

IFREKHAM KHAMM IN KHILANI: **Memories of the Impi Yamakhanda** **An Indigenous Knowledge System Perspective**



Freedom Sown in Blood

Magwaza, Seleti and Sithole(eds)



"This book is a welcome publication of a collection of essays and critical historical reflections. Some of the articles in this collection deal with issues on Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Methodology discussion, indigenous governance of the Royal amaZondi of Ngome, challenges of keeping memories and 'letting live' the Bhambata uprising events and so forth. Undoubtedly, fresh and well-articulated perspectives form an integrated conversation throughout the document; in particular one is impressed by the gender-centered-critical reflections. This is a timely and useful collection of essays that will act as an important stimulant for younger, emerging scholars and South African indigenous communities."

Dr Mogomme Masoga
CRL Commission, Johannesburg.

"To me the most important contribution of this book is the accommodation of the divergent views of the opposing histories co-existing on the same topic. This book tests the right to foster an opposing view. Such a book posits a challenge to future generations on how to build bridges without appropriation of the one by the other. Almost unedited accounts of the consultants who were directly involved in the conflict reflect the academic maturity of the writers and editors and show unbiased respect for the future reader. That is the biggest challenge for any researcher in a conflict situation and only the sober minded pass the test. Originality of the accounts adds to the equal sharing from both camps in the writing of history. We cannot hide how human we are

What a remarkable approach? Masses of people in a war situation are zoomed in and presented as individuals - an approach one would have never imagined given the time frame of mass-indoctrination and denial of existence of individualism in indigenous Africa. This book encourages innovation for the scholar of the future"

Dr Levi Namaseb
Lecturer of Khoekhoe at the University of Namibia

"This incisive text scrutinizes, with great insight, the various trajectories central to "the Bhambata Uprising of 1906". Skillfully wrought, it also foregrounds African epistemologies by infusing refreshingly 'new' perspectives predicated on a distant, but lived, experience. The text vividly evokes a socio-cultural consciousness and political pride hitherto 'silenced' by colonialism and apartheid, by voicing memories of an auspicious event that became a symbol of resistance against the 'othering' and diminution of the African's identity."

Dr Mashudu C Mashige
Editor: Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies

Edited by
Thenjiwe Magwaza
Yonah Seleti
Mpilo Pearl Sithole

Ditlou
Publishers

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Cover Picture: Courtesy of the Killie Campbell Collections, University of KwaZulu-Natal. This is a picture of early Zondis with *Inkosi* Bhambada in the middle of the front row. It is originally from the Illustrated London News of 16 June 1906, published during the Uprising. Although there is controversy over whether this is indeed *Inkosi* Bhambada, the present heir *inkosi* Mbongeleni Zondi has the picture displayed proudly in his house and confirms his forefather's identity.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to *Inkosi* Bhambada Zondi for his contribution to the freedom of Black people in South Africa.

Chapter Two

IKS Methodological Pilgrimage: Processes and Procedures

Thenjiwe Magwaza

Introduction

The Country is preparing to celebrate the centenary of the 1906 Bhambada Uprising, or *Impi Yamakhanda*, "The War over the Heads", as it is commonly referred to among the Zulu, because it is believed that it was the imposition of a tax on all unmarried young males over the age of 18 years, whose 'heads had been counted' in the 1904 census (or the 'poll tax'), that unleashed the anger and consequent rebellion. This was the last serious armed revolt against the colonial government before the proclamation of the Union of South Africa in 1909. The protagonists of the revolt, the *amaZondi* of Ngome, have lived the last one hundred years in the shadow of those events, which catapulted them to national prominence through their heroic leader, Bhambada kaMancinza Zondi. The survivors of the struggle had to suffer the consequences of Bhambada's and his clan's actions, which have become ingrained in their historical memories. The aim of the research project, carried out at Ngome between 2003 and 2005, was to find out how that distant cluster of events is alive in the people's collective memories; how it has shaped the view of their history and their present life; and what kind of impact, if any, it may have on their future.

Digging into orally kept memories of an important past event meant researching the Zondi community: a task that was challenging, but equally enlightening and exciting. It was challenging because the Bhambada event has become very controversial, due to the divergent opinions surrounding *Inkosi* Bhambada's death, and consequently the fact that neither the Zondi community nor its royal family have achieved a closure regarding his death. Knowing the location of a family member's remains is an emotional issue amongst Zulu people, due to their persistent and all important veneration of their ancestors. This longing becomes much more intense for the Zondi because of the politically charged nature of their hero's death; the fact that he was of royal blood and therefore deserving of special ceremonies; and the generally held belief that the Zondi royal family is under a curse because, a century since Bhambada's disappearance, they have failed to trace the exact location of his death and of his remains.

We observed that the search seems to intensify with the passing of time and the interest shown by outsiders on *Impi Yamakhanda*. Although the Bhambada history is a relatively well known subject

matter, researching it did not only bring new insights that generated substantial data, but we found that people regarding themselves as *amaZondi*, located beyond the Ngome geographical community, are extremely passionate and enthusiastic about the issue. This attitude made our task rewarding as most people offered to help either in taking us to historical sites considered important and sacred by the Zondi, or they spent lengthy hours with us as information providers, sought information on our behalf and referred us to sources regarded knowledgeable about the subject.

This chapter narrates the practical development of the project, what and how the team carried out the assignment. I give a synopsis of all the processes that went into the activities of the project, from accessing the Ngome area to the team's last visit, as we finalised the first phase of the project.

A substantial amount of time and energy went into discussing and gaining a common understanding of the task at hand, various kinds of available literature on *Impi Yamakhanda*, the Ngome people, their royal family and the cultural aspects thereof. During the three years, the team thus dedicated, within its meetings, scheduled sessions to developing and achieving better insight into Ngome. This was necessary as one of the main objectives of the project was to capture not just the different voices and forms of expression of the Zondi people in narrating their version of *Impi Yamakhanda*, but to understand processes and thought frameworks within which the narration occurs. We are confident that this devotion helped in developing and presenting a commentary that is in the manner and format most preferred by the Zondi people. The insight was gained both from the conversations we had and from our active participation in community activities. Although this book makes reference to interviews, looking back at the entire process, it is the conversations and discussions that we had with the Zondi people that are reflected here, rather than the interviews. Such conversations form part of the final text. As a massive amount of data was generated, it would be impossible to include all the details in this text. All the materials were deposited in the Africana Library, Killie Campbell Collections of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and may be consulted for finer and intense engagement in the future.

The materials are in pictorial, video and audio recorded formats and feature the actual voices of the Zondi people. These materials form the base from which the book developed, and we regard them as a resource depicting how *amaZondi* have 'written' and interpreted their history. The materials are evidence of how the team stretched its vision beyond the existing framework of *Impi Yamakhanda* and responded to a number of individuals' grave concerns about the very

real possibility that the project was bound to fail, as excavating an almost 100 year old story was a mammoth challenge, and probably quite pointless, as the Zondi people were unlikely to remember much, if anything at all. Also recorded in a subtle manner is the culture of the research approach adopted, that is, the manner, language and tone employed in conversing with the oral sources. The regard we had for the *amaZondi* who provided us with information is further manifested by our reference to them, not simply as respondents or informants, but as sources of information, 'oral sources'.

Prior to entering Ngome we held workshops that aimed at arriving at a common understanding of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as a methodological and conceptual framework. As the project progressed we would reflect on what we had done, discuss the future plans and contingency activities. At the core of this practice was the aim of allowing past activities to inform us in finding gaps as well as exploring possibilities of doing things differently. We intended to go beyond just being active participants as qualitative research demands but as Thompson (1988) advises, "to engage with an open mind" both our research approach and the main subject of the project. Hence, research questions taken to the field were treated as a flexible and adaptable guide within which to operate, and we were not distressed by the divergent reaction, responses and even challenging questions put to us by the Zondi people. We had prepared ourselves to engage with the community with open minds, and all the stories and interpretations were accepted, but, of course, they were evaluated against those that proved most common.

Also, considering that information changes as it is passed down from one generation to the next, validating all collected data formed a strategic part of our progression. Whilst validating data with individuals and small groups, we also held a workshop at Ngome that involved the larger community beyond the people from whom the data had been collected. We were conscious that events surrounding the uprising were not handed down in stereotypical and unaltered form from generation to generation.

Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack (1987:2) state the need for a "realization that the interview is a linguistic, as well as a social and psychological event, one that can be better understood by taking into account the specific characteristics and styles of the group and individuals studied". For these reasons there are divergent interpretations and references to *Impi Yamakhanda*. We therefore decided to present the interpretations in the book as they were verbally related to us. Therefore no attempts were made to try to put the views and interpretation in a coherent and complementary manner. Individuals and their views were respected; consequently we

foreground them in our discussions. Alfred Shultz in Mutena (2003:84) 'identifies the individual actor as the starting point in any attempt to understand indigenous knowledge.' Extending this thought to individual researches he further notes that "(f)ailure to appreciate one's subjectivity may lead to gross (mis)interpretations, which then defeat the purpose of seeking to interpret indigenous knowledge in the first place" (Mutena, 2003:85).

The Research Team

Although IK (Indigenous Knowledge) methodology was at the centre of our research, we were cognisant of, and, at our meetings verbalised the fact that our position was different from that of our oral sources. As researchers we were conscious of our identity and the possible impact it may have in collecting and synthesising the collected data. "The identities of the people who conduct research and get to communicate with sources cannot be ignored – if anything it should be at the centre of presenting an analysis of the collected data" (Magwaza & Khumalo, 2003:38). We therefore acknowledge identity features of some members of the team, that is, members of an organisation of higher learning, non-Zondi. We are unlikely ever to be living permanently at Ngome; and note that these factors and characteristics may have had an impact on the manner in which information was given, and on the kind of information given. At a meeting, in one of our reflection sessions, two members of the group who had spoken to the same person on the same day about Bhambada's personality and how people nowadays regard him, solicited not only totally different information but extremely opposing statements. To a Zulu speaking member of the team he was defined as a hero who made a mark and is extremely revered by *amaZondi*, whilst to the non-Zulu speaking white member of the team he was painted as a terrorist who caused a lot of trouble for everyone. This is one of the examples of how important it is to reveal a researcher's cultural and social identity when reporting about a research process – as information given by 'sources' does, from time to time, get altered, depending on who is asking the question.

The age and male gender of most of our research assistants was a factor that had an impact on getting the intended data, and contributed in somehow stalling the progress of the project. Elderly women in particular proved extremely difficult to interview; they were either discourteous or blatantly refused to talk to the male research assistants. Besides age and gender, the assumed level of education, the place of origin, the language spoken including dialectical accents, the fact that as researchers we often came in cars – all have an impact on the information given. These elements cannot be ignored in formulating the final version of the product. As deriving totally different

responses and reactions from our 'resources' was experienced in several instances as well, it is necessary to briefly explain who constituted the team.

It was a multi-disciplinary body involved in the research from 2003 to 2005. In total we had seven sporadic and six regular team members. This number comprised of feminists, historians, museologists, social anthropologists, graduate students and research assistants from the Ngome community. Conolly and Sienaert, who have contributed a chapter in this volume, served as colloquium commentators and external evaluators of the project. Their chapter is a necessary contribution that reflects on this project, its principles and approach, and presents a view by IKS scholars that were not directly, and on a constant basis, involved in the project.

During the first phase of the three year project, a total of seventy six people were interviewed. Of this number we conducted 2-4 hour intensive interviews with 38 individuals (17 men and 21 women). In addition we had two focus group interviews comprising of three and five people each.

Therefore we cannot ignore the fact that, to a large extent, the stories we have recorded, though originating from our 'resources', reach the wider reading public in the form of a text put together by a team, with some of its members bearing identities and backgrounds that are different from those of the *amaZondi*.

Mode of Operation and Working Principles

One of the premises of our research was to first and foremost challenge the knowledge that we as a team had on *Impi Yamakhanda*, and juxtapose it with the knowledge provided by our oral sources. In this way, we maintain, new knowledge, which is inclusive and embrative of different thought frameworks, gets generated. This inclusive approach has a bias towards "giving a forum to a people that have been silenced for long" (Blauner & Wellman 1973:38) as most of the literature on *Impi Yamakhanda* has a limited reference, let alone display *amaZondi's* version of the 'event'. Besides ensuring that the knowledge and reference base for the *Impi Yamakhanda* was to be the Zondi people of Ngome, we went into the community intending to learn, rather than only to engage the people with our version of events.

We also challenge the fact that there is a single methodology of gathering data from an indigenous people and are open to the fact there may be other ways of gathering the data we collected, and, equally, interpretation models other than the one adopted in this

book. However, whatever approach is adopted, we assert it should first and foremost respect, consult, verify, and work in close collaboration with indigenous people with the intention of presenting a product that is representative and respectful of the people's values. The indigenous people's own terms and definitions of what constitute respect ought to be prioritised. In our data collection and presentation we have striven, not only to abide by this generic principle, but ensured that the product and style presented to a wider readership have been authenticated with *amaZondi*. It is for this reason that 2005 was dedicated on re-validating collected data, seek permission to use data in the manner we have in this publication, as well as seek permission to use the images and expressions found in the book.



Fig. 1 & 2 Validating and getting permission to use data for the book and 'giving back' (copies of pictures, audio and videos tapes) collected from the *amaZondi*.

Prior to the 2005 process there were other forms of validating data, that is, whilst interviews were conducted, over the phone, through individual visits and at a community wide workshop. In a nutshell, the adopted practices and processes put the *amaZondi* Ngome people at the centre of the scholarship. In the practical sense this approach forced and compelled us to shift our goals, change some of our planned actions and allow our sources to be in charge.

Principles defining and guiding the project included regarding the people we engaged with as 'sources, oral sources, and/ or resources', avoiding the use of the word and reference to them as just research subjects or interviewees. In turn our practice was codified in these references in an attempt not to objectify and appropriate *amaZondi* into conventional modes of doing research, which have little, if any, respect for indigenous people. This approach therefore acknowledges the Zondi people's way of presenting experiences and opinions, and emphasizes that their style of remembering and relaying information is a significant contribution to the understanding of an indigenous people's way of reflecting on their history.

Besides the Ngome community workshop to which I make reference above, data collected from *amaZondi* was presented at various forums; conferences, chapter contributions and a Bhambada Research Colloquium. This was done in order to allow our colleagues to engage and advise on the collected data and methodologies employed.

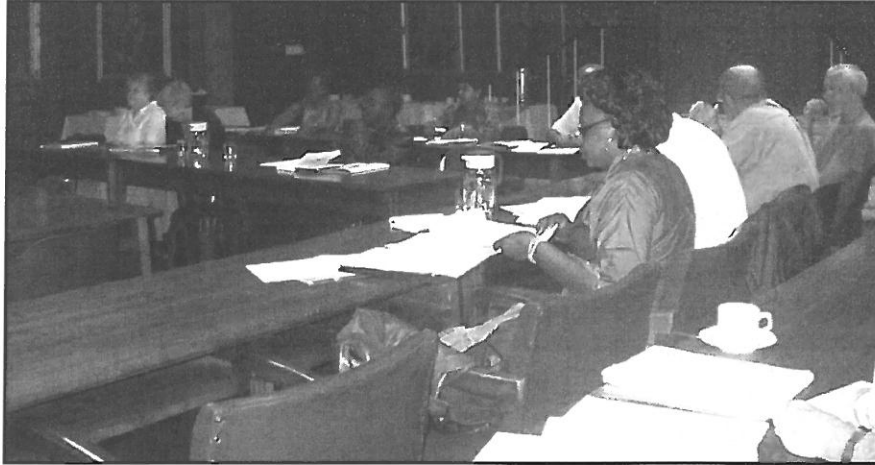


Fig. 3 Delegates at the Bhambada Research Colloquium.

Methodological Approaches

The indigenous knowledge methodological approach is a relatively new research field that is under development. It does not purport to be exclusive; hence it employs some of the characteristics of long existing approaches in its operations. Four research approaches: action, participatory, ethnography, and grounded theory, were employed in data gathering processes. These approaches were not necessarily used in a linear fashion, but were largely employed to help the team understand issues and problems associated with the subject of study.

Action and Participatory

Although the two approaches are not the same, their similar trends were roped together and applied in our investigation. The nature of this approach required that researchers engage in a democratic, equitable, and liberating manner with the community. In essence, this entails empowering a community by inviting them to be equal partners in a research process. In adopting this approach we intended to afford all parties 'ownership' of the process and findings. This kind of approach necessitates that research be carried out by all involved parties (Freire, 1972), in our case the two parties were formal researchers and some members of the Ngome community. In

our discussions with *amaZondi* we focused on engaging with open minds whilst making all attempts to allow them relive the event in their minds. This was an opportunity for the entire team to participate in a Zondi history.

Ethnography

The Zondi community was studied in their 'natural culture' and setting (Ellen, 1984), that is, we took into consideration the context and environment they find themselves in the 21st century. This publication is a product generated by the investigation, evidence of which is the keen interest taken in the Zondi people's contemporary issues. In order to achieve this it was necessary for the research team to visit and spend considerable time with the Zondi community. Through the three years (2003-2005) we had several short visits to the community but dedicated 2004 as a year in which mainly the research assistants were to stay and be immersed in the community. During this year, the team got to know the community better and participated in their activities. Immersing some of the members of the team on a daily basis in the community was valuable in uncovering the community perspective on the event whilst equally participating but also observing how they live out their lives in relation to what they state during interviews. The team became a familiar sight within the community and got invited to local social gatherings as well as to participate in community projects. This practice made us familiar with the context in which the study was set and afforded us an opportunity to learn and appreciate the community and its operational frameworks. Through this practice we were also afforded an opportunity not only to observe but also to participate, engage and interact with the *amaZondi* and their everyday culture.

Grounded Theory Practice

This theory was applied through the analysis of multiple stages of data collection and interpretation. The team identified trends, patterns, themes and categories from collected data. What was identified was shared with the Zondi community in order to engage them and solicit their opinions on how to package the data. In the interest of providing a product that is representative of the collected data, this approach necessitated that team members continuously revisit the process and collected data, looking for and validating common trends. Common trends deduced from collected data were tested. We adopted and discussed varied theories as found in this publication.

Ethics of the Research Project

Ethical practices adopted by the team involved seeking permission, approval and validation of each process undertaken. We did this in order to show consideration for the dignity of the Zondi people. All the data used in this book, which is in the form of information, pictures and names was verified and permission was given for its use in the book. Prior to entering the research site and interviewing the Zondi people consent was sought from both the current *Inkosi* and individual people concerned. Seleti's introductory chapter provides some details and principles that informed the team's practices.

Conclusion

Whilst on one hand the team was committed to table the history of *Impi Yamakhanda* as it was remembered and relayed to us by *amaZondi* – we could not be dismissive of scholarship that has been generated on *Impi Yamakhanda* and *amaZondi*. This literature, as most authors demonstrate, served as the 'springboard' for our research.

The main task of the team was to try, cognisant of the time that the event happened, to present a contemporary Zondi voice. In presenting this voice we further endeavoured to employ presentation formats that were verified and approved by the Zondi people. We have also attempted through this book to suggest ways in which IKS has considered gender and ways in which accommodating gender issues can enrich the IKS scholarship.

Chapter Six

The Role of Zondi Women during Conflict Situations: Perspectives and Expressions

Thenjiwe Magwaza

It has been a universal tradition that matters of war and conflict are not associated with women. Jones (2005:1), reflecting on the effects of this tradition, decries the fact that this has brought about a 'historical normalisation of the military as a masculine realm'. In contemporary times the tradition has been challenged by various people in a variety of forums. Women who get impacted by conflict situations, activists, and conflict management scholars, have all called for the documentation of women's lives, biographies, memories and testimonies in such situations. The result has been the soliciting, recording and affording a platform to women's interpretation of their own involvement in conflict. Without providing an exhaustive list, at organisation level we can refer to the establishment of the University for Peace's Gender & Peace-building Programme and similar initiatives throughout the globe, Harvard University's "Women Waging Peace" Programme, ACCORD's¹ special Conflict Trends publication issues on women, peace and security. A range of organisations within African states or externally supported by the United Nations have also conducted studies and produced reports signifying women's contributions towards peace building. Within the Southern African region there are recent vigorous endeavours to recognise and report, in particular African women's contributions and perceptions during war times. Special women focused publications by Agendaⁱⁱ and Peace Review journals constitute part of these efforts.

When I was introduced by Yonah Seleti to the *Impi Yamakhanda* research project I was delighted at the opportunity of bringing to the fore the voice of the most historically marginalised and suppressed group, the rural women. As we explored the general objectives of the project, what excited me the most were the prospects, as a non-historian, of engaging and documenting a women's history. The task of tapping into what Ngame women of the twenty first century recollect about stories told to them about the women of the early twentieth century event, at first seemed daunting for me. Two factors encouraged me to stay in the project: the fact that the task centred on women and therefore, as a feminist, I had to commit myself. The second reason was my eagerness to be involved in an exercise that seeks to employ Indigenous Knowledge (IK) methodology as a tool, in documenting and understanding a woman's culture and perspective

in relation to a war situation. The urgency to record women's words was motivated by the realisation that most literature on Bhambada was oblivious of the fact that a woman species not only existed during the Bhambada era, but must have been affected by the event and must have contributed to it. This factor is at the cornerstone of this chapter. In an attempt to understand and explain women's *absence* from the literature that documents conflicts, Ruth Mastron and Carmen Dyk (2004) quote a San Diego academic website "...[w]omen... seldom record their experiences, activities and insights, as generally there is no time, or, perhaps, no formal education that would help women record their stories..." (<http://peace.sandiego.edu/wpmp.shtml>). Mastron and Dyk vie for the need to record women's stories, asserting that "(o)nce stories are documented, they become shared experiences ... (and) go beyond one person, one gender and one country" (2004:59). There is indeed an urgent need to document more women's stories.

Whilst the main purpose of the Bhambada project was to record the memories of Ngome people on the 1906 Bhambada series of events, my role was to discern what role women had during the event, and how they understood that role. These were questions to be posed to contemporary women and, largely, the elderly. Given that research was conducted from 2003 to 2005, about a century after *Impi Yamakhanda*; and, further, that the task was to investigate if contemporary women still think and talk about the event, and how they interpret it, we thought that the most realistic thing to do would be to investigate not only the role and place of Ngome women in the uprising, but also their contribution in knowledge production, as well as the impact that the event had and still has on women. This embracive approach, we reckoned, would go beyond simply providing explanations and descriptions of the event from the women's experiences and perceptions, but also take into account and respond to *gaps* that a Zimbabwean political activist, Everjoice Win identifies in conflict report documents. Emphasising the need for report writers to look at the *bigger picture* of conflict situations, she bemoans the fact that women in her country "have been either inadequately featured, or left out in the country's discourse on conflict" (Win, 2004:17). Win's observations are of course not limited to Zimbabwe.

Taking cognisance of Wins' call, this chapter looks at the bigger picture of conflict situations, and embodies women's extensive contribution to the Zondi history. It does not only present the historical facts related by women to the team, but examines issues that affect only women. In this chapter I therefore include issues such as motherhood, womanhood, girlhood and women sexuality, and the manner in which they are conceptualised to shape the position and status of women in the Zondi community in times of conflict. The

chapter aims to recover an exhaustive picture of Ngome women's history, arguing for a theorisation informed by an analytical framework which takes cognisance of women's lived experiences, their identities and expressions. Although the *Impi Yamakhanda* was in essence an *affair* centred on royalty and its traditional male regiments, this chapter, (subscribing to the Zulu proverb, '*Inkosi yinkosi ngabantu*,' which, loosely translated, means 'what makes a king are hisⁱⁱⁱ people'); equally presents perceptions, struggles and successes of ordinary Zondi women. It is in this framework that I also discuss how women have come to campaign for their own status and against patriarchy.

Taking stock of recurrent gender imbalances in the manner in which histories are presented, I identify women's role in conflict situations without focusing exclusively on the *Impi Yamakhanda*. After the identification there follows some explanation and analysis of the women's role and their own perspectives thereof. During the empirical research stage there was great dedication in uncovering a woman's history reflective of women of any status. This was done, on the one hand, as part of conscience-raising within ourselves; on the other, to provide data on the entire Ngome women-folk. It was exciting as well as illuminating to learn of the similarities shared by women of different eras and ages. Although the main focus was, quite naturally, on elderly women (above the age of sixty) who were closer to the *event*, we found that their voices resonated expressions and experiences of women of all ages. The politics that shaped the lives of women in 1906 seem to have, in one way or another, continued into the lives of 21st century women. These include patriarchy, preference for subjective subjects, and high moral expectations for girl children.^{iv} Though involved in an IK methodology defined project, as a feminist scholar I could not shed my feminist inclinations, but tried to apply feminist strategies and lenses only in analysing the collected data. This chapter therefore adopts and reflects a feminist analysis, which I find fascinatingly congruent with the indigenous knowledge systems approach. Gender imbalance has been a significant major historical factor in the presentation of Zondi narratives. Entwined in this has been a concealment of the identity of the Zondi women in the 1906 uprising. It is thus essential to adopt an analytical approach that puts marginal groups at the centre of discussion.

Concerted endeavours have been made to allow the reader to engage with the experiences and feelings of the Zondi women. The women's actual words, verbatim and in the women's language, are presented. Whilst presenting the actual voices I attempt to separate my narration from the women's, however in some cases the two are intertwined. This chapter does not only document Ngome women's voices and interpretation of their experiences and struggles, but it is

equally my reflection and analysis of the women's experiences. Whilst Magwaza & Sithole (chapter 7 of this volume) state that Ngome women deliberately avoid the 'subject of war' as they insist on talking about struggles other than what women do during conflict situations; the following discussion reports on women's role during the *Impi Yamakhanda*, in other conflict circumstances, as well as the impact that such conflicts have on women. The discussion draws from a variety of sources, that is, the Ngome women themselves, other oral sources from the Zondi community and data from literature documenting some or part of the *Impi Yamakhanda*.

These statements must be prefaced with the general reflection that, while men think of war as an adventure meant to demonstrate their masculinity and courage, women reflect on the effects that war has on their own life: husbands and sons go away leaving the wives and mothers to fend for themselves. While the men try to cover themselves in glory, the women have to carry the can of providing for the aged, wounded and the children. News coming from the front is seldom glorious for individual mothers and wives: it reports death and destruction; indicates the creation of widows and orphans, and is accompanied by wounded soldiers who have come home to be cared for by their women. The ululating of the women to encourage the men departing for war soon turns into wailing for the dead and the wounded. No wonder that women, who are not consulted about the wisdom of ever starting a war and are not listened to when they endeavour to bring about reconciliation, try hard to forget everything connected with war and conflicts, and are never happy to talk about their painful experiences.

Women's Experiences: Their Contribution and Effects of Conflicts

Ngome women's contribution in conflicts and in particular in their resolution has been elusive. Equally, their experiences and opinions have been indistinctly presented. "Traditional thinking about war, conflict and peace has ignored women's potential to bring about peace" (Magwaza, 2003:35) thus perpetuating their vague participation and even existence during times of conflict. This in turn helps in minimising their contribution. The subsequent consequence of women's obscure representation has been at most a minimal and at the least a nil effort made towards getting them to participate both during and in the aftermath of conflict. Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa (in Magwaza, 2003: 37) cite this disregard as an "oversight that has cost the world dearly". This reality holds true for Ngome women, especially for those of the *Impi Yamakhanda* era. The oversight does not mean that women played no role or had no responsibility. Most of the oral sources, including women, unfortunately testify to women's nil-contributions. Examining the content of the responses generated

from probing about women's involvement in the *Impi Yamakhanda* is an indication of how deeply entrenched patriarchy is in the Ngome community. Responses range from statements that imply women were not impacted by the event at all – to expressions of irritation that questions about women's engagement were even posed. Justifying women's exclusion, Mazambane Zondi (aged 76) found the probe an unnecessary digression from his eloquent narration about Bhambada's bravery. He asserts:

Babeshiywa ngaphandle ngoba benganamsebenzi empini. Yini enye? (pauses, seems taken aback) ... Oh umsebenzi wabo kwakungukukhala, belilela ukufika kombiko wokuthi kukhona abasele empini.

The reason they were left out of war was because they had no role in the war. What else? (pauses, seems taken aback). ... Oh their job was to cry, wailing at news of people who had died in the battle.

Even more fascinating was a strong statement of a woman interviewed in July 2005, Ntombizini MaZondi Ngubane (aged 65). The question about women's role in war yielded this response:

Nani nikuleyo nto entsha yamalungelo? Umfazi umfazi, umfazi nje kwaphela. Yini enye ngale kwalokho? Mina ngiqabuka manje impela nje ukwazi ukuthi kanti umuntu wesifazane naye emphakathini naphakathi komuzi wakhe ubalulekile. (Kw)Isizulu sakithi nje abukho impela ubufazi, abukho.

Are you also in the new crusade about rights? A woman is a woman, just a woman. Is there anything beyond that? It is indeed news to me that females have any importance, in the community and within the family. In our Zulu culture being a woman is to be nothing. Nothing at all.

It is sad and of serious concern when women give such utterances. Such remarks however need to be understood as evidence of the extent to which patriarchy has been 'successful' in making women feel unimportant in national social matters. Ntombizini MaZondi Ngubane's words depict a common case - wherein women have come to believe, internalise and fully accept the low regard ascribed to the female-folk. The determined refusal to reflect on the commonsensical fact that women do get impacted by a conflict happening in their environment "hampers any possibility of intensely engaging women in meaningful peace-building processes" (Engujobi, 1991:17).

Despite several emphatic statements by most of our oral sources, that women never had any role to play in times of war, it is fascinating to note that the experiences women share, of their own private events and from recollected stories of *Impi Yamakhanda*, indicate unequivocally that women had responsibilities. It is due to low regard that patriarchal communities have for women that leads to their role being overlooked or taken for granted. As Ngome women related their experiences, attempts were made to uncover their several roles, whilst concurrently exploring their multilayered meanings and implications on the Zondi history. While relaying their stories women were invited to provide meaning imbued in their statements and expressions, thereby ensuring that we do not attach uninformed significance to the stories – as often is the case when stories are analysed away from their original environment. This was a conscious effort that was intensely stressed at the team's research meetings, conducted before and after accessing the Ngome community.

Contemporary South Africa is becoming increasingly aware of, and putting under the microscope, both women's roles and their reactions in varied processes related to conflict. Unlike their male counterparts, in attempts to respond to questions posed about the 1906 event, women's feelings and symbolic significance of what they value, i.e. that which happens in their immediate environment, feature strongly in their narrations. Given this context and the global need for the recognition of the rights of women, this section is biased towards a presentation of those emotions of the Ngome women that are triggered by finding themselves involved in conflict situations.

Our programme to investigate women's general role in the 1906 event was met with some contempt, as women were eager to paint their own personal, even intimate, lives (see Magwaza & Sithole in this volume), as well as their interpretations and feelings, not only in relation to war but to a variety of circumstances they found themselves in, rather than talking about specific war events. Anderson & Jack warn that, in attempting to get to the core of women's interpretation, we cannot dismiss "how women feel about their lives. (We) have to allow them to talk about their activities as well as their feelings" (1991:15). It was such feminist sentiments that encouraged the team to consciously and deliberately seek to unravel women's experiences and feelings about the *Impi Yamakhanda*. However the enthusiasm I had for women's stories on the Bhambada era was initially dampened by the muteness with which most women met the subject, preferring to talk about their unfulfilled girlhood:

... (S)ingabalapha eNgome kodwa kuke kwanesikhathi eside
singahlali lapha, sixoshwa yizimpi. Sahamba
singamantombazane ukuya eNkandla. Sahlukana nontanga

esakhula nabo bendawo, uthi kumnandi nje lokho?. Sasakazeka yonke indawo. Sasihlalise ngaphansi kwenkosi uBizimali. Ukuhlukumezeka impilo yethu thina.

... Ngome is our land of birth, but we were once displaced due to conflicts in the area. We were young girls when we moved to Nkandla. We had to part with our local friends; is that a pleasant experience? We got scattered all over. We (referring to her own family) sought refuge under *Inkosi Bizimali*. Suffering has been a great part of our lives. (MaNdlovu Ntuli, aged 40, August 2004)

On the surface, this conversation may seem irrelevant given that the posed question was about what women recollect of stories told to them about Bhambada. However, careful examination indicates women's preference to view all the pain by the Zondi people as occurring in a single continuum. What is further fascinating about this trend is that it is followed by women of all ages. Students of oral history explain that it is a known fact that oral historical narratives show a lack of time perspective, especially when dealing with events in the remote past. These are often superimposed with recent events, especially when dealing with painful or frightful experiences, thus losing the historical-temporal perspective. We found this kind of past-and-present narration a common practice amongst Ngome women. With great confidence, seemingly not bothered that she is not talking about *Impi Yamakhanda*, Zenzile Idah Zondi (aged 80), like MaNdlovu Ntuli, reflects on the loss of neighbourhood spirit when conflict strikes:

Impilo ejwayekile iyaphazamiseka phela ngesikhathi sezinxushunxushu. Ngesikhathi sezimpi zokugcina nje sasingenandawo yokufihla ikhanda, sibaleka sicasha.

Conflicts bring about a lot of instability. During the last spate of conflict [referring to the 1990's faction fights in the area] we had nowhere to go, always on the run seeking refuge. (July, 2004)

The women narrators were adamant to recurrently shape the stories they chose to tell according to their own personal interpretation, showing that they had reflected on the events deeply. Contrary to the historical patriarchy that has defined and consigned women as just 'passive non-reflecting victims' (West, 1997: 38), women have proved to have strong opinions about how conflicts impact and affect their lives. Thus they see remote events in the light of recent happenings that have touched them personally. To counteract the legacy of patriarchy, we need to be sensitive to the manner in which women project and emphasise their lives. Some women opted for a type of narration that was inclusive of the performance of what actually transpired during the *Impi Yamakhanda*. Harding (1987) points out

the need to acknowledge and record such variations in relaying stories as they bring out subjective expressions and understanding of the same story. Evidently we were conscious and careful not to manipulate women to discuss topics they did not want to discuss lest they make up or bring out performed dramatic performances as we found with one of the Zondi women – who dramatised the 1906 war as if she experienced it herself. When we enquired about the source of her story, she made reference to a coloured painting that shows the manner in which "Bhambada's men brought off white enemies from their horses using spears". She was quick to point that the picture, owned by her white Greytown employers, would bring back all the memories of the *Impi Yamakhanda* stories she was told by her parents and grandparents. We would have liked to for many such stories and expressions, but opted to settle for what was of great concern to the women.

It became clear that women forced us to ask the type of questions they regarded relevant for them. Women were assertive about making us abandon the list of questions and topics we had prepared to discuss with them, and adamantly pushed us towards their emotions for topics they felt fiery to talk about. The choice of conflict stories women opted to talk about were the ones that had a direct bearing on their lives, about which they felt qualified to give firsthand evidence. This trend sharply contrasts with men's narration. We found men to generally have a tendency of trying extremely hard to respond to the posed questions, and in doing so painstakingly provide detailed accounts of events – depending on how well their memories served them. Sukayithathe Zondi (68), a headman, asked to relate what he knows about the event, does not only provide a list of key people in *Impi Yamakhanda*, but also of a medicinal potion named *umhlabelo*, and of a person, Mbuzana Ndlovu, who made it popular. The potion is believed to have helped Mbuzana Ndlovu kill a white man who was infamous and hated for his skilful use of the gun, and who had killed many Zondi people.

Ngome women are concerned about factors that impact negatively on their immediate contexts, i.e. their relationships with their partners and children (see Magwaza & Sithole, forthcoming) and their neighbourhood. For the women, war on the Zondi people did not start and end with *Impi Yamakhanda*; it still manifests itself in various forms nowadays. In a subtle fashion, women refer to the scourge of diseases (including HIV/AIDS), to unemployment, crime and the general disregard for human life and values in contemporary society; these are referred to as *izimpi* (wars) and *ukulwa* (fighting). They speak of the 'war' in figurative expressions, using words such as *ukuhlukumezeka* (suffering), *ulaka* (bad temper), *inxushunxushu* (disruption), *ubuhlungu* (pain) and *izingozi* (accidents) to signify their

discomfort. MaZondi Ngubane's (99) facial expressions portray misery (see figure 1), as she sadly notes:

Izingane namuhla sezavelelwa 'yizingozi' eziningi, ziphila ngazo.

Contemporary youth live a life full of 'accidents'. (January, 2005)



Fig. 1 Mama MaZondi Ngubane's demeanour tells of pain.

The language MaZondi Ngubane employs, though highly figurative, reflects the general belief amongst elderly women and mothers, that moral degeneration is a form of suffering, a 'war' on the Zondi people. Women's linguistic choices were found to differ significantly from those of men; this aspect is discussed in some detail later in this chapter.

Turning to the physical suffering brought about by *Impi Yamakhanda*, women's narrations are mostly general. They opt to refer to difficulties women and children go through during conflicts in general and not specifically to the ones related to the main purpose of our research. Even MaZondi Ndlovu (89), whom most of our oral sources insisted we had to interview because she was considered well versed with the event, was extremely generic about the impact women had:

Kuba nzima phela ngesikhathi semp, akulula neze ngane yami. Wenziwa yini ungakwazi wena lokho? Nanini nanini impi iba njalo-nje. Abantu besifazane baba senkingeni. Mina-nje ngizibonile izimpi ziningi zinginetha, zingehlisa zingenyusa. Khona la kwelakithi. Ubuhlungu buba yinsakavukela. Ngenele ngifuna ukuhamba manje.

War times are difficult indeed; they are not pleasant at all, my child. How is it possible that you do not know that? War has always been like that. Women find themselves in the midst of

troubles. I have seen too many wars, all 'pouring' down upon me, pushing me from place to place. All have taken place in this very land of ours. Pain becomes the order of the day. I have had enough and am ready to die now. (September, 2004)

Although MaZondi Ndlovu does not make specific reference to any conflict, her personal suffering and the accompanying emotions are clearly pointed out in the excerpt when she says she has 'seen many wars'. She locates herself within a number of conflict situations which have caused bitterness in her life. Allusion to the firsthand experience of the effects of conflicts was common with all women above the age of twenty. Since the end of *Impi Yamakhanda*, Ngome has experienced numerous disturbances, both within the Zondi people, and in faction fights with neighbouring communities; conflicts induced by allegations of stock theft, and fights triggered by ANC/ IFP^v party rivalry.

Reflecting on what happens during conflict situations, the women quote the enormous challenges in trying to keep their households together, to show a brave face and to strive to continue with normal activities. As MaMbokodo Mzila (71) puts it, the 'brave face' is only superficial:

... ukuze phela izingane zingezweli kakhulu. Awuzobe ulokhu ukhala ubalisa lapha. Kubalulekile ukuma idolo. Uqinise ohlezi nabo, futhi wenze ukuthi laba abaye empini bangadikibali.

...so that the kids may not sense the bad vibes. You cannot afford to be in tears or to complain. Strength is essential. You have to be strong for those you live with and for those at war, otherwise they all lose hope. (July 2004)

Normal activities however do get disrupted; "... whilst doing all the chores, it is crucial to watch your back. This aspect cannot be exaggerated, because anything is possible", a local woman who refused to give her name cut in during MaMbokodo Mzila's interview. Other disruptions that women mention are: rescheduling household duties – having to prepare food at different times from normal practice, in order to go into hiding late afternoon. Planned rituals and customary ceremonies are put on hold, sometimes for an indefinite period, as the main focus becomes ensuring that everyone is safe. We found that women's lives change for the worst when police officers fail to protect women and children from impending dangers related to conflicts. This has cast a lot of doubt and eroded any trust that people may have had in the police. Women made reference to some instances wherein the perpetrators were in fact police officers:

Amaphoyisa yiwo kanye ake abe inkinga ekuhlukunyezweni kwabantu besifazane. Emandulo yayingekho le nto yokushaywa nokuhlukunyezwa kwabesimame. Manje, lutho! Bayakuhlokoza bathi khipha isibhamu. Ukuthi unaso noma cha, akusho lutho. Abanendaba ngisho nokukushaya ube ungumuntu wesifazane. Sigginsa sesiphila impilo yokubaleka sifuna indawo yokufihla amakhanda.

The police are sometimes the main problem, and become the major culprits in women abuse. In the olden days this thing of assaulting females was never heard of. Nowadays, nothing of the kind! They poke and push you around expecting you to produce a firearm. They do not care whether you have one or not. They do not mind beating women up. We then find ourselves living a nomadic life in search of a place of refuge. (MaZuma Mazeka (44), August 2004)

Women's Roles

Audio and video interview tapes from which these excerpts were taken (see 2003-2005 Ngome field research tapes archived in the Killie Campbell Collections) yielded different and somehow conflicting statements about what women used to do during times of conflict. Work edited by Harding (1987) and Berger & Patai (1991) is amongst feminist literature cautioning researchers not to panic when bits and pieces of collected data appear incongruous. This body of scholarship says that "conflicting" statements seem due to the fact that people are different and will interpret the reality they experience in different ways. Ngome women may have participated in all the listed activities at different times, one after the other or when the activities varied from one household to the next. When we presented the variations to different people at validation sessions, Ngome people were least concerned about the variation and in fact confirmed all the women activities we listed.

Women activities vary, depending on whether warriors are about to go off to war, are at the battlefield or have returned from a battle. During *Impi Yamakhanda* our oral sources say women had to *ukukikiza* (ululate) before the regiments left for the war. When I pointed out this custom to MaMbokodo Mzila, she was quick to stress that the ululation, though similar to the shouts of joy often heard at wedding ceremonies, carried a different symbolic significance, as it was meant to infuse courage in the departing warriors. The shouting was also meant to frighten the enemy. The dual function of *ukukikiza* during conflicts and its contemporary common use (to express joy) triggered conflicting views as to whether the activity did take place at all.

As the regiments marched off to war, the women vigorously waved grass brooms in the air, believed to have magical and medicinal powers, in a gesture meant to fight against and chase away some unseen object or evil influence. We were told that this action was meant to ward off the enemy and to weaken the power of their protecting ancestor spirits, to ensure the success of the women's side in the battle. James Stuart, mentioning the women's use of grass brooms, notes:

Just before leaving for war an old woman would stand outside the gate awaiting men's departure with grass brooms in hand ... she flicks the calf of each warrior. (1913: 87)

It should be noted that Stuart's description is a generic reference to a war activity, not specific to *Impi Yamakhanda*. Stuart further gives a list of customs observed by women after their men have left for war (see Stuart's pages 67-89 for a narration about the Zulu military system). Msimang (1975: 339-348), like Stuart, paints a broad picture of the Zulu royal military system. King (1979) makes mention of what happened to some 1906 women; however, they are generally presented as having been inactive and quite faceless. Reporting on the event, he refers to a magistrate who wanted to evacuate European women from Mpanza. About non-European women, much more details are given; "on 10 May, a large number of native women was sent to Pietermaritzburg from New Hanover by Leuchars" but were later sent back as there was no accommodation for them.

At the time of the battle, oral sources say that women adopt a 'mourning stance', remaining mostly silent. If they do have to talk, they whisper. They are even barred from punishing children or rebuking domestic animals. Households need to have as little movement as possible, as the absence of warriors is viewed as a period of mourning requiring a quiet behaviour, similar to that adopted when there is a death in the family. To signify the state of mourning, *izidwaba* (animal cowhide skirts) were worn upside down. In January 2005 it was interesting to note that women still observe this practice. Although the women were not adorned in *izidwaba*, their skirts, made of long cloth wrapped around the waist, were observed worn upside down, signifying a family death (see figure 2).

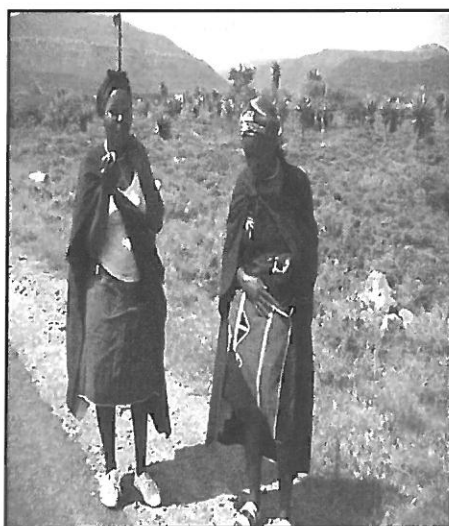


Fig. 2 Contemporary Ngome women's mourning depicted in dress.

House doors were left open at all times with men's sleeping mats straightened and put upright every day. All this, we were told, was to provide 'distant support' to the men at war, and as a way of maximising their chances of returning home alive and well. During the *Impi Yamakhanda* the Zondi clashed with the neighbouring Ngubane clan, and this led to bad inter-clanic blood long after the war. When the conflict was over, however, the women of each clan contributed towards forging peace between the two by agreeing to be wedded to either side. Albertina MaNgubane Zondi (67) cites herself as an example of such an intermarriage, affirming that the practice has continued 'ngoba kuhlale kuhlale kube khona izinkulumo ezingezinhle phakathi kwalaba bantu' (because to this day, from time to time the two sides continue to exchange nasty words).

Ngome people affirm that in contemporary times women have continued to practise much of the above during conflicts, with the exception of leaving hut doors open. The following were cited as additional practices observed by present-day women: providing refuge to any battle escapee, irrespective of the faction he belongs; dressing men in women's clothing to conceal their gender; warning those who have pulled out or run away from the *melée* to flee when danger is approaching; ensuring that most valued household possessions and documents are safely kept and even buried under the floor; etc. They maintain it is essential for people not physically taking part in a fight to be on their feet, always busying themselves. In this way 'those staying behind show that they mean business about the lives of those in battle – sitting down for lengthy periods of time could wear them out, which may lead to their breakdown' (Nesina

MaZondi Ngubane, 63). There were many such metaphorical allusions to women's responsibilities, all in a nutshell bearing evidence to the women's spiritual and moral support given to the men at war.

Women's Expressions: Mapping a Different Historical Focus

The above discussion, and Magwaza & Sithole's chapter in this volume, show that Ngame women maintain a different view on the *Impi Yamakhanda*, thereby formulating an alternative history. Besides demonstrating that the same reality is open to an interpretation different from that of the men, the women tend to be more metaphorical in their speech. Chosen expressions (both in words and gestures) endorse this historical variance. The expressions and tone employed in defining their lives is not only reflective of their pain and unpleasant memories of the 1906 event, but portray an interpretation that encapsulates contemporary realities and struggles. Whilst men's *Impi Yamakhanda* discussion gets engrained with land restitution and concern about constant sudden deaths of Zondi amakhosi not long after they assume the headship; women are more concerned about their own lives, and the moral choices adopted by the community. Even when we manage to pin women down to talk about the 1906 event, they speak of it as a struggle for the Zondi people's dignity – whilst on the other hand the men focus on competitive aspects, that is, which of the warring sides (the Zondi or the colonial forces) displayed greater strength and resilience.

In this section I explore some of the words and expressions we found to be popularly used by women, including the actual terminology employed in steering us away from the war subject matter. Asked to tell us who Bhambada was and his personality, women had extremely few words to describe him, often referring to him as *umuntu ohlakaniphile* (clever person) and *owayenza into eshiwo yinhlziyo yakhe* (he did what felt right to him). Men's descriptions are more aligned towards *ubuqhawe obukhulu* (his outstanding bravery) and *ishinga elinqobayo* (unfailing heroism). This description is coupled with disgusted reference and use of derogatory terms for people who chose not to join Bhambada in his war venture. When women make reference to the 1906 war it is clear that it is a century old *event* and is spoken of in the remote past tense. We were fascinated by men's articulations about the event, talking as if they themselves took part and endured physical injuries in the *Impi Yamakhanda*. One evidently sympathises with and understands the frustration male oral sources portray when they cannot recall finer details of the events; that is, people's names, dates and places – their association with the event is indeed intense. With this regard for the *Impi Yamakhanda* it is

apparent why memories of stories relayed are still vibrant in their minds. I believe it is for this reason that whilst women were not bothered about responding with a prompt *angazi* (I do not know) to most questions posed about the details, men's equivalent responses were *angikutholanga kahle lokho* or *angiyibambanga kahle leyo nto* (I did not get that well or I must have listened badly about that detail). It is interesting to note that these expressions immediately put the blame and failure to recall the details on oneself, a tendency resonating men's choice of the first person as opposed to women's third person in relating *Impi Yamakhanda* incidents.

Aside from the use of spoken words to communicate female discourse war idiosyncrasies, we found that women communicate certain messages, conscious or not, using their bodies and dress items. To comprehend women's experiences clearly it is essential that we are attentive to both their loud and mute expressions, because within the mute there may be screaming voices and within loud expressions resounding silence. Voices that lie beyond the mute and loud expressions may be significant and contributing efforts of achieving peace. It is also essential to listen not only to mute voices but also to pauses, facial gestures, sighs – and probe these non-verbal expressions in an attempt to arrive at what they could be implying (see Thuphane MaZondi Ngubane's video tape archived in the Killie Campbell Collections).

Contemporary discourse on violence against women has stressed the fact that "women's bodies are sites where battles are waged" (Agenda, 2004:3), noting that the violence happens in the form of rape, battering and gendered HIV/AIDS's statistical evidence. It was a fascinating revelation to learn of the manner in which Ngome women have used their bodies and clothing to advance peace. Women's clothing items have not only been used to protect and conceal the identities of escapees, as stated earlier – but they have been thrown over the faces of those looking for and chasing the escapees. These intervening acts would halt further household searches and in turn save lives. This subtle kind of advocacy, we were told, has continued to the present day. Women, in particular the young, are reported to have stripped off all their clothing to prevent fighting incidents from continuing. Albertina Zondi (54) affirms that the practice is still seen nowadays, where women have bravely intervened in conflict situations, including fights happening along the road:

Uma sebona ukuthi impi ayikhumuki, bayakwenza impela lokho. Bayakhumula impela nje babe hlwempu.

If they realise that fighting continues without letting up, they definitely do that. They strip off their clothes and go naked.

Women regard these gestures as moral choices - forming part of their means of instilling peace. They undertake this responsibility out of their conviction that the efforts are a contribution that will see their families and community in a peaceful state of affairs:

Le mizamo phela umuntu ungena kuyo nje ngoba ebona ingukuphosa esivivaneni sokuqinisekisa ukuthi kubuya ukuthula emakhaya.

This is done by people (use of 3rd person) as attempts of ensuring that peace is restored. (MaMbokodo Mzila, July, 2004)

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion began by raising the concern that, in relation to conflicts, women's opinions, experiences and contributions do not get a forum and are acknowledged, neither in everyday life nor in documented literature. The concern, I posit, has a history and is an 'attitude' dating beyond the *Impi Yamakhanda* event. Such an attitude in turn leads to ill, nil or limited representation of women, even in matters that have a direct bearing on their lives. In this chapter I have therefore looked at Ngome women's location and agency in the context of the *Impi Yamakhanda's* main historic period, that is, how they reflect on their contemporary experiences to understand not only the 1906 event, but to make a contribution to conflict situations generally. Employing examples in which Ngome women have intervened to bring about peace, I argue that the women's skills of solving conflict, employing their bodies and clothing, is advocacy work that needs recognition. The examples are evidence of the fact that women are agents of change, and opt to be involved in a change that benefits more than a few people. It is not uncommon for women, in their everyday lives, at their homes to take on the role as mediators; a skill that Ngome women have proven is transferable.

The discussion of this chapter has acknowledged and recorded the fact that Zondi women's lives have been shaped by the intersection of a number of issues and histories. These include the *Impi Yamakhanda* history, their contemporary history, the patriarchal culture, their own opinions and interpretations of their context as well as a distinct linguistic presentation of the factors. Besides discrete language use, the content of women's stories focuses on communal benefits, with the family put as a priority. We also found that women's interests, experiences and perspectives were significantly different from men's demeanour and expressions. It is fascinating to note how Anderson and Jack's analysis of the differences between the two genders played itself out with the Ngome community. They note, "(a) woman's discussion of her life may combine two separate, often conflicting, perspectives: one framed in concepts and values that

reflect men's dominant position in the culture, and one informed by the more immediate realities of a woman's personal experience" (1991:11). Even as a group, women have very different and even divergent ways of thinking, knowing and expressing their concerns. They draw from personal experiences which contribute in shaping a different Zondi history than the one that has been presented to the public. A critical engagement and presentation with women's meaning to the organisation and perception of historical knowledge from a women's point of view cannot be overstated.

Equally important is the need to examine women's feelings and opinions about a research process. Reflecting on the Zondi women's interviews I acknowledge a gap in our research. Although the collected data has been valuable in providing information and documentation of otherwise neglected women's discourse in a rural area, we did not investigate the women's feelings and emotions brought about by our intervention. This was indeed a lost prospect. In retrospect, I realise we were not subjective enough in our probing – possibly deceived by the fact that women were already telling their own stories and not that of Bhambada as expected of them. The appreciation of the importance of emotions that go with expressing experiences and perspectives is an equally crucial factor that requires foregrounding.

Notes

ⁱ Refers to "The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes".

ⁱⁱ A feminist media project that publishes an academic journal as one of its programmes.

ⁱⁱⁱ I am deliberately not using a gender neutral pronoun as the common understanding among the Zulu is that a king cannot be a woman.

^{iv} This factor is explored in greater detail in Chapter 7 of this volume.

^v From the late 1980s – mid 1990s, the ANC (African National Congress) and IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party) often clashed throughout the country which led to bloodshed and loss of many lives. Ngome was not immune to these fights.