.* This work allows us to take seriously the role of women

in social reproduction in spheres such as agriculture, housekeeping, child-rearing, and thatching, which form part of the everyday making of a community. (Ngobese 2016, 7419). Hanretta (2008, 391) argues that Zulu women, through appropriating certain activities such as diviners and central to agriculture within the Zulu life, could acquire the status of being socially prominent within the nation. I further observe that through the work presented by Hanretta (2008), we're invited into perspectives of how Zulu women didn't exist as 'outsiders' within the Zulu state. Through the social responsibilities taken on by women, we're able to observe their agency through their participation in Zulu life. Arguably, where we locate their agency within social responsibility, we simultaneously see them define and entrench themselves within the collective sensibilities of the Zulu state.

Beer brewing is one example that played a critical function in the weaving and maintenance of social ties between families and communities within the Zulu state. It could also be seen during traditional rites and offerings, and its presence became crucial in maintaining broad social ties among individuals within the Zulu state. Arguably, such mundane productions became a reinforcing act that affirmed the idea of a collective consciousness within Zulu life in which women played an essential part in.

In times of war, women heralded the role of instilling political morale for *amabutho*[5], doing so in their role as diviners, i.e., healers and tending to the elderly, the wounded, and the children. As healers, women would perform rituals to protect *amabutho* during battle and serve as interpreters of possible dangers during combat (Ngobese 2016, 7422). This role contributed to the rituals that tied the state together as they became quintessentially important in maintaining the standing of the state and fostering the idea of collective solidarity. This nature of engagement becomes evident through Hobsbawm's work (1983). He asserts that nations are constructed and fostered by adopting specific practices, ritualisation, and the repetitive reinforcement of norms or systems of value. This process implies a concept of continuities that extend beyond the present. Consequently, we observe how the efforts made by women within the practice of traditions and ritualisation, contribute to the formation of collective and nationalist sensibilities.

[5] Translation: Zulu soldiers

These collective and nationalist sensibilities established by women can be observed through Anderson's (1983) work of *Imagined Communities*. Anderson (1983) speaks to such broad ties as a political community that is imagined, where people exhibit a form of camaraderie and membership despite not knowing each other or ever meeting. Yet, people who associate themselves with this form of imagined reality and constructed meaning each lives in the image of their shared communion. This assertion holds within the Zulu state, where individuals spanning an expansive area of eighty thousand square miles under Shaka actively participated in Zulu practices, which contributed to the formation of this collective whole that Anderson frames as 'imagined' (Gluckman 1960). However, Anderson's work insinuates that elites dictate these ideas, and no co-constitution is credited to the ordinary person. This avenue is offered by Hobsbawm (1990) in *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780,* as he states that nationalism is a dual phenomenon that needs to be studied from above (elites) and from the bottom, speaking to ordinary people and how they ignite the idea of the nation through everyday processes. This demonstrates how Anderson's work, in observing nationalist sensibilities carried out by women in everyday life, could miss their contributions if we centred the works produced by one part of Zulu society. In this case, Hobsbawm's approach allows us to read the participation carried out by women as nationalist work under the Zulu state.

This participation can be observed following the defeat of the Ndwandwe kingdom; Zulu elites actively sought to erase historical knowledge about the Ndwandwe, reinforcing a singular narrative that emphasised Zulu supremacy and unity (Ndlovu 2018). According to Ndlovu, "…after its defeat under King Shaka ka Senzangakhona in 1826, destroyed its ruling elite and ruptured the processes by which memories of the kingdom's past were being transmitted orally by intellectuals linked to the elite" (Ndlovu 2018, 102). This strategic erasure helped consolidate power and shape a cohesive identity that marginalised other histories. Despite Ndlovu's assertion that this rapture within was linked to elites, the vernacularisation of such memory work ties back to everyday life and the interpretations that are led by everyday individuals. Moreover, this erasure of historical knowledge would have been conveyed through oral traditions, a practice central to women in Zulu society (Hanretta 2008). This further underscores the crucial role of women in building and consolidating the Zulu state

## KwaZulu and the Struggle for Women's Voice

The obscured role of women and their contributions to Zulu society can be traced back to the violent imperialism initiated by the British presence in KwaZulu. The annexation of KwaZulu by the British in 1887 marked a crucial turning point for the Zulu state, instigating significant transformations in Zulu life, particularly regarding gender dynamics. Mamdani (1996) draws our attention to the concept of the bifurcated state, capturing the developments that unfolded in KwaZulu during this period. This system socially and legally solidified the division between those considered to be 'civilised' and 'uncivilised.' In the context of KwaZulu, the locals were labelled as 'uncivilised,' while white settlers were characterised as 'civilised.'

These notions were further entrenched through legislation, giving rise to the system of indirect rule for the Zulu people. This system, also known as the Shepstonian system, derived its name from Theophilus Shepstone, appointed as the "Diplomatic agent to the native tribes" (Etherington 1976, 15). The Shepstonian system maintained chieftaincy structures that governed the native population. It operated in a way that granted chiefs the power "to exercise authority over their tribes, according to their existing customs, and to enforce obedience by the usually employed among them to such of the Native Law customs as shall not, from time to time, be specially abrogated by British authority" (Etherington 1976, 15). This implied that chiefs became the visible face of authority with limited power, and British administrators wielded control through these local representatives.

As Mamdani exercises this concept of rule that governed what it meant to be a native and a white settler, this concept can be extrapolated to the developments of gender within KwaZulu. This extrapolation can be observed through the fixed gender binary and the associated roles in KwaZulu. Ifi Amadiume (1987), who writes from Nnobi experience in Nigeria, supports the claim that colonialism changed how gender had initially played out within pre-colonial settings, and the implication of this gender was the imposition of fixed gender systems. This meant society became structured through a binary system of male and female, and socially defined roles were designated to each gender. Due to the forcing of such ideas, gender could no longer be shaped by social and cultural materiality, as it had operated in the early 19th century, becoming an inflexible identity within Zulu society.

Although this inflexibility did not change Zulu society immediately, systems such as the Hut Taxes[6] gradually eroded this feature within Zulu life. McClendon (2010) states that women's work was essential for the success of the home as women performed most of the agricultural and reproductive labour. Therefore, women's participation within spaces of labour was deemed as valuable, contributing to the taxation system. This soon changed once the colonial administration required households to pay the sum only in cash. This resulted in men participating in a waged labour market outside of their homes and essentially became an example of how gender configurations became altered. Consequently, the work traditionally performed by women, initially regarded as indispensable in everyday life, became confined to the home, consequently devalued as unproductive labour. In contrast, the work carried out by men outside the domestic sphere was structured and recognised as productive.

The Natal Code[7] of the Bantu Law of 1891 further entrenched this division. The code made African women legal minors to be governed by their husbands more directly and through Roman-Dutch Law which chiefs or the magistrate exercised. This meant that they could not own nor inherit property or have autonomy over their finances unless this was attained emancipation from chiefs or the magistrate (Hassim, 1998). This code further entrenched inequalities between men and women, giving rise to significant heteropatriarchal ideas that would stunt the visibility and contributions carried out by women.

This phenomenon promoted the incorporation of the private and the public sphere, a system that had long existed in Western society, which will be discussed further in the next chapter. Essentially, written texts and histories going into the 20$^{th}$ century would be impacted by the construction of these racialised and gendered lines imposed by colonial regimes in KwaZulu. Although women became reserved to the home, it can be argued that they maintained a measure of influence within the private sphere, even as arbiters of patriarchal ideas that grew during this period.

[6] The Hut Tax was a form of property tax, was the system of revenue collection imposed upon the African inhabitants of Natal by the British colonial authorities to finance the administration of African affairs.

[7] According to Bennet and Pillay (2003), "...individuals could be specifically exempted from the Natal Code. This possibility was introduced in 1864 to cater for Christianised Africans and to ward off criticisms that the Colony was doing nothing to promote higher standards among the African population". This led to the exemption of Amakholwa women from this legislation.

## Nationalism in the 20th Century

The early 20th century ushered another cultural and political ensemble of Zulu nationalism. Inkatha[8] was established between the 'tribal' elites, such as King *Solomon kaDinuzulu,* and educated Christian elites, such as *John Dube*, known as *Amakholwa* (Cope 1990). This movement emerged as a revitalised nationalism, arguably the syncretised nationalism that drew from Zulu tradition and British ideologies.

To provide a brief background, *Amakholwa* were a social group that was created through racism and the imposition of Christian values in Natal. The creation of this social group became an important quest to 'civilise' the natives and, in this case, the Zulu people, as the British believed that their everyday lives could be deemed as 'tribal ways' of life. This became a collaborative mission carried out by Bishop John Colenso and Shepstone, and a demonstration of their imperialist ideologies beyond the borders of Britain (Etherington 2019, 4). This was done by establishing missionary stations such as Ekukhanyeni in Bishopstowe, Natal. Both Shepstone and Colenso ensured that chiefs loyal to the British attended due to their role within the Shepstonian system. Bishopstowe became one of the critical spaces for the transfer and socialisation of British Christian values.

Missionary stations such as Bishopstowe and others found in Natal catered for both men and women. Although women held responsibilities within the household and community, they remained hidden from the literature of *Amakholwa* society. Meintjies (2020) states that "Kholwa wives find little mention in the missionary sources and unless one probes behind the silence, one might suppose that women had little role to play in community life. Yet women were key church congregation members" (2020, 115). It was understood that within missionary society, the private space of the home was the arena where an individual's social position could be inscribed, speaking to their place, status and power within society (Meintjies 1990, 133). This often emphasised women's subordinate role with respect to men within the society and resulted in their obscure contributions within the documentation.

[8] The name Inkatha, according to Cope (1990) came from "The original Inkatha was a royal coil of woven grass containing ingredients of mystical significance and representing the unity and spiritual essence (insila) of the Zulu nation. It also symbolised 'supreme power' and was thus a symbol of the kingship" (1990, 448).

Despite this subordination, women were still crucial to society. Drawing from their work on the establishment of Inanda Seminary in Natal, Klein (2015) states that "The purpose of the school was mainly to educate women as wives for mission-educated men and as mothers who could provide appropriate homes" (2015, 122). This perspective underscores the marginalisation of women within the *Amakholwa* society, with their lives being centred around their social reproductive capacities within the society. However, it can be argued that this highlights women's influential role in the household, as they were responsible for creating an 'appropriate' home. Making the domestic realm an important space for how we understand gender and the agency of women within the homes.

Within the establishment of Inkatha, women were positioned outside of the union between *Amakholwa* and Zulu political elites, as their status within the society was seen as inessential. Through this relationship, King Solomon aimed to restore the influence of the Zulu royalty amongst its people. This meant the resuscitation of the Zulu nation whereby chiefs, elders, and the royal family were esteemed amongst the Zulu people (Cope 1990 423). This need for influence followed the diminished influence and the corrosion of royal power and national unity among the Zulu. For *Amakholwa*, this would continue to position them as elites, even with the changing conditions under the Union of South Africa[9]. This union between *amakholwa* and Zulu political elites would define itself as the political mouthpiece for the Zulu nation. Within this newly formed unity, no mention of the participation or role of women was observed.

According to Golan (1994), this nationalist movement saw ideas of an invented past started to be imagined, informed by masculine imaginations. Whereby the elites had control over significant forms of narratives; in the newspaper Ilanga lase Natal, the elite were already able to create a reimagination of Shaka as a great leader of the Zulu's rather than the "cruel savage" from early settler history, and a masculine iconography that would evoke the nation (Golan 1994, 67). This use of the media in the dissemination of ideas is what Benedict Anderson describes as the critical role of print capitalism in the formation of national consciousness, in exploiting oral vernaculars to establish camaraderie amongst people as both deep and

[9] The Union of South Africa was a merger between the Afrikaners and the British in 1910 following years of conflict, such as the First and Second Anglo-Boer War. This meant the unification of the Cape, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange River colonies. This was also a union that excluded Africans from the negotiation process and would result in Africans being dispossessed of their land and not being granted citizenship within the new nation.

horizontal (1991, 43). This is further argued by Gellner (1983) as the way in which nations are created is done through the imposition of high culture onto lower cultures that would have been pre-existing and taken on by the local people (Gellner 1983, 57). High culture can be defined as individuals that hold a certain status within society, defined through literacy and education level for example, and the power to influence change. This became the position of political elites within KwaZulu and Natal, and arguably, as they imposed these ideas on local life and society, we can observe a continuation of patriarchal orders that erased the participation of women.

Ilanga lase Natal, which became a crucial mouthpiece that depicted everyday migrant life away from KwaZulu, demonstrated the neglect of women's voices and lived realities. According to Du Toit and Nzuza (2019), when the women made the papers, this was done to decry their decision to move from rural KwaZulu to Natal, creating synonymy between Zulu women and the rural and their role in building families and maintaining their responsibilities to the nation (2019, 69). This was despite the increasing migration of women from the 1920s and their involvement in urban politics in areas such as Durban. Names such as Isabel Sililo established the Durban Bantu Women's Society, a welfare organisation for women (Du Toit and Nzuza 2019, 63). This demonstrated how the movement associated with this nationalism became interwoven with patriarchal ideals.

## IFP: Women and Gender Dynamics in Zulu Nationalism

The Inkatha Freedom Party[10] (IFP), which was originally called the Cultural Liberation Movement, was founded by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi in 1975. The IFP was established as a reactionary political movement which drew on Zulu traditions as a crucial political tool. According to Hassim (1990), this political movement meshed its attributes with Zulu nationalism, as Inkatha demonstrated a notion of harking back to a popular Zulu past (1990, 4). This movement further engaged women as its political subjects in ways that intertwined their domestic and public identities.

[10] The 'Inkatha Freedom Party from 1975 should not be conflated within Inkatha led by King Solomon KaDinuzulu. According to *Shula Marks* (1976) in *Natal, the Zulu royal family and the ideology of segregation*, Inkatha led by *King Solomon kaDinuzulu* and the movement led by Chief Buthelezi were two separate movements but connections between them could be made, with such connections being alluded to in the constitution of Inkatha in the 1970s. Marks (1976) further points out that the decision to adopt the same name as *King Solomon kaDinuzulu* was a 'deliberate manipulation of tradition' and very much an intentional link to the original movement.

During apartheid, the IFP advocated for the freedoms and equality of Black people, but it also stressed the equality between women and men. To demonstrate this, Inkatha called for the abolition of the KwaZulu code, which made women ‘minors’ to be governed by their husbands, a code that had institutionalised the notion of women being limited to the private and dominated by their existing patriarchal associations (Hassim 1998). Simultaneously, the IFP consistently upheld the values of the nuclear family, emphasising domestic roles and reinforcing parental authority among women who enlisted in the women's brigade following its establishment in 1978. This demonstrated a contradiction within the party’s mandate, as it adapted to contemporary politics of freedoms for all. Still, it also kept its grip on the notion of traditions, which included the ideas of fixed gender systems, which were at this time embedded within Zulu traditions.

Although the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) has sought to redefine itself by engaging with contemporary gender politics, it displays significant contradictions. The party’s manifesto claims a commitment to changing gender dynamics and empowering women to assume leadership roles in our nation. However, in practice, women often face barriers to holding positions of power within the organisation (Tolsi 2010). As a result, women in this cultural and political movement find themselves excluded from participating in what can be seen as the 'public' sphere of IFP politics.

These sentiments echo the nature of women’s contributions to the nationalist movement as a privatised engagement confined to the home. This draws us to what Yuval-Davis (1993, 622) states: We cannot grapple with and understand the contributions of the public domain without a close inspection of the private sphere. Through close inspections of women’s everyday public and private engagements, we can reinstate their silenced contributions within contemporary nationalist discourse.

# Chapter Three: Methodology

I still remember the day I arrived at the hostel and the overwhelming presence of this establishment. It became this vast concrete that surrounded me, and this realisation shifted my bearings for a split second. It took on a circular, panopticon-like shape, with one central exit. As I sat with this thought another thought emerged on how it reflected the very same architecture of many townships built during the apartheid era, including the one I grew up in. We moved closer to the interior of this loop that surrounded us and were met by the blaring speakers which came from the Shembe sermon at the heart of the grounds. A form of theological unity associated with the Zulu traditions. Around the sermon were grounds that became a home and food source for grazing goats. Admittedly an animal that was known for its importance within Zulu ritual practices and for being a Zulu delicacy. This made me reminisce about my very own home and how the women in my family feature at the heart of this ritualised practice. I then thought to myself: What are the histories that have been tucked away in this living establishment? And was it by coincidence that most of my visual senses seemed intrigued by things that I would typically deem as Zulu in a space away from Kwa-Zulu?

The Madala hostel had been built in the early 1970s and exemplified the apartheid government's architectural violence, a continuation of the town planning that existed throughout the greater township of Alexandra (Noor 2011). It reflected the one-way in and one-way out manipulations that were constructed as modes of control. Thus, this physical structure served the purpose of criminalising Black labourers, organised as microcosmic systems of

control with a racial proclivity to limit the freedoms of Black labourers within these spaces. I began to wonder how, historically, women navigated these spaces, which had legislated control over their existence and movement, beyond the patriarchies that also served as an occurrence of oppression within their lives. I wondered how the hostel itself animated and structured colonial and gendered regimes of control.

Through the early inventions of Inkatha, this political entity centrally coined itself and all Zulu-speaking people within KwaZulu and Natal as the main arbiters of the political content of this emerging Zulu nationalism in the 1920s (Cope 1990, 450). This was later co-opted and entrenched through the Apartheid system of the Bantustans, and yet practices of Zulu nationalism continue to be practised beyond this social boundary, particularly in the hostels of Johannesburg. Years into Apartheid, according to Golan (1994, 15), many of the hostels, especially in Alexandra, which were constructed by the Apartheid government as single-sex living areas for migrant workers, became an Inkatha Freedom Party stronghold that bred cycles of inter-ethnic and political violence. Through its manufacturing of a Zulu nation, the now IFP succeeded in creating a continuity of Zulu-ness within migrant life, and this reality is defined by Wimmer & Schiller (2002) as long-distance nationalism. They define this phenomenon as the nation "No longer confined to a territorially limited entity; the nation is extending across different terrains and places but nonetheless imagined as an organic and integrated whole." (Wimmer & Schiller 2002, 323). Critiquing the notions posed by classic nationalist scholars such as Gellner (1983) and Anderson (1983) about the boundaries of nationalist productions as being limited and defined by state boundaries.

In this chapter, I will go through a brief gendered history of Alexandra and hostel life to demonstrate why I view the site as an invaluable space for nationalist productions. In the second section, I will introduce my four participants. Thereafter, I discuss the key ethnographic methods I used to understand the four modalities of everyday nationhood, namely participant observation in the form of walking, interviews, archival research, and autoethnography. I discuss the benefits and limitations of each. Lastly, I discuss the ethical implications of each of these methods on the scope of my study.

## Early History of Alexandra

Alexandra presents an interesting history of land ownership and how Black people retained and continue to retain their foothold in this area today. The history of this township of what represents present-day Alexandra starts in 1905. Herbert Papenfus, an influential attorney within politics in the Witwatersrand and farmer, purchased farming land which was called Cyferfontein 2. When Papenfus purchased this land and divided it into 338 lots, two parks and a square accompanied the lots, and the intention behind this big land purchase was to sell it off to white buyers (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2007, 18). However, when Papenfus failed to attract white investors, he was left to redevise his plan, and this led to the land being redivided into 2308 lots in 1911, allowing Black and Coloured people to purchase the land. Alexandra became a private township owned by Papenfus, and this privatised nature of Alexandra meant that the area was exempt from the changing sociopolitical landscape that followed the Land Act of 1913. This meant that Black and Coloured people could have full ownership of the area, unlike in spaces such as the 'native locations', which concentrated on leasing out land. Alexandra became one of the few freehold townships, alongside Sophiatown, Lady Selbourne, and Evaton.

Within these histories of ownership, women could also purchase land in Alexandra, but according to Nauright (1996), very few women were able to acquire the necessary capital for this to occur. This meant that men retained the status of being head of the household during the early years. Later, women occupied the space as tenants when this became prominent in the 1930s (Nauright 1996, 263). However, though restricted by their socioeconomic realities, this phenomenon of ownership differed from spaces outside of Alexandra, such as KwaZulu, whereby inheritance and ownership of property was a pursuit that was legislated against, as seen through the KwaZulu code.

According to Bonner and Nieftagodien (2007, 25), by the late 1920s, Alexandra was receiving an influx of 600 families a year, but this migration into the township was not only limited to families and saw the movement of single men and women. Alexandra attracted the migrations of Black women who were violently squeezed out by the conditions within the reserves. The conditions included women who came looking for their husbands who were located within the migrant labour system or to seek employment in order to support and remit funds back to the

family within the reserves (Nauright 1996, 264). Overall, Alexandra became a township that exemplified both physical and abstract freedoms within a wider society that aimed to limit the rights and negotiations of Black people. This space became prominent for the reimagining of the home following the violent lengths of dispossessions that Black people experienced. Through this process, Alexandra became a place where women could manoeuvre and exercise their limited agency within. In my study, this notion still rings true, with many of the women having migrated into areas such as present-day Alexandra to pursue opportunities away from their homes back in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal.

## The home place and the Hostel as a site for Zulu nationalist production

The hostels in Alexandra were established in 1970, and they followed a single-sex system that designated some hostels to men and others to women. The establishment of the hostels was a result of urban influx policies under the Apartheid regime, and arguably, such policies are still entrenched within the post-apartheid era and maintained by dynamics of spatiality.

Black men and women within urban settings during the apartheid regime were framed as 'undesirable' within towns and cities, but their labour was viewed as essential for maintaining the regime. Women located in Alexandra obtained employment as domestic workers and washerwomen, sourced in the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg (Bonner & Nieftagodien 2007, 7). Before Domestic work became entrenched as feminised work in the mid-20$^{th}$ century, these positions in the Witwatersrand were occupied by Black men. According to Van Onselen (2001,5), these men were referred to as 'Zulu houseboys', many of them originating from parts of Zululand and Natal. The men worked within white households that relied on them for a range of tasks which included washing laundry, cooking, and nursing infants (Ally 2009, 28). With the greater demands within the mining industry and the sensationalised 'black peril', which saw the deliberate and malign accusations of Black men as instigators of sexual assault and initiating forms of miscegenation with white women. Black women replaced black men within this line of work, and this replacement exemplified how the essence of the 'Black body' emerges as a site of production, whereby it is seen as dispensable and draws its value from the labour power that it is able to produce (Sharp 292, 200). Therefore, the apartheid government

saw to it that limitations of Black life and expressions were limited through policy and only engaged Black women as a source of labour.

The increasing visibility of Black women seeking labour in urban centres saw a fundamental shift within the enforcement of policies, which increasingly centred around Black women and their bodies. For the native administration, the centre of control went beyond the enforcement of pass laws and centred around the Black female body. According to Glaser, legislation began to focus on the Black woman's body and the need for it to be regulated "…in accordance with demographic and political control objectives" between the 1920s and 1960s (Glaser 2005, 304). Black women were essentially viewed in the same way, with their wombs becoming the site of anxieties under the regime, as their unregulated sexual activities were seen as a threat to the concept of cities being the fortress for white socio-cultural production. This leads me to what scholar Fatmasari (2016) postulates as the concept of 'Womb control', a process that was institutionalised during slavery whereby the Black women's body served as a valuable commodity for labour in the fields, but also for providing the next generation of the enslaved. This also spoke to the simultaneous demonising and fetishising of Black women's bodies, as they are perceived within racialised spaces of the slave trade, colonialism, and under the apartheid state as carrying an excessive sexual appetite (Fatmasari 2016). This concept can be seen as adjacent to the urban influx policies, which are embedded in race, with the preoccupation of Black people but, more specifically, Black women being seen as a double-edged sword for the Apartheid regime. Black women were viewed as a source of labour and reproductive centre for more labour but were also seen as a part of the potential demise of the apartheid racial model.

The construction of the hostels in Alexandra in 1970 supported the urban influx policies of the apartheid government. Once constructed, "The new hostels epitomised the crass objectives of apartheid; to control the lives of urban African workers by housing them in prison-like, single-sex dormitories" (Bonner and Nieftagodien 2007, 187). The architectural features of the hostels, with "nine people to one wash basin, fourteen to one toilet and thirty-five to one shower", meant that the space was adequate for a man or woman who sought to stay in the establishment only for a few months (Rand Daily Mail, 1972). This meant that only single women could occupy the hostels, and if there was a man and woman who were married – they still had to reside in their respective hostels, and their idea of home and family life could be constructed in the homelands, where their children would live, oftentimes with their relatives.

Therefore, of the women who resided in these hostels, a majority were situated within domestic work in white households. Yet, they experienced significant limitations in domestic production that could be attributed towards their own homes. This meant that Black women had to extend care and work towards the white household whilst being forced to neglect the entrenching of these processes within their own homes because of how hostels limited family life.

With the idea of the home being tied to the homeland for Black people, Black women became synonymous with the idea of the homelands. Historically, as women became excluded from public arenas that they had previously engaged in during the pre-colonial period, as a result of western colonialism, women became the primary occupiers of the private sphere (Oyewumi 1997, 124). During colonialism and apartheid, the entrenching of the ideas of the public and the private sphere limited the participation of women in the household and associated them with social reproductions concerned with homemaking. Therefore, since the 'home' and spaces for homemaking for Black people were reserved for the homelands, this made the ideas of the homelands synonymous with women or at least where women were to be situated. This is depicted through the accounts shared by Xulu-Gama (2020) in their work on hostels turned Community Residential Units in Kwa-Mashu. Xulu-Gama (2020) describes how men would control how women experienced urban-rural dichotomies, with women being conceived as the 'home' and therefore belonging to the rural within the contemporary. This often manifested in men constantly demonstrating their displeasure towards the visibility of women within the hostel. The visibility of women within this space, therefore, symbolises a nature of disruptions to the notion of the home.

In the present day, the women in my study demonstrate such disruptions and exemplify qualities of subversion. I draw from bell hooks' (1990) essay in Homeplace: A Site of Resistance. hooks writes from the African American context, and she defines 'homeplace' as the following:

> "Historically, African-American people believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack), had a radical political dimension. Despite the brutal reality of radical apartheid, of domination, one's homeplace was the site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist" (hooks 1990, 384).

The women in my study show this nature of 'radical subversive' through their quest to turn the very walls of the hostels, which historically limited their attempts at homemaking, into centres whereby the creation of care and conviviality can be witnessed. This exists in conversation with the works offered by Healy-Clancy (2014), in that the home or at least the creation of the concept of *ikhaya*[11], should not be presented as a nether realm that is vastly different from how the public realm is imagined. The home should be imagined as a domain of the political, which carries as much weight in this part of the world as anywhere else. Therefore, this subversiveness that is theorised by hooks (1990) can be understood as another co-creation of a political site in which women take their claim within.

In the post-apartheid era, and with the observation of unisex hostel living, such homes have been constructed within spaces that had previously denied this creation, a stance which demonstrates the reclamation of this space by my participants.

Through chapter two and within this subchapter, we're constantly invited into the conversation of women occupying the private sphere and how they are able to create a parallel sphere of influence within their homes. As the women in my study create the notion of home within the hostel, I posit that through their act of reclaiming, the hostel, therefore, becomes an important site for how we unpack their expressions of nationalism. I contend that the hostel does indeed become a home for the women and a site for how they grapple with the long-distance relation with their other home in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal.

## On the research process

I started conducting my ethnographic fieldwork in June 2023 and Mam'Dlamini (57) was the first of the four women that I met. Thereafter, I would go on to meet Mam'Nzama (55), Nokukhanya (23), and Nokwazi (21). All the women have lived at the Madala hostel, the site of my research, for different lengths of their lives. Mam'Dlamini has been a hostel resident for over 28 years. Mam'Nzama has lived there for 22 years. Nokukhanya and Nokwazi have both resided at the hostel for 4 years, having been raised by their grandmothers in eMsinga and Estcourt, respectively.

[11] Translation: The home

I centre Mam'Dlamini because she connected me to the other three women, and I still remember the day I received her number from a mutual contact, bhut' Thabo[12], whom I had worked with in the past.

I had just submitted a one-page concept note to the department about my topic and what I intended to do for my research. I sat with this number for over a week, crippled by my anxieties surrounding phone calls and how I would phrase my ask for uMam'Dlamini. I finally gathered the strength on a random Thursday. I still remember the feeling of my arms going numb as the phone rang. We finally spoke, and she expressed that she'd been awaiting my call from the moment I'd asked for it about Thabo. I immediately felt an overwhelming feeling of embarrassment from keeping her waiting and how kindly she had received me from that moment. We had scheduled to meet on the coming Saturday at noon to discuss my research and how we can go about it in the coming months.

When the day finally came, I had my information sheets ready in both English and IsiZulu for them to read. I felt self-conscious about my translations; just over a month before this meeting, I had to call my mother to ask what the direct translation of 'research' was in our language, and the next thing I knew, my whole document had the words 'ucwaningo' and 'ucwaningi' on it. From that moment onwards, I knew that this research was beyond just the idea of research, this was a personal territory.

Engaging with terms that I had encountered in English but never in IsiZulu felt like the confrontation that M. NourbeSe Philip (1989) speaks of in her anthology, and maybe this was indeed a return to myself, and this was an attempt to try my tongue. A way to confront the dispossession of my mother tongue by the English language in terms of the process of thinking, learning, and understanding the dimensions of this project. Perhaps through what Mkhize and Ntsekhe (2023) coin as *Ukuzwa ngenkaba*[13], this return can facilitate the ways in which I comprehend this idea of communion, nationhood and the position of women within that

[12] Bhut' Thabo is someone I used to work alongside for certain projects in Alexandra. He later became a crucial point for accessing the Madala hostel for this research.

[13] This is a term that Mkhize and Ntsekhe adapt from the Zulu idiom *lapho inkaba ilele khona* which directly translates to where your umbilical cord is located. Signalling a long practice of burying the umbilical cord on the grounds of your home/homestead, a practice that is done to signal belonging and nature of rootedness and origins.

discourse, which is not limited to and by western epistemologies. Manifesting as a confrontation into how we've had to epistemically position our social worlds through a language that does not hold the words, vernaculars, and interpretations for it.

Again, this felt like a process of *ukuzilanda*, and going forward would the language not fetch me? During the ethnographic stage, I realised that this was a deeply experiential study because in some instances the women would use terminologies that I wasn't familiar with, and this would allow me to ask them what those words meant. This process would allow me to deepen the interpretations of the responses I was collecting. When I think about this now, I realise that this approach provided me with an embodied and experiential approach to the research, whereby I could engage with the women through modes of participation in a very emic and etic way (Murchison 2010, 86). Emic, because I knew of the certain rites and qualities that my culture entailed, and we could mutually engage the topics that came about in this research. Etic, because I also had to let go of the need to position myself as someone who knew every aspect of the Zulu cultural traditions and remain open to the aspect of learning more from the women because, admittingly, they had a plethora of knowledge of the Zulu culture than I possessed. Secondly, they drew different interpretations of this culture because the culture is very much influenced by the walks of life we engage in, which are diverse and distinct.

## Ethnography

Ethnography was the primary method that I used for this study. This ethnographic method was achieved using individual qualitative interviews that were both structured and semi-structured and participant observations.

The use of qualitative interviews proved to be a useful method. This practice entailed the use of semi-structured interviews. This mixed approach suited my research well, as the semi-structured questions allowed the women to speak freely about their lives, allowing room to inspect my theoretical framework of Everyday Nationhood by Fox and Miller-Idriss.

As the women ordered their thoughts around the questions, I could pick up how they constituted, legitimated, and deflected ideas of Zulu nationalism (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008). An example of this can be observed through my own experiences that can be found in the

opening vignette and how my reading of uShembe, taxis and goats manifested as typical features within Zulu life. A goat is a goat; however, given the right set of circumstances, it can be transformed into a nationally significant symbol. For the women in my study, this included what it meant when Nokukhanya spoke about the differentiations between thick and thin isiZulu and whether this could be analysed as the nation being invoked through discursive elements. To Mam'Dlamini, who preferred to eat *uLamthuthu*[14] than packaged chicken because it reminded her of home and practices of isintu, which, according to Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), can be viewed as the intentional consumption of products that are recast as national products. Would Nokwazi's choice to watch Ingoma[15] every Sunday as important entertainment for her as a young woman be deemed as a way of performing for the nation? Or would Mam'Nzama's choice to marry a Zulu man whom she met at the hostel 20 years ago be understood as a national choice? This method ensured that these theories could be explored through my close engagement with their narratives.

For my participant observation, I used walking as an approach. This practice of walking is defined by Pierce and Lawhon (2015) as "…observational walking for urban research as a self-conscious, reflective project of wandering around to better understand an area's physical context, social context, and the spatial practices of its residents." (2015, 2). Therefore, walking as a method was crucial for my understanding of women and women's negotiations of everydayness. This meant that the participation in the life worlds of the women became important for this research, and understanding their daily rhythms was a crucial aspect of my work. This included engaging with them through their daily activities, such as gardening and cleaning, with walking becoming an essential approach to this study. The incorporation of walking with my participants allowed me to immerse myself into the women's lifeworlds and walk in and around the hostel while we conversed and exchanged with the local residents, which allowed me to explore my theoretical framework further. With Mam'Dlamini, for example, there were moments during our walking inside the hostel when we stopped to greet and hug people that she knew; here, *ukuhlonipha* in which greeting and the acknowledgement of *omunye ubuntu* were essential in performing affirming the relationality of connections that she had nurtured over the 31 years she had lived in Alexandra. These observations allowed me to critically inspect the notions of Everyday Nationhood by Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), and

[14] Translation: Hardbody chicken

[15] Translation: direct is Song but this is a traditional performance that is done by young women and men.

how the women coded specific sensibilities as decidedly Zulu through their everyday navigations within and outside the hostel.

The hostel itself held configurations of histories that could address some of the social and spatial conjunctions between the women and the hostel (Pierce & Lawhon 2015, 7). This site could be seen within the research as an inanimate participant that has significantly impacted how women express and shape their connections to the Zulu nation. I realised this phenomenon on the day Nokukhanya and I took a walk to the Children's Library on 3rd Avenue and how she told me that the hostel didn't necessarily restrict families from engaging in rites and traditions and that in some events, you would have cultural rites such as *Umhlonyane*[16] because the hostel was representative of home. This went against the earlier historiography and the constricting nature of the hostel for full expressions of the individuals who inhabited the space. Today, the confines of this space have been warmed by the community and their shared experiences of the hostel, something that has allowed the site to become a space for their individual and communal production.

## Autoethnography

I found myself journeying alongside the four women that I introduced earlier in my research study, asserting myself as a fifth participant using autoethnography. Being a Zulu woman myself, I took on this experience to inspect my experiences of this identity marker, and to compare, contrast, and examine the biases during the research. Autoethnography is defined as a qualitative research method whereby researchers use their personal experiences to critique different social and cultural meanings around them (Ellis 2009, 361). The process looked like scribbled notes that were captured during the sessions and audio voice notes that were recorded after visits to the hostel. This method demands one to be reflexive, engaged, and critically inspect personal emerging ideas alongside my other participants and to be amongst the studied.

Researchers often turn to this method to find answers to the questions we're confronting within our research in a reflexive manner, but this is also a method that is concerned with the ideas of unsituating objectivity. Mupotsa (2011) coins unsituated objectivity as a way in which we

[16] According to uNokukhanya, this ritual celebration is done to celebrate a daughter once she reaches her stage of womanhood (commonly done during stages of puberty). This is often done between the ages of 16 and 21.

attempt to restore the balance between the researcher and the researched, whereby the researcher opens themselves up to the presented interview techniques of the study. During my time with the women, we'd often find ourselves laughing or being surprised at how congruent our experiences were as Zulu women. This approach created a level of comfort and allowed me to establish rapport between me and the women, which deepened our connection as individuals and the exploration of the topics we discussed.

Furthermore, my participation in this study was shaped by the rotation between different intersectional hats that I held. From my identity marker of being a Black woman, a Black feminist, to being a Zulu woman. Through my research and my participation, these were some of the negotiations and rhythms that I had to engage in, whether I always entered the 'field' and analysis with all these markers. I recall writing up my proposal for this research and referring to myself as a "part-time Zulu woman and as a part-time transgressor of Zulu woman ideals", these were the words I used to situate my feminist praxis away from Zulu women's ideals. Reflecting now, I am reminded of Mampane's (2022, 5) words, that "Being a feminist in a Black community, and especially in a religious one 'continues to be misrepresented, distorted or dismissed as though being both Black and feminist are two mutually exclusive and/or conflicting experiences (McClaurin, 2001, p.238)". Part of my research was to understand if/why I found what I saw as Zulu women's ideals as conflicting struggles that occupied the ways that I navigate my very own everyday life. Did this mean that I didn't view the work done by Zulu women as essentially feminist work? Or was this perspective shaped by how patriarchies have etched themselves as the presiding narratives that have stunted the work and contributions of women? These were important lines of inquiry for me and quite adjacent to the work within this research in particular.

## Ethical considerations

For anonymity, this was done through the pseudonymisation of the three women: uNokukhanya, uMam'Nzama, and uNokwazi. This was also extended to our time during the interview sessions, whereby the women could opt to be addressed by a pseudonym to erase any discomfort during our session. For Mam'Dlamini, this was difficult to ensure due to the nature of her work at the hostel as induna, and some of this information could be linked back to her. This information was explained to her during our time together.

My positionality within the study did demonstrate an ethical dilemma within research. Understanding that as a Black woman of middle-class background with evident forms of cultural capital stood to benefit from this project and pursuit of an MA still sat with me. According to Wits' ethical protocol, remuneration of participants was not allowed and was seen as a breach of ethical conduct. This process can be seen as coercive, especially when it concerns vulnerable groups. To display my gratitude and perhaps also leaning towards the saying *awufiki kumuzi womuntu ulambatha noma uthwele izandla*[17]I mitigated this through the introduction of bringing and sharing meals that we could have with my participants during our time together. Although I must admit that this act didn't level the field, we were able to establish some form of reciprocity during our time together.

Through the archival and historical groundings provided, this chapter has demonstrated why the hostel as a site is crucial for the study of women's agency in the face of racism and patriarchies. They subvert these oppressions to create the notion of the home within this establishment. Against this backdrop and from what we've observed from the imposition of western patriarchies and the dichotomy of the public and the private, the hostel then becomes an essential site for the exploration of the presented methods and theoretical framework for this study. This is to say that, through the use of ethnography we're able to explore this idea of Everyday Nationhood and whether the women in this study co-constitute or deflect these ideas of the Zulu nation within their everyday life.

[17] Translation: You don't arrive empty-handed to someone's house.

# Chapter Four: UmZulu Phaqa and Invented Authenticity

> Nokukhanya: *Umuntu uzenza yena ukuthi abe umZulu cause khona abawumZulu usunga-feela ngathi umuntu ak'siwo umZulu ngendlela a-injoya impilo yakhe, 'yabo? Athathe impilo ephilwa kuleyondawo mase ke angayiqhenyi ngokuba umZulu...Mina ngumZulu nje, emsebenzini uma ngifika nje, ngiyasho ukuthi mina [ebheka isandla sakhe esifubeni, etshengisa ukuzigqaja] ngumZulu…*

I begin this chapter with a conversation I shared with Nokukhanya during my time at the Madala hostel. In our discussion, she expressed a powerful sentiment: [Translation]"A person teaches themselves to become Zulu because sometimes you'll find that someone is Zulu, but you wouldn't be able to tell because of how they've adopted other ways of life that aren't deemed as Zulu, you see? And this indicates a loss of pride in being Zulu. I am Zulu, even when I arrive at work; I tell them [colleagues] [placing her hand on her chest] that I am Zulu."

This quote emphasises the internal and external negotiations individuals undergo in maintaining their cultural identity amidst societal pressures. Nokukhanya suggests that some may adopt lifestyles that diverge from what is perceived as 'traditional' Zulu practices, which she interprets as a loss of cultural pride. By confidently asserting her identity, even in professional settings, she highlights the significance of self-identification and pride in one's heritage. This quote underscores a broader theme of cultural resilience, where individuals actively reclaim and assert their identities in diverse environments.

Through this excerpt, Nokukhanya exemplifies her pride in being umZulu not only through her words but also through her body language, emphasising the notion of choice in ethnic identity. Thus, this chapter explores two modalities of everyday nationhood: talking about the nation and choosing the nation (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008). I demonstrate how participants signal their constitution of Zuluness through routine conversations, engaging in dialogue that reflects

both their lived experiences and their cultural identity. In the second part of the chapter, I explore how these choices are mediated by an understanding of oneself as Zulu, revealing how nationhood influences the decisions participants make.

## uLimi Lwasekhaya

Contrary to the imagination of nationalists, everyday people rarely "talk about" nationhood, rather they use idioms and speech acts to make claims to belonging (Calhoun 1997: 5). According to Fox and Miller-Idris (2008) ", the nation as a discursive construct is reproduced not only through direct discursive engagement, but also as it is implicated tangentially through talk and interaction." This was made clear to me in my conversation with Nokukhanya as we discussed my inability to pronounce "iqanda" (egg). Her reaction was of laughter, almost incredulous, prompting her to enquire about how I was raised. I reassured her that everyone at home knows how to pronounce it except me. From our conversation, she informed me that the manner a person speaks demonstrates an embodiment of Zuluness.

> Nokukhanya: *Omunye uyamuzwa ukuthi umZulu, yabo, kodwa indlela akhuliswa ngayo, nendawo akhulelele kuyona, isiZulu sakhona asikho thick kangaka, asiqinanga. Esami lesi engisfunde ekhaya ngikhule naso nje, uthole ukuthi sihlukhile kunesakhe, kodwa sabaZulu sonke. Uthole ukuthi sabakwaDuma sobawu-two kodwa isiZulu sethu asifani.* (29 June 2023)
>
> [translation]: *You can tell that someone is Zulu, but because of the way that they were brought up and the place where they grew up, their Zulu is not so thick; it is not strong. Mine is the one I learned at home and grew up with. You can tell that it's different from theirs, but we are all Zulu. You'll find that we both share a surname, Duma, but our Zulu is not the same.*

Although Nokukhanya held strong beliefs about the relationship between how one speaks and their identity as Zulu, she also made room for alternative ways of linguistically inhabiting being Zulu. Her laughter about my failure to pronounce egg did not signal my exclusion from claiming belonging. During our conversation, uNokukhanya alluded to the differentiations of isiZulu and what she understands to be "thick" Zulu. Nokukhanya makes an example of this by speaking about the differences in the pronunciation of the word "iqanda" and how certain

people replace the consonant “q” with a “c”. This, according to her, is as a result of people adopting the nature of their surroundings, which wouldn’t typically be marked as “Zulu territory”. Such differences can also indicate the nature of one’s pride, “ukuziqhenya” in being Zulu.

According to Dlamini (2005), political structures such as the Inkatha Freedom Party have heralded this notion of difference that can be traced through how people use the Zulu language. Through the IFP’s definition, they defined Zulu people as (i) people who could trace their ancestors to KwaZulu/Natal, (ii) engaged in Zulu cultural practices such as *hlonipha*, (iii) showed allegiance to the KwaZulu ‘state’ and Inkatha politics and lastly, (iv) Spoke isiZulu in its ‘legitimised way’ (Dlamini 2005, 182). I lean on this definition presented by the IFP because uNokukhanya is a staunch supporter of the present-day IFP which still demonstrates a great deal of harking back to such notions of ‘pure’ and ‘authentic’ Zulu-ness. The party’s politics, which use ethnonationalist ideologies, demonstrate how certain linguistic conventions separate who is deemed as Zulu or not. The criterion of speaking Zulu in a “legitimised” way, which would allude to the nature of what it takes to be a member of a Zulu people.

Through the responses provided by uNokukhanya, I am able to draw correlations to the ideas presented by the IFP. This is demonstrated in how they identify certain linguistic cues which speak to pronunciation and accent as a signal of membership to the Zulu ethnic identity. According to Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), in contexts where language is taken as a criterion of ethnonationality, “linguistic conventions such as accent, intonation and syntax can signal ethnonational membership” (2008, 541). Based on Nokukhanya’s response, this is not a hard and fast rule. Rather, from her response in our conversation, failing to correctly pronounce certain words or speaking in an accented way is supplemented by where one grew up, one's home life, and even being able to trace one’s lineage to Zulu identity. This shows that speaking the nation is an ongoing negotiation that surpasses singular utterances.

Although this was her position, Nokukhanya did point out geography played a significant role when it came to membership and identifying within the nation. She acknowledged that an individual could still be identified as Zulu, which could be identified through their surname, without exhibiting the linguistic cues she had identified. Nokukhanya stated that this would still position the individual at the periphery of what is deemed as ‘true and authentic’ displays of being Zulu because this would demonstrate a kind of deviation from Zulu life and practice.

This would signal a loss of pride in being Zulu, which, according to Nokukhanya's response, went hand-in-hand with the person's grasp of the language. Even through such interpretations, I observe how Nokukhanya is able to enact a boundary between who can be deemed as true and authentically Zulu by setting her own parameters of what this looks like. Although the IFP's definition presented the notion of 'legitimised', through Nokukhanya's response, we're introduced to how ordinary people, throughout their everyday lives, adapt and impose this notion of difference and membership.

During our discussion, Nokukhanya demonstrated both salient and non-articulate expressions of being Zulu. The salient expressions included how she would intentionally flag that she was Zulu in spaces such as work and amongst her colleagues. This, I would assume, would also become an extension of her pride in being Zulu and a way to communicate her membership and allegiance to the identity. Nokukhanya works at a school in Alexandra, which hosts students and educators who stretch from different parts of the country. The school mirrors the diverse population within the greater township of Alexandra, according to different ethnic groups and people of different nationalities. Therefore, Nokukhanya's choice to actively identify and overtly express this allegiance demonstrates the conscious discursive constructions of the nation carried out by her within everyday contexts. According to Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), "These discursive strategies and linguistic conventions make nationhood momentarily salient in everyday talk and interaction" (2008, 542). These salient strategies are deployed as an expression of her belonging to the Zulu nation and, consequentially, become an essential intermediary for the nation through this practice.

Through this mode of consciously talking to the nation and engaging it through ethnolinguistic ways that signal membership, Nokukhanya's conventions also appeared to deflect this notion. Through her conscious interpretations of the Zuluness, she deploys the use of English and slang, as seen through her adoption of loanwords such as *usunga-feela/a-injoya* in the ways that she spoke. Despite her response in how she takes us through ideas of language in a very bounded and purist nature, her use of language demonstrates a practice of translanguaging[18].

[18] Translanguaging is defined as the ability to switch between different languages during interactions. According to Nguyen, "Such translanguaging practice allow them(people) to overcome and deconstruct supposed language barriers and place themselves in a 'bilingual in-between position' (García and Leiva, 2014) where they can articulate an in-between identity combining the features of their ethnicity and their mainstream experiences" (Nguyen 2018, 2).

Through this notion, we observe how Nokukhanya is able to select and deploy certain features of her language with others in order to adapt and manoeuvre her social environment. Consequently, this demonstrates how the idea of 'thin and thick' Zulu is essentially deployed as an ideology that demonstrates loyalty and membership to the idea of Zuluness within different parts of our everyday life. This deployment of 'authentic Zulu' asserts and affirms the existence of the ethnic identity of being Zulu and her belonging in the same breath.

The concepts of belonging and nationalist engagement work alongside one another. Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) have shown how these qualities can allude to the notion of membership and, thus, a form of belonging within a particular group. Mam'Dlamini and Mam'Nzama emphasise this in the following excerpts:

> Mam'Dlamini: *Uma umuntu kumele uphile ngayiphi indlela? fanele wazi isintu, noma ngaba ungaphila esilungwini kodwa isintu sona fanele ungasishiyi, fanele usazi. Ney'ngane zakho uma zikhula, noma zingafunda esilungwini kumele zilazi ulimi lakubo, zazi izinto ezenziwa emakubo…Ngoba nginabo nje abazukulu abawu-two abafunda esilungwini but ngiyazama ukuthi uma besendlini ngibafundise isiZulu ngenzele ukuthi bangakhohlwa ukuthi babuya kuphi*
>
> [Translation]: *And your children, when they grow up, even if they're at an English school, they must know their language, and know the things that are done [customs and traditions] that are carried out in their homes... I have two grandchildren who study at an English school, but I try to teach them isiZulu when they are at home so that they don't forget where they came from.*
> (4 July 2023)
>
> Mam'Nzama: *UmZulu kubulekile ukuthi unani? Unenhlonipho, futhi kumele nasekukhulumeni kwami ngizwakale ukuthi manje sekukhuluma umuntu owumZulu, uzwe ukuthi into engiyincelile le ebeleni likaMam'am. Ngizoyibeka kanjalo nje ngokuba umZulu.*
>
> [Translation]: *As a Zulu person, what attributes are important? To have respect when I speak, people need to hear that a Zulu person is speaking now. They need to know that I have suckled the language from my mother's breast, that's how I would put it.*

(12 July 2023)

Mam'Dlamini, in her response, speaks to the notion of *imvelaphi*[19] and how we can derive this feeling from language. She illustrates the importance of the social environment and how it can hold different kinds of socialisations; in this case, she remarks on her grandchildren being taught *esilungwini*[20]. To uMam'Dlamini, she treats this institution as a site that contributes to a way of socialising in 'white' and 'western' ways. In her response, uMam'Dlamini asserts that her role as a grandmother is to provide an alternate form of education within the household domain. This alternative is the socialising of Zulu cultural practices, including language use. Language to both Mam'Dlamini and Nokukhanya is an intrinsic expression of being Zulu and an important feature in signalling forms of belonging. As Mam'Dlamini states that *ngiyazama ukuthi uma besendlini ngibafundise isiZulu ngenzele ukuthi bangakhohlwa ukuthi babuya kuphi*. She also mentioned how this is done "endlini " which translates to the house or home. This implies how, as Yuval-Davis (1990) states, the home becomes an important site for understanding the public displays of nationalism. Through Mam'Dlamini's acts of socialising isiZulu within the home, the house becomes emblematic of *imvelaphi* and the notion of knowing your origins. The home, therefore, not only becomes an important site for entrenching and using this language but also an important site for fostering ethnolinguistic belonging. The home, under Mami Dlamini's authority, became an important site for the formation of linguistic displays of nationalism in the public.

Through Mam'Nzama's response, we're further invited into the importance of women in literally reproducing the "mother tongue". Mam'Nzama speaks to the importance of language as an indication of being Zulu, and she also connects this identity with the idiomatic expression of learning language from suckling on your mother's breast (*engiyincelile le ebeleni likaMam'am.)* This phrase speaks to the socialising of isiZulu from the moment that you're an infant, referring to the breast as a source of language. The act of breastfeeding is viewed as an important form of inoculation, as the breast also serves as a source of nutrients, life, and a source of well-being for a child. To this act, Mam'Nzama adds the language of isiZulu as

[19] Translation: Origins

[20] Translation: This term can be directly translated to whiteness or spaces that are populated by white people. It is also colloquially used to refer to the suburbs or a space that or neighbourhood that houses white people. The suffix 'ini' is usually used as a descriptive of location and time.

another invaluable inoculation that we gain from our mothers, which signify the importance of these socialisations from a young age, particularly for a Zulu child.

I connect this notion of *ukuncela* to the idea of the mother tongue. It is referred to as the mother tongue because traditionally, it is assumed that the mother takes on the role of socialising languages to a child, as a primary caregiver within the private domain. I read this notion of the mother tongue by drawing associations to *ulimi* and *ukuncelisa* as two separate parts of the body that are connected within this response, which serve the power of enshrining linguistic cultures. *uLimi*, directly translates to the tongue and figuratively to the idea of language. Through the act of *ukuncelisa*, there's a connection that is maintained between the breast of the mother and the tongue of the child. Through this relationship a connection is formed and nurtured and we also observe the transfer of the exact nutrients that the mother hosts to the child. This inspires the ideas of continuity whereby the process is viewed literally and figuratively as a chain of events which involve the weaving of one generation with another. This act is carried onto the next generation, made to exhibit an uninterrupted chain of events.

This process and understanding of language reaffirm the work done by women in the Zulu nation. Through their private socialisations, they become the mediators that enshrine symbolic ideas of the nation. The use of the woman and elements of her body is then used to demonstrate how language and associated Zulu practices can be attributed to ideas of being immemorial through the theorising of *ukuncelisa*.

Therefore, everyday talk and language operate as an essential connector to others who identify with the same ethnic identity, but it also serves as an important linguistic culture for different generations. This process, which enshrines deep and horizontal forms of belonging within that group, is spearheaded by women. Demonstrating how women preserve is co-constitute alongside the nation through the notion of talk.

## Indlela Ibuzwa Kwabaphambili

Choice can be defined as an act or the possibility of choosing. In this subchapter, I explore the women's lives and inspect how they opt to make national choices or deflect them. According to Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), this often looks like the choice of reading a national newspaper

such as *Isolezwe* rather than the Mail and Guardian, for example, or the choice of being able to do a thesis inspecting Zulu nationalism rather than other forms of nationalisms. However, as I write this, I am reminded that it also becomes difficult to disentangle the notion of choice from agency. As the women in my study make national choices, we can also locate a form of agency in that choice. Therefore, this subchapter will explore this idea and how and where we can locate the notion of choice within the women's lived experiences.

It was Tuesday afternoon, and I had asked to meet with uNokukhanya in order to conduct our interview session. I had picked this particular day because Tuesday was the day that the IFP congregated at the hostel for their weekly meeting. We met at the entrance on Rooseveldt Road, where she stood in her long deep blue denim skirt and a faded white, black and yellow party-political shirt which had a man with umqhele on it. Her attire immediately told me that she would attend the meeting that day. We decided to take a walk to the Children's Library on 3rd Avenue. Once we arrived there, we gravitated towards a bench and started chatting. I began our session by asking her about her political regalia. She freed her bounded arms and responded with "iskhiba sami lesi engisiqoka ngama-meeting eNkatha"[21]. Boasting with confidence in her choice of attire for today. The faded nature of the t-shirt also told me that she wore it often, exhibiting pride in her political association. She went on to state that "Phela eHostela isenkatheni and mina? Mina ngihamba nenkatha…vele ngihlezi ngisenkatheni nje. Makuthiwa kuyasetshenzwa, kuyakankaswa, kuyiwa eLibrary…"[22]. I proceeded to inspect her reasons for supporting this particular political party. She proceeded to give me a stern look, with no hesitation or uncertainty, she responded, "Ngikhule nami ekhaya kuyiNkatha, noGogo ehamba neNkatha, uMah naye neNkatha...why kumele ngihluke?"[23] Nokukhanya's reason behind her support and following of the IFP corroborated with the response I had received from Mam'Nzama during our session:

> Mam'Nzama: *i-IFP ngizothi ngikhule vele abadala ekhaya beyi-IFP, nathi ke sakhula ngahamba kuleyondlela yabo, Njengoba manje nje ngisayona i-IFP, ngiyoze ngife futhi ngiyi-IFP. Ngihamba la engifike oGogo, oMkhulu noMah bahamba khona so ngingene*

[21] Translation: This is a t-shirt that I wear during our Inkatha meeting

[22] Translation: Me? I follow Inkatha [IFP]…I'm always with them. If there is work to be done, canvassing or we're heading to the library.

[23] Translation: I grew up in a home that supported the IFP, even my grandmother supported them. My mother also supports the IFP, so why would I differ?

*kanjalo kwi-IFP ngoba namanje ngisayihamba, ngisayithanda futhi…Noku-vota ngisa-votela yona nje, kuloke ngaqala uku-vota.*

[Translation]: *Regarding the IFP, I will say that I grew up around elders who were home supporters of the IFP, and when we grew up, we followed their path, as I am still an IFP, I will die an IFP supporter. I follow in the footsteps of my grandmothers, my grandfathers, and my mother. I joined the IFP, and I still follow them even today, I still love it... And I still vote for them, as I did when I started voting.*

(12 July 2023)

In the provided responses, Nokukhanya and Mam'Nzama index how their support and choice in the political movement of the IFP rests on the notion of traditions. They further state that such traditions are anchored in inherited traditions from their family members, referencing their elders, including their parents and grandparents. I relate their responses to the notion of traditions, as they speak to the political movement as a feature of life that needs to be preserved and enshrined as a continuity (Graburn 2001, 6). These inherited loyalties reminded me of the Zulu idiom, *indlela ubuzwa kwabaphambili*, when loosely translated, means the way forward is always guided by those who came before you, speaking to the act of seeking advice, counsel, or wisdom from an elder. Mam'Nzama emphasises this as she states *Ngihamba la engifike oGogo, oMkhulu noMah bahamba khona*, which symbolises the notion of walking in the footsteps of her elders when it comes to her allegiance and support for the IFP. We esteem elders within our societies because we view them as carrying wisdom and experience that has guided and guarded them into becoming the person that they are. This often places them in the position to transfer certain traditions and values to the young. In this instance, we observe how Nokukhanya and Mam'Nzama's elders played a part in their political socialisations regarding the IFP, and as a result, the IFP became reconstituted as more than a political party one chooses but takes on an air of inherited tradition. Admittedly, this notion of enshrining is not by chance, as it is presented in chapter two that the movement has been heavily involved in the co-opting and the notion of harking back to certain symbols that are deemed Zulu. Through this association, the IFP becomes naturalised and begins to manifest as a social responsibility that can be related to the nation.

Women can be considered essential in forming such traditions and this form of continuation. Within the formation, such socialisations have been heralded by women and this remains a practice in which they still occupy, particularly older women within families. According to Masuku (2012), this practice of socialising was prominently occupied by older women, as they were acknowledged as repositories of wisdom. This is further posited by Magoqwana (2018), as they remind us of the importance of *uMakhulu* away from the notions of being regarded as a forgotten archive but as a productive force behind the sharing and continuation of Indigenous knowledge systems. Through these responses, we introduced how the IFP solidifies itself as a movement synonymous with Zulu tradition's aspects. Through this act of enshrining itself as tradition, the political movement presents itself as a naturalised and long-lasting feature of Zulu-ness passed on from one generation. Participants engage this discourse through their symbolically aligned choices concerning their vote and participation within the IFP movement.

Within the symbolically aligned choices, women demonstrate their ideas of agency as more than individual but framed in collectivist language.

> Sinqobile: *So, Mah, ungakwaz' ukungitshela ukuthi iqembu lo mama lwe-IFP lijwayele ukwenzani?*
>
> [Translation]: *So, Mah, can you tell me what the IFP women's brigade does?*
>
> Mam'Nzama: *Asithi kuzobakhona i-meeting ephuthumayo, leyo-meeting izodinga bani? Izodinga wena mama ukuthi fanele uhambe ulungise masinya kuleyondawo, ubuye mhlawumbe kuleyondawo, uzobeka namanzi, uphinde futhi ubekele lawo ma-visitor something abazoyidla, ehhe. Kuba umsebenzi wethu oMama ekufanele siwenze kwi-qembu, ehhe.*
>
> [Translation]: *Let's say there will be an urgent meeting, who will that meeting need? It will require you as a woman to go and fix that place [meeting room]as soon as possible. Later on, you'd have to go back and refill water or offer something to the visitors to eat. That becomes our job as women within the women's brigade.*

(12 July 2023)

Mam'Nzama's life is an example of this choice and agency among the symbolically aligned decisions that they encounter. Having moved to the hostel in 2002, Mam'Nzama soon joined the movement of the IFP, volunteering as part of the Women's Brigade at the hostel. Part of her role, alongside other women within this structure, involved preparations for a special engagement with visiting guests and the weekly meetings that were held at the hostel. In their work, Anne McClintock (1991) reveals the gendered responsibilities and interpretations of people's roles within nationalist movements, focusing on some of the different waves of nationalism that emerged in the post-1900s. McClintock (1991) states that "In the chronicles of male nationalism, women are all too often figured as mere scenic backdrop to the big-brass business of masculine armies and uprisings" (1991, 105). Responding to the notion of gendered nationalism and how women are situated within the auxiliary positions of the movement, exhibiting no role within the executive positions within these political movements. Within the IFP movement, women are framed similarly, being perceived as 'passive subjects' that do not directly contribute to the movement (Hassim 1993, 12). I contend that through this analysis, we continue to trap women within the flawed tropes where they become framed as accessories to this nationalist movement. Through Mam'Nzama's response, we can locate her agency within the different choices she makes in association within the movement. An example of this is seen in her decision to join the movement rather than remaining as a voter and fairly unattached to the structures of the movement, as well as through her voluntary work within the Women's Brigade. Mam'Nzama perceives herself as an active member because she works actively for the political cause and moment of Inkatha in and around the hostel. Herein, we observe how she exercises choice and demonstrates a conscious form of agency within this movement.

The women within this subchapter demonstrate their ability to craft and participate in choice-making that is aligned with the nation. Through their accounts, we're invited into their families' histories and how women participate in the notion of symbolic choice. This is an act in which they do through the notion of interlacing political choice through modes of socialisation. Therefore, this positions women as essential facets of meaning-making within the nation. We can also observe women's choice to participate within ethnonationalist movements through volunteering and other tasks. Through these actions, we find their notion of choice is embedded in agency.

**Conclusion**

Through the documented experiences of the women and how they embody and express their nationalist ideals within modes of routine talk and choice, we observe that they operate as essential connectors to others and critical arbiters within Zulu nationalism. Whether in the private or the public, women are essential in forming and participating within the notions of conjuring and co-constituting alongside the existing patterns of Zulu nationalism.

# Chapter Five: When Women Gather

"Hmm, ngigqokeni namhlanje?[24]" searching through my closet in panic. It's almost noon, which means I only have an hour to get dressed and be on my way. "Finally!" I found myself shouting, picking out a dress, towers over every part of my skin. "This is the dress! Now I look respectful enough." I added, feeling like a woman who had just been transported into Queen Victoria's era of prudishness. It was an era where ideologies of sexual respectability for women shaped the form of dress. This translated into the public appearances of a de-sexualised form of self-presentation. This practice was soon adopted by *Amakholwa*, who engaged these sensibilities in their missionary learnings and leanings.

But on this day, the perceptions I held about the hostel guided my hyper-awareness as I was about to embark on my journey into the field. These perceptions were based on the stories of hostel life in the township of Umlazi, KZN, a place that I call home. This area is notoriously known as e17, which straddles between the Mangosuthu University, Griffiths Mxenge highway, and KwaMnyandu, one of the biggest train stations in the township. Like the Madala hostel, the area originally housed men who had migrated from the outskirts of KZN, from Vryheid and Ladysmith. Once in Umlazi, they worked in industrial areas such as Jacobs and Clairwood. Similar to eMadala, the area grew to be known as an IFP stronghold within the township.

[24] Translation: Hmm, what should I wear today?

I'd heard stories about young women being stopped and beaten by the men who lived by the hostels for wearing pants. Growing up, I would often hear murmurs surrounding young women who would wear long skirts to avoid potential reprisals from male hostel dwellers whilst defiantly carrying their pair of skinny jeans to change into once they arrived at Mangosuthu University. These acts of defiance by young women show the creative ways young women adhere (albeit reluctantly) to expectations of modesty. The nature of this negotiation today reminds me of the transgressions that Thenjiwe Magwaza (2001) writes about, in how Zulu women in rural Ndwedwe would deploy the use of *imvunulo* [25]in the form of *ibheshu*[26] to demonstrate forms of personal protest when aggrieved by their partners within the home and in their communities. Other times, they would deploy this method to pressure their promised suitors into marriage. An attempt to subvert the norms around gender and the power engagements within the society.

Such moments reminded me of the times when I had to leave my feminist hat on the tarmac before I entered the gates to my grandmother's house. When I arrive wearing a pair of skinny jeans, knowing very well that there's *umcimbi*[27] happening at home and being told that it would upset my ancestors so much to see me in such attire once it's time to burn *impepho*[28] and communicate with them. Hearing my uncle scolding and adamantly reciting the words "kumele sibahloniphe abantu abadala"[29] loud enough for everyone to hear. Not a second later, I would find myself walking towards my grandmother's closet to get a towel to wrap over my jeans, feeling proud of myself for such acts of subtle rebelliousness. In the same breath, my thoughts would sit on the thought of how dress as a form of performance and visual consumption are entwined with ideas of modesty that deploy a combination of Zulu and colonial sensibilities.

In this chapter, I am interested in discussing experiences and expressions of performance and consumption of values and traditions that are located within the ideas of the nation. Engaging how women protest and reify these notions within the different negotiations they take on in their life words. Exploring this through the key themes of *inhlonipho*, *isintu* and food.

[25] Translation: Traditional attire
[26] Translation: Zulu traditional attire that is made for men, made from cowhide/goatskin
[27] Translation: Traditional ceremony
[28] Translation: Incense
[29] Translation: We must respect our elders and ancestors in this house

## Rights and Ritual performances

The nation is produced and reproduced through the actions and everyday events people conduct. Through these ritual practices, the nation is created and recreated through symbolic acts that can be attributed to a group of people, actions which are sometimes posed as innate to them (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008, 545). Yuval-Davis (1993, 622) describes women as significant purveyors in the cultural and symbolic reproductions of the nation.

The following extracts are taken from Nokukhanya, Mam'Dlamini, and Mam'Nzama when asked *ukuthi* u*muntu wesifazane kumele aziphathe kanjani ekhaya nasemphakathini ngemibono yabo*[30]. Their responses reflected common themes which demonstrated the cultural, symbolic and even political work that women maintain and reproduce within the home, which can be read as the site of co-constitutions towards what is featured as the nation.

> Nokukhanya: *As umuntu wesifazane kumele uyihloniphe wena nje, uyiphathe kahle emphakathini nabanye abantu, ungaba uvanzi, atholakale nom' ukuphi. Umuntu oluvanzi uyazi ukuthi uma ungamtholanga la, uzomthola ka-Vimba, uma ungamtholanga la uzomthola ka-Phiri.*
>
> [Translation]: *As a woman, you must respect yourself, you must maintain good behaviour in society and extend this to others as well. You shouldn't be all over the place or found everywhere. When a person loiters, you know that if you don't find them here, you'll find them at A common person knows that at Kwa-Vimba, and if you don't find him here, you will find them at Phiri's.*
>
> (30 June 2023)
>
> Mam'Dlamini: *Njengoba ngishilo angithi, sisuke sibalekela ukuthi bangabi uvanzi angithi, indlela yokuthi uzihloniphe njengomuntu wesifazane, angisho? Ungahambi uma noma ikuphi, ungahambi uye eyi-potini uyophuza utshwala, ubheme ugwayi, kumele uzihloniphe uma uyintombazane. Phela lento yokubhema ugwayi nokuphuza*

[30] [Translation]: Based on your opinion, how should a woman behave at home and in society?

*utshwala izinto zamadoda…and then ukwaze futhi ukuthi uhloniphe ekhaya uma umuntu wesifazane ukuze uzokwazi noma usuthola umshado ukuthi ekhaya bangifundisile inhlonipho, ukuthi ngikwaze ukuba umuntu ohloniphayo.*

[Translation]: *As I said right, we are trying to avoid having them loiter because know that this isn't the way that a woman demonstrates self-respect, right? You shouldn't be found everywhere, you shouldn't go to parties, drink alcohol, or smoke cigarettes, you must respect yourself if you are a woman. After all, smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol are activities for men...and then you also need to learn how to show respect as a woman, so that you know if you get married, you can demonstrate the respect that you were taught at home.*
(04 July 2023)

Mam'Nzama: *Umuntu owumama kufanele ahloniphe, inhlonipho kufanele iqale kuwe endlini uwuMama ukuze ney'ngane zakho endlini zibone konke okusendlini. Yonke nje i-family yakho ifunde kuwe, ungangitholi nje ngelinye ilanga ukuthi ngikwatile, uthole ukuthi ngikhuluma noBaba, hlampe noGogo noMkhulu khona la endlini, sengikhuluma nje ngiphakamisa u i-voice, sengiyathukana, cha. Noma ngizwa ukuthi kukhona okungidinayo, akumele ngenze njalo ngoba kuzokwenza wrong nabo [iyngane] bazokwenza lokhu engikwenzayo. Yikho ke lokhu engikubonayo, ngoba bazogcine benza lokhu engikwenzayo, uma ngihamba ngiyophuza, ngidakwa utshwala nabo bazohamba baphuze badakw' utshwala, uma ubheme ugwayi, mangilwa bazokulwa. Mina kufanele umangibona ukuthi into ingiphethe kabhlungu ngiyigcinizele, noma ngibona ukuthi ayikho-right ukuze nginikeni? Inhlonipho.*

Translation: *A person who is a mother should show respect; respect should start from you in the house as a mother so that your children in the house can see this behaviour being demonstrated in the household. Your whole family must learn from you. Even when I'm angry on a certain day, you won't find me raising my voice or cursing at my husband, my grandmother, or even my grandmother, no, that's not the way to do it. Even if I feel that something is bothering me, I shouldn't do that because it will be wrong and they [the children] will mimic that behaviour. This is what I see because they will end up doing what I do, if I drink, I get drunk, they will also go drink and get drunk or*

*if you smoke cigarettes, if I fight then they will fight. If I can tell that something is making me uncomfortable then I must suppress those emotions and I do this because I'm trying to maintain what? Respect.*

(13 July 2023)

The women in my study emphasised the principle of *ukuhlonipha* during our time together (to respect). *Ukuhlonipha* is the verb derived from *Inhlonipho*, which directly translates to forms of respect. According to the two women, *inhlonipho* is tied to self and how you're meant to conduct and present yourself around others within your respective space or society. *Inhlonipho* is also meant to be extended to those around you, especially your husband/partner, your elders, and, most importantly, the elders associated with your husband (Hunter 2011). This principle has been at the core of nationalist sensibilities, featuring in King Dinuzulu's Inkatha to the IFP's definitions of what makes a Zulu person. According to Mark Hunter (2011), the concept of *ukuhlonipha* is a set of acts of obedience that have maintained social hierarchies amongst the Zulu people. These hierarchies are typically observed from the young to the old, subjects to the chief, or wives to husbands (2011, 40). Although it can be acknowledged that *inhlonipho* is a universal principle within Zulu practice alluding to the proverb *kuhlonishwana kabili*[31], my interviews demonstrated the profoundly gendered nature of the principle which would support and maintain social and gendered hierarchies. This is observed through the nature of interpretations as to how men and women manoeuvre this concept differs from one gender to the other.

Regarding self, the concept of *inhlonipho* for all three women is accompanied by the cautionary message of condemning public visibility, as this demonstrates a form of idleness. This idea was relayed as a cautionary message not to be *uvanzi* which, when directly translated means to avoid 'loitering' or 'idling' around the public. This idea of idling according to the women was characteristic of male behaviour, with the idea of public visibility, consuming alcohol, and movement being perceived and reserved as an activity reserved for men. This statement drew me back to the ideas of the public domain (Oyewumi 1997). These statements illustrate how women continue to be excluded from participating in certain activities within the public, especially when said activity is marked as socially unacceptable for women.

[31] Translation: Zulu proverb that means respect is a two-way street, bi-directional engagement.

These socially accepted activities and expressions, expressed through the women's responses and my opening vignette, bring me to the ideas of neo-traditionalism and invented traditions. Nomalanga Mkhize & Mathe Ntšekhe (2021) demonstrate the contemporary manipulations of African traditionalist practices and how they're often conjured to limit women's rights and frame gender relations in ways that prioritise patriarchal systems. They coined the term neo-traditionalist to describe how adherents to this idea "re-imagine and modernise oppressive gender norms by drawing on any selection of self-serving religious, cultural, and political ideologies" (2021, 540). Through this selection, neo-traditionalists can paint oppressive gender norms as existing since time immemorial, doing so to counter the democratisation process in post-apartheid South Africa and the access to basic rights for Black women. The idea of neotraditionalism is reinforced and conditioned into the ways that women ought to behave and conduct themselves and simultaneously serves the purpose of gendered hierarchies. This is observed through the responses offered by the women.

The contemporary manipulations presented by Mkhize & Ntšekhe (2021) are compatible with the invented traditions by Hobsbawm (1983). Hobsbawm states that invented traditions are often used to legitimise nations as having existed since time immemorial. This is observed through "…a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (1983,1). Within Inkatha Freedom Party framings, *inhlonipho* is entrenched as a prerequisite attribute that supposedly makes one Zulu. Through the responses provided by the women, *inhlonipho* is seen as an inherent characteristic that needs to be embodied by women in certain ways. Therefore, entrenching the principle of *ukuhlonipha*, as deference to male authority as opposed to the mutual respect that would be exhibited by people who are true and authentically Zulu.

Mam'Dlamini and Mam'Nzama further introduce the idea of respectability and its importance within marriage and the marital home, and the need to performance these virtues if they wanted to reflect 'true womanhood'. For both women, being raised to exhibit *inhlonipho* and the impression of being differential demonstrates qualities of being a good wife. This act of being differential within the marital home extends to your husband, and in-laws. Demonstrating this manner of restraint and respect also sets a good example for your children. This is confirmed by Hunter (2011), stating that depictions of femininity within ideas of Zuluness are to exhibit

this ritual practice of being respectful, "shy and bashful" and to "shun certain places and avoid using certain words and phrases" (Hunter 2011, 41). These embodied actions are seen and presented through the responses provided by uMam'Nzama, and both women also centre how they serve as the centre for enshrining these principles.

The responses offered by the women reminded me of my own experiences growing up with my grandparents. During my young years, I recall being free to idle and play around my neighbourhood and visit friends, but this soon changed when I reached puberty. My male cousin, on the other hand, whom I grew up alongside, was still allowed to play with his friends. That moment, what I've grown to see, was the beginning of my socialisation. Being left to attend to cleaning, cooking, or even assisting my grandfather with his vegetable garden.

In the present day, whenever I reach any kind of achievement or milestone, my grandmother congratulates me by saying [I paraphrase] "Ukhule waba ingane elalelayo", which translates to the idea that I grew up to become a child who listens. Reflecting on these words, the act of *ukulalela* (listening) to my grandmother is how I have embraced the lessons that she has imparted to me, particularly from socialising. These ideas are embedded in the notions of *ukuziphatha kahle*[32], which are synonymous with *ukuzihlonipha*[33], *w*hich would've furthered translating, in my own grandmother's understanding, as having not been *uvanzi* or grown to become a woman outside the scope of what she deemed as appropriate womanhood. Therefore, ukuhlonipha for both my grandmother and I also signalled a nature of responsibilities that both of us carried. Hers was to socialise me into the practice, and mine was to carry out this embodied act. This highlighted another element of how political the private domain became for women, echoing what Motsemme (2011) states: "…African women had to assume primary responsibility for the maintenance of the family and the household in both the economic and emotional sense, they were compelled to view domestic issues as having a strong political dimension.

My grandmother is a staunch Christian, and this notion of *ukuziphatha kahle* reflects her Christian values and anxieties around girls during the ages of puberty. This idea would also explain the differentiated treatment my cousin and I received. The Nnobi mothers also shared

[32] Translation: To behave and exhibit good manners.
[33] Translation: To respect yourself

these anxieties, and through Amadiume's (1987, 87) readings, we see that through the matriarchal reigns that women took on within the society, whereby they would instil practices and socialisations that girl children between the ages of puberty and marriage, direct their efforts towards averting early pregnancy or children before marriage. Because these lessons and socialisations are the mother's responsibility, if this were to occur, it would reflect on her and her matriarchal hold within the space. The same could be said with my grandmother. My failure to listen to her socialising would reflect back on her and her maternal duty.

## Izinto Zesintu as Everydayness

In this subchapter, I explore the consumption activities presented by women during our time together and how they constitute and reinforce the ideas of social membership when it concerns the Zulu nation. Through the methods of our engagement, the women spoke about the different foods and delicacies that reminded them of their identity of being Zulu, demonstrating the political nature of certain foods and how they're often aligned with nationalist ideals. Within this chapter, I demonstrate the intertwined nature of choice and consumption in how the women, through their selection of foods, demonstrate a method of heeding nationalist sensibilities. This surpasses the method of their daily consumption and is interwoven with the crops and foods that they plant in their gardens, demonstrating the careful selection and curation of these foods for their families and immediate community in the hostel.

> Mam'Dlamini*: Ukudla kwesintu ebengikuthanda kakhulu, uMah ebethanda ukwenza kukhona lokudla ekuthiwa Isijingi. Isijingi yiso ebengisithanda, Isijabane sona angisithandanga ngoba bengathi siyababa*
>
> [Translation]: *When it comes to traditional foods that I enjoy, my mother used to make us a meal called Isijingi, which is one meal I really love. Isijabane wasn't my favourite, I always found it bitter.*
>
> Sinqobile: *Isijabane, yini Isijabane Mah?*
>
> Translation: *What is Isijabane, Mah*?
>
> Mam'Dlamini: *Awukwazi? Isijabane uhlanganise imfino nempumphu*

[Translation]: *You don't know it? You combine green leafy vegetables with maize meal.*

Sinqobile: *Yazi angisjwayele, kodwa ngathi senziwa njenges'gwaqane uma kuphekwa kuhlanganiswe kodwa phela nobhontshisi*

[Translation]: *I'm not familiar with it, but it really does remind me of isigwaqane, especially if you mix maize meal with red kidney beans.*

Mam'Dlamini: *hayyyi isigwaqane yiso leso abathi umbhaqanga [sihleka sobabili], hayi isigwaqane.*

[Translation]: *Nooo, they don't call that isigwaqane, they call it umbhaqanga [we both break out into a laugh], not isigwaqane.*

The excerpt above presents a conversation I had with uMam'Dlamini as she guided me through her favourite meals, which she connects to her Zulu identity. She flags *Isijingi* as one of her favourite meals that her mother would make and refers to umbhaqanga as her least favourite dish. During our conversation, she further corrected my use of *isigwaqane* as the name of a dish that she knows to be called mb*aqanga.* Although we were referring to the same dish with the same ingredients, it carried a different name, signalling the influences of space and geography. Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) state, "It is not the intrinsic properties of these products but rather the shifting modalities through which meaning is attached to them that distinguishes national consumption from other forms of consumption" (2008, 552). Although Mam'Dlamini and I carried dissimilar names for these dishes, we reconciled and made sense of them through their properties. After this realisation, I remember how we marvelled at our familiarity with these dishes. I remember experiencing a feeling of how this realisation lapsed space and time between us, as it conjured a familiarity and closeness that aligned for both of us as Zulu people. Demonstrating how food could also be something that can be fundamentally viewed as political, playing an important role in everyday practices in the reproduction of nations.

According to Ichijo and Ranta (2016) on their concept of gastronationalism, they acknowledge how food cultures play a crucial role in building and sustaining relationships between individuals and nations. This notion rings true when we inspect food as an everyday practice

and serves the role of collective sensibilities and the evoking of the nation through dietary foods and practices. This was demonstrated through Mam'Dlamini's response and how the mere mention of these foods also drew me in and established a connection between us as Zulu women.

I still recall the day we made these connections. Mam'Dlamini and I started our day in her home at the hostel. I asked her what it meant to be Zulu, and she effortlessly laid out her life history and the importance of practising *isintu* to demonstrate an attachment to the identity. *Isintu* is described as a way that people actively engage in the social system that they are born into, and this is sometimes shaped into being seen as inherent to their specific culture. This idea breeds an association between the nature of humanness and ritual activity. This indicates the activity's direct nature as it is directed towards attaining actualised wholeness.

After Mam'Dlamini moved to Alexandra in 1993, she spoke about how this move, and the nature of her work, which included waitressing and working as a hotel cleaning staff, has disrupted her practices of *isintu*. For some time, she grew distant from the ways of life that would be rendered as essentially Zulu engagement. She described her relationship with *Isintu* as being disrupted by her journey to different cities looking for work. To counter this disruption, she would engage in food practices as a ritual and establish networks with others where they would collectively share these meals. This reminded me of Mkhize and Ntsekhe (2023), who state that "Ritual expresses one mode of exercising duties and obligations towards the making of persons" (2023, 412). Detailing how the journey of our selfhood is located within ritual practices such as *isintu,* which Mam'Dlamini demonstrates through our engagement, sees her Zulu identity as intrinsically tied to this idea of becoming and the notion of humanness. However, through food consumption practices and the collective nature of shared meals with other Zulu women at the hostel, this became another avenue of maintaining her attachment to *isintu*.

The word *Isintu* was mentioned throughout my engagements with the four women. This word is commonly associated with *ubuntu, umuntu,* and *abantu,* often used alongside the common extension into the phrase *umuntu, ngumuntu, ngabantu,* which translates to the idea that we are granted our humanity through collective and communal efforts: with '-ntu' operating as the noun. I draw from Ramose (1999, 36), who hypothesises around the philosophy of ubu-ntu, which they acknowledge to be two words transposed into one, (ubu- the prefix and -ntu the

stem) as serving a function that shouldn't be seen as irreconcilable or having polar meanings, as they both speak to wholeness, one-ness, and being. As ubu- is a pre-fix that speaks to the state of being, and this is often employed through the notion of gender and how the state of being a woman is relayed as ubu-fazi (womanhood), the stem is taken from the word umfazi (woman) and for a man this would be ubu-ndoda (manhood) with the stem being extracted from the word indoda (man). Ramose views umu-ntu as a specific entity, which alludes to a singularity, and this is the person or being that continues to inspect and inquire about the notion of being through what they deem as experience, knowledge, and truth (1999,36). Ramose speaks these activities of inspecting your being-ness as an action, the state of being in motion and this is what I would reckon is the idea of *isintu*. The ritualised activities and practices and activities that draw us closer to the state of being or, rather, our personhood.

Through my engagement with Mam'Dlamini and my other participants, it became apparent that *izinto zesintu* was synonymous with *izinto zesiZulu.* Therefore, as we engage in experiences and activities which are intrinsically tied to Zulu customs and traditions, that is where we can locate our humanity. Therefore, through this engagement we can find our membership of being umZulu.

I can pinpoint this notion of becoming and being immersed in *isintu* during our ritual engagements at home. When we have *umcimbi* at home, my grandmother would action the methods of *isintu*, through her preparation of traditional beer and foods such as *uJeqe*[34], *amadumbe*[35], etc. beyond this, she would also regulate our uses of other languages, particularly English during this time. Something that I had always observed as resembling purist notions that shifted us towards the immemorial ideas of Zulu traditions. During umcimbi, it was always referred to as a time when our ancestors are within our presence and therefore it is necessary to fully embody the identity of being umZulu. Doing so through language and foods associated with *isintu.*

Through this action, we observe the active negotiations of the nation by the women, echoing what Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) posit "Consumers don't simply buy national commodities; they constitute national sensibilities, embody national pride, negotiate national meanings, thus

[34] Translation: Steamed bread which has become important for times of ritual engagement.
[35] Translation: Yams which have become an important feature for times of ritual engagement.

making nationhood a salient feature of their everyday lives" (2008, 551). This symbolises how the use of food can be political, tied to the politics of being, and as a signal of membership that simultaneously contributes to the actualisation of Zulu membership.

> Nokwazi: *Bahlangana kephi abantu besifazane? Ubathola yonk' indawo. Yabona nje nalana [ekhomba] engadini, ubathola betshala itshalo ezihlukile njengespinashi, imfino nethanga. Bavame ukusiza khona la ehostela nge-soup kitchen for iyngane.*
>
> [Translation]: Where do women meet? You find them everywhere. You see there [pointing] in the garden, you will find them planting different crops like spinach, greens and pumpkin. They often help out at the hostel with a soup kitchen for the children.

The response shared by uNokwazi echoed Fox and Miller-Idriss's (2008) work, showing that people are not passive consumers of products but actively engaged in propagating nationalist forms of consumption.

This is seen through the selection of foods such as *imfino* and *ithanga*[36] in the little garden at the local library on 3rd Avenue. This garden was established by Mam'Dlamini, Mam'Nzama, and Nokukhanya's mom. The crops are used for the soup kitchen that they have established for children in need of support in and around the hostel. This practice reminded me of the nature of mothering and how this maternal role within my life hasn't solely relied on the mother that birthed me. Still, within the community, your mother becomes an omnipresent figure, taken on by the women around you. A depiction of motherhood that extends beyond the home. This notion has also been co-opted within nationalist movements, whereby the politicisation of everyday roles is enshrined within rhetoric such as 'mother of the nation' to symbolise motherhood's reproductive and symbolic features. This is also shared by Hassim (1990), in how the maternal role within the IFP has not been framed as a not privatised role that is limited to the structure of their family but extends to the nation. In the hostel, we see how women become the symbolic mother to all children under the hostel and within the structures of such political leanings. We observe how, through this method of social and communal parenting, the women sanction ideas and, within this context, foods that are adjacent to the modes of consumption within Zulu practice.

[36] Translation: Pumpkin

These ingredients can be viewed as staples that are not only found and consumed within the contours of the Zulu nation, but through the assumed methods and preparations we find the local appropriations of foods (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008, 552). This ultimately leads to the demarcation, which entrenches ideas of a social group or membership. A demonstration of consuming the nation that is entwined with choice, and therefore, their agency within this evincing of the nation.

**Conclusion**

Through women's performance in the form of inhlonipho and their consumption practices which embedded in the ideas of isintu, we're introduced to how they embody and carry out tasks that signal nationalist membership within movements. Therefore, we see how the women engage sensibilities that become public displays of connection and enact the notions of the collective.

# Conclusion

*I wish to write an epic poem about uMnkabayi kaJama Zulu, one that will be silent on her nephew, Shaka, and her brother, Senzangakhona.*

*It will not even mention Nandi. It will focus on her relationship with her sisters Mawa and Mmama, her choice not to marry, her preference not to have children and her power as a ruler. It will speak of her assortment of battle strategies and her charisma as a leader. It will render a compilation of all the pieces of advice she gave to men of abaQulusi who bowed to receive them, smiled to thank her, but in public never acknowledged her, instead called her a mad witch.*

- Tongues of their Mothers by Makhosazana Xaba

In examining nationalist discourse, we uncover the manifestations of heteropatriarchal orders that relegate women to the periphery, rendering them invisible. Within early Zulu society, women like uMnkabayi played crucial roles in crafting collective sensibilities and contributing to the consciousness of the Zulu state. In contemporary narratives, figures such as uShaka and the late Mangosuthu Buthelezi emerge as dominant symbols of nationhood. At the same time, women often fall into the shadows, depicted as 'disappeared' or inessential arbiters of the nation.

Through close examinations of the lived experiences and articulations of Mam'Dlamini, Nokukhanya, Mam'Nzama, and Nokwazi, alongside my own reflections as a Zulu woman, we are introduced to realms of influence that contribute to nationalist ideals. Their embodiment and enshrining of various collective sensibilities reveal how women are central to the public displays of nationalism. Here, we can locate women's roles in preserving cultural cues as forms of resistance against the interlocking oppressions inherent in nationalist frameworks.

This resistance resonates with the words of Makhosazana Xaba in her poem "Tongues of their Mothers," which honours the women in history who have been spoken about but never allowed to speak for themselves. Xaba expresses a yearning for a history that occupies the centre rather than the margins, for narratives that are not merely by-products of someone else's story.

Drawing on the theoretical framework offered by Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), we explore how women, through their everyday processes, embody the nation in their choices, performances, and dialogues.

In these displays, women reclaim their agency and re-enter the discourse as vital contributors to the nation, shaping and sometimes deflecting its narrative through their matriarchal influence within the home and beyond.

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