

BAHLABELELELANI: WHY DO THEY SING?

Gender and Power in Contemporary women's Songs

By

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A Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu- Natal.

Supervisor:

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Durban

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DECLARATION

I, Nompumelelo Bernadette Zondi

Student Number: 891102039

Hereby declare that the thesis entitled **BAHLABELELELANI-WHY DO THEY SING? GENDER AND POWER IN CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S SONGS** is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other Degree or to any other University.

Signature: -----

Date:

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

Certain cultural practices present unspoken questions to women. While women may not be free to state these concerns upfront I argue that they have always had some means of expressing themselves in creative ways about issues that affect them. One issue that is investigated in this dissertation is the question of why women sing. This study, therefore, examines one of the channels, which are songs, that women and rural women in particular employ to deal with their day to day living. To this end I have selected cultural songs as one of the ways of demonstrating how women negotiate their spaces in the culture. The study is based on a community of women from Zwelibomvu near Pinetown, South Africa but goes beyond this as I believe that women in general speak for the majority of other women especially with regard to issues around gender and power inequalities. Songs have been selected as a genre and as a special form of expression that women in particular find easier to use to raise issues that affect them in their daily lives. The three hour DVD rendition that forms part of this study captures a synoptic view of the amount of raw data found in this study. Through the medium of song, and strengthened by the stories that they share, Zwelibomvu rural women are able to get a sense of relief and consolation from the burdens that they have and which they would like to share.

Presented as a two part field work process, the first process involves the collection of songs in ceremonies and occasions and observing and being part of the occasions and ceremonies where the songs that are sung by women are performed. This process culminates in the production of the three hour DVD rendition that forms part of this study and which captures a synoptic view of the amount of raw data found in this dissertation. The second part mainly involves interviews of categories of respondents in similar settings/districts observed where ceremonies were attended and attempts to provide some insight into why women sing and the question of gender and power in contemporary women's songs. Finally, the last chapters involve an analysis of songs with regard to themes that emanate from these songs as well as a review on their oral composition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
Declaration	
Acknowledgements	
Dedication	
Abstract	
 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Aims and focus of the study	2
1.3 Reasons for the study	3
1.3.1 Personal reasons	4
1.3.2 Academic reasons	5
1.3.3 Reasons justifying choice of literary genre	7
1.4 Definition and delimitation of concepts within the title	8
1.4.1 Categories of women	9
1.4.2 Contemporary versus old	9
1.4.3 Gender and power	10
1.5 Delimitation and scope of the present study	10
1.5.1 Research site	10
1.5.2 Scope of songs	10
1.5.2.1 Channels of circulation	11
1.6 Problems statement and key questions	13
1.6.1. <i>Hlonipha</i> custom and its impact on the performance Genre	14
1.6.2 Traditional marriage and <i>Lobola</i> system	16
1.6.3 Polygyny	17
1.7 Structure of the thesis	18
1.8 Conclusion	20

CHAPTER 2: THE CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1	Introduction	22
2.1.1	Paradigmatic orientations of the study	22
2.2	Conceptual framework	23
2.3	Theoretical framework	24
2.3.1	Analysis of the multidisciplinary approach	25
2.3.1.1	History of Marcel Jousse	26
2.3.1.2	Marcel Jousse's Oral Style: Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm	28
2.3.2	Weedon's Social Construction and Feminist post structuralism	33
2.3.3	Scott's Model of hidden and public transcripts: Patriarchy and power	37
2.3.3.1	Background of Scott's model	37
2.3.3.2	Public and Hidden transcripts	38
2.4	Conclusion	40

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1	Introduction	41
3.2	Contextualizing Zwelibomvu within which the genres take place	42
3.3	Scope of Literature Review	43
3.3.1	Literature review of related studies in the African continent	43
3.3.1.1	Review of Nigerian literature	44
3.3.1.2	Review of Zairian literature	45
3.3.1.3	Review of Tanzanian literature	47

3.3.2.4	Review of Zimbabwean literature	48
3.3.2.5	Review of Egyptian Literature	50
3.3.2.6	An aspect of literature on East African women songs	51
3.3.2.5	Review of Kenyan Literature	55
3.4	Literature review of studies conducted within South African borders	56
3.5	Background to literature review that relates to Nguni people	66
3.5.1	Literature review of studies on songs conducted by Nguni women	67
3.6	Conclusion	70

CHAPTER 4 PART 1: A VISUAL RENDITION OF SONGS COLLECTED AND PERFORMED BY ZWELIBOMVU WOMEN

4.1	Introduction	72
4.2	Objectives of this chapter	73
4.3	Procedures for primary data collection	73
4.3.1	Video camera, note taking, tapes and photography	73
4.3.2	Overview of ceremonies and contexts	74
4.4	What is performance?	75
4.5	Analysis of visual rendition of songs in different functions by Zwelibomvu women	76
4.6.	Conclusion	104

CHAPTER 5: PART 2: WHY DO WOMEN SING – A QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1	Introduction	105
5.2	Purpose of the research	106
5.3	Qualitative and quantitative approaches	106
5.3.1	Qualitative method	107
5.3.1.1	Participatory approach	108

5.4	Scope and procedure	108
5.4.1	Selection of participating districts	109
5.4.2	Population for the study	109
5.4.2.1	Sampling	109
5.5	Instrument design	111
5.5.1	Procedure for interviews	112
5.5.2	Biographical and geographical information	112
5.5.2.1	Biographical and geographical information of Zwelibomvu	112
5.6	Data collection methods	115
5.6.1	Video camera, note taking, and tape recording	116
5.6.2	Reliability and Validity	116
5.7	Data analysis	117
5.7.1	Phase by phase analysis of responses	117
5.8	Ethical Considerations	148
5.9	Research limitations	150
5.10	Conclusion and observations	150

CHAPTER 6: AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND POWER IN CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S SONGS

6.1.	Introduction	153
6.2.	Transcription and translation of songs	154
6.3.	Themes prevalent in the songs of contemporary women	155
6.3.1	Women as sustenance of life	157
6.3.2	Hardship and rejection in marriage	165
6.3.3	Polygny and jealousy	173
6.3.4	Unfaithfulness	178
6.3.5	Societal Expectations	181
6.4	Conclusion	185

CHAPTER 7: ORAL COMPOSITION IN CONTEMPORARY WOMEN’S SONGS

7.1.	Introduction	187
7.2	Mobility and fluidity of songs	189
7.3	Political commentary	191
	7.3.1. Sites of circulation of songs	197
	7.3.2. Figures of speech as a form of oral composition	200
7.4.	Topical songs and social commentary	201
	7.4.1 Songs about Witchcraft	203
	7.4.2 Songs about the spread of disease and rape	207
	7.4.3 Evidence of oral composition: meeting with a Zwelibomvu composer	214
	7.4.3.1 Background for the interview	214
7.5	Conclusion	218

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1	Introductory Statement	220
8.2	The study in essence	221
8.3	General findings of the study	223
8.4	Concluding remarks	225

ANNEXURE A: A COLLECTION OF ZWELIBOMVU WOMEN’S SONGS

ANNEXURE B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

ANNEXURE C: EVIDENCE OF ADHERANCE TO RESEARCH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The study involves an enquiry about the nature of women's contemporary songs as exemplified by a specific rural community of Zwelibomvu near Pinetown in KwaZulu -Natal, South Africa. The aim is to investigate the reasons for contemporary women's songs, hence the question 'Bahlabelelani-why do they sing'? The study engages with varieties of discourses of gender and power as presented through Zwelibomvu women's songs. In essence songs constitute some of the richest treasures within African societies. A cultural critic, Msimang (1986:97) argues that:

...ukucula lokhu kusemithanjeni yomuntu ongumZulu. Empeleni leli yiqiniso elingephikwe futhi aligcini kumaZulu odwa; bonke abayinzalo yaseAfrika bazalwa naso le si siphiso esibaleleke kangaka. Azikho KwaZulu izikole zokufundela umculo kodwa sinezingqambi, sinamagosa, sinabaculi, sinabasini. Uma kufiwe kuyahutshwa, uma kujajiwe kuyahlatshelelwa, kubhiyozwe; uma kuyimikhosi kuyahaywa kugidwe, uma kusetshenzwa kunamalima umculo kawusaleli ngemuva, uma kwenziwa noma yini ongase uyicabange leyonto iphelezela umculo.

(...singing is engrained in a Zulu person. In fact this is an unquestionable truth and does not end with the Zulu people; but all descendants of Africa are born with this wonderful talent. In KwaZulu there are no schools where music is learned but we have composers and great musical leaders. If there is death, songs are sung, if people are happy, they sing and dance, whenever there are ceremonies songs will be sung, when people are engaged in any kind of work such as working in the fields, music will be there; in fact whatever the occasion is, music will be part of it).

Attesting to Msimang's view Nketia (1974:21) maintains that songs are ever present when traditional African societies "come together for enjoyment of leisure, for recreational activities, or for the performance of a rite, ceremony, festival, or any kind of collective activity". Barber (1997: 2) forges continuity in this narration in her argument that people "make use of all available contemporary materials to speak of contemporary struggles".

The above extract from Msimang clarifies that music is part and parcel of the Zulu society. Without disregarding the rest of the contexts in which songs are performed, this introductory chapter aims to put the entire study in perspective by addressing a few fundamental concepts. This will be achieved by means of:

- Attending to the aims and focus of the study
- Giving reasons for undertaking the study
- Providing definitions and delimitations that impact on the title
- Delimitation and presentation of the scope of the study
- Addressing the problem statement and key questions and
- Indicating how the study will be structured.

1.2 Aims and focus of the study

African cultures epitomise patriarchy in which cultural practices are inherent and in that way translated through certain practices. Some of the patriarchal ideologies, while present in African cultures in general, do sometimes focus specifically on the relationship between men and women. Being a performance genre, one of the aim of the songs is to discover possible cracks in the monolith of patriarchy in the forms of subtle criticism of the status quo. Such criticism would amount to the genuine rays of hope and to promises and directions for the massive change in attitudes, which is gradually taking place in modern society.

Gunner (1979) argues that songs are a manifestation of a variety of facets that are typical of women's lives in general. This assertion seems to hold true in this study. I will indicate that over and above the concern with male domination of women there is an angle that appears in this study which also perceives women as fellow oppressors. However, the aim of the study is to illustrate that men are ultimately still to blame since they are the ulterior cause for such behaviour when it happens woman to woman.

This study therefore aims to bring to the fore aspects that have led to distortions of Zulu culture and to deal with the ways in which a shift in paradigm can be gradually developed around the issue of gender imbalances especially in the way in which future research will direct the type, style, tone and form of literature that is written. In this regard Zondi (2004) argues that Zulu literature has to move from the traditional portrayal of women as inferior to reflect the current times where women have taken up more prominent roles in society. In this study while the focus will be on songs, the actual culture and tradition as practiced today will inevitably form part of the study.

1.3 Reasons for the study

In line with Hartnett et al. (1979) who argue that there is a need for women to have a sense of positive self-worth, autonomy and independence, which is often thought of as stereotypical masculine attributes. My arguments in 1.2 above attest to the similar idea. Some of the questions that emerge in this study have to do with the characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity and how these are reinforced in some of the oral forms. For example the questions such as how these characteristics manifest themselves in Zwelibomvu community as well as in South African institutions and structures will be explored. The other factor to be examined is whether Zulu women, for example, are truly emancipated so that they can freely exercise their rights or of whether they are still conditioned by a subservient mentality that has, over time, been seen to be an inherent part of their culture are addressed.

Zwelibomvu women's songs, when read in conjunction with the interviews will explore women's lives and comment on what women think it means to be a woman in their society. Using those songs as a framework as well as responses from these women themselves an attempt will be made to determine how the situation really is or should be. If our society should reflect what South African Constitution embodies, there definitely needs to be observable rather than perceived changes. It is my hope that through their songs, Zwelibomvu women will offer answers to questions addressed in this study. Other reasons for the study are further explored below.

1.3.1 Personal Reasons for the study

In the twelve years that I have been engaged in the teaching of oral literature and folklore within the School of IsiZulu Studies of the University of KwaZulu -Natal my students have brought to my attention certain observations. These have mainly been from non mother tongue students who have, on many occasions, pointed out how men seem to be always presented as more intelligent than women in Zulu oral literature. The inclination to attribute masculine qualities to those aspects of oral literature that display wisdom, for example, is suddenly being questioned. In most of the folktales, for example, it has been noted that female characters are generally represented as inherently less intelligent than male characters. Such portrayal triggered an interest to investigate some of these assumptions. It is my belief that through the songs gathered for this study from Zwelibomvu women our thinking will be directed on some fundamental questions with regard to the connection between a society's culture and its oral tradition and whether this connection can make some sectors of society complacent on issues of change and gender equality in particular.

Referring to the Luba society of Zaire Fabian (1990: xv) argues for collaboration with subjects being studied and cautions that "our attempts at making sense are not in essence different and certainly not of a higher order than those made by the people whom we study" (1990: xv). Fabian's point is that whoever is doing the study should acknowledge the sense of what 'the people we study have to say. Taking Fabian's warning seriously, I being black, an IsiZulu speaker as well as being a woman, I saw the opportunity as a worthwhile venture in undertaking the study that would bring me in direct contact with women issues. Furthermore, the assumption that I as an insider possess a wide range of knowledge than an 'outsider' assured me that I would be at an advantage conducting this study among Zwelibomvu community.

Again, my last name being Zondi, on introducing myself to Israel Magcaba (a local *induna*) I was made aware that his wife was related to the Zondi clan (my clan). I immediately sensed that I was going to derive a lot from Zwelibomvu community. I capitalised on that same knowledge that I was somehow 'related' to the *induna*'s family. I seized every opportunity to get as much information as possible from my respondents who opened up to me in ways that could only have been made possible by that connectedness. As a result of the message which was unfailingly relayed to Zwelibomvu people that I was related to the *induna*'s family I hoped to derive the most from my study.

1.3.2 Academic Reasons for the study

Most researchers who have looked at Zulu oral forms have largely ignored gender as a social variable. Despite very extensive gender research, there has been limited or no investigation into the importance of gender equity as it applies to the Zulu society. With the issue of gender equity currently being a point of great concern in our transforming society, this study intends to explore the issue within the context of Zwelibomvu oral society and to sensitize people to use the oral tradition in promoting gender equity.

The issues to be investigated in this study will address the question of complacency of Zulu oral tradition in tackling gender imbalances in line with transformation. The growing sophistication of the role of Zulu women in South Africa, especially in the province of KwaZulu Natal where they are mostly found will be explored. In line with human rights and through one of the most important forms which will be viewed as a tool that either legitimize or question some of the practices inherent in Zulu culture songs will provide some answers to questions posed in this study.

In line with our democratic constitution which upholds gender equality, amongst other things, songs are assumed to be one of the tools through which women are empowered. Through an in-depth study of their contemporary songs, Zwelibomvu women are assumed to be challenging a status quo that requires women not to question the order of things in their society thus empowering them. Contrary to how the state of affairs used to be prior to 1994 where women's status was seen as very inferior, it would seem that the message contained in songs performed by Zwelibomvu women is gradually opening up spaces for women to engage in contemporary issues, through various genres of songs performed in public. This notion will be investigated and analysed in this study.

In an attempt to do away with the unequal status of what Gunner (1994) terms "print culture and performance" she calls for recognition of literary alternative ways of "writing the nation". The study is therefore in this light partly, a response to a few such scholarly concerns that challenge the existing literary canon which excludes the culture and the literary production of the majority of people in our country (Hofmeyr 1979, Gunner 1994, and Brown, 1998). More so the study brings on board issues related to gender imbalance and serves as a podium for Zwelibomvu

women to relate their experiences in more comfortable ways as illustrated through the cultural songs that they sing.

Drawing from the few responses that address the above concerns, Kaschula, in Stewart (1994) further observes that the merging of formerly delineated genres has led to the production of new forms of African oral literature where oral poetry, song, dance and drama are combined to form new contemporary and popular art forms that require an interdisciplinary theoretical analysis.

Some scholars have, in keeping with Hofmeyr's (1993) insistence that oral scholars leave their desks in order to visit communities about which they write, indeed contributed enormously to the acknowledgment of the existence of the Zulu society (Gunner, 1979), Stewart, 1994 and Turner, 2003). Through their research and interest in this society, this nation is known throughout the world. I note with despair though that little has been done by Zulu people themselves. Zulu women scholars are almost absent from this literature and so is the question of examination of gender inequalities. Among a few black women scholars that have contributed in this area can be mentioned Magwaza, (1993; 1999) whose work on the subject is of great value. These reasons triggered my interest to undertake the study with an aim of adding value to my society.

The fact that much of what has been researched about the Zulu people in various fields has been conducted mainly by white people as has been mentioned above, also counted in favour of the interest in the choice of the study whose main focus is women. I therefore decided to bring in my own black and experiential perspective to the study to possibly provide a more "authentic" voice to the issues discussed. The other academic reason for my interest in this area of study relates to Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). The International Labour Organisation (2007:5) defines IKS as:

knowledge that is held and used by a people who identify themselves as indigenous of a place based on a combination of cultural distinctiveness...with its own distinct and subsequently dominant culture.

A rather recent concept, IKS is further defined in the Tourism document (2003:4) as:

[a] body of knowledge embedded in philosophical thinking and social practices that have evolved over thousands of years

According to IKS scholars are encouraged to embark on research that treasure and promotes the essence and beauty of oral traditions. As a way of answering to that call I set out to undertake this study which I hoped would make a contribution to the area of gender by bringing in my own people, Zulu people as represented through Zwelibomvu community.

1.3.3 Reasons justifying the choice of this literary genre

Human communication finds expression in language which is the mother-mode, because verbalization makes the ideas clear to both speaker and hearer. Music represents a heightened expression of feelings. Dance, with its rhythmic gestures and symbolic movements, captures the imagination and fires it with images of either greatness or deep emotions of love, pain, inspiration, or whatever the feeling might be. In this way dance becomes part of artistic communication, to externalize what one feels inside. This exuberance of the expression of inner feelings could urge one to shout out what one feels inside.

In the western sense, music is achieved through a graceful, controlled, modulated cry or shout that touches several notes on the musical scale and forms the basic element of a melody which requires control and pattern that in turn results in the rhythm. In traditional societies this rhythm is achieved through engaging one's entire body gestures which reach the imagination and the heart of the audience. The audience, in turn, encourages the performance since the experience that mimics an event or an image is shared and understood by both performer and audience.

In the study entitled "Songs of Rural Zulu Women: Finding a voice in a transitional society" Stewart (1994) observes that as the women in the study she undertook actively and consciously performed their songs they ceased to be invisible. While these women actively formulated their own meanings and traditions that challenge patriarchal values they stopped to be voiceless. In that way, she adds, through such songs these women found a channel through which to make their needs known and to resist the gender positions ascribed to them (1994). It is my hope that Zwelibomvu women will also find their songs to equip them with a voice amidst a man's world.

In the light of what has been said above the reasons for choosing this literary genre lies in the fact that since songs bring out a sense of rhythm coupled with harmony, they are a more powerful form of appealing to the audience's sense of feelings. When lyrics and melody are

skilfully strung together they produce harmonious music which hopefully triggers response s from those it is directed towards.

1.4 Definition and delimitation of concepts within the title

It is necessary to provide a detailed exploration of the title as it will contribute to the justification of the adoption of the theoretical underpinnings of my study covered in Chapter 2.

The study aims at exploring various contested issues of gender and power inequalities in contemporary women's songs. It aims to go about doing this by answering a key question which forms a critical part of the title which is *Bahlabelelelani?*. Literally translated, the sub-title, which is a sentence in question form, "*Bahlabelelelani?*" means "Why do they sing?" "*Ba-*" in isiZulu means "they" in English and "*hlabelela*" means "sing". The suffix "*-elani*" gives the sub-title its question form. In addition, "*Ba-*" (they) is a plural noun class two concord which, according to Doke's noun classification system, contains "people" in its semantic content (Doke, 1954). However, it must be pointed that the noun class in question does not provide any sexual differentiation, hence in this context it is essential to clearly define and provide explanation of the kind of "people" the study is concerned with. This is important because this "*ba-*" while still standing for "people" as explained above, could be the concordial agreement to a number of subjects of the sentence, "*Bahlabelelelani?*" For example, "*ba-*" could refer to *abantwana* (children), *abantu* (people in general), *abaculi* (musicians/singers), or any plural form of the human group belonging to this class.

For this reason, therefore, it must be clearly explained that for the purposes of this study the sub - title is focusing primarily on the feminine gender; specifically "women". So, it could be that if we wanted to contest the subject the full sentence could read "*Abantu besifazane bahlabelelelanii?*" Cope (1982: 14) provides a better clarification of the situation tha I am explaining where he maintains that:

Zulu nouns belong to noun classes characterized by noun prefixes and dependent class concords, which operate to bring dependent words into grammatical agreement with the nouns.

1.4.1 Categories of women

From the onset, therefore, it becomes imperative to provide the operational definition of “women” for the purposes of this study. This study will thus focus on the concept of females as being those from the age of 15 years to 65 years of age. Within these ages even those females who are regarded as young adults have a potential of bearing children. Even though one is aware of the fact that girls younger than this age can also bear children, they are nevertheless deliberately left out in this study. This point will become clearer when the question of focus groups is brought forward in chapter 5. In this sense, therefore, “women” must be understood to include *izintombi*, (young unmarried women but who have come of age) and *omakoti* (both young and old married women), the next category of women are older, married or unmarried women as well as *omamezala* (mother’s-in-law). This is because the issues of power and protest would naturally apply more to this category of women than just any other “women” by biological definition. In this study, therefore, the term “*abesifazane*” (people of feminine gender) has both gender and social connotation.

Another critical point is that even though women are the focus of this study as a social construct they do not exist in isolation hence the issues of gender having power implications. Males are a critical part of the society about which “women” seem to sing. This is because be it for reasons of domination and co-existence they enforce the way society is perceived. For this reason the study takes into account men’s views on why women sing and then compare if the men’s perception have any bearing on what women say as well as the implications and impact these songs have on Zwelibomvu community.

1.4.2 Contemporary versus old

Finally as societies evolve they usually take some aspects of the past and carry them onto the future while discarding those things that they feel are no longer applicable to their lives. During this evolution, people generally adapt what they know to the changing circumstances. Contemporary songs, in the same way, can be viewed in this light. It is therefore critical to point out that the songs that are the subject of the study are contemporary songs. However it will also be important to analyse what elements make them contemporary as well as what links them to some of the oral traditional realm of songs as defined in this study.

1.4.3 Gender and power

This is a key issue that will be explored in the songs. It will be reviewed as to how gender and power issues manifest themselves in contemporary songs thus therefore exploring why these discourses have been and continue to be such key dichotomies in society. While gender and power do not inherently imply negativity it is mainly with their inequalities and imbalances that this study concerns itself with.

1.5 Delimitation and scope of the present study

1.5.1 Research site

Zwelibomvu consists of seven districts namely, ePanekeni, ePhangweni, eMkhangoma, eMadwaleni, Ezimbokodweni, Magcaba and Emasomini. While dealing with all seven areas would have shed even more light in the study, the last two mentioned districts were excluded in this study because of two reasons:

- They border Mangangeni which is an area under the jurisdiction of another chief (see Aerial photograph before page 1).
- The population is not proportional to the other districts. The reason is that these areas are populated by few families whose surnames are Magcaba and Msomi respectively and from where they derive their names.

1.5.2 Scope of songs

Another concern that immediately occupies anybody's mind at the mention of the word "song" is "which songs are covered by the present study"? The answer lies in the observation that Zulu people, like any other group have their own beliefs that are unique to them. These beliefs compel them to perform a number of rituals and traditional customs which people who are steeped in this culture believe might cause some disaster if they were not performed. Similarly, integral in the lives of the people of Zwelibomvu are performances of rituals and ceremonies; some of which are restricted to members of the family while others are open to the public.

While it is good to appreciate that among those ceremonies which are open to the public some aspects of them are still ‘private’, the study restricts itself to the songs to which the public was exposed at the time of the ceremony. These traditional ceremonies came in the form of *umemulo* (girl’s coming-of-age ceremony) and *umgcagco* (traditional wedding). Other social contexts from which other songs were gathered have nothing to do with ritual ceremonies but are rather concerned with the Zulu philosophy of life such as manifested in women’s social event referred to as *ilima* (collective word referring to a group of women who come together with an aim of assisting a fellow woman complete any kind of women’s home based activities) . Furthermore songs were collected from women who participated during *amacece* (traditional functions where neighbouring communities come together to perform according to *izigodi* (districts). On these occasions women performed what is commonly known as *izigiyo* (a poetic song genre which refers to specified solo dance songs) but which, within Zwelibomvu community, is peculiarly known as *ukushoza* or *ukujoqa*. This type of song normally takes place in the presence of fellow woman. However during family ceremonies an opportunity might present itself where women get an opportunity to perform in the presence of men to whom these are primarily directed to. As part of *amacece* the other circumstance that offered an opportunity to gather more songs presented itself in the form of traditional music to which Zwelibomvu women themselves referred to as *maskanda*.(traditional type of music) While typical *maskanda* music involves the use of musical instruments, this is not the case with Zwelibomvu women *maskanda*. It is nevertheless to be accepted that what they sing is *maskanda* music since that is how they themselves perceive their music. The contexts from which songs contained in this study were collected are here below carefully described. The last two forms of songs, namely, *ukushoza* and *maskanda* have been grouped under *amacece* and will be well explained in 1.5.2.1.4 below.

1.5.2.1 Channels of circulation

For the purposes of this study the following functions will be analysed as the channels of circulation. However it must be pointed out that this group is not exhaustive of all the types of functions that are performed in Zwelibomvu. These channels are:

1.5.2.1.1 Ilima

Ilima is a collective word for a group of women who live in the same neighbourhood and who help one another with any kind of women’s home based activities. Among the social activities in

which women work together as a group, Mathonsi and Gumede (2006) mention tilling of land; collection of fire wood and maintenance of the huts within a homestead. Nketia (1974) also attest to the above view.

1.5.2.1.2 Umemulo

Umemulo refers to coming of age ceremonies which Magwaza (1993:7) describes as “a ceremony for a girl reaching the marriageable age. The ceremony involves a process whereby a girl, together with other maidens, remain in seclusion for a specific duration of time which could be up to a week or more depending on the wealth of the girl’s family. The wealthier the family, the longer the time for initiation as the family would need to feed the group of girls accompanying their daughter. During this period they are initiated into adulthood by an *iqhikiza* or a senior girl.

1.5.2.1.3 Umgcagco

Umgcagco is a traditional Zulu wedding which involves two parties, namely the bridal party called *umthimba* and the groom’s party called *ikhetho*. It is a culmination of many ceremonies that would have taken place before, including among others *ilobola* (the process of obtaining a wife through the exchange of property). On this day the families of the bride and the groom officially declare and seal the relationship. The speeches and songs on such an occasion deal mainly with what is expected of a married woman. The bride’s family also affirms that they have indeed brought up their daughter well. This is probably the last plea from the bride’s family to the groom and his family to look well after their daughter, more so within the context of patriarchal societies which is generally aggravated by the practice of polygamy which Manqele (2000) sees as having negative consequences and which arguably has its roots in inequality for both wives and children.

1.5.2.1.4 Amacece

Among the rituals and ceremonies celebrated in Zwelibomvu and from which songs for the study were collected are *amacece*. The word is a plural form for *icece*. These are traditional functions where neighbouring communities come together to perform according to *izigodi* (districts). In these functions one finds that there are varieties of songs that are sung that deal

with a number of issues and rendered in different genres. For the purposes of this study I have categorized *ukushoza*, a poetic song genre which refers to specified solo dance songs together with *maskanda* a group of women or men (but in this case women) who sing together for entertainment purposes as well as to earn a living through competitions but who generally have bigger socio-political issues to comment about through this genre.

Maskanda, is a genre which is commonly associated with men but in which women also feature as was the case at Zwelibomvu. In his article entitled “Remarks on *maskandi* poetry”, Ntuli (1990) skillfully demonstrates this feature as it applies to the main stream where he defines *Maskandi* as “a style that combines music and praise-poetry together in a unique fashion” (1990:302).

Ukushoza or *ukujoqa* can be described as a poetic song genre which refers to specified solo dance songs (Mathonsi and Gumede, 2006). This fulfils the same role as *izigiyo* but within Zwelibomvu community the genre is perceived in the verbal-noun context, hence “*uku-*” meaning ‘to do’. Whilst *izigiyo* are normally performed by both men and women in this community it is women who are said to perform *ukushoza* or *ukujoqa* in order to communicate their insight and feelings about being women in their society. In this sense the study is restricted to women genre of *izigiyo* referred to by Zwelibomvu women as *ukushoza* or *ukujoqa*. The term *ukushoza* will therefore, henceforth be used to refer to this genre.

1.6 Problems statement and key questions

Deriving from Kgobe’s (1985:48) claim that every society has a system of laws, social ethic and precepts according to which every member of the society is bound to conform to certain obligations and codes of conduct within society, the study, as it has been pointed out assumed that women’s contemporary songs are one such oral strategy which amongst other things, represents criticism of a patriarchal structure in an African society in this case, the Zulu society.

These structures have played a major role in power struggles between individuals in most cultures as demonstrated, for example, in the subjugation of women in pre-colonial times (Anderson and Zinnser, 1990). The result is inequality in the sharing of power and decision making within families; hence the responsibility of any work in gender studies bound to reveal the injustices and oppressive practices of such practices (Malherbe et al 2000). One such

practice that prevails within Zulu society and which is applicable to Zwelibomvu community is *hlonipha*. The custom is better understood in the context of a traditional marriage system, part of which is *lobola* system which has been elaborated upon in 1.5.2.1.3 above.

The problem statement within this study therefore revolves around three key components within the Zulu traditional system and with specific reference to the Zwelibomvu community. These are outlined below.

1.6.1. *Hlonipha* custom and its impact on the performance genre

In some societies male norms prescribe the appropriate direction of communication. Within such societies social norms are such that power to control even speech patterns rests with men in which case women are required to accept and support them without challenging them. African societies, under different guises subscribe to such notions as *hlonipha*. The custom mainly prescribes an acceptable manner of behaviour and expression, this mainly directed at women and children. While it prevails mostly in rural areas it does not mean that it is absent in urban areas.

Zulu women are also compelled by such customs as that of *ukuhlonipha* of which James Stuart, writing in the early 1920's points out "[that it] affects women [] and [] the whole of that sex" (Stuart's Papers, File 26. Lectures and notes on the Zulu 1948: 97). He arrived at this conclusion after observing that a married woman was bound to respect her own father-in-law. On the other hand her mother-in-law was also bound to respect her son-in-law. Thus young girls grow up and continue to accept their subordinated places. Malherbe (2000:2) referring to a similar situation, expresses this state of things very clearly when she argues:

Characters of men and women as widely accepted in society are a product of socialization and not a biological given. Girls and boys are brought up to act and think the way they do, and [if] they were conditioned differently then the character of two sexes and gender relations would be different.

Zungu (1985:1) defines *hlonipha* custom as a social form of avoidance and notes that it means to show appropriate respect for authority or seniority. She sees the custom as an expression of the pyramid of respect upon which the Zulu ethos is raised. Elaborating on *hlonipha*, Magwaza (2001) perceives it as one of women's roles in preserving Zulu customs. She cautions that as far

as the custom is concerned women are not to take it lightly as ignoring it would subject them to severe public shame.

The worst aspect of the *hlonipha* custom is the one also known as the respect by avoidances that is evident in many relations of superordination and subordination (Raum, 1973) which is still practised mainly in rural African societies.

The concept of *ukuhlonipha* embodies both the private, the collective self and the public self as far as women are concerned. The custom functions merely to prescribe norms and values to which women have to conform, suggesting what Butler (1999:12) refers to as “a certain determinism of gender meanings inscribed on anatomically differentiated bodies, where bodies are understood as passive recipients of an inexorable cultural law”. It is mostly in these societies that songs play an important role in giving women a voice in situations where they would normally be censored. Known as *isihlonipho sabafazi* among the Xhosa society, (Finlayson, 1978, 1995, 2002), this linguistic component of the traditional custom impacts on the behaviour of Zulu, Swati, Xhosa and Ndebele societies. However, the practice is not peculiar to the societies just mentioned, but rather it extends to all black women as argued by Coplan (1994). He comes to this conclusion after presenting a case for Basotho women where referred to “the *hlonepo* custom of the Basotho women”, Coplan (1994:157) argues, that bound by such constraining expression determined by ‘*hlonepo*’ Basotho women find their voices in song. In Coplan’s words, “it is in the medium of song that black women enjoy poetic licence” and I would add that this poetic licence stems from a wider context of patriarchy, part of which is *ukuhlonipha*.

Drawing from Butler (1999) and in support of the views presented above, one concludes that socialization plays a major role in producing what Butler refers to as subjects regulated by structures to which they are subjected, formed, defined and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures.

Among other expectations of this custom a Zulu woman does not directly voice out her concerns and experiences to her family. She has to accept what in Foucault’s language is described as, “juridical systems of power” that produce the subjects that they subsequently come to represent (in Butler, 1999:4). One such reproduction is for the subjects never to question authority, this being rooted in the process of socialisation that takes place at a very early stage of a woman’s

life. This is further inculcated in young girls who have to know that the spaces they occupy in society are 'different' from those occupied by boys. The summation by Finlayson, (1995:144) on the question of *hlonipha* is apt:

The newly married woman is not allowed to treat this custom lightly and is subject to severe public shame should she ignore the rules laid down for her. The forces exerted by the public opinion are a very important deterrent in upholding these values, for one may be ostracized from one's community.

Restricted by customs such as *hlonipha* practice, which Dowling (1988) perceives as a linguistic means towards subordination of women, women resort to allusive language usage such as is found in *ukushoza*. Because of the highly figurative language that is employed in *ukushoza* women's expressions are rendered allusive; the chief reason for this being the fact that a Zulu woman is prohibited by tradition from being direct when she verbally attacks people who are of higher status than hers. In this way such performances are as largely perceived as protesting texts.

1.6.2 Traditional marriage and *Lobola* system

It was pointed earlier that *hlonipha* is best understood in the context of traditional marriage system of which *ilobolo* is part. The custom of *ukulobola* custom is another such practice associated with gender construction in African cultures. Within the patriarchal arrangement, polygamy and *lobolo* are some of the deeply-rooted practices in African societies that have stood the test of time. These practices are still prevalent and considered very important within African cultures and at times they may be a source of anguish for women as the songs will demonstrate.

In olden days *lobola* custom was seen as a man's way of showing gratitude to the woman's family for having raised a girl up well and it was also viewed as an indication that the man would be capable of looking after the woman. In essence, however, the practice seems to have many abuses in our contemporary times.

1.6.3 Polygyny

Polygyny a practice that allows a man to have as many wives as he can afford, for example, is a longstanding feature of many African societies. When viewed together with *lobolo*, polygyny further aggravates the patriarchal superiority within such cultures (Manqele, 2000). Song 3 2 and 40 and 44 (Check if these numbers are still legitimate) on boys not being able to *lobola* is quite significant because the idea of marriage and the family is very strong.

Polygyny as a practice has many negative consequences such as men failing to treat their wives equally, thus hindering their rights as women and leading to hatred among the wives, which arguably has its roots in inequality. In that light, our contemporary society tends, to a large extent, to still view a married woman as a property that was purchased and who, by joining the new family relinquishes her human dignity while relieving others in her new family of their duties.

In recent years though, women in Africa have been up in arms to call for an end to customs that have outlived their purpose (Gama, 2004). According to the survey conducted in Uganda where respondents were asked whether they preferred to be in monogamous or polygamous unions that of the 214 respondents 12% preferred polygamous unions while 88% chose monogamy.

Polygyny and *lobolo* are still very prevalent within Zwelibomvu community. Paradoxically the responses provided by female respondents and that will be analysed in chapter 5, seem to indicate that these customs are still held in great esteem regardless of the fact that women associate their abuse with the fact that *ilobolo* was paid for them. They also support Louw's (2000:106) assertion that there exists a correlation between behaviour and genetics whereby characteristics of individuals within a particular society are transferable from generation to generation.

The key questions arising from the problem statement above and which the study will attempt to address pertain to:

- What the perception, understanding and opinion of Zwelibomvu women is with regards to songs.
- Whether Zwelibomvu women reveal any understanding of their rights.
- What role these songs play in addressing Zwelibomvu women's social issues and daily lives
- How Zwelibomvu men respond to the messages conveyed in the songs.
- Whether Zwelibomvu youth, men and women perceive the role of songs in a similar vein.
- What, where and how songs are sung.
- If genre and gender mirror and reinforce one another within the patriarchal arrangement or if they are an imperfect fit.
- How genres allow women to make certain actions or statements that are not normally allowed or endorsed.
- Whether songs are seen as artistic innovation that can bring about change (for a complete set of questionnaires, see Annexure B)

Gumede (2000) provides carefully woven arguments which I find apt in bringing my discussion of the problem statement and key questions above into a coherent whole. In this Masters Dissertation he explains the traditional Zulu views on patriarchy, *ilobolo*, marriage, polygamy, sexual freedom and equal rights for husband and wife. Using the imaginative literature written in the vernacular during the last fifty years he looks at the true situation of women in Zulu society as reflected in. *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*, *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*, *NguMbuthuma-ke Lowo* and *Ikhiwane Elihle* by J.K. Ngubane, C.L.S. Nyembezi, D.B.Z. Ntuli and L Molefe respectively. Gumede (ibid.) critiques the manner in which these authors “tend to echo social tendencies and trends without thinking because they intend their work to remain a faithful mirror of society”.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The study begins with a general introduction in which pertinent concepts are defined and clarified. An assumption is made that through their contemporary songs women find their voice within the oppressive African patriarchal societies. Patriarchy is alleged to be a major cause of dissatisfaction among African women and songs are perceived as one of the most effective mechanisms of dealing with issues around gender and power constructs.

This chapter, therefore, serves as an introduction and sets out the aims, focus and reasons of the study while also describing the statement of the problem with some key questions.

Chapter 2 provides paradigmatic orientations of research practice in general as a way of introducing conceptual and theoretical framework informing this study and which are therefore adopted in my study. The premise taken is that in African tradition songs form an integral part of orality. In this regard the theory of oral style as espoused by Jousse (1990, 2000) is integrated with Social Constructionist and Post Structural Feminist theory as described by Weedon (1987, 1997) as well as Scott's model (1990) of hidden transcripts.

Chapter 3 provides literature review on existing research that deals with women's songs as a genre. The focus of the literature review will be centred on the African continent, and drawing mainly from the South African base. Furthermore literature that deals primarily with the Nguni population will be highlighted.

Chapter 4 introduces the first of the two part field work process. The first part involves the collection of songs in ceremonies and occasions and observing and being part of the occasions and ceremonies where the songs that are sung by women are performed. The overview of these songs will be given in this chapter. This chapter therefore serves as an introduction to one of the two critical processes of this thesis. The initial process discussed in this chapter, involves the physical attendance of functions where the extrapolation and some of the conclusions of the focus of the study would be made. In this chapter, the ideas that were collected from these visits are presented in the form of an overview of and a visual rendition of women's songs performed by Zwelibomvu women. Chapter 4, a tip of an iceberg and informed by a massive worth of raw data amounting to fifteen hours, should thus ideally be read alongside the three hour DVD recorded rendition which is attached as part of this chapter and therefore of the dissertation.

Chapter 5 brings in the second part of the two part field work process, the first having been covered in Chapter 4. This chapter mainly involves focus group interviews of categories of respondents in similar settings/districts observed in the earlier chapter where ceremonies were attended. Individual interviews are also made mention of even though in this chapter the focus is mainly with the former, the individual interviews being referred to throughout the entire dissertation. Being the focus of the thesis, this chapter thus attempts to provide some insight into

why women sing and the question of gender and power in contemporary women's songs. To this effect, the chapter provides an in depth qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected in line with the research methodology and approach that was adopted.

Having mentioned that individual interviews are used throughout the thesis when ever necessary I have to point out that while my interviewees granted consent to usage of their full names I have either adopted only one name or simple referred to them as "one woman or another man" to provide confidentiality.

Chapter 6 deals with an analysis of prevalent themes drawn and emanating from Chapter 5. The aim of this chapter is to also provide an interpretation of either overt, covert or subtle messages of gender and power conveyed through contemporary women's songs. As part of this process an interpretation of the rest of the songs collected as part of the research and which are in line with the themes identified will be analysed.

Chapter 7 is a continuation of the previous chapter but focusing on presenting a critical analysis of the oral composition of contemporary women's songs. The issues discussed will explore settings of composition, the immediacy and urgency of composition, sites of performance and circulation of songs, the suppleness and fluidity of sites and genres.

Chapter 8 will provide a summary of issues discussed as well as present further insight into wider questions and observations around performance and contemporary women's songs. The aim of this chapter will be to provide further debate into issues arising from the performances so as to perhaps pose further questions for future research purposes.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the thread that will tie the thesis together. By outlining the key elements that inform and pull the study together, the basis on which the investigations, arguments, debates and contested issues around which the study will centre has been foregrounded. This basis has been supported and guided by various theorists who it is believed are an integral source of research in order to ensure that there is a valid degree of authenticity in the arguments presented.

I hope that by drawing on the multi-fold experiences provided through this study, a personal link between what is being investigated and the real world will be created. Indeed in line with Newman (1997: 16), social research is conducted “to discover new knowledge and to gain a richer understanding of a social world

CHAPTER 2: THE CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The title of this thesis, “Bahlabelalelani? Why do they sing - Gender and power in contemporary women’s songs”, is informed by a multidisciplinary approach which will be explored presently. In this study I will firstly provide a brief reflection on the paradigms, conceptual and theoretical framework which inform the theories that I have adopted. These paradigms will further justify methods opted for which are discussed in detail in Chapter 5. In this way Chapter 5 further strengthens what is established in the introductory chapter of this study.

2.1.1 Paradigmatic orientations of the study

Whenever a researcher delves into a research problem of any kind the inquiry is guided by a particular view or approach. A paradigm -an idea made famous by Kuhn (1970, 1979), simply refers to a basic orientation to theory and research or the whole system of thinking that defines for researchers the nature of their inquiry (Neuman, 1997). In this sense paradigms can be said to emanate from the researcher’s world view or from the research question. Amongst several paradigms that inform research positivism, interpretive, critical social science and feminist approaches can be mentioned. Each method is associated with different traditions in social theory and as such requires diverse research expertise (ibid).

Since my theoretical orientation is multidisciplinary in nature I will be drawing critically from various paradigms. As I am mainly concerned with gender issues, this study will, to a limited extent draw from positivism which is mainly associated with natural sciences and which most of feminist research sees as “being consistent with a male point of view” (Neuman, 1997:80). The rationale behind its incorporation is purely because this approach acknowledges some of positivist methodological approaches such as the use of measurements based on quantitative methods as Chapter 5 of my study illustrates. In line with critical theoretical approaches and due to the fact I am a woman who holds a feminist identity with some perspectives embedded in feminism -a feminist ideology that critiques gender inequalities - I consider myself at liberty to adopt multi research techniques that allows for paradigm shifts. Moreover as a person grounded on orality, literature and gender studies, I believe in multifaceted approaches. For these reasons the theoretical framework for this study is multidisciplinary in approach.

Therefore in this research I integrate orality, Social Construction and Post Structural Feminism as well as a model of hidden and public transcripts that addresses gender issues and power.

I hope that by drawing on the multi-fold experiences provided through this study, a personal link between what is being investigated about gender issues and lived experiences of women will be established. In alignment with Newman (1997:16), social research is conducted “to discover new knowledge and to gain a richer understanding of a social world” in which we live. Section 2.3 entitled “Theoretical framework” continues the ideas presented above as well as in Chapter 5 which deals more with Methodology and data analysis. Hence the following section serves as a conceptual framework of my study.

2.2 Conceptual framework

I was born and bred at KwaNdebeqheke, a small rural village within a vicinity of a Catholic mission station called KwaMadlala. This area, populated by approximately 120 families, is situated some 40 kilometres on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg. KwaNdebeqheke was influenced by missionaries who came to the area as far back as my great-grand parents lived. Due to that influence most of the families subscribing to Catholic Christian values with its patriarchal orientation and fearing that they would be perceived as hypocritical Christians, did not practice their cultural ceremonies openly and freely. There are only two families who did not adopt Christianity and hence who openly celebrated their rituals. Moreover, they practiced polygamy. They were publicly referred to as *amaqaba*, pagans and were steeped in Zulu cultural practices which were also patriarchal.

Again, having spent most of my youth in Catholic boarding schools during vacations if these families happened to have a ceremony of one kind or another, my family did not encourage attendance at such functions. As I grew older I felt I had been deprived of a first hand experience of my own culture and as such that I had experienced a void which could only be filled by being part of those ceremonies. I had read a lot about what it meant to belong to a Zulu culture but I needed practical experience that no book could offer. Zwelibomvu, which still epitomizes a world of pure rural lifestyle, seemed to provide a solution. I had initially thought that to be a traditionalist meant to embrace culture in all its “uncontaminated” state. Zwelibomvu community, however, through both lifestyle and songs they engage in during their cultural events, presented a view that was completely different; that culture was not static and that in

general, contemporary women view life in a different light from what women in their position perceived it long time ago. These are the views that the study will share in the following chapters.

Coming from the background just highlighted, I value indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). This is knowledge that is held and used by a people who identify themselves as “indigenous of a place based on a combination of cultural distinctiveness with its own distinct and subsequently dominant culture” (Tourism, 2003:4). Thus being a “body of knowledge embedded in philosophical thinking and social practices that have evolved over thousands of years” (ibid) this system treasures and promotes the essence and beauty of oral traditions and its preservation. Therefore, in discovering Zwelibomvu, I realized that contemporary women’s cultural songs address issues that are closest to my heart. In this way there is a synergy between my feminist views of life and Zwelibomvu women’s songs. Thus ideologies that support this conceptual framework are examined in the theoretical framework and are integrated within this study.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is multidisciplinary in approach. This approach is informed by three main strands which are outlined below. Firstly, inspired by the work of Marcel Jousse (1925) in the book translated by Sienaert and Whitaker (1990) oral style is appropriate in the study that involves this community. Through their cultural activities which are characterised by oral style, the community of Zwelibomvu, attests to the preservation of IKS. Secondly, since my focus in Zwelibomvu community lies mostly with its women, Weedon’s (1987) ideas on Social Construction and Post Structural Feminism theories will also be adopted. Thirdly, a model of hidden and public transcripts as brought forward by Scott (1990) addresses issues of gender and power as depicted through contemporary songs sung by Zwelibomvu women. When carefully integrated, these approaches will enhance the direction of the study.

This chapter, therefore, examines the three approaches informing my study. Jousse’s theory of oral style is essential because in this study because as part of an oral genre songs have to be performed in full view of an audience. During such performances performers use their bodies while rendering the songs. Taking into account that gender and power inequities are also key issues in understanding the songs contained in this study, Social Construction and Post

Structural Feminism theories as adopted by Weedon as well as a model of hidden and public transcripts espoused by Scott will align with Jousse's theory thus giving the study its multidisciplinary approach. For convenience and for the purposes of intelligibility I will discuss each of these approaches individually below. However, it must be pointed out that in the context of this study all of them should be understood holistically in order to achieve an optimal appreciation of the study. The next section will provide an in depth analysis of this multidisciplinary approach.

2.3.1 Analysis of the multidisciplinary approach

The following arguments serve as a basis for the unpacking of Marcel Jousse's theory of Orality which is one of the three approaches mentioned earlier.

Since my thesis is about women, it therefore deals specifically with issues that are gender related. Therefore the songs that have been collected from occasions where these women perform make the study oral in nature. The content of the songs, touch on gender and power inequalities. What further strengthens this approach is that an emphasis has been put on the importance of coordinating the two strands which are gender and orality. For this reason this study, in line with South Africa's National Research Foundation which encourages academics to strive to recognise cultures that are steeped in Indigenous Knowledge Systems, combines the issue of gender equity, which is currently a point of great concern in our transforming society, with the oral aspect which is rendered in the form of song. Thus, issues of gender equity which are inherent in oral traditions need to be given some kind of priority in our transforming society

Canonici's (1996:2) discussion on orality traces the notion of oral literature back to Latin - *os*, *oris*, and *littera*- and examines each term individually. Accordingly, *os* and *oris*, mean oral and signify the mouth which takes into account facial expression and the attitude of the whole person. *Littera*, on the other hand, signifies anything written or anything that makes use of the letters of the alphabet to symbolize the spoken word. Oral communication is therefore, first and foremost, realized by means of vocalization of words, and secondly, through one's presence, gestures and body.

Akivaga and Odaga's (1982:1) definition of oral literature states that it is "...a spoken word, acted (performed) art whose media, like that of written literature, is words". Central to this

definition are the key words “spoken” and “acted” which Akivaga and Odaga (ibid) concur are vital features of oral literature and which comprise of elements that are present in Canonici’s (1996) definition above. These definitions fit perfectly with my current study in that songs that form a bulk of this thesis have been drawn from live performances and in full view of audiences.

In line with these definitions, this study strengthens the view that oral, illiterate and semi-literate societies, like those coming from Zwelibomvu, still exist and provide invaluable oral historical information for contemporary society that is not necessarily captured in writing. Some of the Zwelibomvu residents argued that “*uzofunda okuningi ngathi*” (you will learn a lot from and about us)- [Emadwaleni, September 2006].

2.3.1.1 History of Marcel Jousse

Before the theory of Marcel Jousse is provided it is important to briefly look what informed his theory. This is appropriate because not only does Jousse provide a practical theory on orality but he was himself a product of this culture.

Jousse was born in 1886 in the then rural area located in the Sarthe region west of Paris. Owing to the rural nature of this environment, oral traditions were very much part and parcel of people’s lives as literacy was virtually absent in this community. As such his society used particular ways of ensuring that knowledge was delivered in a careful manner which took into account how it had to be recalled for and by later generations. Known as mnemonic forms, this means of passing on of information expression was used for recording and transmitting tradition. Jousse himself elaborates on his childhood:

“...what I have contributed I owe to my mother ...no sooner was I born, than cantilenas were sung over my cradle. My mother had an extraordinary memory. She was brought up by her totally illiterate grandmother who taught her orally all the ancient cantilenas of the Sarthe region that she knew. My mother, who went to school for three winters only, obviously never saw these cantilenas in any written version” (1990: xix).

Besides his mother and great-grandmother, a number of other older people in Jousse’s community had little or no formal education. However, they possessed extraordinary memories which contributed in Jousse’s long-lasting respect and understanding for human memory and

its capacity to store knowledge (Govender, 2002). In this regard there is a strong synergy between Jousse's circumstances and those of the Zwelibomvu community in that this is also a rural community in which oral traditions are still part and parcel of people's everyday lives. To support these oral traditions almost every weekends are characterised by some kind of traditional ceremony. Again, while Jousse himself received education from his semi-illiterate parents, Zwelibomvu parents also send their children to school while they themselves are either totally illiterate or semi-illiterate.

Grounded in various languages such as Greek, Latin, Aramaic, English, German, Spanish and Italian by the age of fifteen, Jousse read over 5000 works before selecting 500 on which his Oral style was based. Being an ingenious scholar of interdisciplinary orientations, Jousse worked with various societies and came to understand that oral performances are a cross cultural phenomenon which earns his contribution "a cornerstone of modern studies of oral tradition" (1990: viii). He was concerned with the notion that the study of oral traditions and their expression should be "living and dynamic" and in that way be perceived as an anthropological phenomenon which reflected the commonalities of human expression (Govender, 2002). In 1932 Jousse held the Chair in Linguistic Anthropology at the Ecole d'Anthropologie until 1950. Whilst in this position he published a number of essays on human expression taking as his starting point the anthropological laws of mimicry which is one of the most important among the four mnemonic laws of human expression that will be discussed later. He died in 1961.

Jousse's biography indicates that he was a product of a living oral culture which brings credibility to this theoretical perspective from the point of view of an 'insider'. This fact on its own makes his point of view more 'trustworthy'

Educated though Jousse was, the background from which he was born suggests that people who have not received any or sufficient formal education do not necessarily lead uninteresting or boring lives which render them inferior. On the contrary the richness of the culture of such people refutes in concrete and practical ways the ideas brought forward by those scholars who refuse to even come to terms with a term such as "oral literature" which they perceive as contradictory. Instead Jousse concurs that such societies are characterized by a rich heritage of oral style globally.

A worthwhile observation is that some scholars who deal with issues such as ‘orality -literacy’ or ‘oral traditions’ or ‘oral studies’ have not necessarily cited Jousse in their works. Nevertheless his ideas seem to be a driving force behind such works. This is true of Finnegan (1990) of whom Saussy (in Magwaza et al, 2006:159) remarks that she makes no mention of Le Style while continuously referring to Milman Parry who himself acknowledges that he drew a lot of inspiration from Jousse’s ideas. The statement under review in this regard relates to songs collected in Yugoslavia where Parry argues that prior to reading Jousse and understanding his psychological explanation of oral compositions, he had viewed Homer only as a traditional poet. However, after reading Jousse he came to the realization that *Homer* was also an oral poet.

My current research on Zwelibomvu women’s contemporary songs includes visits and observations, recordings, and interviewing of various stakeholders within and around the performance context. It thus ties in closely with Jousse’s theory which is analysed in the next section.

2.3.1.2 Marcel Jousse’s Oral Style: Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm

Jousse introduced the perspective of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm as a means of “understanding the human at a fundamental level that accounted for and transcended ethnic identity and individuality” Conolly (2001:26). The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm assisted Jousse in the explanation of the workings of the human, physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual operations. Jousse observed that man’s natural capacity is related to the structure of the language employed in human expression which mirrors his own balanced, rhythmical and formulaic psycho-physiological structure and operation.

Furthermore, Jousse noticed that there is a link between memory, learning, understanding and expression in humans. He saw cultural expression as first and foremost the expression of the whole being. Therefore, according to Jousse, the notion of culture should be studied as a ‘global’ phenomenon since language is an integral part of a broader cultural strategy that includes ritual, custom and social convention.

In *Oral Style* (1990) and *The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm* (2000) Jousse argues that oral style of teaching and learning is an obvious phenomenon characteristic of many cultural

milieus from time immemorial thus rendering it as a socio-cultural archive that is passed from generation to generation. He also refers to the concept of “register” by which he means the records that serve as the socio-cultural archives which becomes a very important aspect in the understanding of communities we study. Conolly (2001:248) elaborates on the socio-cultural archive by defining it in terms of oral tradition that is passed down from generation to generation and which is used in oral milieus. She argues that this social-cultural archive is supported by gestures which enhance memory and which are referred to as mnemotechnically gestual-visual/oral –aural expression. Expressed in simple ways Turner (2003) explains the notion of ‘a socio-cultural archive’ in terms of the law of mimism by where she argues that an individual’s experiences within his or her particular socio-cultural environment accounts for the way he or she responds to his world. Turner’s idea resounds in Akiyaga and Odaga (1982:15) who put forward a similar idea with regard to oral literature which they argue is created from people’s surroundings, conditions and activities:

The images; similes, metaphors and other figures of speech used in songs, proverbs, or narratives are drawn from the people’s own experiences and their daily activities.

In the case of my study, this socio cultural archive of which Jousse speaks is not uprooted even though young women are sent to school. Through ceremonies such as coming-of-age rituals at which songs are rendered the young girls are directed to what it really means to belong to Zulu culture as it applies to Zwelibomvu. In this way regardless of the move towards modernity traditional values are maintained.

Intrinsic to Jousse’s theory are terms that are rather complex to grasp and therefore essential to explain as the theory unravels. The theory is better understood in terms of Jousse’s concept of the four human expressions known as Mnemonic Laws of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm. These are mimism, rhythmism, bilateralism and formulism. These laws are further understood as charged with memory hence referred to as mnemotechnical devices which assume that man has a certain degree of intelligence and thus can be regarded as “mnemotechnical”. Being mnemotechnical man is thus enabled to successfully transmit to his descendants his past experiences, through structured framework which functions as memory aids.

2.3.1.2.1 Mimism

Mimism, which simply means that people imitate that which they have been exposed to in their world, therefore that which they know, is the most important of these laws. It is the voluntary and involuntary play and replay of the cosmos by the anthropos. Jousse described the human as an “indivisible complexus of geste” which means that people’s gestures cannot be separated from what their environment presents to them. This “geste” is absorbed by man through his senses which are re-arranged and then replayed (Conolly, 2001:233). In mimism the other three laws are somehow also encapsulated as man has the capacity to receive, register and replay the balanced rhythmic formulas of the universe. In the words of Jousse (2000:70):

Corporeal-manual Style man is a subtle observer and a supple ‘receiver’. He faithfully reproduces within himself what is played out external to himself. He replays and gesticulates mimismologically and logically, like a living and conscious plastic mirror.

Simply stated and in the context of my study, Jousse’s corporeal -manual mode of expression maintains that expressions are accomplished by means of the body, face and hands, revealed in movement, mime and dance. Laryngo-buccal mode of expression refers to expression realized by means of the larynx and the lips, revealed in sound, speech and song. For the purposes of my study it becomes clear why Jousse’s theory is useful in explaining the gestures that accompany the songs of women in this study.

Human beings, according to Jousse are unique ‘mimismic’ beings able to live together by continually imitating the world and replaying the perceived movements of the outside world through integrated body-mind expressions. Jousse perceives mimism as a solution to the explanation of the many problems associated with knowledge, which is experienced by many societies the world over. Man’s knowledge is limited to what he ‘receives’ and ‘replays’ within himself. This is controlled by his capacity for ‘intussusception’ which means to amass or to gather by an interior movement. The quality of the re-play will depend on the “richness of the intussusceptions” and man’s personality, considering that man is not equal. (Jousse 2000:117). The significance of the involvement of the entire person in conveying meaning within oral cultures as described through mimicry cannot be overemphasised since gestures suggests that

through rhythm that is naturally imitative movements enjoyment by and for all can be guaranteed.

One of the thematic concerns in the songs by Zwelibomvu women addresses the silencing effects of their culture. Jousse also elaborates on women, mothers and step -mothers on which their cultures impose silence during mourning for duration of time of up to a year. In this regard Jousse refers to a literal meaning of “silencing”. The allegorical or symbolic meaning can have even more devastating effects on those who strictly adhere to their culture. It is evident in some of the songs collected for this study that songs serve as an empowering instrument for women because through them (songs) they shake off the “silencing” effects of their culture as they break the shackles of its often oppressive silencing influence. In this light songs serve as an avenue through which women “speak out their minds”. The women in Jousse’s example become so skilful at observing mourning that even after the said period has expired they sometime continue to abstain from speaking (1990:36)

Interesting in Jousse’s example is the gender bias against women on whom silence is imposed as a result of mourning whereas the same principle does not apply to men. Jousse does not say anything about the “silence” with regards to men. A similar situation is experienced by Zwelibomvu women who air their discontent with a tradition which treats women differently from men and in which men always seem to have an easy way out “ ... *labo phela bakhululeke ngendlela yokuthi ngisho kufiwe bagcwala izinkalo thina omama sibe sishiswa amats hali lapha phansi*” (men are free to wonder about even during times of mourning whereas we are expected to sit wrapped in blanket as a sign of mourning) [Interview with Ndiyeni, Emadwaleni, June 12, 2006]

Simply stated Jousse maintains that whether our expressive gestures originate from psychological, physiological or mechanical factors they signal something or in Joussean language they become semiological gesticulations. He is of the opinion that the product that we see (in the case of my study, performance of songs) is in a way a form of a sign language. Fundamentally, spoken language is controlled by the mouth and is always accompanied by gestures which render expression and communication comprehensible hence the concept of manual gesticulation.

2.3.1.2.2 Rhythmism

By Rhythmism, Jousse refers to the sense of order and logic that is found in man's environment, which is basically rhythmic in nature. Rhythm fulfils an intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical role and in so doing controls man to produce expressions which are logical. In agreement Conolly (2001:326) states that "without rhythm, there is no order/logic, and without order/logic there can be no meaning/sense". According to Jousse, a wide range of ethnic milieus have a natural dependence on the principle of Rhythmism. The songs collected for this study attest to this fact where the beauty of the songs is realised in the rhythm that accompanies the sound. While in western environments this rhythm is realised with an accompaniment of some musical instruments this is not a case with Zwelibomvu songs. Through co-ordination of the entire body and without any musical instrument these women capture the attention of the audience who supported by this rhythm spontaneously become part of the performance.

2.3.1.2.3 Bilateralism

In the context of Jousse, bilateralism refers to the notion that man is naturally balanced with a left and right side, a front and back, and a top and a bottom. Jousse argues that the balance and the rhythm combine and become instinctually embedded with the rhythms of the body function. In the process rhythmic performance of a wide range of daily activities which require both physical strength and skill are achieved. Jousse (2000:215) observes that in many societies throughout the world children choose to learn rhythmically and sing out aloud in a balanced singsong way. This phenomenon is not restricted to children but extends to adults as the songs in the present study will demonstrate. In the rendition of their songs, women in my study engage in an orderly movement as their bodies follow certain directions. They either move forwards, backwards or sideways simultaneously. If otherwise the movement is intended to create a particular aesthetic effect.

2.3.1.2.4 Formulism

According to Jousse formulism is readily observable in traditional texts such as proverbs, nursery rhymes, songs and stories. It refers to the fixed pattern which is structured through constant and repetitive use of phrases or discrete units of meaning in human expression. It is balanced and rhythmical and therefore easy to remember. Jousse maintains that formulism operates at “all levels of cosmological interaction”, from the macroscopic to the microscopic, and is a “product of the energies of Bilateralism and Rhythmism” (Conolly, 2001:121). In my study formulism is found where certain phrases of songs are repeated to create a particular effect. This usually happens in the form of leader/chorus exchanges in which the leader sings a line to which others respond by verbatim repetition or by singing completely different words. This phenomenon is notable even in songs that are poetic in nature such as Zwelibomvu women’s solo songs known as *ukushoza*.

While each of the four laws has, for convenience, been treated individually, ideally all four should be understood as a coherent unit. Indeed the discussion above has demonstrated how interconnected they are. Jousse himself acknowledges that the actions that we see are a result of a number of processes that unconsciously precede them; hence the necessity of energy even during “motor activity” which involves inhibition of any movement from taking place (1990:8). Chapters dealing with primary data will elaborate on these laws.

2.3.2 Weedon’s Social Construction and Feminist post structuralism

In the second edition of her work, Weedon (1997) elaborates on the ideas of power as something that is not perceived as a property of powerful groups; men, the upper class, capitalists or whatever, but rather as argued by Michel Foucault (1990) as something deployed in discourse. In this sense, social power is perceived in and through discourses through the definition of objects and social subjects themselves which contribute to the making of what we are as people. In the light of this statement practices and relations between people are brought into being as a result of those socially constructed bodies of knowledge that we call “the social sciences”.

Weedon (1987) perceives patriarchal power as structural and existing in institutions and social practices rather than merely being individual intentions. In its broader sense patriarchy generally refers to “a system of male domination over women” (Walker, 1990:1). Within the household this domination is not restricted to women but also includes sons and junior male kin. In such cases the father is the head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line, the children belonging to the father’s clan.

African tradition is clearly patriarchal, at least in Southern Africa. Women are seen as completely different from, and inferior to, men. They are even expected to observe taboos, rules and boundaries that are not applicable to the lives of men. This is a continuation of a similar phenomenon described in Jousse (1990:36) where he focuses on how the practices of patriarchy have become so inherent that women in mourning, for example, adhere to this practice even when the normally expected period has expired.

The theory further posits that power rests on the societal meaning validated by biological and sexual distinguishing features. Women are thus defined in relation to the male norm with the result that women’s welfare is subordinated to that of men. This brings about the notion of gender and power. The label “gender” can be understood in at least two ways; as a grammatical category as well as a social category. In a grammatical sense it means the classification of general nouns or pronouns as masculine-feminine. Some languages, for example, German, has three genders (Hornby, 1989:512). In this study, however, ‘gender’ is used in a latter sense, as a social category.

While “gender” and “sex” are clearly distinct terms there is a tendency to confuse them. In practically every male dominated society there exists a belief that gender differences mirror sex differences while in actual fact this should not be the case. Sex or innate differences are natural or biological and cannot be undone. On the contrary gender disparities, being man-made have their source in culture and are thus reversible. Talbot (1998:7) gives a precise picture when she carefully elaborates on this distinction where she defines sex as biologically founded and gender by contrast as socially constructed. She furthermore argues that gender is an important division which has enormous significance for an individual in all societies since “[b]eing born male or female has far reaching consequences for an individual” (1998:7). This contention

refutes a perception that gender differences mirror innate ones. The biological differences between the sexes are often no more significant than those between individuals.

Furthermore, there are roles which are natural to women and cannot be taken over by men. These are for example, child bearing and breastfeeding. In my view, these roles point to a natural superiority of women over men. Unfortunately the same roles linked with motherhood are taken advantage of where they are seen as limiting factors and put women into a secondary role in society. In the past, for example, women rarely secured high positions for themselves, the argument being that should they fall pregnant they will need a long maternity leave which would in turn badly affect productivity. The unfortunate situation is, as observed by Talbot (1998:157) that:

As domestic social subjects-as wives, mothers, daughters-women are expected to do whatever work is necessary in the maintenance of their families, regardless of how arduous and unpleasant it may be. But when it comes to the job market, arduousness and unpleasantness are used as reasons for excluding women from doing what is traditionally men's work on the basis of beliefs about femininity.

Similarly, within the Zwelibomvu community labour is divided on gender lines. Females partake in tasks that centre on home such as tilling the land and repairing their house as it can be seen in some of the contexts from which the songs for this study were collected. Men's labour is mostly outdoors either far away from home or in the case of younger boys out in the veld looking after the livestock. Attesting to the presence of these gender divides, some of the lyrics of the songs collected for this study make reference to these factors [cf ilima songs by woman from Ezimbokodweni district].

The theory is appropriate in this study, which examines gender and power passively accepted or actively challenged in Zulu social system mainly for its presupposition of the "subject" as being a product of social construct.

Finally, using Social Constructionist and Feminist post structuralism approach as part of my framework, the thesis attempts to examine and analyse the naturally held and embraced ideology within patriarchal societies; of women being inferior. In this regard Anderson and Zinsser's (1988: xiv) assertion holds true when they claim that in as much as there are many

factors which have limited women's lives, negative cultural traditions have proved the most powerful and the most resistant to change.

By adopting a feminist approach this examination and analysis will be in the form of presenting the songs and responses to the interviews collected from my field research. Feminism is a specific kind of political discourse that looks at customs, practices, people and events from the women's point of view and with an emancipatory aim (Talbot, 1998:149). In view of the fact that in many parts of the world this point of view is never considered, feminism becomes a critical and theoretical approach devoted to the struggle against those forces that have kept women down through history, that is, patriarchy and sexism.

Feminism goes beyond simple disapproving of patriarchy. It also objects to dominant discourses in literary practice that look at women in terms of what makes them different, and inferior, to men. It challenges the idea of judging women negatively by applying to them the standards of men, and then stating that women are less capable or less accurate than men. It also challenges generally accepted gender roles traditionally assigned to males and females by custom rather than by nature.

While Marxists, for example, generally concentrate on the exploitation of the lower classes by the upper classes, a feminist discourse takes the issue further and criticizes such a stance. Its argument is that Marxism ignores the fact that within those exploited classes there are women who are doubly exploited; first by those in the upper classes and secondly by those with whom they share the same class. This concern was what gave rise to early feminism.

However, it must be borne in mind that feminist approach is not a monolithic process but rather one that incorporates various argumentative schools of thought. The focus, as far as this study is concerned, is feminism's common commitment to the cause of objection against conventional male and female role designation in society.

It is therefore legitimate that post structural feminist theory as presented by Weedon (1987) forms part of the theoretical framework underpinning my study. It is also a widely held and well documented theory in sociology literature that our socialization has a lot to do with what we become, as we grow older. The way young girls and boys are socialized impacts on them for the rest of their lives (Malherbe (2000). A testimony to Malherbe manifests itself among the

women I interacted with, suggesting particular trend of their socialization with regard to their daily lives. Social Constructionist and Post Structural Feminist Theory such as the one supported by Weedon could contribute in changing the mind set of the Zulu people. Ideally, the ideas raised above could be summarized through the feminist claim by Chege (2005:114) who argues:

Feminist-inspired scholarship has shown gender as being not naturally given, but as derived from the society in which individuals live. It involves a society's use of biological differences as the starting point to define what it means to be male and female. In societies characterized by dominance (patriarchy), gender is an expression of political power that enshrines rigid stratification of gender relations to ensure the political domination by men and the subordination of women.

2.3.3 Scott's Model of hidden and public transcripts: Patriarchy and power

It was alluded to earlier that gender should be an integral part of any discussion that takes into cognizance patriarchal issues. Subsequently, Scott's (1999) model of power, domination and subordination, as argued through public and hidden transcripts reinforces the two earlier orientations underpinning my study. In this way it is hoped that the approach will seal any loopholes that the two approaches might have and thus put the entire study into perspective.

2.3.3.1 Background of Scott's model

Scott (1990) developed this approach in an effort "to make sense of class relations in a Malay village", (1990: x). The analytical strategy begins with the premise that structurally similar forms of domination will bear a family resemblance to one another. These similarities in the cases of slavery, serfdom and caste subordination are fairly straight forward. Each represents an institutionalized arrangement for appropriating labor, goods, and services from subordinate population. As a formal matter, subordinate groups in these forms of domination have no political or civil rights, and their status is fixed by birth. Social mobility, in principle if not in practice, is precluded. The ideologies justifying domination of this kind include formal assumptions about inferiority and superiority, which, in turn, find expression in certain rituals or etiquette regulating contact between strata. (1990: x -xi).

Aware of a rather very different reason that led to the conception and development of the model, Scott's work is still relevant in understanding and explaining the role of songs within the Zwelibomvu community. Taking into account that there are oppressive cultural practices that

Zwelibomvu women consider themselves subjected to, songs become one of the media of addressing such practices. My interest in Scott's work lies with the territory of subordination; which according to this model belongs to a third territory. This area of the politics of camouflage and ambiguity is found tactically between the hidden and public conscripts and takes place in public view. However, it is intended to have a twofold connotation or to protect the individuality of the actors. I therefore consider it appropriate to provide an overview of the entire model in order to present a clearer picture and to contextualize this territory.

2.3.3.2 Public and Hidden transcripts

As a starting point to this discussion Scott's (1990:4) quotation is appropriate:

[A]ny analysis based exclusively on the public transcript is likely to conclude that subordinate groups endorse the terms of their subordination and are willing, even enthusiastic partners in that subordination.

According to Scott, the term "public transcript" is shorthand for recounting the unrestricted communication between subordinates and those who dominate. In this context the term 'public' means the action that is openly acknowledged to the other party in the power relationship and 'transcript' means more or less its juridical sense of a complete testimony of what was said. The entire testimony nevertheless would also comprise of nonverbal communication acts such as gestures and expressions. Within the model, this is in fact the territory in which my study fits.

To elaborate further, while Scott's model seems stern and radical, it is relevant in this thesis where we encounter some forms of domination and subordination even if at a "subconscious" levels which are communicated through songs.

Once again, because the songs are presented in public, they become a revelation of what was fully explained earlier in Joussean theory, called "socio-cultural archive" and "register" which are significant aspects in the understanding of communities we study. These songs, make use of these "gestures and expressions" to present their "hidden" transcripts.

Public transcript is the self-portrait of the dominant as they would have themselves seen. The model is designed to be imposing, to assert and naturalize the power of dominant group and to

mask or euphemize the dirty linen of their authority. There could be a danger of taking this manifestation of authority at face value as it may in fact be a ploy. The picture presented here shows that if one were to solely rely on public transcript, the reality of the whole account about power relations would, as attested by Scott (1990:4), not present an objective view of things, but rather that it would be one sided.

Given that ideological struggles tend to grow best when shielded from direct observation, I was led to examine the social sites where this resistance can germinate, which is through songs. This is because these songs provide a forum for a break in the pretence of how the dominant forces would want to be seen and as such Scott (1990: 4 -5) further confirms this when he attests:

The hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those of stage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript.

Zwelibomvu women's songs make out a case for a different study of power that reveals disagreement, pressure, and immanent probabilities. In that way women are saved from throwing up their hands in frustration by the fact that the hidden transcript is typically expressed openly even though in disguised form. Through their songs women imply a review of power while hiding behind anonymity or behind inoffensive understandings of their behaviour.

In summary all subordinate groups establish, out of their suffering a "hidden transcript" that corresponds to analysis of power spoken at the back of the dominant. The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly stated. A contrast of the hidden transcript of the weak with that of the powerful and of both hidden transcripts to the public transcript of power relations offers a significantly fresh way of perceiving resistance to domination (1990:xii). To support this argument, while analyzing autobiographical poetry, Furniss and Gunner (1995:15) observe that through this genre, women engage in topics such as "jealousy ...the pain of polygyny, the irony of unfaithful husbands who are impotent in their own beds".

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the three approaches informing my study. Jousse's Oral Style examined the oral genre in which performance takes place. Weedon's ideas on Social Constructionist and Post Structuralist Feminist theories were highlighted. Finally, Scott's model of hidden and public transcripts was aligned with both Jousse's and Weedon's exposition thus giving this theoretical framework its multidisciplinary approach.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

Numerous authors and scholars have brought forward their views on songs generally while others have focused on specific areas of this genre. Yet a number has given their broad perspectives on the subject of music. Among the possible perspectives of songs that could be reviewed, for example, are songs that address a particular religious sector, songs about nature, children's songs, songs about family or even comical songs. Since it would have been a cumbersome and unnecessary task to present all possible perspectives on the subject, only literature that seems to point toward the direction of my area of interest has been reviewed and commented upon in the following section.

This chapter will focus on literature review and it is aimed at providing an anchor for and justification for undertaking this study. This will be done through outlining and analyzing the contribution of earlier studies on women's songs undertaken within South Africa. Notwithstanding this factor, scholarly works conducted beyond the borders of South Africa have also been reviewed with a view to broadening understanding of the research topic. Accordingly, this chapter looks at various works which bear some relevance to contemporary women's songs related as they relate to my current study conducted within the African continent. This performance genre, it is hoped, will emphasize and clarify specific women's concerns and how they are, if at all, mediated through this genre.

This literature review will also assist in drawing conclusions about the similarities and differences between what concerns Zwelibomvu women who are the focus of my study and other women generally within the South African context.

3.2 Contextualizing Zwelibomvu within which the genres take place

In the introductory chapter it was highlighted that the present study incorporates Zulu culture and traditions as they apply to and are practiced by the community of Zwelibomvu. Through their verbal expressions in song, women present their society's way of life which provides the context of women's performance. In this regard Krige's (1950) work will be seen to be particularly relevant as it addresses pertinent issues.

Zwelibomvu is significantly a community of Zulu ethnic group. Appropriate for this study are various topics addressed by Krige (1950) in *The Social System of the Zulus*, in which an outline of certain "rites de passage" that mark the transition of the Zulu people from childhood to adulthood are presented. These are relevant for this study as ceremonies such as those that celebrate coming of age as well as marriage are prevalent in the community under study. Significantly Krige's work is built around Zulu culture and tradition. This tradition which informs my study echoes Zwelibomvu community whose rituals and social gatherings which point to Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) orientation have been dealt with in the first chapter.

While the study focuses on women, it should be clarified that their male counterparts have also been included in order to present a bigger picture of women existing within a context of which men are part. Goffman (1987) supports this stance in the claim that feminist researchers are said to research men especially those who hold positions of power with a view to investigate how gender and its disparity should be understood. With the above rationalization, studying women in isolation to men would have limited the conclusions that will be arrived at in this thesis. In fact, Krige deals with the philosophy underlying the rituals of coming of age and marriage ceremonies with great care. Furthermore, she draws on the issues surrounding *ilobolo* (bridewealth) and *hlonipha* (respect), which are some of the broader key problems highlighted in this study and which are practices and value systems that exist as a result of the entrenched norms about man and women in the African and more specifically for this study, in the Zulu culture.

By covering a variety of rites of passage for both boys and girls until they reach adulthood, Krige's research data helps in the justification of my inclusion of the various stages/or age categories of women and men in this study. Thus, this study will further explore to what extent

these categories have an impact on the nature of songs and functions in which they are performed.

3.3 Scope of Literature Review

The following review is not undertaken in any particular order of significance. Rather it serves as an illustration that my present study contributes to a wider field of scholarly research which has been dedicated to the field of songs and how the subject is perceived by different societies. This review therefore, brings on board general issues on songs and also those songs which have a direct relationship with women issues. Due to the complex nature of the songs covered in my study, instead of perhaps categorizing my literature review into themes I have decided to categorize it into three broad sections, namely:

- **Literature review of related studies in the African continent**
- **Literature review of studies conducted within South African borders**
- **Literature review of studies on women songs conducted by Nguni women**

As the discussion progresses the justification for the above will become even clearer especially considering the porous genre boundaries of genres that will be explored in later chapters. Even as the discussion unravels from a broader picture (such as review of literature in the context of the African continent) to a narrow situation (such as literature review of Nguni societies) the porous genre boundaries will become clearer.

3.3.1 Literature review of related studies in the African continent

Beyond the borders of South Africa scholars have documented songs and the occasions on which these are likely to be sung. Finnegan (1970) is one such scholar who has researched extensively on African oral studies and from whose work most scholars have been inspired. She has contributed substantially in the area of oral literature where she explores various topical and political issues mediated through songs. In East Africa, for example, Finnegan argues that songs can be used as a means of reporting and commenting on current affairs, for political pressure, for propaganda and to reflect and mould public opinion.

The work of Finnegan contributes to the knowledge of where and when women are likely to use songs as an avenue of commenting about their societal concerns. The discussion that she engages in with regards to Acholi girls married to soldiers, for instance, provides a broad theme of songs as coping mechanism within this context. Finnegan (ibid) accounts that it is not in the letters that these young women exchange with their men who are soldiers that their physical needs as women are fulfilled but rather, that they derive comfort in the songs of separation with their men that they sing so wholeheartedly.

The concern with what songs can achieve that Finnegan addresses is taken further in later work (1992) in which she sees oral poetry and songs as a way of settling conflicts between individuals or groups in social settings as well as in politics. Two cases presented by Finnegan and which are relevant to my current research involve the west Nigerians. In response to their frustration with the federal elections of 1959 they composed satirical political songs. Faced with similar concerns, the Bashi singers in the Congo also composed songs which were sung in the workplace. Of relevance to my research is the function that these songs fulfilled in times of great stress. These singers illustrate that songs can be seen as weapons to draw attention to what affects them as a people.

On the issue of women's songs, Finnegan points out that among the Maori and Chilean society women used songs as an expression of their pent up emotions due to their subordination and marital problems; a concern that will be explored in depth through interviews with women of varying ages from Zwelibomvu who are mostly in polygamous marriages.

3.3.1.1 A review of Nigerian literature

Yoruba and the Chopi women, Finnegan further claims, also use this accepted medium where they publicly voice their opinions of their lives in general. Whilst such songs lighten their burden as women engage in their daily chores they also comment about family matters and give women an opportunity to express themselves. It would then be critical to investigate whether, this is indeed one of the roles that songs play for Zwelibomvu women especially since one of the most common activities that rural women coming from areas similar to Zwelibomvu is organizing themselves to *ilima*, which is when a group of neighbouring men as well as women come together to help on a certain task.

A study by Barber (1991) brings me to a conclusion that Nigerian society resembles Zulu society in more ways than one. For that reason I have reviewed Barber's work with a view to discover if genres are divided along similar lines. *Oriki*, a women genre of Yoruba oral poetry which Barber addresses in her study is similar to *ukushoza* (a poetic song genre which refers to specified solo dance songs), in which Zwelibomvu women feature. For the Yoruba women, this genre is mainly performed by women (in the presence of other women). Barber maintains that it is not institutionalized even though it captures history, society and the spiritual world of the Yoruba culture and embodies everything in existence. She further compares it to a male domain and high-ranking mostly institutionalized form known as *itan* (narrative). This case illustrates that Nigerian society places more value on men than on women even though in essence the latter is the backbone of their indigenous economy. To support the argument Barber forges continuity where she looks at the derogatory references to the tasks women perform which are known as *ise obinrin* as opposed to man's work which is known as *ise okunrin*. The similarities that I draw from this narration point to the fact that the two cultures put men's poetry in a public sphere and women's in a private domain. A similar situation applies to Zulu women's poetry and is well captured in Gunner (1984:62) where she observes:

Women's *izibongo* are never performed at large public gatherings in the flamboyant and martial atmosphere of *ukugiya* as are men's, but rather in small social gatherings at a homestead, in doors after the main dances on a large occasion such as wedding.

3.3.1.2 Review of Zairian literature

The study conducted by Fabian (1978) on the dimension of cultural expression is quite fascinating. After undertaking a study on the Lubumbashu people of Zaire, Fabian remarkably documents and interprets the three fields of cultural expression, namely, popular song/poetry, popular theology/religious speculation and popular visual arts/imagery of popular painting all of which seem relevant for this study. Whereas the link between popular songs and religious conjectures appear to have some connection, at a first glance popular paintings seem to be a misfit. Nevertheless Fabian's thorough analysis brings everything to a coherent whole.

According to his observation, Fabian (1978) reckons that popular song belongs essentially to public places of entertainment whereby images of separation and loss, such as illustrated in the archive of the Lubumbashu station, form part of the conceptual framework of *La Voix du Zaire*

(1978:318). The message or function of these songs is to address everyday difficulties of married life and in which it is suggested that urban alienation could be resolved through the return to the village. The context points to a period of relative stability in the historical -political situation in the country as illustrated in the emphasis of slow progress embodied even in popular songs such as is demonstrated in Fabian (1978:322) :*Mbiombio utakosa; polepole utapata* (Go fast and you will fail; go slowly and you will reach your aim)

The Jamaa teaching with its version of the Genesis story of Adam and Eve and its explicit sexual interpretation of Eve's sin, for example, Fabian argues, is similar to the pivotal theme of separation, loss and suffering found in popular songs. The context coincides with decolonization, hence stability, prior to which Catholicism had been unscathed.

Fabian describes the mermaid pictures which are prevalent in the genre and argues that they project the male-female relationship on concrete socio-economic, political conditions even if in a magical connotation. This, he continues, is dependant on the oral lore that bestows a common ground for visual imagery. Their context refers to post-independence phenomenon and these were displayed in places of entertainment and commerce and became an integral part of the urban living room thus emphasizing the concept of privacy.

The description provided by Fabian of how people express their feelings resembles that of Mkhambathini women, a sector of women separated by a few kilometers from Zwelibomvu, who indicated that through hand woven-crafted statues or dolls women tell their stories about the cycle of HIV infection and how it devastates their families. Because they cannot talk openly to their men they make use of these illustrations to clarify or explain their predicament (Discussion with Magwaza, Durban, October, 2006).

The later work of Fabian (1990) gives a description of integrated publicly articulated ideas about power that emanates from public events. He documents and describes the stages that lead to a play that was informed by the proverb "power is eaten whole" (le pouvoir se mange entire) . While he denounces any stand regarding the current politics of Zaire, the study strengthens the notion of his earlier argument that popular culture incorporates a multifaceted expression of life experiences. He argues that involvement in performance produces ways of perception that cannot always be condensed to verbal representation or analysis and therefore encourages moving "from informative to performative ethnography". In the same way as one Zwelibomvu

women attested, there is hope that one day “our songs will yield good harvest even though for now it is still landing on deaf ears.

3.3.1.3 Review of Tanzanian literature

A number of concerns are addressed in Barber’s (1997) *Readings in African Popular Culture*. While her work covers studies already published in some acclaimed scholarly journals, other contributions are worth drawing from this collection for purposes of demonstrating facets and themes of songs that are dealt with. The study conducted by Graebner (in Barber, 1997) who examines the songs of Remmy Ongala, for example requires attention. Analysing the songs of Remmy Ongala, Graebner sees a function of an artist as that of confronting society with a message of awareness. The message carried in these songs is that instead of associating musicians with derogatory connotations, people must listen to real issues addressed through music. The confrontation stems from the observation that in Tanzania musicians “are commonly considered to be *wathuni*, i.e. vagabonds, drunkards, drug takers, while their music is enjoyed by the same people who call them these names” (in Barber 1997:110). Thus Ongala is giving his society another perspective from the one that he considers incorrect and thus his songs serve both as a corrective and didactic measure to his societies’ obscure and skewed perceptions of musicians in their country.

Against the biographical sketch of Remmy Ongala that Graebner relates, it becomes apparent that Ongala’s songs depict social problems and urban poverty as he also experienced them. He utters these words himself; “all the songs I sing result from the difficulties I had in the past...I speak out for my fellow brothers” (Nyantori/Mshanga, in Barber, 1997:113). The above reflection could be compared to what one of the composers interviewed indicated when she alleged:

“Amaculo amaningi owezwe namhlanje aqanjwa yimina ngikhumbula indaba eyashaqisa bonke abantu bakulesi sigodi sasePhangweni. Kwakukhona ingoduso eyatholakala isiphinge nomunye umlisa nokwaholela ekubeni lo owayeyilobola ayishiy e. Nakuba abantu babefisa izingane zabo zamantombazane zifunde isifundo ngale ndaba kepha babesaba ngisho nokuyixoxa le ndaba besabela izimpilo zabo kulo mndeni wale ntombazane, mina njengomuntu onesiphiwo sokuqamba amaculo ngakuthola kuyithuba elihle ukubakhulumela la bantu ngendlela yokuqamba amaculo asibeka sinjengoba sinjalo isimo sezinto” [Interview with Ntombiyenkosi, ePhangweni, 2 September 2006]

(Most of the songs you heard today were composed recalling an event that shocked the whole of ePhangweni (one of the five researched areas comprising Zwelibomvu) district when a prospective bride misbehaved by engaging in a sexual relationship with another man while the two families were engaged in *ilobolo* (bride price) negotiations leading to her being jilted by her prospective husband. Even though people wanted their daughters to learn from that experience, they nevertheless feared to discuss the matter openly in case they were victimized by the family of the girl in question. Because I am equipped with a skill of composing songs, I saw it fit that through song I should speak for my fellow people who were affected by such behaviour but were in no position to openly discuss it). [Interview with Ntombiyenkosi, ePhangweni, 2 September 2006)

With the history of Tanzania lacking in record industry and Radio Tanzania controlled by the state, it meant that Ongala took it upon himself to address these concerns at nightclub performances. Another dimension in Ongala's songs is that of bringing hope to the unemployed and urging them to find themselves any type of work for "if you live without working you are a burden to your kin ...[and] work is work, don't choose" (in Barber 1997:114). Ongala's music, I would argue, got through to the masses who would have known his life and considered him as a prophet bringing news of a better future despite a gloomy present; himself being a living proof that if one works hard to change one's circumstances, with perseverance and hard work it is possible; even if it means choosing a career that is despised by others; as demonstrated through musician in Tanzania.

Zwelibomvu women Maskanda find that through their songs they achieve a number of objectives; they get invited even in urban areas where they entertain the crowds thus augmenting family income.

3.3.2.4 Review of Zimbabwean literature

On a different note Pongweni's work on "The Chimurenga Songs of the Zimbabwean war of liberation" has at its core a binding force of a people and culture that is being threatened and as such calls for a united front. These songs appeared to achieve a lot more than was accomplished by political speeches and/or writings. In the words of Pongweni (in Barber 1997: 63) the music was "adapted from their traditions and history, and [...] articulated the pressing issues of the day more eloquently than any political speech or historical treatise. He goes on to add that "[the songs] required and facilitated the participation of all (1997:65)". Accordingly, the artist's use of "linguistic camouflage" in addressing the socio political issues served as a vehicle to avoid arrest for politicizing the masses. For the oppressed people, Chimurenga served as a counter -

propaganda to such claims as exemplified in Ian Smith's "My Africans are the happiest on the continent- with the exception of a few malcontents" (in Barber, 1997:65).

In that way people were sensitized that their liberation was in their own hands and that it could be brought about through convincing "blacks to vote in an election in which a disproportionately high number of seats was earmarked for the white minority" (ibid); hence the following lines in one such song:

Come sit everybody and listen to me:
I'll sing you a story to help the country.
The road to your future is really clear
Your vote is quite secret, with nothing to fear

So make up your minds to vote -you will be glad
'Coz people who don't vote -they will be sad
The new constitution is here to stay
You can't help your country by running away.

...

Now jump everybody and make your own choice
The best politicians don't use a loud voice (in Barber 1997: 65).

Chimurenga songs reached out to the rural masses by using traditional genre which highlighted what was lost; both the hidden and transparent contradictions inherent in the colonial hegemony under which the majority Blacks were living. This was achieved by bringing the common cultural ground incorporating ancestral spirits and adapting it to Christianity so as to accommodate those who had adopted Christian ways. The most important message that the artist spread was that unity would bring them victory.

The above reflection is similar to what Zondi and Canonici (2005:98) bring forward with regards to the protest poetry of Vilakazi in which they remark that Vilakazi "shows his shock -awakening to humanity's inhumanity to man in the application of a blind heartless capitalist system". Furthermore, Showalter, in Barber (1997) makes the point that women have a story of their own to tell, the historical thematic and artistic importance of which has been sabotaged by

the patriarchal values which dominate our culture. Showalter cautions that because of the complex issues around gender construction and stratification in African women themselves, women have been denied the analytical tools to question assumptions made in critical circles about such areas as popular culture. Representations of women in traditional literature, folklore, art and rituals indicate that there is an ambivalent attitude towards women.

3.3.2.5 Review of Egyptian Literature

Another fascinating research is the one that concerns a highly formulaic performed poetic genre, called *ghinnawas*. This study was conducted by Abu-Lughod (1986) and it tackles a rather sensitive subject on relationships. He talks about how relationship between a society's official ideology and individual experience is mediated within a Bedouin society of the Western Desert of Egypt. Also known as Awlad'Ali, Abu-Lughod observed that this society was so steeped in the ideology of honor and modesty. After spending two years among these people, Lois Beck, reviewing this study, argues that it is an outstanding and perceptive analysis of an oral lyric poetry which provides a significant contribution to the study of culture theory, oral literature, gender ideology and Middle Eastern society (ibid.). According to this discourse the public sphere is characterized by everyday ordinary language interaction. As such individuals strive to portray themselves as conforming to general personal ideals and seek to appear controlled while denying their sexuality. Accordingly, for Awlad'Ali, honor is related to conforming to prevailing social norms whereas in reality contradictory discourses on love co-exist.

Through their highly formulaic performed poetic genre, called *ghinnawas*, Awlad'Ali, mediates contradictions by commenting on their personal fortunes and tribulations in love and express sentiments that go against the principles of modesty. Formulaic style also marks utterances as extraordinary and sets them apart whereby people would sympathize with the sentiments expressed in poetry but condemn the same ones when expressed in a non poetic manner (1986:239). Thus through their oral lyric poetry women express personal feelings that would otherwise be perceived as violating their moral code had they been expressed in an everyday ordinary language. The phenomenon is evident in song # *Anowagqok'amajazi* (you must wear condoms) in which women allude to not being in control of their husbands when it comes to implementing what they say through song (still to quote relevant interview) where what they sing does not necessarily get translated into practice.

In the medium of their poetry, this society thus expresses attachments to their loved ones that which if communicated in everyday social interaction would harm reputations and put at risk

claims to respectability. In this way *ghinnawa*, due to its formulaic nature, renders content impersonal thus permitting people to distance themselves from the sentiments they articulate if revealed to the wrong audience by claiming that “it was just a song”.

In the same way that Abu-Lughod's, poetry cloaks statements in the veils of formula, convention and tradition, thus making it fit to carry messages about the self that breach the official cultural ideals, Zwelibomvu women find their refuge in the form of poetry known as *ukushoza*. While poetry for Abu-Lughod's society serves both women and men as a means of expressing sentiments of weakness that violate the honor code, the Zwelibomvu kind, *ukushoza* fulfills a similar function but only for women. After all men are not subjected to the same subjugation that is experienced by women within the Zulu society. It would seem that the situation would be harder for women in the absence of this poetic genre. One other function of poetry in Abu-Lughod's study is to express the sentiments of romantic love that breach modesty code without incurring the censure of the community or losing the self esteem derived from exemplifying the moral ideals of this society.

3.3.2.6 An aspect of literature on East African women's songs

Undoubtedly, in their research, Vail and White (1991) touch on some aspects of life as experienced by Zwelibomvu community. Among various issues that they address, two stand out with regard to their relevance in my current study. The first one is a striking discussion of how *Vimbuza*, a type of spirit possession, grants the power of poetic license to women who later contend not to remember anything they said through the songs (and was granted to them) while in the state of unconsciousness. The second is based on *Paiva* as an example of songs that portray a society's disapproval against authority and in that way interpret and criticize social history.

Vail and White's (1991) provide an interesting historical dimension of the role of songs among Tumbuka women. The authors engage in a striking discussion of how *Vimbuza*, a type of spirit possession, in a form of social therapy that is initiated through the power of poetic license, aided women with a public voice of protest to attack authority and to make their complaints heard. *Vimbuza* is a noteworthy phenomenon in that “between 70 to 75 percent of Tumbuka women experience it, most of them poor and uneducated” (1991:231).

The possessed woman alleged not to remember anything she said through the songs while in the trance. The result was that she was listened to, given gifts and thereafter re-incorporated into her community. The songs are rooted in the history of the Tumbuka which records that they were conquered by the Ngoni, a foreign group that migrated into central Africa around 1856. The Ngoni suppressed many of the Tumbuka customs such as the matrilineal systems which women, in particular, cherished. Among the diversity of themes dealt with in these spirit songs are conquest, political reorganisation, pre-Ngoni rule and gender struggle, to mention but a few. The persuasive voice of the spirit through *Vimbuza* songs, provided women with a public voice of protest to attack authority and to make their complaints heard. Vail and White (1991:244) note:

[Women] used the licensed voices of the spirits as a way of seeking a measure of spiritual power and as an avenue of protest and resistance in an increasingly stressful world dominated by others.

In the name of *Vimbuza* the woman singer could, for example, defy both the law as well as domestic etiquette (1991:244). The songs prevail right up to now but they are now used especially by women who, because of their individual anxiety in local society, need to have their message imperishable both by the presence of the mystic and the loyal involvement of understanding members of the community.

Thus even though this aspect is not covered in the current study it is still relevant since the concept of “the voices of the spirits” is quite relevant at diviners’ rituals practiced in Zwelibomvu. One case in support of the above is one of the only two ceremonies I attended in which among the initiates of the day; a young girl of approximately 13 years was one of the initiates. On enquiry an informer told me that the girl had allegedly been raped by a close relative. In order to protect the offender the family forbade her to ever utter a word about the incident to anyone, and this, at the victim’s expense. For fear of punishment the girl abided.

Sooner or later the girl is alleged to have begun acting in a very strange way and claiming to have “the voices of the spirits” who told her several things. When the family realized what was happening they did not associate it with the girl’s recent experiences but they called a diviner who, in turn, concluded that the girl needed to undergo training to become a diviner as her ancestors wanted her to answer the calling. In my opinion, this was a girl’s psychological strategy to deal with what was going on with her mentally. She was pleading for attention which

she certainly did receive, albeit in a different way. (Interview held on April 19 at the initiate's graduation-Both the informer and the child's name have been withheld to protect relevant parties)

While Zwelibomvu community, in the form of *imigubho yezangoma*, (diviners' ceremonies) during which *ukuphuthula kwamathwasa* (initiates' graduation) takes place, subscribes to a similar notion that Vail and White's (1991) address in their work, however, this aspect is not covered in the current study. The reason for their exclusion was that owing to the cost of these ceremonies they are merely celebrated when many initiates need to graduate and as one interviewee stated: held at:

“Kungcono ukulinda baze babe baningana abaphothulayo ngoba lo msebenzi udla imali eningi” [ePhangweni- Mama Malevu: 19th of April 2006]
(It is better to wait until a substantial number of *amathwasa* (initiates) are ready to graduate before one can perform as ceremony because such a ceremony demands a lot of money).

Another reason for their exclusion was that most of the rites towards being initiated as a diviner are private and thus not easily accessible. As such I was exposed to only two such ceremonies which helped me to compare and contrast Vail and White's discussion of “the possession of the dispossessed”. This is similar to the stages that lead towards being a diviner.

Another dimension of songs presented by Vail and White (1991) is that songs can also depict a society's protest against authority and in that way interpret and critique social history. In *Power and the praise poem*, they cover this area adequately in their discussion and analysis of ‘Paiva’; a satirical protest poem about the single sugar company. ‘Paiva’, the founder of the sugar company in the lower Zambezi for over eight decades from 1890 -1978 is a good example of a set of conjectures about poetic performance held throughout Southern Africa that if the grievance was articulated in song, there would be no argument. Entrenched in Marxist ideology of exploitation by the owners of the means of production, the authors argue that songs of this nature, concerned with particular individuals lose their relevance when the object disappears from the scene; nonetheless ‘Paiva’ cannot be forgotten for it is about the people's suffering. In this sense the song may be viewed in the light of issues on the role of memory in preserving people's histories addressed by Werbner (in Nyairo, 2005). Accordingly because the songs were passed down from generation to generation the children came to know of the suffering their people had to put up (1991:198).

A remarkable observation about this particular song is that it has not changed despite altered circumstances but rather through it, history is conveyed in a very striking manner. The argument that through songs even the highest authority, such as “Paiva” can be accessible is apt in the following words reported by Mapeia Quelimane in an interview on the nature of “Paiva”:

Then on Sundays, when they stopped work, they used to say that Paiva was only an ordinary stupid man. We got his money for him, yet we got paid so little. So they made a song about him – Group interview, 20 September 1978, Mopeia, Quelimane district Mozambique in Vail and Landeg (1991:198).

The above discussion is an illustration of the song as protest. It indicates power that is carried in songs; that through songs people can be empowered and address issues that they would, under normal circumstances not tackle. The said people may have suffered a lot but the fact that they were able to send the message in this medium provided them an avenue to express their frustrating condition; that of being overworked for meagre wages while Paiva kept all the profits. Despite their worked up bodies, the song kept their spirits cheerful.

In my study “Paiva” is relevant since it emulates songs such as those that inundated our country, South Africa during the 2006 Deputy President Jacob Zuma’s s aga. Songs such as “*Msholoz*” resounded throughout Zwelibomvu as people’s emotions were turned high during the court cases. At that particular time in our history these songs became part and parcel of the songs sung during ceremonies and social events, a phenomenon that had not been apparent prior to the said incident. They were also played in the taxis as well as from family radios in all cases, with loud speakers at their highest volumes. As such I find the presentation of the background and message of the song worth introducing here even though it will be dealt with in the relevant chapter of song analysis.

“Paiva” is also echoed in an acclaimed Zulu writer and poet, B.W. Vilakazi’s (1945) protest poems, with particular emphasis on Ezinkomponi (On the gold mines). In the medium of this poem Vilakazi efficiently broke the silence by bringing the plight of the black masses to the attention of the world when many resorted to political and mass demonstrations to address the inequalities found in South Africa during Apartheid years. In the poem, Vilakazi’s main concern lies with the enslavement of the black laborers, especially in the gold and diamond mines, responsible for the human, psychological and physical destruction of the black working

classes. As a self appointed voice of the oppressed, he used poetry as a vehicle to address discrimination experienced by his fellow black workers. One of his profound anxieties was the fact that black workers had been reduced to a class with no name, no rights, practically with no life and no soul. To that end the poem '*Ezinkomponi*' (On the gold mines) is representative of the poems in which Vilakazi articulates his commitment to the welfare of the black workers, and his protest against the insensitivity of white employers Zondi, 1995).

3.3.2.5 Review of Kenyan Literature

Ogude (2005) forges continuity with Vail and White's (1991) '*Paiva*'. In his unpublished paper he presents a remarkably strong case in which music can be read as "a political act which works through specific symbolic structures with decoding the political unconscious of performance" (2005:2) and thus serves as memory to remember Kenyan politics. He observes historical and spatial distancing techniques used in Misiani's *benga* music. Ogude places this music against Kenya's politics in which one Kenyan ethnic group, the Luo community, to which Misiani belongs, was "excluded from the state structures in Kenya" (2005:7). Misiani sees himself as a prophet and through his music, rising above the current situation of disintegration and exile.

Using metaphors pertinent to his society, he ridicules those in state power for their ability to change the playing field and influence the rules of the game to match their wellbeing so as to guarantee total power. The metaphorical idea of "the cat that ended up eating the homestead chicken" (2005:1) illuminates the derision found in Misiani's songs. Ogude's study and analysis of this dissident music which in the words of Mosolo are seen as "a hidden transcript of resistance, a variant realm of power and interests in opposition to hegemonic force" (in Ogude, 2005:2), brings him to the conclusion that performance is "an act of intervention in the public sphere in which the artist is involved in meaning making" (2005:2).

In the same way Nyairo (2005) reiterates Ogude where she perceives music as serving the purpose of sustaining memory of Kenyan politics where, in her own words, she argues that "popular music is itself a site of memory" (2005:). Since within this society control and regulation of society's memory lies with the state; which sees it as an effective tool for sustaining political power, popular music which falls outside the system of official control, therefore offers radically different readings of the past from those controlled by the state. Thus,

popular music plays a major role in presenting differences between memories constructed by marginalized groups and those upheld by officially recognized groups.

Nyairo puts her study against Connerton (in Nyairo, 2005) who sees performativity as a carrier of social history. Her study of the popular musical group called Kayamba Afrika bears witness to the broad historical picture of Kenya. She points out that the kind of memories evoked is as diverse as the groups that engage in songs. In her paper, Nyairo extensively covers the ground of Kayamba Afrika's 'Zilizopendwa' and explores how the remembrance in the revised songs fit into contemporary socio-political context.

3.4 Literature review of studies conducted within South African borders

The above discussion has concentrated on relevant research related to the study of songs that was conducted outside the borders of South Africa. My present study takes place in one of the rural villages of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. As such I consider it of utmost importance to bring on studies that have been conducted in this country especially research that takes cognizance of rural based communities. While I have chosen to look more into research that deals with people of Zulu background, I have also accommodated other ethnic groups in order to widen the understanding of issues pertinent to my study. That way conclusions arrived at will be guided by an extensive insight.

Msimang (1986) contribution on the subject of songs is very useful. In the introductory chapter of this study Msimang (1986) was quoted listing variety of the uses of songs. In fact the discussion he engages in situates songs in the context of the entire African continent. He thus creates a holistic picture which justifies the incorporation of studies that have been brought on board in the above section on literature review that tackles related studies conducted in the African continent generally. Msimang's work focuses on poetry whilst also providing the theme of music. When dealing with these issues he systematically links poetry to song thus closing the gap in the understanding of what creates poetry and song within the context of Isizulu. He deals with poems that cover a variety of themes; one such theme concentrating on music.

In the first chapter a section addressing classification of songs brought forward porous genre boundaries that are central to Zulu. Msimang's work is a good illustration of this feature whereby he writes elaborately on the themes that are fulfilled by songs. As he brings clarity on

the relationship between poetry and song he uses poetry to illustrate themes found in songs in line with the definition of song which is said to be a poem set to music and intended to be sung (Hornby, 1989:1219). Taking into consideration that *ukushoza*, (women's solo songs) is a poetic, Msimang's work is invaluable. The significance of Msimang's work can be summed up in this one phrase regarding the role of music among Zulu people, "... *uma kwenziwa noma yini ongase uyicabange leyonto iphelezelwa umculo*" (...whatever the occasion is, music will be part of it).

A recent study conducted by Stewart in (1994) documents a variety of women's songs. Her *Songs of rural Zulu women* research was aimed at examining what messages are carried in women's songs that are sung in the presence of other women as exemplified by the songs sung at cane sugar plantations of her research site in KwaZulu-Natal. The songs of Zulu rural women demonstrate how these women have found both a political and literary voice through the medium of oral poetry in the transitional stage in the history of South Africa.

The overriding theme in Stewart's songs pertains to the polygamous homesteads and the strain it causes for women. The subjects of the songs cover various themes; lamentations, protest, social commentary, women's work conditions, and frustrations with social environments. The songs having been collected in the 1990's cover lullabies and work songs which comment indirectly on the behaviour of those within the community.

The entire exercise concluded that these women have found both a political and literary voice through the medium of oral poetry in the transitional stage in the history of South Africa. Accordingly, Stewart discovered that women cease to be invisible and voiceless when they actively formulate their own meanings and traditions that challenge patriarchal values; a fact that informs one of the assumptions of the study; and that through the songs of social protest that women have actively and consciously devised, women find a channel through which to make their needs known and to resist the gender positions ascribed to them (1994:77-78).

While Stewart (1994) has indeed made a valuable contribution through her collection of rural women's songs, covering a wide range of themes, her work nevertheless has limitations. Her field work concentrated on one site, the sugar cane plantation and only focused on the same group of women. Understandingly so, the nature of her study required that she sets the parameters since the study was only undertaken in partial fulfilment of the degree for which she was studying, having completed other sections of the degree. The study shed some light on the

current study and was certainly found very relevant in the present research. In the light of her contribution, the present research took the themes further and incorporated various genres as they apply to women of various age groups found in Zwelibomvu.

The research further examines whether the crucial element of change is possible in the light of ceremonies attracting larger audiences including men. The question to be answered is whether women's "invisibility and voiceless ness" is actually better challenged in this manner rather than where women perform for fellow women as exemplified by the women engaged in sugar plantations in Stewart's research. However, Stewart's study is valuable in that it records women's concerns shared as entertainment in the presence of fellow women; thus contributing to African women's concerns.

Conducted several decades ago the study by Krige (1968) was not primarily pre-occupied with how women are viewed within a Zulu patriarchal society. Her study was rather based on girls' puberty songs focusing on how they relate to a Zulu system of beliefs and values underlying a whole group of rural activities for the good of the community; for health, morality, religion, rain, and fertility in man and beast and for combating pests and epidemics. While ritual songs in Krige's study were not concerned with the question of gender and power nonetheless this concern surfaces in her work; a point that illustrates the weightiness of women's plight within the Zulu society.

Her discussion of a number of these songs sung during what she calls *udwa*, first menstruation and *omula*, coming of age ritual ceremonies were studied in the light of *Inkosazane* (*UNomkhubulwane*) who is a personification of nature. She examined the role played by such songs in the ordering and reordering of social relations (1968: 173). A consistent observation of what runs through most of the songs is the language associated with sexual intercourse, which in my opinion gives a suggestion that women are viewed as sexual objects.

Two songs (# 8 and 10 reprinted as an appendix) serve as examples of the obscene language used for which Krige argues; even if they appear obscene they can hardly be called 'committing public obscenities' (1968:192-193). In the first one the leader sings all the lines and the chorus joins in repeating after her.

The lyrics of said songs illustrate that the language used for similar ceremonies is different from the language used in everyday encounters. More conspicuous is the vocabulary used in the chorus of the first song “*ubolo olumakhwezikhwezi*” (the penis is attractive) that is not only unfamiliar but has not been heard among the songs gathered in the present study. What is interesting is that Krige collected these songs from within KwaZulu -Natal and yet surprisingly is the fact that I find it difficult understanding the obscene language used in most of the songs she collected. As mentioned in the section that addresses key questions and problems, one of the concerns to be addressed relates to geographical boundaries and whether these can have such drastic effects on language shifts.

It would be interesting to examine the trend these songs take in the present study. The focus in the present study is rather with women issues specifically through investigating if young girls do actually transcend gender boundaries by way of addressing issues that would normally be seen as transgression. Are the songs sung at these ceremonies affording young women a space to voice their feelings about the patriarchal system under which they are socialized? Are they content with the status quo where young girls are viewed differently from their male peer group? Are these songs assisting young girls with HIV and AIDS related education and issues such that they can grow up knowing their sexual rights? Is there a shift in the language that makes up the lyrics of the songs to accommodate changing times? These and other pertinent questions are addressed.

Zwelibomvu women make use of *izigiyo* even though their term for them is perceived in the verbal form of *ukushoza*. On the subject of women’s songs a more recent study by Mathonsi and Gumede (2006) is invaluable. The study deals with the women performers and composers of *izigiyo* who range roughly from the ages of 40 and above. In this study they examine the content of Zulu women’s *izigiyo* (in my study referred to as *ukushoza*) as performed at functions in KwaQwabe, a rural area near Stanger in Northern KwaZulu -Natal.

Within Zulu oral literature their study situates *izigiyo* generally as embodiments of traditional songs or folk songs and dancing praises. These songs, they argue, are performed with a variety of intentions. Defined as songs that originated among the people and which were traditionally handed down by them (Guma in Mathonsi et al. 2006:283), they argue that it is difficult to define them conclusively. In my present study I have decided to look at this type of poetry in terms of their performance and content, in the sense that the study under review has done.

Encapsulated in *izigiyo* are expressions which include but are not limited to “the tilling of land; collection of wood for fire making; cooking; water fetching from the wells or rivers; maintenance of the hut in the homestead and caring for children” (2006:283). For the purposes of their study, the authors perceive *izigiyo* as “oral texts [which] are largely gendered responses to issues of heritage, culture, women abuse and domestic violence” (2006:483). The study undertaken by Mathonsi et.al explores gender relations in *izigiyo* with a view to establishing whether Zulu women have always been silent when it comes to issues of abuse and domestic violence for example.

Mathonsi et al. in agreement with Jousse (2004) perceive *izigiyo* as metaphoric in nature and as performed by both Zulu men and women. Through these songs, they add, men and women relay their perceptions, experiences and feelings about the way of life in their families and communities at large. However, my interest in their work emanates from the fact that their study confines itself to the Zulu women’s *izigiyo* performance in line with my own study which is restricted to women’s songs.

The study also alludes to the custom of *ukuhlonipha* (respect) (Raum, 1973, Zungu, 1985, Finlayson, 1995) an expression of the pyramid of respect upon which the Zulu ethos is built. These restriction are placed particularly on adult women but are rooted in the process of socialization at a very early stage of her life (Dowling, in Mathonsi et al, 2006: 484). This concern is one of the key issues which inform my thesis. Steeped in a tradition that prohibits women from being direct when verbally attacking those of a higher status, a highly figurative language used in the composition of *izigiyo*, renders women’s expressions allusive. Implied in the cultural practice of *ukuhlonipha* is a notion that at no point in her life does a Zulu woman reach a stage in which she can be said to have attained complete freedom of speech. Being bearers of the practice and regarded by the community as a crucial element of culture, *ukuhlonipha* custom thus becomes of critical significance to the position of women in her community (Magwaza, 2001).

Among the settings in which *izigiyo* are performed Mathonsi et al (2006) mention coming of age ceremonies which are some of the contexts in which songs for my study were collected. Furthermore, in agreement with my observations they note that unlike men’s *izigiyo*, which are

performed in the open, women's *izigiyo* are performed indoors, either inside a Zulu hut in a homestead or in a tent.

Gunner (1979, 1984, 1991 and 2002) also makes a great contribution in the documentation of the role of songs among Zulu women. Among the songs she deals with she mentions also those songs that are poetic in form such as they are fulfilled by *ukushoza* in my study.

My interest as far as the above works are concerned concentrates on oral forms particularly those that pay special attention to women as composers and performers. In these works Gunner contends that *izibongo* (praise poems) are associated with war and authority and as such they are usually regarded as male preserve. She argues that whilst there are also few outstanding royal women's documented praise poems there is no indication of these poems being "an art in which women as a group participate" (1979:239). She also argues in favour of *izangelo*, (praises of infancy). For Gunner, such poems and songs are perceived as a survival strategy within polygamous family structure. The prevalent notion that only men are composers and performers of praises is questioned and the notion of women's poems as an effective and socially acceptable way of publicly announcing one's anger and grief is upheld.

In this regard Gunner is in agreement with Khumalo (1993) where writing on women praises and *izigiyo* (women's solo poetry) he brings forward the view that it is not only men that have praises but also prominent women. He goes on to provide examples of such women; Nandi and Mkabayi being two of them. However, Zondi (2005) is critical of the same praises which she sees as derogatory and sexist rather, having been composed by men and perpetuating a notion of women being inferior to men.

According to Zondi (ibid) the case of the praises of Nandi, being Shaka's mother and Mkabayi, his aunt, cited above, illustrates the sexist nature of the Zulu society where the *imbongi* succinctly puts down both women in what is considered one of the best forms of oral art. This is not unique to the Zulu society as observed by Barber (1991) where she comments that within Yoruba culture for a woman to have a reputation at all, was viewed with suspicion; suggesting a threat of encroachment into male territory. Reputation in a woman, therefore, is almost automatically turned inside out and becomes an accusation of her character. A brief reflection on Nandi's and Mkabayi's praises is brought forward in order to illumine the points made above.

In Nandi's praises, the theme of sexual misconduct highlighted by the sexually explicit language that runs through her *izibongo* is baffling. The *imbongi* uses his poetic license to put her down by using the two opening lines which gets repeated at the end of her praises thus emphasizing his stance with Nandi:

UMathanga awahlangani

Ahlangana ngokubona umyeni

(She whose thighs do not meet

they only meet on seeing the husband)

Likewise, Mkabayi's praises illustrate chauvinist attitude of *imbongi* who performed her praises; this being ascribed to the prejudiced language used. Despite Zulu history that ranks Mkabayi so high (Morris, 1965), the absence of, for example, metaphors befitting her strength needs reviewing. Within the male domain, the *imbongi* managed to bring her down. Her wisdom is underrated as illustrated by the metaphoric images such as that of the mouse when male counterparts are given metaphors of powerful animals (Nyembezi, 1958). In fact, Mkabayi is not even a mouse, but she is a female diminutive version thereof, "*imbibakazana*" (a small female mouse):

Imbibakazan' eyaqamb'imigqa kwaMalandela

(Little mouse that opened new paths in the land of Malandela)

The above line seems to give a false picture of the main direction of women's praise poems: where the *imbongi's* uncompromising language gives an impression of being harsh in his appraisal of appearance and personality and in that way endorsing Foucault's notion of gender construction which suggests a certain determinism of gender meanings as inscribed on anatomically differentiated bodies where those bodies are understood as passive recipients of an inexorable cultural law (Butler, 1999:12).

Gunner (1984:25) describes that the use of praising by ordinary people was one of the most striking and unexpected feature that emerged from her fieldwork. In the same way, *izigiyo* or *ukushoza* as they are commonly known to Zwelibomvu community are a very powerful tool

with which a certain age group of Zwelibomvu women vents their true feelings about their lives. The relevance of Gunner's research in the present project is that the contemporary genre of oral literature promotes the interest in women issues as they are brought forward in the medium of songs.

Contrary to Foucault's (in Butler, 1993:22) prevalent notion that regulatory power produces the subjects it controls and that the power is not only imposed externally, but works as a regulatory and normative means, current research illustrates that through the medium of song women own the means of stating their grievances and in some cases even a means of righting the relation even if only through a public airing thereof (Gunner, 1979), consequently defying a dominant discourse. In that manner new ways of understanding African women's coping and survival strategies amid their subordination are brought forward.

After almost a decade since the democratic elections in 1994, Meintjes (2003) in *Sound of Africa! Making Music Zulu in a South African studio* engages in a study about "popularization of Zuluness" through *mbaqanga* music in the studios of Johannesburg. In this work she draws parallels between South Africa's spaces that are highly racialized and openly politicized and the studio that reveals how South Africa's brutal political affairs are infused with feeling and embedded in the struggles of daily living and in communicative forms that on the outside appear to have little to do with race. In the studio, *mbaqanga* music groups work hand in hand with engineers to produce their songs.

The significance here is that even though they live in Johannesburg's highly politicized townships, ascribing to different political views, *mbaqanga* singers leave these differences outside the studio as they negotiate their music production. The relevance of Meintjes's work for the current research is her reference to women groups in these studios which is a clear indication that after Apartheid has been replaced by democracy there are still concerns that need to be addressed such as those pertaining to women empowerment. A question of modernity comes to the fore when considering technology that is part of this kind of production. Does this then mean that there is a lot more to genre flows than the mere incidence of songs themselves?

Meintjes's study concurs with Molefe (1997) in which he presents many music genres of the fifties. Among these jazz, *mbaqanga*, kwela and choral music are mentioned. He ascribes such genres to the rigid apartheid policies which restricted peoples' movement and activities through

government regulated permits. These music genres seemed to promise better tomorrows and thus brought hope where there was despair. Molefe's observation that whereas there was an inclination of men to dominate the making of popular music, each era included a small group of creative women who regularly against enormous odds made their voices heard in song. He documents such women groups and provides a timeline of the different music genres. He mentions Mahotella Queens and *Izintombi zesimanje* as pioneers of *mbaqanga* women singers within a male dominated market. Nothembi is said to have broken a double taboo by starting to record. Not only was she one of the first women stars within the territory of neo-traditional music, but she also played the guitar prior to that which was played only by men.

The above discussion tallies with the deduction drawn from the songs of Zwelibomvu Maskanda women group who, while engaging in a male dominated genre, perceive themselves as true Maskanda in their own way. By excluding any form of instruments and relying on their selective choice of adorning their bodies they see themselves as breaking a taboo that there are music genres that only men can perform in line with Molefe who provides a variety of music genres into which women are incorporated.

As was mentioned earlier, studies conducted in South Africa which relates to people of other ethnic groups have also been reviewed. Coplan, in the study entitled *In the Time of Cannibals* (1994) makes an observation similar to Msimang above (1986) and Nketia (1974) where he remarks that within the African culture whether recorded or not, music is ever present. In the same way this situation is also reported by Hofmeyr (1979), Ndebele in Stewart (1994) and Gunner (1994) who attest to a similar view.

Coplan meticulously gives an account of what struck him on his first visit to South Africa in 1975, at the time when Apartheid was in full swing. He remarks about "the continuity and vitality of black popular culture and its almost total lack of documentation or recognition in South African public or intellectual life". Brown (1995:1) ascribes this "exclusion" to the particular oppression of South African political life. What makes music a unique feature within particular settings, Coplan claims, is its ability to convey that which would otherwise be censored if it were pronounced in another form.

In his work, Coplan demonstrates how people take everything that constitutes them, including their culture and tradition even when they leave their countries. He documents the voices of Lesotho migrant workers in the genre of sung oral poetry. In this medium men and women have

stories to tell about what it means to be “a migrant or part of a migrant’s life” in the mines and cities neighbouring South Africa and the life back at their homes in Lesotho. Using the cannibal metaphor as a title of his book, in a culture that sees cannibalism as a great threat to humanity and hence a need to hunt them down, Coplan, (1994), brilliantly presents an account of migrants, who through a medium of song and dance, see themselves not as hunters but as the hunted. He provides an account of how these migrant men and women respond to the harsh realities in which they find themselves:

Basotho migrant men and women respond to their situation with complexly evocative word-music, creating a cultural shield against dependency, expropriation and the dehumanizing relations of race and class in Southern Africa.

While migrant labour seems unavoidable in Lesotho, Coplan’s study indicates that women are the most affected given that “[a]t any one time, roughly half of all married women in Lesotho is wives of absent migrants” (1994:165). Under such circumstances Coplan’s research traces the survival strategy of these women and presents them in the form of songs. The songs of the Basotho women, Coplan remarks, cover a variety of themes which would otherwise be sanctioned. They address experiences of the wives within labour migrant system.

Through their songs these women evocatively and publicly voice their serious complaints as they narrate personal plight with which female audience easily identify. Some of the songs express the sense of abandonment and resentment felt by women who, because of negligent and unsupportive husbands, are forced into migration themselves. Concerns about women’s insecurity and dependency syndrome come out through songs. Other concerns touch on the young girls who are being deprived of marriage and the psychological stress that accompany come with it. Yet a number of song also illustrate that some husbands are still faithful and express respect for faithful marriages.

In the light of the fact that these migrant songs are performed mainly in the presence of fellow women, it is my contention that by engaging in a field that takes into account those songs sung in the presence of male audiences as well such as is the case with most of the songs collected for this study. More contribution will be made to scholarly research on what affects women and how men will come to learn of women’s concerns and be challenged to put right what has been inculcated in them through the years. When these songs are performed in the presence of men,

the assumption is that men will hear them and make an effort to improve their ways which are perceived oppressive.

Deborah James's (1999) also provides an example of studies that are about ethnic groups other than Zulu people. Her study of songs of northern Sotho or Pedi women migrants from Northern Province called *Kiba*, contributes as a good illustration of empowered women adopting "quasi - male status". In adopting a genre which was formerly an entirely male domain their redefinition of gender roles allows them to condemn male behaviour where they relate to their irresponsibility (1999:17). Through *kiba* women, and not men, have preserved their culture through spreading the music back to the rural villages thus facilitating in the maintenance of roots between the migrants and their villages. A similar case was observed in Zwelibomvu through group that refers to themselves as "Zwelibomvu women maskanda".

Even though men and women occupied different spaces in this genre; with men's *kiba* taking place in the open spaces of the hostels or outside the shacks where some of them lived, in Alexandra or Tembisa, and women's in the servants' rooms where most stayed in the back yard of their white employers' home, through songs, women found ways of coping with and even challenging men's spheres. In the process they redefined and constructed themselves according to the demands of the times. This is not only unique to the women James writes about. A case of women *maskanda*, a genre in which women singers seem to have found their voices alongside the hugely popular male singers was also discussed earlier. It also serves the function of illustrating how the album as well as the live performance of Izingane Zoma drew attention to the Zuma saga discussed earlier. With Zwelibomvu women also involved in Maskanda singing, the study argues for shifts in genre construction.

3.5 Background to literature review that relates to Nguni people

Xhosa, Swati, Ndebele and Zulu people belong to the Nguni family tree; a prehistoric population which lived north-west of the equatorial rain forest approximately 6 000 years ago and started migrating towards the south about 2 000 years ago. Those early people used a language partly constructed as Proto-Bantu or Ur-Bantu which produced over 300 languages spoken at present from the Equator to the southern tip of Africa (Canonici, 1996:1). As such these people have a lot in common with regard to cultural and traditional orientations. For this reason it is crucial to draw on the experiences of women in these societies and to discover the role played by songs in

reconciling their positions. To this effect literature review covering at least two of these Nguni groups, namely Xhosa and Swazi women's songs follows.

3.5.1 Literature review of studies on songs conducted by Nguni women

Makhwaza (1997) undertook a study in which she examined how the Zulu people communicate their experiences, perceptions and feelings through songs. She argues that the traditional role of songs was and still is to vent feelings of joy, dissatisfaction or disapproval of respectable people hence the indirectness of satire. Makhwaza (ibid) elaborates on what satire is and how songs achieve what would normally not be possible within Zulu society. While she admits that satire is a well known weapon or tool of human kind that has been employed by all human societies she nevertheless agrees that there is no unanimity with regards to the exact meaning of the word as far as different societies are concerned. Therefore in the context of the Zulu culture, where *inhlonipho*, respect is pivotal women may not directly admonish men with regards to their unbecoming behaviour. It is under these circumstances that satire, in the form of song, grants women license to voice their disapproval with impunity. Makhwaza goes on to caution that one context is very important in understanding these songs as one song can convey different meanings to different people depending on the context in which it is sung (1997:46).

The factor discussed above is very true of Zwelibomvu as attested to through the interview with one of the composers in the area. (cf. chapter 6 for a detailed exploration of this). The other phenomenon characteristic of Zwelibomvu is that of *ukushoza* (a poetic song genre which refers to specified solo dance songs) through which Zwelibomvu women, in subtle ways, among other things, make known that which they are not happy about.

At a recent conference of South African Folklore Society, presenting on Xhosa songs as some form of cultural expression, Mpola (2007) elaborated on the significant role and function of song within the Xhosa culture. She argued that besides expressing emotional feelings like joy, love, anger, sorrow and rejection, song is also used to express the ideals of amaXhosa philosophy of life, such as protest, praise or religious ideology. She further alluded to the normative standards in which non conformity is unacceptable for this society and claimed that Xhosa song writers compose songs about these social transgressions and paint the undesirable element in that practice. In her study

Moreover, Ntshinga (1993) takes the discussion further as she focuses on songs as they relate to women. She examines how Xhosa women's songs have changed and adapted to new social circumstances. She documents what she perceives as the role of songs amongst Xhosa women. Through these songs, she asserts, contrary to the nineteenth century notion of folklore being static, that songs are, in fact, flexible. For that reason songs are alive and hence have a way of accommodating the changing lifestyles of the people. Ntshinga points to this adaptability by demonstrating through their songs how Xhosa women have been capable of meeting new challenges by adjusting even their language to the new social conditions. In this light these songs are seen as one of the most remarkable aspects of Xhosa tradition in that they portray, among other things, the philosophy of people's sociological and historical aspects developing from a variety of factors.

Among the examples of songs in her study that capture my attention are those which are perceived as vehicles for condemning social transgressors. Such songs seem to ridicule the woman who does not stick to her marriage and she is viewed with contempt. These songs promote the natural order that upholds a view that a man is always right; failure of the marriage is always seen as a woman's fault.

One such song found in Ntshinga's study is:

Uhlebekile ntombi

Wen'ubuy'ekwendeni

Uhlebekile ntombi

Wen'ubuy'ekwendeni (repeated five times)

(You are disgraced girl

You who has come back from marriage

You are disgraced girl

You who has come back from marriage)

Drawn from women's daily experiences, these songs are relevant in my current study since Zwelibomvu women also address their day to day observations about their own lives. On the other hand some songs documented in Ntshinga's study present the views of women that try to defend their decisions of leaving their husbands. From the observation made by the researcher

such songs provide the woman with a measure of emotional relief and elicits support for her from those in the audience (1993:116).

Like Stewart (1994) Ntshinga includes all types of songs that women engage in. My study will draw on the songs that give meaning to how gender and power are negotiated through activities that bring women together in song. In my opinion, even though the songs for my study may be performed at ceremonies which do not necessarily involve those to whom these songs are directed, they are still a way of demonstrating that such concerns need to be addressed as they reflect what happens in society.

Concurrently writing on Swazi women's songs, Dlamini (1994) argues that there is no point in time at which Swazi women are said to acquire their freedom of speech. Referring to Zulu women Magwaza (2001) makes a similar remark. In the light of this assertion, Dlamini perceives women's songs as a way of emancipating women. Carrying a variety of themes such as love, hatred and resistance these songs, she argues, thus serve as a channel through which women's attitudes, views and feelings are communicated within this society.

Dlamini (in Malherbe et al, 2000:72) takes the issue of Eswatini women's reaction to patriarchal social codes further where she examines how proverbs encode gender constraints within this society. She also elaborates on the folksongs of which she argues that even though they may be created for purposes of entertainment they also can be used as a spear for fighting with a person who is in power. One of the songs she presents and comments upon sheds more light on this society's expectation on women; to be silent even when they are unhappy with their situation. In this case the song demonstrates that one of the results of polygyny is that it often results in women entering a world of jealousy and uncertainty since one wife may be pushed aside in favour of another one. (Dlamini in Malherbe et al, 2000:79). The following song drawn from Dlamini illustrates this sentiment:

Ngeke ngithule mine

(Chorus) *Hawu suka thula mfati*

Ngeke ngithule

Ngithulelen'umfati

Umfat'efika

Angemuk'indvodva

Ndvodza ingeyami

(Chorus) *Hawu suka thula mfati*

(I will not keep quiet

(Chorus) Oh no woman, keep quiet

I will not keep quiet,

Keep quiet for a woman,

A woman who has just come

To take away my husband

(Chorus) Oh no, keep quiet woman!)

The two songs, one from the Xhosa women's study and another from Swazi women's songs illustrate that Xhosa, Swazi and Zulu cultures, all falling under Nguni group cherish similar orientations. The former demonstrates how society views it a woman's fault if marriage breaks down. The latter illustrates jealousy that is typical of polygamous marriages; both concerns forming part of the problems and key issues addressed in my study. The conclusion arrived at is that what affects a Xhosa and Swazi woman also affects a Zulu woman, more so in rural traditional settings.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an extensive literature review on what songs for various societies. Drawing both from international and local studies, it has been pointed out how diverse communities reconcile their day to day life experiences, be it history or cultural circumstances. The general overview of the genre has been offered with a view to grasping the broader context of the music genres available and their connection to society. Emanating from this literature review is the fact that there is a reason behind every song. The review has not been restricted to a specific people or gender. But it has taken into account national interests. The reason for being inclusive is that while my study concerns women, it had to be highlighted that they are not islands but rather live in the real situation in which men are also found. Also, the themes presented through this literature review have indicated that for some societies while it is

unacceptable to directly challenge authority through songs this is possible. The case of “Paiva”, for example, which is not about a particular gender, relates to the entire nation. Having provided music genres that are gender bound and those that are not gender specific I hope to discover similarities and or differences between the concerns that prompt contemporary Zwelibomvu women to sing.

CHAPTER 4 PART 1: A VISUAL RENDITION OF SONGS COLLECTED AND PERFORMED BY ZWELIBOMVU WOMEN

4.1 Introduction

In order to derive an optimal appreciation of the entire study, it is critical that a first hand experience of the songs as experienced by me, the researcher is provided. This has been made possible by recording the songs as they were performed; thus offering an opportunity to view the DVD which demonstrates the significance of the researcher's presence during the performances and live recordings. In this regard, this chapter is ground breaking and therefore introduces a visual rendition of primary data in the form of songs. The field work process was made up of two parts. The first part involved the collection of songs in ceremonies and occasions and involved observing and being part of the occasions and ceremonies where the songs that are sung by women are performed. The overview of these songs will be given in this chapter. The second part involved focus group interviews of categories of respondents in similar settings/districts where ceremonies were attended and will be analysed in Chapter 5.

A word of advice to the reader is that he/she should preferably read the chapter before watching the DVD. The fact that the rendition is in the Zulu language should provide an experience that was first hand and should be embraced with better focus of both mind and body. It is not the language that is of significance but rather the observation of the actual performance. For this reason should there be reasons that impinge on viewing the DVD, let me express that the subject matter covered in this chapter has been presented in such a way that the reader will still derive a lot from simply reading the chapter. In this way I have ensured that the material is accessible to a variety of audiences/readership with various needs.

4.2 Objectives of this chapter

The main objective of providing this visual and synoptic rendition of performances is to invite my audience to a journey of song and dance so that they may become part of growth and understanding around critical issues of gender and power in contemporary women's songs. As my audience gets involved in this journey they will also be provided with an opportunity to feel the emotions of the performers and perhaps be part of the guests which were in these events. In so doing it is hoped that they will be able to bring together with me, the researcher, their subjective views as to why women sing. Notwithstanding what I have explained above, I am of the opinion that the chapter, ideally read in conjunction with the DVD recording, will shed more light about the perspective of the study.

Another significance of this approach and hence this chapter is that the performances provided authentic information that would be a critical source of analysis in the coming chapters. It is therefore important to point out that this chapter does not attempt to provide a full analysis of the problem statement which is the main aim of the study but it is merely an attempt to bring the study closer to the issues in preparation for in depth analysis in forthcoming chapters.

4.3 Procedures for primary data collection

The following section provides a summary of the procedures that were followed to capture the information necessary for providing an overview for this part of the field research. Data collection being a labour-intensive process (Miles, 1984) the tools used becomes an essential point of departure.

4.3.1 Video camera, note taking, tapes and photography

An example from each type of occasion that provided songs for this study was captured and recorded by means of a video camera and forms part of the research. This facilitated the writing process as I could go back to the event if there was something I was not quite clear about. Without breaching ethical principles consent was obtained prior to any video footage and photograph being taken and in all instances individuals consented to their pictures being published in my study.

The DVD has become the most important visual resource for this chapter. The other resources are a collection of songs some of which have been analysed in this thesis and others which have become a critical bank that will be an attachment to this study.

4.3.2 Overview of ceremonies and contexts

It is also important to point at this stage that the songs recorded do not represent a complete collection for this study. In fact the recording only represents about one fifth of the entire songs collected for the study, the field work having spread over a period of two years. Thus the three hour DVD rendition presented in this chapter is a tip of an iceberg compared to the whole amount of raw data. It is informed by a massive worth of raw data amounting to fifteen hours and has been picked to represent this raw data in this recording as a sample of the five contexts from which the songs were recorded. At the end of the discussion of each of the contexts a photograph illustrating a key moment of each of these contexts will be attached. The contexts being referred to are:

- *Ilima*, a collective word for a group of women who engage in some kind of women's home based activities, and
- *umemulo*, a ceremony for a girl reaching the marriageable age
- *umgcagco*, traditional wedding ceremony
- *Amacece*, traditional functions where neighbouring communities come together to perform according to izigodi (districts). In these functions one finds that there are varieties of songs that are sung that deal with a number of issues and rendered in different genres. For this reason and for the purposes of this study I have categorized *ukushoza*, a poetic song genre which refers to specified solo dance songs together with *maskanda* a group of women or men (but in this case women) who sing together for entertainment purposes as well as to earn a living but who generally have bigger socio-political issues to comment about through this genre, under the context of *amacece*.

The rest of the songs will be presented as part of the analysis in subsequent chapters. The above contexts have also been further structured according to the districts in which the functions took place and in such a way that each function or context is represented by each of the five districts

that constitute Zwelibomvu namely; ePanekeni, ePhangweni, eMkhangoma, eMadwaleni and Ezimbokodweni.

The DVD sections therefore appear in the following format:

- Section 1 Negotiating entry into Zwelibomvu (appearing as Chapter 1 on the DVD)
- Section 2 *Ilima*: eZimbokodweni (appearing as Chapter 2 on the DVD)
- Section 3 *Umemulo* : ePhangweni(appearing as Chapter 3 on the DVD)
- Section 4 *Umgcagco*: ePanekeni(appearing as Chapter 4 on the DVD)
- Section 5 *Amacece*: eMkhangoma-*ukushoza* (appearing as Chapter 5 on the DVD), and eMadwaleni –*omaskandi* (appearing as Chapter 6 on the DVD)

Before commenting on the nature of rendition of women's songs, a concept of performance needs to be revisited so as to put the recordings into perspective and to direct the way in which the DVD should be appreciated.

4.4 What is performance?

In the study of oral forms there needs to be reciprocity between verbal and non-verbal aspects thus validating the performance based approach of songs which should lie at the heart of any analysis that is orally informed. Continuing with the same line of thought Finnegan (1992:93) cautions that the meaning and artistry emerge in performance and therefore attention should not only be paid to words but also to how they are delivered. This necessitates that a project of this nature delves deeper into the question of what really constitutes performance. The provision of the DVD rendition will assist in understanding the thread that runs through Zwelibomvu women's songs.

A few definitions of performance are highlighted below. Bauman (1975:290) defines it as:

artistic action, the doing of folklore and artistic event, the performance situation involving performer, art form, audience, and setting, both of which are central to developing performance approach to folklore.

According to a definition provided by Sykes (1975:820) in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* performance is “notable feat, public exhibition”.

In this same way as described above one can notice how the songs in the recordings are performed in line with the function and the message being conveyed.

The above definitions of performance point to a necessity of an audience for performance to be appreciated. African societies live in a community and find their fullest expression in and through performance. With regards to these societies, Canonici (1996) draws a link between the notion of performance and community in which he emphasizes the method of knowledge dissemination from generation to generation. Therefore performance by definition implies an audience. Whilst the primary role of performance is perceived to be entertainment it is also meant to confirm and teach social values and important philosophical concepts as guidelines to the realization of a full social and intellectual life. The completeness of an individual is experienced through others during a performance thus rendering performance a public rather than a private affair; a phenomenon that has always been characteristic of traditional societies.

The Sections that follow will look closely at the songs with an emphasis on making observations around the attributes of functions and related performances in line with these descriptions of performance that have been provided. At the end of the discussion of each section a photograph illustrating a key moment of each of these sections will be attached.

4.5 Analysis of visual rendition of songs in different functions by Zwelibomvu women

Section 1: Negotiating entry into Zwelibomvu

Date: Wednesday 8 February 2006

8H15-12H15 A first scheduled visit and meeting with Israel Magcaba, a local headman, about my interest in conducting research in his area.

Venue: Homestead of Induna Israel Magcaba, ePhangweni.

I returned to Zwelibomvu with Mlungisi Ngcobo, my Research Assistant **on:**

Date: Wednesday 15 February 2006

Time: 9H00-15H00.

Equipment used: camera, video camera, notebook, pen, tape-recorder.

Bailey (1987: 205) maintains that gaining entry to the field may be difficult since some communities expect consent for any sort of soliciting activity. Being a tribal authority, Zwelibomvu requires that anyone wishing to undertake research in that place announces him/herself and his/her intentions to the local headman, *induna*, and in that way get consent to undertake research. My experience with the local headman or *induna* proved to be a rewarding one in that although protocol of some kind needed to be observed, the atmosphere was very positive and encouraging and the *induna* immediately granted me permission to undertake this research. Thus I ventured into this study charged with energy and enthusiasm.

The first stage of the first part of this field work process meant that certain procedures had to be followed to capture these performances. The first section of the DVD recordings points to these preparatory stages of the research, a major part of which was to meet the local headman, *induna*, Israel Magcaba. It also provides a good source of information about the area as the area will play a critical role in the structuring of the songs and functions which were attended. Assigned by his father, the *induna*'s son, Thulebona Magcaba, took me and my research assistant through a tour of Zwelibomvu. In the process he explained the fascinating history of the place. He also took us through the names of the districts that make up Zwelibomvu emphasizing the fact that these districts are all named after rivers from which residents of each district drink. He suggested some landmarks that were beneficial in determining exactly which district I was dealing with at any particular time during the research process. Thulebona was very valuable as he answered whatever questions I had and in that way equipped me for the task ahead.

Section 1 therefore is about transparency of the research and shows that I did not take advantage of the people being researched. It sets the perimeters on how I entered my research site and how as a researcher I needed to value the customs of Zwelibomvu community. This section thus serves as a tool of illustrating the transparency of my research process. It also demonstrates the significance of both the researcher and the researched as argued through the critical social science research paradigm (Neuman, 1997). By being part of the people that I was researching and through attending most of their events I acquainted myself with how they lived. As I showed interest in their ceremonies and functions they got so used to me that I was sometimes invited to present a speech during some school functions at Zwelibomvu. Because I had learned some songs so well I introduced those speeches by one of the songs I had learnt from them. In that way my researched realized that I did not own knowledge but came to learn from them just as

they were also learning one or two things from me (see paradigmatic orientation of the study discussed in 2.1.1 of Chapter 2).

As far as I am concerned the element of transparency has been lacking in most research that I consulted during my literature review process where these researchers do not explain in detail how their field work was actually negotiated.

Since feminism is one of the theoretical orientations informing my study (see 2.2.3 of Chapter 2) the first section is also used to show the point of patriarchy in this community as evidenced in the gendered power structures with a male on top. At a point of entrance, even before I started working on the songs gender issues were already there demonstrating that in this community a male is an authority. This is based on the fact that for me to seek permission into women's lives I had to go through a man, the *induna* who also gave me another male, his son to show me around Zwelibomvu. The wife of *induna* was present at the first meeting that we held at his homestead. During introductions it had been brought to my attention that the maiden surname of the *induna*'s wife was the same as mine. She had rejoiced at that knowledge even offering me a hug. Consequently I would have thought it natural that the headman's wife was a better person suited for the task since I am also a woman. However it was to his son that the *induna* turned with a request that he shows me Zwelibomvu. Thulebona also did not suggest his mother as a most suitable person for the job. Surprisingly, the *induna*'s wife did not suggest accompanying me either. It just seemed that the status quo was unquestionable. This section shows the point of patriarchy in this community where land issues are a male domain.

After deliberation with the local *induna*, visits were made to some neighbouring schools to meet with the principals so as to have access to the children who, in turn, would be a source of information with regards to where events or ceremonies were taking place. To that end the principals of Olwambeni and Nqobane Primary Schools, Mr. Nzimande and Mrs. Nkosi respectively, were of enormous help. In these forums, I was afforded an opportunity to address the learners during assembly on my interest in Zwelibomvu. Learners were also informed of the written information to parents in which I was asking for the permission to attend their events in their homes.

Relevant teachers who would assist me by relaying messages of where ceremonies were taking place were identified and Ms. Mzila was going to be the main contact person. She accompanied

me to most of the events and as a person who has worked in the area for over thirty years offered insightful explanations to narrow the gaps in my understanding. During the first stage I simply went and was part of functions, sitting back, without necessarily collecting songs. The DVD itself is just a visual rendition of these songs.

Section 1 of this DVD is the longest of the six sections comprising this DVD. Having explained the intention of the section I must now add that the reader is not obliged to watch every detail once he/she has grasped the essential points made. The following sections then take us through the actual functions and events attended as a critical part of this study. Some of the songs sung on these occasions will be highlighted and briefly commented upon.



A scenic view of Zwelibomvu

Section 2 *Ilima*: eZimbokodweni

Date: Thursday, 23 February 2006

Time: 8H00-13H00

Venue: KwaToni Store, eZimbokodweni (near KwaNdengezi)

Equipment used: camera, video camera, notebook, pen, tape -recorder.

Songs are central to African culture and they constitute some of the richest treasures. Singing helps to fix ideas in words and to remember them through musical rhythm and repetition. Nketia (1974) and Msimang (1986:97) provide insight with regard to music which they perceive as part and parcel of an African society. Nketia (1974:21) maintains that songs are ever present when traditional African societies “come together for enjoyment, for recreational activities, or for the performance of a rite, ceremony, festival, or any kind of collective activity”. Among the many occasions in which music feature, Msimang (1896.) singles out *ilima* as one such important event where one is likely to hear women singing both for enjoyment as well as for the performance of some kind of collective activity.

Context: *Ilima* is generally organized to ensure that work that otherwise would have taken a long time to accomplish, for example in the fields, takes a short time due to many people working collaboratively together. Usually both men and women can be part of the ‘*ilima*’. However, in this recording only women participated and they were asked to help remove weed around a local shop.

The *ilima* activity covered in this section takes place in the premises of an Indian owned grocery store called KwaToni. During the day the owner works in his shop but in the evening he returns to his home in Nagina. He is assisted by the Maseko family who has looked after his shop for over ten years. The shop owner provided the Masekos with a little flat near the shop. Seeing that there was a huge land that had been uncultivated for a number of years, Mrs. Maseko asked permission to utilize it. I was then made aware that some women would gather there as part of *ilima* and engage in song as they prepared the land for growing vegetables.

Performance: As can be seen from the recording, the women rhythmically work the soil while they sing. They argued that singing encourages them to work faster and harder. From their expressions one can notice that they do not look exhausted even though the work they are doing seems rather hard as the soil looks dry and infertile.

The rhythm of the songs referred to can be observed even as women raised and brought down their hoes. What they sing seems to be coordinated through the sound made by the hoes as they go up and down in a certain rhythm.

It can be pointed out also that because this is a collaborative task, there is no competition among the women and that is one of the most critical observations about the connection between the traditional values of *ubuntu* and caring for one another and the culture that has managed to be passed on to the modern times.

Songs: Utshwala bugayelwe ba [For whom is this beer brewed]

Lo mhlaba wakithi sondliwa yiwona [This soil is our sustenance]

Since this function/activity is more household related the songs that are sung generally relate to issues that take place in families such as brewing beer, tending the soil, and the plight of women. Most of the songs do not necessarily contain overt heavy content that shows protest around bigger social issues such as politics. This may be due to the fact that there is work to be done which must also be accomplished by a specific period of time (be it short term or short to medium term). Instead such issues can be discussed during their breaks as they sit and relax. The tasks they have to do are generally exhausting too and songs with such heavy messages can perhaps be too draining.

In this context most of the songs they sang about were about valuing the soil and what it produces. For example the song called: *Lo mhlaba wakithi sondliwa yiwona* demonstrates this very well. The song however, continues to focus on how women are used as stepping stones for other people to get what they want. And surely this song may well be directed to men who demand wives to brew beer for them while they (men) do not provide enough food for the family.

In line with the rendition of this song and when asked about what else they do while working, the women argued that because they were all women, they talk about their family problems

especially about their husbands and how they are being treated by these men at home. They argued that as women they are usually in polygamous relationships so they advise one another about how to handle difficult situations in their marriages. The stories that these women shared were intriguing attesting to what (Barber, 1997: 2) states when she argues that people “make use of all available contemporary materials to speak of contemporary struggles”.

Food: When an *ilima* is organized, the family that has asked for assistance usually prepares food and drink to take with to the fields. This is because generally there is not enough time for each member to take a break to eat in their individual families. Also this is a gesture of appreciation by the family for the volunteerism that has been offered by these members. Eating together also gives a sense of togetherness and comradeship.

One can therefore identify in the performance, a calabash of “*amahewu*”, home made fermented porridge. In some cases it can be “*utshwala*” home brewed beer, or in these contemporary times even juice.

Attire: Because the activities are usually physically taxing and the people are generally exposed to the harsh elements of weather, volunteers in the *ilima* generally dress up in loose fitting pinafores and smear some form of clay on their faces to prevent themselves from being burnt by the sun. Others bring along straw hats to protect themselves.

One can notice therefore in the recording that these women are quite flexible due to the type of attire they are wearing.



Tilling the soil during *Ilima*

Section 3 Umemulo: ePhangweni

Date: 4 March 2006

Time: 1500-18H00

Venue: Esigcawini

Equipment used: camera, video camera, notebook, pen, tape-recorder.

Singing is mostly a community enterprise involving social ceremonies and events. A song is a powerful means to propagate an idea or a sentiment, and to engage the entire community in a response. A song is not sung only once, but easily becomes part of one's internal reasoning, expressing feelings and cultural directions. This phenomenon is observable in the data which shows variations of the same song when sung for different occasions or by different districts.

Context: *Umemulo* is a ceremony that celebrates a "girl's coming -of-age". It is organized by the family for a young girl to mark the right of passage to womanhood. However, this recording shows a very unique *umemulo* ceremony; unique in that the lady whose function it was, was already married. In fact, this ceremony is normally performed before marriage.

The bride also added that culturally, "for my *umemulo* to be valid and to bear fruit it had to be performed for my older sisters as well since they were older than me even though they are no longer alive. That is why my younger sister, Busi, is standing in the place of our late sisters as their representative; hence the ceremony today is in honour of all of us; my late sisters and me. Our father has promised that as soon as he recovers financially after all he has had to spend for our *umemulo*, he will have to arrange for my younger sister's own *umemulo* ceremony [because even though what we saw looked like it was also Busi's *umemulo*, in essence it was not]".

On this occasion, we filmed about 12 songs

For this specific occasion, the husband was also bringing some items to the bride's family; again something that was also supposed to have happened on the day of their wedding six years previously. The reason for the ceremony to take place at that time was narrated by the groom who said [my own translation]: "I live in the area known as eMadwaleni while my wife's home is at ePhangweni. We got married in 1999 and have been for the past five years, trying unsuccessfully to have a child. I kept blaming my wife and there was no peace in our family. Eventually we decided to consult some traditional healers and diviners both from Zwelibomvu and beyond. In all instances it was pointed out that this situation was due to the fact that my

ancestors were angry with my wife's father for not having performed the *umemulo* ceremony for her. On the other hand her family's ancestors were angry with my family because we had not brought gifts as the culture dictates, to my wife's family. For this reason in the eyes of the two family ancestors our marriage did not exist and since children are a blessing and a special gift to a marriage, we could not have this blessing as in their eyes our marriage was not sealed".

Performance: In this function young women dance respectfully but rhythmically to show that they are no longer "pure". The audience is made of men and women, the old and young and children of all age groups.

There is generally an aura of pride and gracefulness in the dance while young maidens sing songs that generally allude to how they expect to be treated as women and obviously to be also noticed by men. In this particular function since the girl coming of age was already a married woman, this gracefulness was even more obvious as the woman had to show respect to the family of her in-laws.

One can notice in the recording, how as the group of young women performs its traditional dances, the women do not lift their legs too high but make interesting variations with their hands and upper parts of their legs to make the dance almost like a more contemporary rendition of the traditional version of '*ukusina*'. It must be noted however, that, this is not the case with individual performances where each person comes onto the stage to show -case her traditional skill. In this instance, younger girls can outperform one another on how well they can dance and how high their legs can go.

Generally a message is conveyed through these functions; at the same time entertainment is conveyed through performance and song. Concurrent with enjoyment, performance criticizes or conveys an opinion. This cannot be effectively achieved without there being someone to listen hence the necessity of the presence of an audience who is in the process carried away by both the verbal and non-verbal elements of a song. Canonici (1996) argues that the audience is extremely important for the success of the performance. By its presence the audience causes the performer to modify the performance in accordance with their reaction. Differentiating between an active and passive audience Canonici (ibid) goes on to point out that the audience can either make or break the performance. An active audience makes the performance while passive one may breaks it.

Again it is worth mentioning how lively the performance becomes as the groom's side of the family and community arrive. Even though this group of women is still graceful, they seem more excited to see their 'husbands' and instinctively perform even much more enthusiastically, perhaps to entice them or even to be potentially recognized as potential brides.

In line with Jousse's concept of "geste" in which he claims "man is gesture; gesture is man thus putting the whole body at the disposal of thought" (1990: ixv) one can observe in the recording how the value of physical aspects of performance cannot be overlooked. These bodily movements are not incidental rather their significance is realized during performance in the response-producing stimulus as they assist in prompting or reminding a performer the words of the artistic form. In this way, through engaging the entire person in the performance, the performer is enabled to integrate the actions with the accompanying words attesting to Walter Ong's (1982:31) view that "what cannot be recalled is wasted".

In a similar way the performance of the song 'Baba wami' is in line with what is described above as the women seem to be 'dissing' (using their arms as gestures), those members of the family that could be bewitching them and those that thought their father was not rich enough to have this function done for them!

Songs:Baba wami wangisiza wangimulisa [Thanks my father for umemulo]

Ingewu [

Umuthi omubi [Poisonous Muti]

Since this function/activity has to do with growing into womanhood and prospects of marriage, the songs that are sung generally relate to issues to do with how women are treated and what makes a family prominent in a community. Due to the fact that neighboring communities, extended families and relatives participate in the function, the messages in the songs also deal with issues around jealousy among families, subtle accusations and suspicions of witchcraft among neighbors.

For example in the song called: 'Baba wami wangisiza wangimulisa', the woman thanks the father for making the umemulo ceremony for her. She shows pride in the fact that her father has proved to the world that he is a capable man with a lot of cows to slaughter for the ceremony.

Elaborating on word, rhythm and dance which serve as the characteristic aspects of oral literature and forging continuity in the argument presented above, Canonici (1996:53) states that:

The oral nature of traditional societies...involves the use of words...by the performer...perceived by the audience. It also involves visual dimensions or gestures and movement as well as speech.

Consider in this case the rendition of 'Ingewu' which is chanted by the young girls as they leave the house to go to *esigcawini* (open space) out at the top of the hill. This repetition of the words as one leads in a high pitched voice and the other follow is quite catchy.

Finally, during the renditions of the songs, the rhythm referred to above provides a stable and manageable framework within which to preserve the verbal material and in this way serves as a mnemonic device which heightens memory. Referring to it as rhythm-mimicry and perceiving it typical of many oral societies, Jousse (1990) associates these body movements observable during performance with the rhythmical articulation of the words. In the first chapter audience and context were alluded to as two variables that formed part of Zwelibomvu performance framework.

The songs generally sung in this event are structured on popular catchy tunes, often with a leader and a responding chorus, accompanied by hand-clapping and sometimes by dance movements.

Food and commodities: While the women are singing, the bride looking down is showered with gifts especially in the form of money. This is another aspect of progress within the Zulu culture which has managed to adapt to modern times by offering money as an important commodity while still retaining its cultural essence.

The goods that were going to be offered to the bride's family can be seen in the recording as the groom's side of the family arrives. These offerings include goats and bulk groceries. Even with the groceries, just as in the case of money this shows how culture evolves as these types of groceries were not found in the olden days.

Finally, even though this recording does not provide the celebration in the form of food and drink for the guests, this function is one of the most lavish functions in this regard.

Attire: In this function it is important that maidens take pride in their womanhood. In this regard, young girls show their purity by exposing their breasts. On the other hand, those women that are already in relationships are dressed differently with attires covering their breasts.

It must be pointed out that due to changing times and related to the fact that young girls are allowed to lift their feet high up when performing traditional dances, one observes that they tend to wear short trousers underneath their traditional attires, which is something that would not have been heard of in the past. This evokes a comment that will be elaborated later where a comparison between umemulo of the different districts is made, that as a result of modernization, young girls have even adapted umemulo songs to comment on contemporary issues affecting their lives such as child-grants “*imali yeqolo*” and therefore demonstrate that lives have changed even for these young girls who can still have these functions performed for them even though they are no longer virgins.



Young maidens during *Umemulo*

Section 4 - Umgcagco: ePanekeni

Date: Saturday 16 September 2006

Time: 15H30-18H30

Venue: Esigcawini

Equipment used: camera, video camera, notebook, pen, tape -recorder.

This function is performed for a woman that is getting married in a traditional way.

Jousse (1990, 2000) emphasizes the significance of oral traditions especially for communities where literacy is not a strong point. He argues that from time immemorial oral style of teaching and learning has been an obvious phenomenon characteristic of many cultural milieus thus strengthening a socio-cultural archives that is passed from generation to generation. Conolly (2001:248) concurs with Jousse and adds that this social-cultural archive is supported by gestures which enhance memory.

Context: In this part of the DVD the selected *umgcagco* ceremony that took place at ePanekemi is quite captivating. The bride is dressed in exotic traditional dress and is waiting to be whisked to her new family by the groom. The audience is always mixed as it is a common social function.

In the DVD recording and in what is known as *ukubhemisa abakhwenyana* (lighting cigarettes for the groom's male party), the new bride, assisted by fellow young women, literally hands out and light the cigarettes for all males accompanying the groom. She has been given gifts of money pinned onto her head gear. She is accompanied by *umthimba* (bridal party) of both men and women to the groom's house. Moreover, with the help of other women as well, she serves beer to the groom's male party. Construed as *hlonipha* culture or respect, the new bride continues to be socialized and indoctrinated into knowing her place in society on the very day of her wedding, attesting to gender as a social construct. I was told that the ritual serves as a constant reminder to the bride that she is coming to the new family to serve. This is best understood in terms of what Scott (1990) in his elaborate work refers to as "nonverbal communication acts" that are used to present hidden transcripts.

Songs: Ubani obengaliwa? [Who would have been jilted?]

Ngob'ugwala akathandanga [Because Gwala was not in favour]

O Nang' uMababaza, ngaliwa njengkonyana [Here is Mababaza, I was jilted like a calf]

Ayimalanga, ifuna ukugana [She did not reject him]

Wena uyadela osenobaba nomama [Lucky you who still has parents]

Izibongo Zomndeni –zabakaMbunda [Praises for Mbundas]

The songs sung and performed by women of more or less the same ages as those who perform during *umemulo*, girl's coming of age ceremony - are different. However, the traditional wedding songs seemed to take the same tone and style as the rest of the *umemulo* songs sung in the four districts whereas *umemulo* songs are very unique to ePanekeni.

The songs sung allude to possibilities of rejection in marriage, laud important people in the community and how they are respected and listened to, witchcraft, have folklore metaphors of animals, talk about issues of hardship in marriage as a result of being an orphan bride. In these occasions one also hears izibongo such as Izibongo zabakaMbunda giving lineage of the bride's family with characteristics such as repetition of the last name for continuity.

In the recording one can easily see the jubilation especially by the bride as songs such as 'Ayimalanga, ifuna ukugana' are sung to show that she has been the one that has been finally chosen by the groom. Even though some songs depict sarcasm the people singing are happy on this day.

Performance: The phenomenon is best expressed in terms of the four human expressions known as Mnemonic Laws of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm. These are mimism, rhythmism, bilateralism and formulism.

Through ceremonies such as *umgcagco* at which songs are rendered, the new bride is introduced to what it really means to be a married woman within Zulu culture especially as it applies to Zwelibomvu. Furthermore, patriarchal power as a structural entity that exists in institutions and social practices rather than merely being individual intentions Weedon (1987) is practically indoctrinated.

In this performance everyone is happy thus there is an open opportunity for everyone to perform. Married women jump around on stage showing their skills and ululate. They also dance in a respected manner typical of married women.

In the process of '*ukuthemeleza*', where the bride's representative sings praises of the bride family and recounts her lineage, women from the bride's side, proudly strut their stuff, gracefully and steadily like peacocks as a sign of boastfulness and allegiance to where they come from. Others commend the bride by going to the groom's section of the stage and showing off their performance in celebration of the occasion.

Furthermore in this event there is a lot of *ukusina* as the singers clap hands in line with the rhythm of songs. This is part of showing gratitude that the two families are united and all the necessary lobola was paid in full. The bride herself is quite excited constantly showing this by coming out and dancing for the spectators.

Food and commodities: In the same way as *unemulo*, described above, there are lavish gifts and offerings made to by the bride's family. In the recordings commodities such as furniture are being offered.

Because it is a wedding guests are also provided food to celebrate with the bride and groom.

Attire: Traditional attire is worn by both men and women. Young girls also wear traditional attire but improvise with the changing times.



A bride during *Umgcagco*

Section 5 – Amacece: eMkhangoma and eMadwaleni (Omaskandi and ukushoza)

Date: Friday 17 March 2006

Time: 8H00-13H00

Venue: Outside at one of the performers' premises

Equipment used: camera, video camera, notebook, pen, tape -recorder.

This section looks at general functions that are held within the Zwelib omvu community, which are generally triggered by spontaneous events or coincide with certain days such as Cultural Heritage day celebrations, Christmas day performances, or Boxing Day performances that have since become a tradition from year to year. Usually, members of the community organize the functions and there are generally competitions between the different groups from the different districts. Others come for entertainment. *Omaskandi* and *ukushoza* will be discussed in this section.

Omaskandi

Context: The recording in this section of the DVD took place during Dress Rehearsal Performance by women Maskanda of eMkhangoma. It was in preparation for the music festival which was going to take place at Hammarsdale Community Hall where different women categories from all over KwaZulu-Natal would compete. I was informed a week before that there was going to be a dress rehearsal. Since I was not going to be able to attend the actual performance and also because I felt that I might not be able to get every word amidst a number of choirs that was going to participate I asked the group to perform for me the songs that they were going to sing on the day. They assembled at one of the members' homes. At 8am I arrived with my research assistant, Mlungisi Ngcobo and we found the women already in the grass thatched hut busy dressing up. We were told that the group normally consists of seventeen women but because I had asked them to change their scheduled rehearsal time, they were fewer (a fact I cherished since I was going to give them some token in appreciation for accommodating me). When they emerged out of the hut they were dressed in a stunning colourful traditional gear.

Songs: We Hulumeni [To the Government]

Ngiphelezele ngiyobonumnakwethu [Accompany me]

Wo bekezela esithenjini [Persevere]

Anowagqoka amajazi [Wear condoms]

Kancane bobaba [Wait a bit]

Angisahamb'ebusuku [I don't travel at night anymore]

In these events a variety of songs are sung and in this recording, *omaskandi* are portrayed as some of the songs that can be sung in these functions. It must also be pointed out that due to the porous nature of songs however, one might find that these songs and others that will be in this category and which will be analysed later on in this study, can still be sung in the other functions such as *umemulo* and *imigcagco*.

With regard to *omaskandi*, Meintjes (2003) in *Sound of Africa! Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio* makes reference to women groups; a concern that needs to be addressed since it pertains to women empowerment. Meintjes's study concurs with Molefe (1997) who presents several music genres which seemed to promise better tomorrows and thus brought hope where there was despair. Coplan (1994) and James (1999) in their study of Basotho and Pedi women respectively, address experiences of the women within labour migrant system and how, through their songs they tackle a variety of themes which would otherwise be sanctioned.

Similarly, through their music, Zwelibomvu Women Maskanda, against all their perceived disadvantages, make their voices heard in song and mainly perform songs that deal with the spread of HIV and AIDS as a result of unfaithfulness in relationships. Through song they appeal to stop having unprotected sex and to also have less demand about sex as such. Through song they can protest about issues that as individuals in their homes and to their husbands, it would otherwise, be hard for women to talk about. They also sing about other social ills that affect them, issues such as rape and fear of walking in the dark. The song 'Angisahamb'ebusuku' laments about this problem. Just as Mahotella Queens and *Izintombi Zesimanje* are pioneers of *mbaqanga* women singers within a male dominated market (Molefe, 1997), Zwelibomvu women have broken taboo by perceiving themselves as true Maskanda in their own way. While excluding any form of instruments and relying on their selective choice of adorning their bodies they see themselves as breaking a taboo that there are music genres that only men can perform in

line with Molefe (ibid) who provides a variety of music genres into which women are incorporated.

Performance: Zwelibomvu maskandi's performance is structured and shows a degree of professionalism. As it can be seen in the video, they have systematic steps that they have practiced where they demonstrate the message they are putting across. For example in one song, 'Ngiphelezeleni', where a woman asks other women to accompany her to her 'mnakawabo' (a woman they share the same husband with) one who is supposed to be ugly with a big forehead and eyes protruding from under this forehead, there is a hilarious performance where they demonstrate exactly how the other woman looks.

As it can be seen in the video, a few minutes after the women emerged from the hut in time for the performance some spectators gathered in the vicinity proving that performance is a community affair (Canonici, 1996). The audience clapped their hands and ululated as the performance continued. The songs were sung one after another. Most of these songs were made up of not more than four lines and each one was repeated more than five times.

Attire: Groups of performers dress in different attires and compete on the colourfulness and creativity of the garments. They generally decorate themselves from head to toe and they perform sometimes to win stakes such as a goat, money or any other similar small items that would be put for that year. It is an honor for the district to win and come first in these events

As can be observed in the recording, on their heads the women have put on *inkehli* (a rounded hat decorated in bright colourful beads). On their neck they have beautiful necklaces all made from colourful beads. They also wear white towels running from one shoulder to another while going through the breast area. Around their waists they had *umqulu*, a rolled up material which they said is made up of sixteen straws of a particular type of grass. They are also wearing an *isidwaba* (skin skirt) under which they said they had to wear some garment to prevent it from hurting. Over the *isidwaba* they have what they call *umsetho* (a material that is decorated with colourful beads). I was told that this is where women want to excel as far as looking beautiful is concerned. The more colours a woman's *umsetho* contains the more attractive a woman is said to look. The legs are covered in what is called *amaqhosha* (silver rings made up of some special thick silver bead) under which they also wore a kind of a material that would make it

comfortable for them to wear these *amaqhosha*. Some women also wore black sleeper shoes while most walked bare-footed.



Maskanda as one of *Amacece* genre

Ukushoza

Date: Wednesday 1 November 2006

Time: 14H00-17H00)

Venue: At one of the women's homes

Equipment used: camera, video camera, notebook, pen, tape -recorder.

Commonly known as *izigiyo*, and peculiarly referred to as *ukushoza* within Zwelibomvu context, this is a poetic song genre which refers to specified solo dance songs. Whilst *izigiyo* are not unique to women *ukushoza* is peculiar to women only in Zwelibomvu.

Context: This section of the DVD contains what within Zwelibomvu is peculiarly known as *ukushoza* or *ukujoqa*. As pointed out earlier, the porous genre boundaries make it difficult for one to capture everything at the same time. This was demonstrated in Chapter 1 of this thesis where it was explained that during any ceremony a woman would be seen popping out of the crowd with her individual solo dance where she would be joined by other women. This phenomenon within Zwelibomvu thus slightly contradicts Gunner (1984: 62 -63) where she argues that:

women's *izibongo* are never performed at large public gatherings in the flamboyant and martial atmosphere of 'ukugiya' as are men's, but rather in small social gatherings at a homestead after the main dances on a large occasion such as wedding.

However, the fact that it is impossible to take these women's poetry seriously during such gatherings makes difficult for Gunner's statement to be easily dismissible. This factor accounts for the recording of Zwelibomvu's *ukushoza* in the DVD provided for this chapter.

The following rendition of *ukushoza* was performed by women from eMadwaleni that had been identified during some ceremonies. Only those who were willing and felt comfortable to present renditions of their *ukushoza* are captured in this section of the DVD.

Songs: Langishisa ibhodwe [I am burnt]

Deda [Move]

Ngathi uyangibusisa kanti uyangidlisa [I thought you were being nice]

Kuyashisa emendweni [Marriage is not easy]

Waze wangikhipha endodeni [You have taken my husband away]

Mubi umakhelwane [This neighbour is not good]

We mama womnika umakoti isikhwama [Please give the bride money]

The mood is generally a very jovial one and while the women are putting forward issues of social concern such as hardships in marriage, the plight of brides and mother-in laws, competition for a husband, gossip among women, deceit and witchcraft, they perform to entertain others and themselves.

The song called ‘Kuyashisa emendweni’ – Marriage is hard, gets the women laughing as though this plight is one they are now used to. Another interesting rendition is ‘We mama womnika umakoti isikhwama’ where the women ask the mother in law to give the bride some money obviously from the bride’s husband who presumably is a migrant worker.

Performance: Both women’s *izigiyo* and *ukushoza* normally take place in the presence of fellow woman. However during family ceremonies an opportunity might present itself where women get an opportunity to perform in the presence of men to whom *ukushoza* is primarily directed to. The work of Abu-Lughod (1986) which deals with relationships among the Egyptians of the Western Desert is indicative of the fact that women have been subjugated the world over.

Thus in the same way that Zwelibomvu women use *ukushoza* to mediate their situation, the Bedouin society, which is also known as Awlad’Ali that Abu -Lughod writes about, use poetry to mediate theirs. Through this highly formulaic performed poetic genre, called *ghinnawas*, people can say something that would, otherwise under normal circumstances, be forbidden. Whereas the function of poetry in Abu-Lughod’s study is to express the sentiments of romantic love that breach modesty code without incurring the censure of the community or losing the self esteem derived from exemplifying the moral ideals of this society, for Zwelibomvu community, through *ukushoza*, women’s day to day conditions are communicated. These circumstances incorporate patriarchal domination as women’s daily life experiences and the cultural expectations which render women’s voices ‘inaudible’.

Similarly, one can even notice how in the recordings women are behaving almost as young girls, dancing and prancing around with each one standing up to lead a particular *isigiyo* while others excitedly follow in chorus.

Attire: Since it is sporadic in nature the attire can be anything that women are wearing at a particular point in time also depending on the purpose and nature of gathering. In the recording, these women were resting as community neighbours so were they were dressed in their ordinary home attires.



Ukushoza as one of Amacece genres

4.6. Conclusion

Zwelibomvu community bears full testimony to the description presented above. The environment or context in which most of the songs were collected involved large crowds which gathered to celebrate whatever public ritual or ceremony there was. At Zwelibomvu there was almost no occasion when the audience was seen to be passive and thus breaking the performance. Rather the audience owned the occasion as if they were also on stage. Taking into account that almost every week-end Zwelibomvu is characterized by a cultural event of one kind or another, I observed with interest that at none of the events of which I was part did any member of the community leave the *isigcawu* (open space where the performances take place) before the entire function was over. That they were directly involved as an active audience also came out clearly in the way they tirelessly clapped their hands, affirming whoever came forward for an individual dance, a group performance or other rendition of some sort (cf all DVD renditions).

Finally, we hope the chapter in conjunction with the video recording will shed more light about the perspective of the study.

CHAPTER 5: PART 2: WHY DO WOMEN SING – A QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 the rationale for undertaking the study was offered. One of the reasons that were identified was the problem that needed to be investigated, which ultimately became the core purpose of the entire thesis. This problem statement, it was argued, revolved around key questions that needed to be answered. By attempting to answer them, one would be lead to the drawing of some conclusions as to why women sing with specific reference to contemporary songs as sung by Zwelibomvu women.

Neuman (1997) points out that one of the many reasons for social research is to find out something new and original about the social world. This is done through a systematic way where theories or ideas are combined with facts. These systematic procedures require appropriate techniques which will ensure that pertinent questions are addressed in an effective manner. In addition, social research is a critical process of discovery which requires among other things, personal integrity, tolerance, good interaction with others and commitment to what one wants to achieve. In this thesis, for example, the strategies used to derive knowledge and facts about investigating the problem statement, involved the application of the theoretical and conceptual framework which is discussed in Chapter 2, and that is informed by Jousse (1990, 2000), Weedon (1987, 1997) and Scott (1990). Another strategy on which the basis of primary data is derived is through the involvement and participation in certain events or practices that would impact on the conclusions drawn about the purpose of the research. In this thesis, Chapter 4 is a concrete example of such a strategy. In conjunction with these two strategies, this essential knowledge that is sought is then generally collected from strategically identified group of people or population that will ideally be a remarkable resource from which to derive the best possible responses.

5.2 Purpose of the research

While there are general or overt reasons for women to engage in song, such as for entertainment, the aim of this study is to find out what really prompts contemporary rural women of Zwelibomvu to sing. Bearing in mind my paradigmatic stance established in Chapter 2, this chapter will outline in detail the methods employed in undertaking this study. It will also provide a step by step description of how the research was undertaken. This Chapter therefore uses the Zwelibomvu community as a strategic population from which knowledge, opinions and facts about why contemporary women songs are derived.

5.3 Qualitative and quantitative approaches

At this point I wish to motivate for the method selected which amalgamates methodology and data analysis. In my experience as a researcher I found that separating methodology and data analysis would not be suitable for the kind of study I undertook. This stance is informed by an expectation that for a PHD it is imperative that a student comes up with something original. For me, therefore, instead of adopting a conventional way such as presenting methodology as a chapter on its own I opted for a simultaneous presentation of methodology and data analysis. This is because this approach seemed to work well for me than any other established method could have done. As such I envisaged that the kind of approach that I adopted put me in control over the subject matter at my disposal and in that way did justice to my study.

In view of the research aims, elaborated upon in Chapter 1, the study required both a qualitative and quantitative focus. This decision is reinforced by the views of Bless & Higson-Smith (1995) and Bless (2000) who argue that these approaches are not rivals, but are inherently complementary research approaches which can inform and guide each other. The former attempts to describe qualities, characteristics, and change within particular contexts, while the latter emphasizes precision and measurement. The qualitative dimension looks at what community members highlight as the reason why women sing. For the qualitative dimension the main focus was with the focus groups and observations which served as the means of gaining the type of information needed. Individual interviews also played a role albeit minimally when compared with focus groups. Nonetheless the data drawn from individual interviews was validated by the focus groups whose opinions form the major component of this chapter.

However, I have quoted these individual interviews throughout the study making a case of their significance whenever mostly relevant. Chapter 7, in particular, succinctly illustrates this point.

On the other hand, and while taking full cognisance of the fact that the quantitative dimension of this work is derived from the qualitative responses and as such represents an idea of a general trend around 'thoughts and feelings' (which is aimed at ensuring that readers can get a sense of what informed the respondents' points of view) of the respondents, through this limited dimension of a quantitative analysis which was based on a broader qualitative one, as a researcher I was concerned with accessing certain degree of measurable information about the extent and nature of responses on why women sing as well as assist in drawing some conclusions about other specific trends. I am therefore fully aware of the limited degree to which one can accurately quantify these responses but that such an analysis was useful and critical for this study in order to provide the degree to which the issues through their songs and their articulations, were affecting the community of Zwelibomvu.

In this study the quantitative dimension was therefore secondary and mainly derived from the qualitative responses. For this reason, it is important to provide more justification for the use of qualitative approach, which was the main approach used in data collection.

5.3.1 Qualitative method

Qualitative method involves strategies such as total participation in the activity being investigated, through methods such as field work. It allows the researcher to obtain first hand - knowledge about the social world in question (Fielstead, in Bailey, 1987:94). The key feature that distinguishes this approach from quantitative method for example, is that it is conducted in the natural setting of social actors, thus providing the 'insider view' which anthropologists also refer to as the "emic" perspective (Neuman, 1997). According to Neuman (1997) qualitative research has a potential of obtaining adequate information about the community's actions, perceptions, attitudes, constraints and experience. Qualitative approach allows for flexibility in the sense that it accommodates the unexpected turn of events during the research process. It is thus regarded as suitable for the current study as it allows adequate flexibility in terms of questioning and discussion. Hence while initially the plan was to concentrate on using individual interviews I resorted to relying predominantly on focus groups when it turned out that more information was being derived from them. However individual interviews were not completely

discarded as the information from such interviews was validated by the focus groups presented in this chapter.

5.3.1.1 Participatory approach

There are major advantages in following this kind of a participatory action research methodological framework. First, it provides for methodological flexibility within the project. This flexibility in turn allows the researcher to engage with participants based on their unique contexts, the diversity in age and experience, diversity in their identity and cultural backgrounds and language differences. As far as this study is concerned it comprised the same cultural group albeit of varying ages and gender residing at the five districts constituting Zwelibomvu.

Second, participatory method allows for active participation of participants with whom the study is being conducted and it is particularly suitable to observing subtle nuances such as body language amongst participants. I was in a position to watch attentively for those aspects of gestures presented through the body language (cf Marcel Jousse's concept of the four human expression known as Mnemonic Laws of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm described in Chapter 2). It is envisaged that the focus group activities could assist in gaining a deeper insight into participants' knowledge and internalization of the issues discussed and the impact it has had on them. Focus group interviews offer for action-based research that may easily inform paradigm shift. It is participatory, open and provides a forum for the gathering of as much information as possible. Indeed, these advantages manifested themselves clearly in this research as Zwelibomvu women failed at times to listen to one person's views as each woman was eager to voice her feelings which were communicated also with a body language.

5.4 Scope and procedure

The methodology that was adopted in the study allowed the researcher to:

- derive information on sample participants and to provide certain biographic data related to the sample;
- describe and analyse trends across districts, gender and age categories

The section that follows outlines the method used in the selection of participating communities.

5.4.1 Selection of participating districts

Community members from Zwelibomvu's districts were organised into focus groups. This choice was based on the fact that this community epitomizes the tension between traditional and contemporary practices.

Elaborating on the merits of focus groups, Bless (2000) argues that focus group discussion provides participants with an opportunity to discuss the issues by questioning each other. Moreover, one person's ideas may set off a whole string of related thoughts and ideas in another person. In the same manner, one participant may disagree with and question the remarks of another. This allows for participants to play off one another's contributions and to 'spill the beans'. Consequently the researcher gets much deeper insight into a topic than would be the case from interviewing all the participants individually. This was observed throughout the facilitation of the focus groups that took place in Zwelibomvu.

5.4.2 Population for the study

The study population consists of women and men from five of the seven districts comprising Zwelibomvu. The five districts are grouped around one local *induna*, Israel Magcaba under Chief Mzonjani Mkhize.

5.4.2.1 Sampling

Bailey (1987:80) states that the logic of sampling is relatively straight forward. He maintains that we first select a population of interest, in my case Zwelibomvu residents. David and Sutton (2004:149) add that "good sampling implies a well defined population, an adequately chosen sample and an estimate of how representative of the whole population the sample is". Thus in this study in the rural geographic location of Zwelibomvu representation of female and male residents in line with the nature of the study was included in the sample across the demographics in the sample. This is in keeping with Bailey (ibid.) who further states that a subject of some pre-arranged size from the population is then chosen.

The rationale for the choice of the sample was also based on the spread across my operational definition of women explained in detail in Chapter 1. This was irrespective of whether they were

unmarried, married, in polygamous or monogamous marriages (see questionnaire Annexure B). In all instances the sample was representative of the various age groups of Zwelibomvu residents. Hence the ages of participants taken into account were 15 -65 years. These targeted participants were primarily selected on voluntary bases as well as on request (mindful of ethical requirements). Language factor was considered and all interviews were conducted in isiZulu only. These have been translated into English. Bearing in mind that whenever translation is involved the original sense of the source text is somehow affected (Bassnett -McGuire, 1991, 2002) Zwelibomvu is no exception. However every effort has been made to translate as efficiently as possible such that meaning is not lost in the process. The use of the representative sample ensures that the information gathered is as 'authentic' as possible.

Hofmeyr (1993) recommends that oral scholars leave their desks in order to fully understand the communities about which they write. I immersed myself in the Zwelibomvu community after deliberations with a local *induna* (headman).

The sampling criteria would assist in the selection of a statistically valid sample. In this study my sample ensured that every aspect of the community's way of life as presented through songs was represented.

In making the selection the following procedure was adopted:

- A sample of 60 participants was selected from Zwelibomvu which is made up of the following districts: eZimbokodweni, ePhangweni, ePanekeni, eMkhangoma and eMadwaleni (the last two districts forming one group).
- Focus groups of 15 participants per district were set up in order to ensure maximum group participation and management. Thus 4 groups were interviewed.
- These were grouped according to gender and age as follows:
Phase1-eZimbokodweni/young females between ages 15 -35;
Phase 2- ePhangweni/old women between ages 45-65;
Phase 3- ePanekeni/young males between ages 15 -35; and
Phase 4- eMkhangoma and eMadwaleni/old males between ages 45 -65.
- From the groups an analysis would be made as to whether there are any discernable differences in expressed reasons between the selected age and gender categories.

- **Table 1: Participating members by Gender and Age**

District	Gender	Average age per group
eZimbokodweni	Young females	15-35 years
ePhangweni	Old females	40-65 years
ePanekeni	Young males	15-35 years
eMkhangoma and eMadwaleni	Old males	40-65 years

The following table is a summary of process for selecting participating members:

Table 2: Summary of process for selecting participating communities

District	Total number of planned participants	Number of sessions
eZimbokodweni	15	1
ePhangweni	15	1
ePanekeni	15	1
eMkhangoma & eMadwaleni	15	1

5.5 Instrument design

A set of questionnaires were developed in line with achieving the research goals. While questionnaires generally do have the disadvantage of limiting the scope of possible responses this was balanced by the more open and flexible approach used in the qualitative phase of the research. This kind of approach does not prescribe but is open -minded about what responses will emerge on the issues of what is priority for the participants. Thus a few questions that do not respond to the main question of the dissertation title were included. Such questions were asked because it was felt that since they revolved on topical issues or lifestyle trends of Zwelibomvu community they could also shed light to broader concerns of the study (See questions 10 and 12 of Phase 1 and Questions 9 and 10 of Phase 3 Annexure B).

The key questions to be answered through the instrument were in the following categories:

- What is their opinion of what songs are;
- Whether women sing for specific reasons;
- What messages are communicated through their songs;
- What role these songs play in addressing their social issues;
- Whether youth, men and women see the role played by songs in similar ways; and
- What songs are sung and why.

5.5.1 Procedure for interviews

The research was supposed to be based on a generic questionnaire for both females and males. However, for certain categories of participants' specific questions had to be adapted to suit those participants. For example one would never ask men a question such as "As women why do you sing?"

See **Annexure B**: List of questions

The reason why males were used as part of the study was to gather their opinions since they co-exist with females and it was interesting to use their responses as well to measure the validity of the community's responses. Again, within the focus of this study what constitutes the notion of gender is the relationship between the discourse of domination between men and women.

5.5.2 Biographical and geographical information

The following data was analysed based on participants' information from their response transcripts:

- Biographical, geographical location and profile per district
- Actual participating number of members

5.5.2.1 Biographical and geographical information of Zwelibomvu

The study takes place in Zwelibomvu, a rural reserve located some 55 km south of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Its neighboring town is Pinetown while the nearest township is

KwaNdengezi. According to an account given by Thulebona Magcaba, (08/02/07) a then headman's son, residents consider themselves of Zulu ethnicity and are members of a large Mkhize chiefdom that migrated to the region in the 1830's to avoid the disfavour of the Zulu king, Dingane. While originally under the authority of one chief, the Mkhize chiefdom, is presently split into three traditional authorities, namely Vumakwenza, Embo -Timuni and Isimahla.

Zwelibomvu falls under the latter traditional authority, Isimahla Traditional Authority with Zwelinjani Mkhize as its chief. The people of Zwelibomvu are spread over throughout seven districts constituting Zwelibomvu with approximately 8 500 people. These areas derive their names from rivers that provide water for the people. These are Ezimbokodweni, ePhangweni, ePanekeni eMkhangoma, and eMadwaleni. The division of districts in this fashion is not unique to Zwelibomvu as Shangase (2006: 44) points out a similar phenomenon in his study when he says:

According to the cultural tradition of the Shangase clan, there is a region, (isigodi -umfula) known as iKhohlo Lesizwe (the left-side house of the tribe).

Three municipalities, namely, eThekwini, Ugu and Mkhambathini service Zwelibomvu with local councilors evenly distributed between the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) political parties. Due to the wide area that Isimahla Tribal Authority covers, the chief is assisted by *izinduna*, loosely translated to mean headmen whom he authorizes to deliberate on his behalf. Thus Zwelibomvu has Israel Magcaba as its *induna*. In order to facilitate a smooth functioning of his area he is, in turn, assisted by *amaKhansela* (councilors) who report directly to him.

Except for *izimpi zemibango* (factions-fighting), the region did not experience any politically the unrest. These factions-fighting characterized by violence inundated the area for decades and cost the community several lives. They were resolved in the 1990s when chief Zwelinjani and *induna* Magcaba called a successful *imbizo* (a meeting of the entire region) in which they implored the people to put behind their past animosity and create a peaceful and healthy environment in which to raise future Zwelibomvu descendants.

Integral to the lives of Zwelibomvu community are ritual and social gatherings which are characterized by singing. These occasions are:

- *Ilima*, a collective word for a group of women who engage in some kind of women's home based activities, and
- *umemulo*, a ceremony for a girl reaching the marriageable age
- *umgcagco*, traditional wedding ceremony
- *Amacece*, traditional functions where neighbouring communities come together to perform according to izigodi (districts). In these functions one finds that there are varieties of songs that are sung that deal with a number of issues and rendered in different genres. For this reason and for the purposes of this study I have categorized *ukushoza*, a poetic song genre which refers to specified solo dance songs together with *maskanda* a group of women or men (but in this case women) who sing together for entertainment purposes as well as to earn a living but who generally have bigger socio - political issues to comment about through this genre, under the context of *amacece*.

These activities have been adequately elaborated upon in Chapters 1, 2 and 4. It is during such gatherings that women, through the medium of songs, consciously or unconsciously find a space to tell stories about their lives

Table 3: Summary of geographical location and profile

Session	Name Of District	District Profile	Distance
1	eZimbokodweni	Rural Outskirts of Mainly illiterate community using land as form of sustenance	55 km from central Ethekwini CBD
2	ePhangweni	Rural Traditional deep rural area. Communities active in school functioning and show great interest though most not literate.	40 km from central Ethekwini CBD
3.3	ePanekeni	Rural In close proximity to KwaNdengezi township influence	35 km from central Ethekwini CBD
3.4	eMkhangoma and eMaDwalweni	Rural Mainly utilizing tradition for entertainment for economic purposes	45km and 50 km from eThekwini CBD respectively

5.5.2.2 Participating numbers

Even though much was done to ensure that the total numbers expected attended the focus group sessions, some participants could not turn up due to unforeseen circumstances. For example on the day of the meeting with ePanekeni group death had occurred in the neighbourhood resulting in the shortage of 6 participants as illustrated in Table 4 below. However, this situation did not distort the goals of the research since the people that did not turn up were fewer in number than those who did.

The following table summarises the rate of attendance in the focus group interviews.

Table 4: Actual participating number of members

Name of District	Total No. Of participants	Planned	Percentage attendance
eZimbokodweni	15	15	100%
ePhangweni	11	15	73%
ePanekeni	9	15	60%
eMkhangoma and eMadwaleni	14	15	93%
Total Attendance	49	60	81%

Overall, there was an 81% attendance. In total 49 respondents out of a planned 60 participants attended. Attendance in Ezimbokodweni was higher than in other districts, with ePanekeni having the least number of attendees. A reason for a high attendance at eZimbokodweni could be deduced. Generally this district showed a very high degree of interest in what I was doing throughout my presence in Zwelibomvu. The same could be said of eMkhangoma where the *induna* and his family lived.

5.6 Data collection methods

During the process of observation (participant observation in natural field setting) and focus groups, information or data was collected by means of note taking. These notes were either captured in the form of recordings or were handwritten based on the responses from questions as

well as remarks made by respondents during their responses and after further probing by the researcher.

5.6.1 Video camera, note taking, and tape recording

To further ensure that everything that emerged during the discussion was captured so as not to miss any crucial information at a later stage, over and above note taking a tape recorder and video recording were used for interviews. This facilitated the writing process as I could go back to the event if there was something I was not quite clear about. Without breaching ethical principles consent was obtained prior to the recording.

5.6.2 Reliability and Validity

In research reliability is concerned with the consistency of measures. An instrument which produces different scores whenever it is used to measure an unchanging value has low reliability (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995:130). On the other hand an instrument which continuously yields the same score when used to measure unchanging value can be trusted to provide correct measuring and is said to have high reliability (ibid).

Validity is measured in terms of two different yet associated dimensions; the internal and external validity. While the former aspect is interested in the question “Do the observed changes in the dependent variable actually relate to changes in the independent variable” the latter is concerned with the question “Do the results obtained from the particular sample of participants apply to all subjects in the population being studied” (Bless and Higson -Smith, 1995:113).

In the case of Zwelibomvu respondents, reliability and validity was ensured by selecting women and men of the same age group as well as young girls and boys of the same age group. However, to further measure the reliability of responses, the respondents were selected from the different districts so as to compare similar and different trends and to determine whether the responses confirmed or disconfirmed the views propagated by theoretical framework of the study. In the light of what is explained above, the study concerned itself with external validity which examines the extent to which the result of the study can be generalized to the real world. For high external validity to be accomplished, the researcher must consider two factors. The

sample must be typical of the population in question and the researcher must ensure that the study simulates the real world as closely as possible (ibid).

5.7 Data analysis

In order to be systematic with the analysis of the experiences and other elements of Zwelibomvu community's culture as depicted in the responses, the questions were categorized and analysed according to districts and age categories, each theme consisting of sub -themes.

5.7.1 Phase by phase analysis of responses

For ease of navigation, the analysis is categorized into four phases. These will be outlined below in sections 5.7.1.1- 5.7.1.4) . The responses are analysed according to the most common responses made by the respondents to the issues in question. However, for some questions, other respondents would indicate that they were not sure or would be rather vague about an issue. I felt that it was important to indicate such instances as they could reveal something about the issue in question.

Again, where there were interesting comments made by the respondents to augment their responses, such as through an example or a direct quotation, these are indicated under the column marked "Comments". Where no particular comments are extractible this has been indicated by a "not applicable" (n/a) code.

Finally, it is important to make this last point with regard to the tallying of number of or frequency of responses by individual respondents. Since the interviews were conducted in the form of focus groups, it must be noted that this was a structured but open discussion. For this reason, I, as a facilitator of the interviews had to ensure that everyone put their opinions forward. However, some people would naturally repeat what others had already said even though not in the exact words. Since the respondents were free to comment in any order and make their input as and when they had something to say, it was observed that respondents were not merely repeating what the others had said (not just through exact words) but their utterances were a clear indication that these were issues that they were passionate and had strong beliefs about. The approach to this analysis therefore took this critical observation into account and I have endeavored to indicate how many times the same issue was mentioned, though in different ways.

This, I believe can also assist in drawing certain conclusions about the most burning issues that people felt were of critical importance as to why women sing.

Therefore it is important to understand that the frequency of responses indicated in numbers, will not necessarily reflect the total number of respondents, since one respondent could voice out more than one issue as being of concern and would still be tallied for the other responses. I have decided to categorise the stages in which the focus groups were conducted into phases. A phase is determined by the grouping according to district, gender and age as described below.

5.7.1.1 Phase 1: Quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses from Ezimbokodweni: Young females/ 15-35 years

Question 1: Is there a role that women play in song?

Ans: All said yes.

Question 2: Why do women sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
To entertain	In functions and ceremonies To also entertain their parents as they ogle at their beautiful bodies while young girls dance	8
To show respect and pride and to enhance their self esteem and confidence	To parents as being virgins, this builds their self esteem and confidence when they are commended and praised on how beautiful and pure their bodies are, it encourages them to behave As young girls take centre stage they feel important since the audience is looking	5

	at only them	
Women provoke, look down and criticize each other	n/a	2
Women complain about co-wives and expose the way they are treated in polygamous marriages.	n/a	5
They get poetic license to voice issues against their husbands	Issues such as violence and abuse and lack of financial support As young girls observing this negative behaviour they also get courage to tell their fathers what they do not like in the treatment of their mothers Here they can use any words however unacceptable they are in society	5
To voice out and protest about issues in the community that they are not happy about and to warn members to correct these	Socio-political issues under <i>izinduna</i> (headmen) and councilors. Witchcraft Spread of disease with special mention of HIV and AIDS being made.	5
To protest about unequal rights and power that men seem to have	“We show unhappiness about men yielding fear and we can be rude to them and reclaim the power and fear fullness to ourselves through song- even if it just for that moment in time”	5
To observe, carry on, preserve, promote and validate our culture and heritage	Culture as it relates to Virginity. A concern that ceremonies such as <i>umemulo</i>	11

	<p>extends to girls who are no longer virgins surfaced.</p> <p>Women sing as a way of life.</p> <p>A significance of traditional attire and dance was raised.</p> <p>Also young girls are warned not to cohabit with men but to wait until <i>ilobolo</i> is paid</p>	
To show respect and pride and to enhance their self esteem and confidence	<p>To parents as being virgins, this builds their self esteem and confidence when they are commended and praised on how beautiful and pure their bodies are, it encourages them to behave</p> <p>As young girls take centre stage they feel important since the audience is looking at only them</p>	5
To show solidarity with their mothers about their hardships	This is regarded mainly to oppression by men	3
It is an expectation from our society	n/a	1
It is an inexpensive way to relax	Whereas in urban areas young people go to cinemas to relax we use these forums which are free in order to relax	1

Each and every respondent answered “Yebo” (yes) to question 1. I felt that there was a short coming in the manner in which this question was phrased. This observation was arrived at after respondents from all other phases provided the same verbatim affirmative response to the same question. The question should thus have been linked with the next question to prompt a discussion.

It is interesting to note that the issue of culture rates highest followed by entertainment and then protest by these young women. Considering the average age group that was being interviewed the trend does seem to validate the relevance of popularity of responses since these are typical

responses that affect them first and foremost as younger people and then their parents especially mothers.

Question3: Other than in traditional ceremonies and functions, during wh at other times do you and other women sing and what determines what you sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
When a particular family has brewed Zulu beer, adults gather to have fun.	n/a	2
When youth attend any function and they are on the way to the function.	n/a	1
In church and at school functions.	n/a	11
On Heritage days.	n/a	1
Age group determines what we sing.	n/a	2
Nature of functions determine what we sing	n/a	13

Since these were mainly young women most of whom were still active in school it is not surprising that they responded in the majority that they sang in these places. It is also worth noting that these two institutions (church and school) are representatives of contemporary institutions and therefore it shows that these people are indeed immersed in both worlds – the old and the new.

There is also a close correlation in number of responses between the responses on the fact that ‘types of functions determine what they sing’ and the choice of the functions in this case being church and school.

Question 4: Is there a difference between songs sung by men and women in these functions/ceremonies? Elaborate.

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Stages at which men and women are, and age differences determine types of songs	There is therefore a big difference. Young girls and older women will not have predominantly the same issues to talk about. In the same way as young boys and girls; boys and men will not have similar issues.	13
Content related to age and gender determines types of songs for both sexes. Young boys and males songs are about adventure and being <i>amasoka</i> (men who are popular with women). Girls' songs are generally about how to behave themselves and to be obedient.	Men for example, are taught at a young age that you are not man enough if you can't have more than one girlfriend	4
Content: Women's songs are generally sarcastic in nature.	n/a	2
Place in society: Determined by position and where male or female should be at a particular time.	Women are not allowed in the Kraal, so can't sing during this time	2
Tone, sound and rhythm of males and females songs are different	n/a	2
Performance: Men even dance differently from women	n/a	3
Genre: Local men don't sing Gospel as groups of men	Women prefer both	1
Not sure	n/a	1
There are generic songs for both sexes though	n/a	1

While the majority agrees that there is a difference in songs sung by both sexes, the reasons they give are varied yet all valid seeing from the spread of responses across all respondents. The most common responses as to the difference centred on the stage at which these two groups were at but content of songs played an important role. Other differences even though not popular ly articulated are important as they give more insight into other reasons as to why this community, especially, women as well indirectly provide even more insight into the nature of women's songs.

Question 5: Is there a point at which both women and men sing the same songs? Elaborate.

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
In traditional weddings and public platforms or <i>esigcawini</i> .	n/a	12
During rituals or ceremonies as men and women meet outside the kraal.	n/a	2
When there are songs that are neutral not based on gender.	These could be political songs and church songs	2

Question 6: As a woman, what is it that you gain through song?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
It is a form of enjoyment.	n/a	1
It brings us together during practice to share common stories.	n/a	3
We educate each other during this time.	They educate each other about behaviour, respect and to accept that they can't change the way their husbands are.	4
Freedom of expression and to defy pre-set rules as well as liberty to create our own rules.	This freedom is around issues that are not easily spoken about by individual women. The freedom is however limited and time bound and the women consciously are aware of this. "This freedom ends in Words".	3
Provides platform for men to recognize them as potential wives and for them to get worthy husbands	n/a	2
Affirmation of body and self as well as confidence and pride in who we are.	We ridicule those that can't participate /who are no longer virgins as it means they no longer have a sense of belonging to any particular group anymore	4
Motivation and encouragement	Mainly to remain well behaved and to keep virginity as they show off their bodies.	4
Not sure	n/a	1

Whereas enjoyment is implied in these performances and has not been as conspicuously and frequently mentioned, it is critical to realize that this group is even more conscious of the bigger role of songs and the functions that they fulfill. Taking pride in themselves as well as education are the most common utterances, while freedom to articulate themselves freely, even if just for that moment is rated as quite an important gain.

It is worth mentioning that there is a glaring tension in responses between the same women especially on the issue of their willingness to accept men's behaviour and their articulation of the fact that through the same medium of song they liberate themselves from the very same men that they are eager to accept.

Question 7: Do you normally sing individually or as groups and why? And do you sing different songs or same songs in the different districts?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
We sing in groups.	Almost all were unanimous and could not imagine a situation where songs could be sung meaningfully as individuals.	13
Only in solo gospel music.	n/a	1
Mothers in polygamous relationships can sing individually but not young girls.	This is when they want to provoke or be sarcastic to other wives in the same marriage.	1
On the issue of songs they are mostly similar as they spread and become popular.	This is because either one person visiting another district will hear a new song and come back to teach her own <i>isigodi</i> (district). Also as districts they attend one another's functions and ceremonies.	13

Songs only differ according to the nature of a function but not in essence and generic meaning.	n/a	3
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Attending one another's functions make songs porous and signifies that there are no modern rules of patenting, intellectual property and copyright to be observed as society owns these songs. The messages are more for society in any case. The popularity of singing in groups as well as singing the same songs may signify that women, irrespective of where they live, generally share the same concerns and interests.

Question 8: Is there a message/s that you generally want to convey through the songs?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Songs teach us to be proud and to respect our virginity and bodies. We also affirm a sense of self.	You cannot dance in a certain way if you are no longer a virgin. Since there is an audience and we perform in an open space.	4
We encourage good behaviour and character building and entrench what society expects of us.	Even when you have 'fallen' you can still build your character.	5
We express ourselves through words to warn society against social ills	n/a	2
Through the attires we put on you can 'READ' who we are.	Whether one is pure or is still a virgin.	2
We convey a message of caring and change to our fathers to support our mothers and to respect their wives' feelings	n/a	2
We sing for fun	n/a	1
It conveys a sense of solidarity, friendship and belonging	n/a	2

Messages are popularly about character building and they almost spread evenly to other issues. It is interesting to note that some pointed out that attire and performance are interrelated and even without using words one can already come to certain conclusions about the women that are singing. To this effect, even, attire could also be a form of discrimination and oppression in a society that values tradition within a modern context.

Question 9: What themes do you touch on through the songs?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Traditional ways of life	n/a	3
Respect for the elderly	Education	2
Morality and pride	n/a	3
Hardship in marriage including: *Jealousy *Inequality among wives from the same husband	n/a	11
Preservation of heritage	n/a	3
Government and politics, nation building after democracy		3
Fidelity/faithfulness	n/a	2
Abstinence	n/a	2
Other social issues	n/a	2

From the frequency of responses it is clear that issues of marriage are of big concern in our society and that everyone is grappling with ways to find solutions to correct this institution in contemporary times and to balance this against the entrenched traditional systems. Later on in this thesis these themes will be explored as to how they come out through the songs.

Question 10: With regards to social concerns mentioned above and particularly about the promotion of morality and good behaviour, what is your view on the issue of social grants for unmarried women with children?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
It is fine for adults but not for young girls.	It must be used for grandmothers looking after children.	4
It promotes promiscuity and the spread of HIV and AIDS.	n/a	8
It is important in sustaining people's lives and has socio-political implications.	This was realized when Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi lost popularity and votes in KZN after announcing that he would stop this grant.	3
We do not want this money.	n/a	4
It is against our culture.	It is better to get married or an <i>ingoduso</i> (bride to be) to get a baby.	3
It helps prevent young girls from having abortions.	n/a	1

Almost every respondent argued that they did not want this money but justified this with different reasons as represented in the table. The messages that are conveyed in the songs correspond to most of the people's views of promoting culture and morality.

Question 11: Were you born out of a polygamous or monogamous marriage?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Yes with no justification	n/a	2
Yes	“But I see no difference and significance between the two/it makes no difference/no issue”	5
No	“But this does not make things better or any different/not an issue”	8

Most of the respondents interviewed come from polygamous marriages but those that responded with comments explained that they were not that bothered by this. By this they really meant that they see no big difference in women's issues between a monogamous and polygamous family since in line with their comments earlier a man will always yield power and be unfaithful to a woman irrespective of where he is.

In fact even those that responded with a 'No' had some subtle misgivings as they believed their men cheated anyway, so to them, this made no difference even in the way they lived.

Question 12: What type of marriage would you prefer (polygamy/monogamy)?

Responses	Comments	Popularity of comments
No polygamy	I would: Rather not marry; rather be single; rather be a spinster; but this is beyond me x2; it is his right. Witchcraft is rife in polygamy; even my mother is alone in husband x2;	9
Polygamy	It will be the same anyway	1
Don't care	It will be the same anyway	1
Not ready/not sure/not thought of this yet	Too young to think of marriage	2
Do not know	I cant have say over husband/ whatever husband says	2

This shows the general feeling women have about polygamy and when one compares the rate of respondents in polygamous relationships in this sample, one can see that they are indeed not happy with the status quo. This may even be the more reason why most of the songs are about marriages and hardships in polygamous relationships as observed earlier.

However, when compared to the responses regarding the families they come from, it is interesting to note that whereas the majority was despondent about what they could not change, it is worth noting that in this case and given an option, the majority would still prefer 'no polygamy', despite the fact that earlier they had indicated that they were very conscious of the fact that being in this situation makes no difference.

**5.7.1.2 Phase 2: Quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses from ePhangweni:
Older women/ 40-65 years**

Question 1: Is there a role that women play in song?

Ans: All said yes.

Question 2: Why do women sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
When we are working together so we do not feel the toughness of the task.	n/a	1
It keeps our families together, consoles us as we are suffering under husbands' abuse.	Gives an enduring sense of healing. It makes us feel happy.	7
In new democracy councilors may not be doing their work properly so it is a form of social commentary for them to pull up their socks.	Political commentary Avoids gossip but gives courage as it is not easy to face someone with the truth Can sing about a person even in their presence and they will know the song is directed to them	1
To voice out and protest about issues in the community that they are not happy about such as witchcraft and community violence.	n/a	1
To observe, carry on, preserve, culture for our future generation		3

When compared to the younger female's responses one can see that from a gender perspective the women share a common identity especially with regard to issues of abuse and protest. However, one notices that in this category of older women, their responses are broader and well articulated and they show as a sense of pain felt and experienced directly rather than observed.

Their issues touch on the welfare of society as a whole and are not confined only and mainly to hardship in families.

Question 3: Other than in traditional ceremonies and functions, during what other times do you and other women sing and what determines what they sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
In church and when we teach each other religious song from our respective denominations.	It is here that we get a sense of belonging.	2
When we do tasks such as weaving beads or during <i>ilima</i> or On Heritage days	We generally like helping one another as a community	2
During rituals for <i>sangoma</i> (diviner) initiations and in traditional weddings.	n/a	1
We sing alone when we want to send a message to our husbands through the co-wife in a sarcastic way.	Like when we want the other woman, while passing by to her own house, to tell our husband that he is now neglecting my family and children we say things like: “even my children use the toilet”	1

These responses were more insightful but there were still similarities to the responses made by the younger age group of another district!

Question 4: Is there a difference between songs sung by men and women in these functions/ceremonies? Elaborate.

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Content related to age and gender determines types of songs for both sexes. Young boys and males songs are about adventure violence and war songs. Men also sing about issues affecting nations.	n/a	7
Content: Women songs are sarcastic and we jibe at others and poke fun at them	n/a	5
Content: We also talk about what affects us, our children and co-wives	n/a	3
Content: What makes a man is having many wives so they sing about this.	n/a	1
Women tell stories while men's songs are unclear and sometimes meaningless	n/a	1
Men sing about family <i>izibongo</i> (family praises)		1

Generally, the responses were similar to the previous group. The issue of what makes a man is passed on to younger generations as it is observed that there were similar observations about this from both groups. An important addition is the fact that it is only men that can say *Izibongo Zomndeni* or praise songs for families or their histories. There was a very obvious sense of the battle of the sexes in this group as the members wanted to show how little they think of men.

**Question 5: Is there a point at which both women and men sing the same songs?
Elaborate.**

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
In traditional weddings	n/a	8
During rituals as men and women meet outside the kraal	n/a	2
At public platforms or <i>esigcawini</i>	n/a	6
No.	Men can't protest about being in bigamous relationships and can't be chased from homes due to rejection by their wives	4

Notice the common responses with the earlier group but also the fact that due to inequalities of power some of these women see the status quo as being 'unquestionable' and so feel that as a result of this they cannot sing songs that portray the sense of rejection by their husbands.

Question 6: As a woman, what is it that you gain through song?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Our children are dying because of HIV and AIDS so we advise one another about traditional medicine that has worked for any family.	n/a	1
We relax without having to bother about men pestering us to serve them.	n/a	1
We also advise one another about children that are naughty.	n/a	1
Freedom of expression and to voice our dissatisfaction about our men and a sense of relief that we have let out steam	n/a	5
Hardships caused to us by our in-laws.	We feel free until we have to face these demons again.	3
We give each other advice on how to entice our men to love us more and to compete against co-wives		4
Emotional happiness	n/a	1

These women's first hand experiences provide more insight into the hardship they go through in their families as well as what role songs play to alleviate this pain. They also added an element of oppression from the in-laws which was not mentioned by the previous group.

Question 7: Do you normally sing individually or as groups and why? And do you sing different songs or same songs in the different districts?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
We sing in groups	Almost all were unanimous and could not imagine a situation where songs could be sung meaningfully as individuals.	4
We sing solo when we lead in <i>ukushoza</i> (women's solo poetic songs) and even here there is a group that backs us up.	n/a	1
Mothers in polygamous relationships can sing individually.	This is when they want to provoke or be sarcastic to other wives in the same marriage.	1
Songs are similar as they spread and become popular.	This is because either one person visiting another district will hear a new song and come back to teach her own <i>isigodi</i> (district). Also as districts they attend one another's functions and ceremonies	3
Songs only differ according to the nature of a function but not in essence and generic meaning	n/a	2

In the same way as the previous groups these responses were the same.

Question 8: Is there a message/s that you generally want to convey through the songs?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
We can air our views about what troubles us and we get courage from singing.	n/a	5
Government has given us rights as women	Education	4
We are aware of current issues that affect us even though we did not go to school. We therefore sing about current affairs.	Media (TV and radio) plays an important source of information and they have these commodities. Issue of Zuma has affected them as they see this being aired on TV and they feel like they are part of this process.	5
Preservation of heritage	n/a	2

Again the messages were many and broad. Issues of rights and equal treatment were most common, while voicing issues about politics were quite prevalent.

From the frequency of responses it is clear that issues of marriage are of big concern in our society and that everyone is grappling with ideas to find solutions to correct this institution in contemporary times and to balance this against the entrenched traditional systems.

Question 9: What themes do you touch on through the songs?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Awareness of HIV and AIDS.	This is because there is an audience and we perform in an open space.	1
Encouraging good behaviour and character building.	n/a	1
Understanding of our rights in the democratic South Africa and to fight against women and child abuse.	“We inform them through song that we will report them to the law”	5
Pleading with our men to support us and to treat us well even though they have more than one wife	n/a	5
Protest to our men that we are not slaves or donkeys even though they paid lobola	To talk about equal distribution of work with men, since we also work to earn a living.	1
Preservation of culture	Especially respect	3
To remind ourselves about old ways that used to sustain us and to promote development.	Issues such as the value of land are conveyed through song.	1

This age group of women seems to be more in touch with issues that affect them in the modern context and that they voice these issues through song. The issue of self -empowerment comes through very clearly as they take matters such as sustainability and right to dignity and justice into their hands. While from the interviews and observing their body language, one got the sense that with regard to getting justice from abusive husbands, they have not really had the courage to take such action, they were very clear about their stand on this issue. In fact one respondent argued that we threaten them with incidents of women who report their husbands to the law - incidents that we merely hear about in the news on radio or television.

On the other hand the responses from younger women seem to suggest something otherwise. While they are aware of the plight of women they generally do not seem to have tangible experiences which refer them per se. They seem to embrace their cultural expectation with a dubious attitude. This is based on the responses that seem to point at their unhappiness with the status quo of polygamy, for example where they claim that if it has worked all along it should also work for them.

5.7.1. 3 Phase 3: Quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses from ePanekeni: Young males/ 15-35 years

Question 1: Is there a role that women play in song?

Ans: All said yes.

Question 2: Why do women sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Women provoke, look down, poke fun at and criticize each other.	n/a	5
They expose the cruelty of men who have many wives and girlfriends.	n/a	3
They talk about wayward children.	Issues such as violence and abuse.	1
They talk about HIV and AIDS awareness	n/a	1
To entertain themselves and celebrate weddings and other traditional ceremonies	n/a	1

It is interesting to note that these young men are aware of how husbands treat their wives through messages conveyed in song but from the responses this was not perceived by this group as the most popular reason as depicted in the table above.

Question 3: Other than in traditional ceremonies and functions, what other times do you and other women sing and what determines what they sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
When a particular family has brewed Zulu beer they gather to relax and to have fun.	They are usually a bit tipsy at this time.	2
When they work together in the field attend any function or they are on the way to the function.	n/a	4
Age group determines what they sing	n/a	2
Nature of functions determine what they sing such as gospel or on heritage days and in church	n/a	3

These responses were quite similar to those made by young women of the same age as well as to the ones mentioned by older women even though this to a lesser extent.

Question 4: Is there a difference between songs sung by men and women in these functions/ceremonies? Elaborate.

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Stages at which men and women are and age differences determine types of songs.	n/a	4
Content related to age and gender as per age and stage of women.	If they are old they sing their songs in <i>amalima</i> (plural for <i>ilima</i>) and in <i>izitokufela</i> .	5
It is not common	n/a	1

These responses are closer to those articulated by older women.

Question 5: As men, why do you sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
To entertain and have fun	n/a	6
It is what the community does	n/a	2
Not sure	n/a	1

This group of males seemed to take the role of singing quite lightly compared to the previous groups of women. This was seen in the way they were not as willing as others to elaborate on the reasons even though they were probed further. The majority assumed the main reason to be to entertain.

Question 6: When do you sing and where?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
When herding livestock or at school during heritage days	n/a	3
At traditional functions and weddings	n/a	6

Question 7: What is it that you GAIN through song?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Nothing directly.	Songs about Zuma show sympathy towards him and make a political statement.	3
It is part of our way of life and to pass the heritage from one generation to the other.	n/a	2
No knowledge of this.	n/a	1
We do not gain anything.	n/a	1

The young men were not very creative and open minded in their thinking so their responses were quite limited. This may be tied in with the fact that earlier they did not see songs as really playing a critical role other than that of entertainment.

They did however point out common issues about political commentary in songs that were mentioned by older women of the ePhangweni district.

Question 9: With regards to social concerns mentioned above and particularly about the promotion of morality and good behaviour, what is your view on the issue of social grants received by young and unmarried women for their children?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
I do not like this as it promotes pregnancy in youth.	Girls use it for wrong reasons.	5
It is not a problem.	However girls abuse it.	2
It is fine.	For adults only	1
No comment.	n/a	1

The majority of young males do not approve of this money. The rest felt that it would be fine if the mothers especially, young girls used it appropriately to look after the children.

Question 10: Were you born out of a polygamous or monogamous marriage?

Responses	Comments	Popularity of comments
Yes.	Through the Shembe religion.	6
Yes.	But I see no difference.	1
No.	But father has other women.	1
No comment.	n/a	1

Most of the respondents interviewed come from polygamous marriages but those that responded with a 'yes' with comments meant that they were not even bothered by this situation. Even those that came from monogamous relationships felt that there was not much of a difference. These comments were the same as those given by a group of young girls from eZimbokodweni.

Question 11: What type of marriage would you prefer (polygamy/monogamy)?

Responses	Comments	Frequency of responses
No polygamy	n/a	0
Polygamy	n/a	8
No comment	n/a	1

Since most respondents came from this type of institution it seemed to make sense that they would also want to be in the same relationships. In contrast to the women's responses earlier, this is because these are males and they are the ones in control about such issues.

Question 12: What is your view about women who say they are being oppressed by men?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
There is nothing like that.	Our culture must not be confused with civilization	4
They are mad.	They accept all the nonsense from other cultures. A Zulu man will never change.	1
Women must only concern themselves with whether men support them or not and nothing else.	n/a	3
This is a modern trend for women to find faults with men.	Education is a threat to our old ways of lives.	2

It is interesting to observe young males commenting unanimously in this way. Like their fathers, they already seemed to hold the views similar to the adult males – who tended to see women as commodities and objects. These assertions could indeed validate the reasons put forward by women as to why they sing.

5.7.1.4 Phase 4: Quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses from eMkhangoma and eMadwaleni: Adult males/ 40-65 years

Question 1: Is there a role that women play in song?

Ans: All said yes.

Question 2: Why do women sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
Women provoke, look down, poke fun at and criticize each other, each other's children and co-wives.	n/a	6
To talk about women stuff.	n/a	5
They just sing especially when they are together.	n/a	2
To entertain themselves and celebrate weddings and other traditional ceremonies.	n/a	5

Like their younger male counterparts, these men seem to consider the role of singing particularly as perceived by women, seriously. Except for the fact that they think women entertain themselves through song and criticize each other, this group seemed oblivious to the fact that, as men, they are the main reasons which triggers women to sing.

Question 3: Other than in traditional ceremonies and functions, during what other times do women sing and what determines what they sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
When they see you they sing sarcastic songs and gossip about us.	n/a	5
When they work together in the field attend and doing household work like <i>ilima</i> and fetching wood	n/a	5
They also talk about other wives and ridicule their children	n/a	4

From observations, the tone of the above responses were rather ridiculing and condescending, with some underlying connotations that women were not given the respectful status and a degree of dignity that they deserve.

Question 4: Is there a difference between songs sung by men and women in these functions/ceremonies? Elaborate.

Common issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
They cannot be the same as we are not the same.	n/a	3
Men do not like talking too much as women so women carry this on in song.	n/a	4
They talk about us.	n/a	3

Stereotypes about men and women came through clearly in this question, as even women also depicted men as useless and singing generally inferior songs than what they sing. In this case, men think women talk too much and therefore will have a lot to say anyway through song. By this comment they also were trivializing the motive of women's songs.

Question 5: When do you as men sing together with women?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
At traditional functions and weddings	n/a	12
When the new bride is brought to <i>esigcawini</i> (open place)	n/a	2

Question 6: What is it that you gain through song?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
It brings us together as a Nation.	n/a	1
Only women gain. We don't.	n/a	2
To express our happiness at the way our 'children' have brewed beer for us.	n/a	1
We do not gain anything.	n/a	1

The older men called the women 'their children' and perhaps that is another tension that needs to be explored as to being the reason for male oppression towards women and for women to have a sense of powerlessness and to feel that they can only express the feeling of manipulation and domination through song.

Question 7: When and where do you sing?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
In traditional weddings and functions.	n/a	6
Whenever we are under the influence of liquor.	n/a	4
When in our families when we are happy.	n/a	1
No comment.	n/a	3

Question 8: Is there any message that is conveyed through your songs?

Issues identified	Comments	Popularity of comments
We show how happy we are.	n/a	6
We show our wives we appreciate their efforts of brewing strong and nice beer for us which makes us drunk.	They also complain that we are rude when we are drunk but they are the ones who brew it in the first place	3
No	n/a	5

Question 9: Were you born out of a polygamous or monogamous marriage?

Responses	Comments	Popularity of comments
No	But I have other women with my children x3	3
Yes	And I still have other women	1
No comment		1

All the men, whether responding positively or negatively, had the same attitude towards polygamy, that this was a very good practice.

Question 10: Are women happy about the situation of polygamy that you generally put them in?

Responses	Comments	Popularity of comments
No	You can never satisfy a woman even if she were alone.	5
No	They are jealous those 'things'. They are never satisfied.	1
No	Do you think I would be sane to even consider what women say.	4
No	No wife ever likes another they are all pretenders.	1
No	Where have you ever heard of a man with one woman. Unless he is an <i>isigwadi</i> (a man who is not popular with women).	1
No	You cannot own anything if you were to listen to a woman.	1
No	This helps in that while one is still wild with her madness and jealousy I can go to another woman.	1

All the men seemed to be aware of the unhappiness they were causing, but they seemed not to care judging from the comments made above. This may further strengthen the deduction made by women that they sing mainly because in polygamous marriages, men are insensitive to their feelings.

5.8 Ethical Considerations

In observance of Mouton's (2001:100) assertion that one of the considerations in the gathering of a new or primary data collection is ethical issues, throughout my fieldwork ethical principles were adhered to. Participants were made to clearly understand their rights and that they were not bound to remain in the study. They became aware that if they opted to pull out at any point in time during the study they were free to do.

Some of the ethical considerations that were put to use were:

- a. It is important for the researchers in the interactions with interviewees to be sensitive to the respondents' cultural background and not to demonise the physical relationships that are natural and essential to human interaction.

- b. The voices and experiences of participants themselves have to be elicited with great care, integrity and respect.
- c. The limitations of focus groups to establish actual views of the participants needs to be considered. Research settings produce a '*Hawthorn effect*' where the behaviour of research participants is altered. In the study participants may articulate values and behaviour patterns that participants believe the researchers would like to hear whilst their actual behaviour may contradict their statements. One way of overcoming this limitation is to structure the interaction to illicit the logic of their thought processes, their understanding of the topic at hand and the kinds of benefits they derive from it. This information can then be triangulated with their descriptions and explanations for their responses.
- d. Sufficient time needs to be created for the participatory research activities, focus groups and individual personal interviews in particular to be conducted.
- e. The research must be consultative, inclusive and interactive.

Bailey (1987: 205) states that gaining entry to the field may be no easy matter since some communities expect consent for any sort of soliciting activity and interviewing cannot be conducted without permission. This is very true of Tribal Authorities. One may not simply immerse oneself in the community without announcing one's presence and intention.

The very first stage was therefore to make an appointment with the local *induna*, Israel Magcaba to whom I handed a translated version of my supervisor's letter explaining the nature of my study. I also had to ask for permission in my own capacity as a researcher, to be present on a regular basis in his jurisdiction area. This also meant that my intention had to be thoroughly explained and after a couple of questions from the *induna* himself trying to ascertain if there were no ulterior motives in my presence in his area I was heartily welcomed.

That I was welcome was demonstrated by *induna*'s provision of assistance to me. He asked his own son, Thulebona Magcaba to take me, together with my research assistant thorough a thorough tour of Zwelibomvu. In the process Thulebona explained, using landmarks to substantiate where each of the seven districts constituting Zwelibomvu began and ended. Henceforth I started frequenting the neighbourhood to familiarize myself with it and its people. Gradually, I became immersed in this community.

5.9 Research limitations

The age grouping could perhaps have been more narrowed thus ensuring that the other stages were also represented.

The fact that responses were recorded could also serve as a limitation in that the respondents could be more self-conscious of what they were saying thus limiting the naturalness of the setting.

5.10 Conclusion and observations

The chapter has reflected on the methods employed in this study. A qualitative approach has been defined with the focus on participatory research method in the form of focus groups. Focus group interviews were found to be relevant as they enhance the mobilisation of the public through social action campaigns.

The following is a summary of key observations from this research.

Women were said to sing:

- To express poetic license
- To be sarcastic
- To educate and advise
- To preserve culture and heritage
- For entertainment

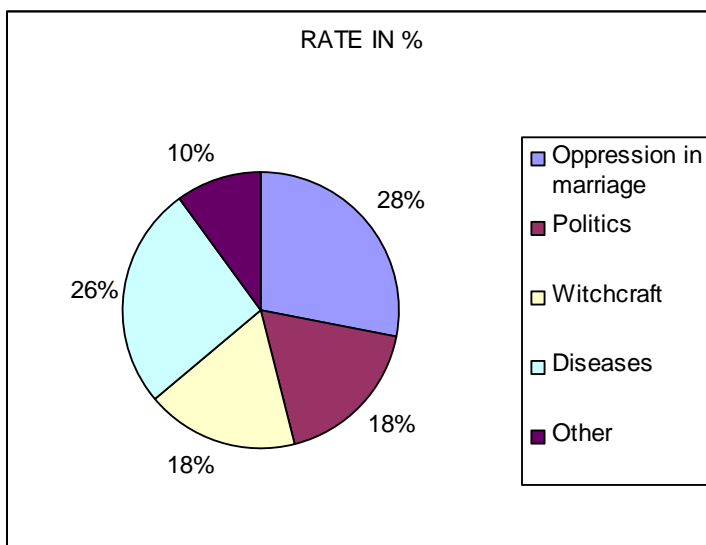
The following is a graphical representation of perceptions of overall popularity of responses from the interviews.



Graph1: Representation of why women sing.

Common issues that women seemed to convey through songs were:

- Oppression in marriage
- Politics
- Witchcraft
- Diseases
- The following is a graphical representation of perceptions of overall popularity of responses from the interviews.



Graph 2: Common issues conveyed through song in %.

The following chapters will analyse the songs that were sung and or mentioned during recordings and interviews in order to ascertain as to whether indeed these messages are inherent in women's songs.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND POWER IN CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S SONGS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter as well as the next chapter will draw from theories used in the previous chapters. By looking at the theoretical framework as well as the primary data collected and analysed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this dissertation, Chapter 6 will explore ways in which the songs sung by Zwelibomvu women display prevalent themes that are of concern to the m as well as to Zwelibomvu society as a whole. It must however be foregrounded that the premise for the way in which this and the next chapter will be dealt with in this section is based on the belief that due to the complexity of human beings, issues that impact on societies are usually hard to extricate and to treat them individually and in isolation of others. This is because real life experiences normally occur in contexts which are usually informed by timeless values and systems and which in turn would most likely impact on the way those societies behave. Therefore even though certain themes dealt with in the present chapter as well as in this study in general, have been identified, it must be clearly pointed out that this is by no means a reflection of the fact that a smooth and clear-cut process, which does not allow integration of other themes coming into one particular theme, will be followed. Rather the themes it is based on are a conscious understanding that these themes are mutually inclusive.

To elaborate further, the themes have been first and foremost identified and isolated by virtue of the key messages that seem to stand out from these songs, and secondly as a structural motif for ease of analysis. One theme will therefore, most likely, reverberate in another theme in such a way that it may perhaps present a certain strain in the creation of other themes. It will be observed therefore that for the purposes of logical and coherent flow of arguments in this project, the approach that has been adopted in both this and the next chapter has been to group the songs according to common themes that seem to be communicated by the songs and from thereafter an indepth analysis is provided. The analysis recognises and acknowledges mutual inclusivity in the way that the songs are dealt with. Therefore I hope that I am able to skillfully make connections with what happens in real life where experiences are not stored in little packets.

Chapter 6 will focus more on the discourse of gender and power in contemporary Zw elibomvu women's songs as conveyed in thematic form. The choice of songs that will be analysed in this chapter has been chosen using both personal and subjective criteria that are relevant and which fit the flow and objective of this study as a whole. As such, the songs identified for Chapter 6 have been selected with regard to the key issues that they deal with which are specifically songs about gender and power as it affects mainly women of Zw elibomvu – a district which could be a microcosm of any other country in Africa and therefore representing similar issues that other women in Africa may be affected by.

6.2. Transcription and translation of songs

All the songs used in this thesis were captured during **oral** performances after which transcription followed to ensure that capturing was well documented when rendered in **written form**. In some cases where certain songs were inaudible from the tape and video recordings, I went back to the research site to verify the lyrics of the songs. The next process was to then have these transcriptions further translated into English to ensure ease of interpretation in this dissertation while also ensuring that the translations provided as much of an 'authentic' process of the original meaning as was possible.

Descriptive translation theorists such as Bassnett-McGurie (1991, 2002), Toury (1980) Lambert and Van Gorp (1985) and Lefevere (1992) suggest that the socio-cultural context in which translations take place should be considered when translating. These scholars argue that translations are never produced in a vacuum but that they are part of a larger system and therefore should be described in terms of the target system. A slightly different view is offered by Hermans (1985) who maintains that translations can never be exact equivalents of their originals because every translation involves a certain amount of manipulation for a certain purpose. Concurring, Bassnett, (1995:160) suggests that songs, like writing, do not happen in a vacuum but happen in context and the process of translating them from one cultural system to another is therefore not a neutral, innocent and transparent activity. In line with the above translation theorists, my approach in transcribing and translating these songs took into account their cautionary and informative ideas on presenting work of quality. Thus both Hermans and Bassnett's views have been mitigated in this study through my physical attendance in functions which would ensure that there was as much objectivity and impartiality as possible in the translations so as to maintain a relative high amount of 'authenticity' of the original meaning of

the songs. Furthermore and with the above understanding in mind, I preferred to work on the translations on my own as soon as possible after each event, so as to capture the immediate essence and freshness of the songs and their experience, thus ensuring that meaning is not 'lost in translation'. Thus if one accepts that in translation one transfers not only words but the culture of the source of text and the target text, then it is important to seriously consider how the process of translation has been followed.

The songs were, therefore, not translated into English in order to judge whether the translation is good or bad. Rather the translation took into consideration the factors that influenced the process of translation which eventually made the end product look the way it does. This is well explained in the paragraph above

6.3. Themes prevalent in the songs of contemporary women

In my opinion the analysis of the songs of Zwelibomvu women suggest that they are steeped in Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS). As such their songs are viewed as one of the medium that represents IKS. Therefore I argue that Zwelibomvu community adheres to oral style. Songs being oral by nature, this thesis, Marcel Jousse's (1990, 2000) ideas form one of the underlying principles that underpin my understanding of and interpretation of women's songs of this community. In this study, I therefore reveal entrenched issues about gender and power which have been instilled in this community through socialisation. Again, Weedon's (1987) Social Constructionist and Post feminism as well as Scott's (1990) model of hidden and public transcripts echo quite loudly in the songs and will therefore render the theoretical bases provided earlier in Chapter 2 even more comprehensible. However, to support key arguments that pertain to this thesis other South African, African and international theorists are also used as indicated in earlier chapters with special reference to Chapter 3 that deals with literature review.

According to Scott (1990) relations of domination are, at the same time, relations of resistance and once established domination does not persist of its own momentum. In support of this statement, songs that women of Zwelibomvu sing reveal this comment quite clearly as there are certain forces that these women are responding to which perhaps question the very existence of such forces.

One of these forces is patriarchy, a social system in which men dominate and in which they are regarded as the authority within the family as well as within society. In this form of social

organization the father is the head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line; the children belonging to the father's clan. Because of patriarchy, some African traditions perceive women as utterly different from, and inferior to men. In that way there is an assumption that men have power over women who have to conform to the normative expectations of their societies.

It has been observed mainly through the research conducted and analysed about the community of Zwelibomvu, that the main hypothesis of this study is that women in patriarchal societies, suffer domination at the hands of their men and that songs thus become one of the strategies of responding to gender and patriarchal power that women experience on a day to day basis. Evidence of this force will be seen through an analysis of songs in order to demonstrate how the songs and women, in particular, illustrate and respond to attitudes towards their societal expectations which are grounded in patriarchy.

I am inspired by Weedon's (1987) assertion that the starting point in any field on women's studies is the patriarchal structure of society. This refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. Therefore I find some definitions which are in line with this study worth revisiting. The word "gender" was earlier described in at least two ways; as a grammatical category as well as a social category. In this study it has been used in the latter sense in which Talbot (1998) comments that being born male or female impacts extensively on an individual. The family, as a socializing agent and has social connotations.

Prior to my visits to the community of Zwelibomvu my perception of this conflict was understood to be a vertical one where women express their discontent with men. However, a second dimension that emerged during the process of my investigation revealed that present within this discourse is also a horizontal aspect where women oppress fellow women and express this in songs. This facet strongly illustrates the genius of oppression whereby due to being slaves of oppression, the oppressed also grab whatever little power at their disposal to oppress those less in power than themselves. These are the effects of oppression on women. And as such this dimension, I argue, is also still rooted in male domination. For this reason one finds during some ceremonies celebrated at Zwelibomvu, women sang to express a particular type of resistance either to their husbands, to other women and to society at large. This resistance or protest was also manifested in the responses that the women articulated during the field research as well as through the songs that they sang in the functions. The following sections will look at

clusters of songs grouped according to themes, which however were not necessarily sung in one function and then an analysis of the issues conveyed will be provided.

6.3.1 Women as sustenance of life

As part of their daily chores women generally, till the land especially when they are together in order to help one another. As they work the soil, they sing in order to encourage one another not to feel tired. The next group of songs demonstrates this commitment and they were collected from the different ceremonies. These songs individually communicate a powerful message about women as being strong members of society who play a critical role in looking after society and sustaining communities. Thus in the words of Christopher Waterman (in Barber, 1997: 49) “hegemonic values enacted and reproduced in musical performance portray [that group] of people as a community”.

In an article by Barbara Moss (in Maria Grosz-Ngate et al., 1997) she comments on gender and cultural consumption and argues that with the advent of modernization and Christianity foreign consumption brought with it cultural baggage, which predominantly African women carried. Christian African women were therefore, taught to redefine themselves, not as farmers, but as dependent housewives. She goes on to argue that “agricultural production proved to be challenging for women, who remained the principal suppliers” (1997:101). Coupled with this challenge, customary law granted men greater authority, while women’s traditional autonomy exacerbated their needs. Therefore whatever changes be they, colonial, religious or political resulting in migrant labour, there was a realization that African women were the linchpin to African self-sufficiency. The above analysis by Moss provides a striking similarity to issues that affect Zwelibomvu women. For example, women who were found singing while tilling land during *ilima* were very vocal about their role in using agriculture for sustenance of their families.

Another striking analogy to the analysis by Moss is the argument that was provided by women during interviews where they argued that they usually sing religious songs together and when they happened to get an opportunity to gather in one place, Christian songs were a form of spiritual relief from their family burdens. One woman commented that, it did not matter that as women they did not belong to the same Christian denomination, but when they were together

they either taught one another songs from their denominations or sang those that were common and through this they experienced a healing and unifying force.

1. Lo mhlaba

Lo mhlaba wakithi
Sondliwa yiwona
Sikhuliswa yiwona
Kodwa sililadi lokukhwela

Lo mhlaba wakithi
Sifundiswa yiwona
Kodwa sililadi lokukhwela

2. Asiwafun'amavila

Asiwafun'amavila thina
Asiwafun'amavila thina
Kulo mbuthano wethu
Asiwafun'amavila thina

Asiwafun'amavila thina
Asiwafun'amavila thina
Kulo mbuthano wethu
Asiwafun'amavila thina
Asiwafun'amavila thina
Kulo mbuthano wethu
Noselibambil'ijoka lakhe
Akasabuy'abhek'eceleni

This soil

This soil of ours
sustains us
It helps us grow
But we are used as a stepping stone for
others to climb up

This soil of ours
It educates us about [how to live]
But we are used as a stepping stone for
others to climb up

We don't want people who are sloths

We do not want lazy people
We do not want lazy people
In this association of ours
We do not want lazy people

We do not want lazy people
We do not want lazy people
In this association of ours
We do not want lazy people
We do not want lazy people
In this association of ours
Even the one who has taken on the yoke
Will never have to loose focus again

3. Imbenge

Leader: Imbenge

Chorus: Wothath'imbenge

Leader: Imbenge

Chorus: Wothath'imbenge

Leader: Sekunjenje kwenza bani?

Chorus: Kwenz'imbokodo

4. Singabasezimbokodweni

Wo suka sambe ilizwe silakhile

SingabaseZimbokodweni ngenkani

Wo suka sambe ilizwe silakhile

5. Utshwala bugayelwe bani?

Utshwala bugayelwe bani?

Sifa yindlala

Utshwala bugayelwe bani?

Sifa yindlala

6. Take him back?

Leader: Ngimthathe, ngikhohlwe?

All: Myeke. Kaka'udla wena

Leader: kant'ifunani le ndoda?

All: Myeke. Mshiye. Kad'umncenga

A grass woven dish

A grass woven dish

You must take the dish

A grass woven dish

You must take the dish

Who is behind these improved conditions?

It is the rock

We are from Zimbokodweni

Oh damn, we have built the country indeed

We belong to Zimbokodweni indeed

Oh damn, we have built the country indeed

For whom is the beer brewed

For whom is the beer brewed

When we are dying of starvation

For whom is the beer brewed

When we are dying of starvation

Forgive him?

Should I take him back, should I forget

Leave him. After all he is leaving off you

What does this man really want?

Leave him. You have been begging him for too long

Song No.1 talks about the role of land in nurturing families. The striking aspect about this song is the fact that there is a sharp underlying message which is embedded. The deeper meaning in the context of protest and resistance alluded to earlier is the fact that it may seem quite clear for everyone to understand the value of land, considering the fact that land is at everybody's disposal- both male and female- to use. However, despite this fact, while they as women know this and use the soil to sustain everybody, it looks like men are not prepared to play their part but instead they still exploit women to get whatever they want. In the context of this study this could mean that men do not work to support their families but that women are still expected to play this dual role. This connotation of exploitation is evident in the imagery of a 'ladder'. Again in line with power and gender issues, this is a striking and loaded metaphor as it shows that women are a means for the dominant group to get to the top.

There is a sense too that women when they sing this song are wanting to educate the men to respect land as it 'teaches' and 'helps us grow' – even though they do not mention the men directly. Akavanga and Odaga's (1982: 5) ideas are evoked in this regard when they state that "the images, similes, metaphors and other figures of speech used in songs ...are drawn from the people's own experiences and their daily activities". This attests to Moss (in Grosz -Ngate) who argues that women remain at home and use the land to sustain the families while as a result of migrant labor men can't even earn enough money to look after their families. In fact the issue of brewing beer is even further and sadly ridiculed by Zwelibomvu men themselves, who patronizingly argued when interviewed that the reason why they sing is to show their happiness when they are drunk. One further stated that "it is funny that these women brew us beer yet complain afterwards that we are rude or that we are not responsible".

The repetition of the lyrics within each song provides for the rhythmic nature of the songs in line with Jousse' Mnemonic Laws. Once again, the use of the consonant 's' which results in a figure of speech called alliteration produces a rhythmic effect while ensuring that the singers easily remember the songs. This idea of woman as 'sustenance' resonates in Song No. 2 where even though the women are aware that they are exploited, they also encourage one another as women not to give up. Their sense of determination is well expressed in the lines 'noselibambil'ijoka lakhe/Akasabuy'abhek'eceleni (even the one who has taken on the yoke will never have to lose focus again). The use of a plural form in both songs indicates that women are fully aware of the power of solidarity and collaboration.

In the first song and second songs the prefix 'si-' in *sililadi* and 'asi-' respectively are in plural form- even though the second one is in a negative form. Therefore, since songs are generally a hidden transcript to publics to voice issues that the oppressed cannot usually articulate freely, this plural form carries more substance with regard to gender solidarity and ensures that no finger is pointed at one particular individual as having complained and protested about any form of oppression. In this regard, plurality is another form of giving women courage to freely express what they are discontent about. Scott (1990) further argues that the idea of a collective which in this case is emphasized by the plural composition of the song as well as by the collective nature of performance, illustrates the fact that as subordinates and in this case as women they may collude to create a piece of theater that serves their superior's view of the situation but that is maintained in their own interest.

Carrying on the idea of the value of land, one of the practices that women get to do while they gather together is to do crafts and to sometimes sell these crafts to provide for their families. Certain types of grass, some of which is called *umshiki*, which they as women know as one of the practices within the IKS is still applicable as seen in ornaments such as '*izimbenge*' which is alluded to in Song No.3. These ornaments are sold in the consumer market as part of earning money while men, enjoy themselves with other women as migrant laborers in cities such as Johannesburg. Because men never contribute to making these ventures viable for their wives in similar ways, Moss reiterates the problem by stating that "women reported that their husbands often refused to purchase accessories necessary for vegetable farming, forcing them to revert to pre-colonial methods of agriculture which they had learned from their mothers" (Moss in Grosz - Ngate, 1997:101).

The sense of pride, and honor in being a hardworking woman despite being exploited is expressed in Song No.4 where women proclaim almost in disdain to the 'other' that though the dominant, in this case their men, may exert power over them, women are in fact the most important people as they are instrumental in the development and prosperity of their district - which in this case is eZimbokodweni and the country as a whole. The weight of the phrases '*ngenkani*' and '*wo suka sambe*' cannot actually be translated fully into English to convey the sense of pride and patriotism and worth embedded in the song.

This sense of worth is almost directly communicated in Song No.6 where one woman in this instance, representing the plight of all women, asks other women, if she really should take ‘him’ back and forget [all the hardships he has put her through]. Women in a chorus relating to this woman’s problem answer in unison that she should leave him especially because after all ‘he is leaving off her sweat’. This message conveys once again the fact that women realize the ‘power’ that they have and argue that there is in fact no need to beg the man for he is not worth the trouble. Once again it is important to point out that in the context of orality and particularly women’s songs, the subject can be successfully contested without causing confusion to the group as to who it is the song is talking about. Therefore in this particular song, the song begins with ‘*ngimthathe*’ without necessarily clarifying who it is that she should be taking back. Nevertheless, the other women through composition understand that it must be a man and they all argue that she should leave ‘**him**’. It is only later on in the song that, it is confirmed that the matter is indeed about a man, when the leader sings, ‘*kant’ifunani le **ndoda**?*’ meaning ‘what exactly does **this man** want?’. Once again the subject can be hidden through using ‘concordial agreement’ and not necessarily saying the real name but generalizing. This is another way in which women play off their ‘power’ to men through song.

One woman in one of my interviews argued:

“Sisebenza kanzima ngomhlabathi sibeke nembewu yonyaka olandelayo ukuze kudliwe emakhaya. Phela lokho okuncane abasinika kona abayeni bethu kugada indlala kodwa basazenzela umathanda ngathi” (We till the soil and save seeds so we can put food on the table. Whatever little our husbands provide, we have to ensure we don’t get hungry yet these men still think they can do as they please with us) [Interview with one of the women from eZimbokodweni 23 February 2006].

“Obaba basemagoli bandindile. Kodwa lomhlaba uyasincelisa wena owabon’ingane incela kunina”(Our men are in Johannesburg and have abandoned us but this soil provides for us and we suckle from it like a child suckling from its mother”). [Interview with one of the women from eMkhangoma, March 15, 2006].

In her feminist critical practice, Weedon (1987) examines ways of understanding social and cultural practices which throw light on how gender power relations should be understood within a variety of contexts in which they manifest themselves; from the sexual division of labour and the social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity by which we live, are constituted, reproduced and contested. She further posits that patriarchal power rests on the social meanings given to biological sexual difference and that in patriarchal discourse the nature and social role of women are defined in relation to a norm which is male. The above imagery

used by one resident of eZimbokodweni when she compares the soil to a woman is effective in that she is in fact further talking about herself as a woman and as the soil of a nation that nurtures men.

Song No. 5 looks at the ironic position in which women find themselves with regard to their roles in the family. In this song they are protesting that beer has been brewed but this protest is in a question or rhetoric form. While this form of protest is powerful in that it does not require an answer to be given since it is known that it is brewed for men, the powerfulness is further emphasized by the fact that it does not question who actually brewed the beer because it is in fact the protester herself that did! There is another level conveyed by the song where the women are not just complaining about their role as waitresses of men who satisfy their every whim, but the fact that beer is sheer entertainment and is not essential more so if the family and women and children are starving. The whole notion of men being ‘*abanumzane*’ by virtue of the fact that it is a family that always has beer that is considered ‘wealthy’ is beautifully subverted, dismissed and questioned in this song.

Commenting on Song No.5 about irresponsible men who expect their wives to always fix beer for them while they do not care about putting food on the table one of Zwelibomvu women interviewed said:

“...abayeni abangondli emakhaya bebe kodwa befuna njalo kuhlale kukhona utshwala uyabona nje ukuthi ngenhliziyo bathi “Kungamane kulale kungadliwe kodwa eyokuphisa utshwala yona iyohlale ikhona”.

(One can just read the mind of men who do not take care of their families. They think that even though their families may go hungry as long as they provide money to fix beer everything is fine)

Ironically men revelled at the idea of beer being brewed for them as they believed that the beer makes them ‘sing and be merry’. It also makes them feel important in the community. One man in fact called her wife ‘*umntwana*’ or ‘child’ to show the perceived role they that they consider their wives to play. This discourse of domination expresses the underlying attitudes that men have about women – thus putting them on the same level as:

‘abantwana esibakhombisa ukuthi sijabule ngokusigayela kwabo utshwala obumnandi’.
(children who we express our happiness to about the strong delicious beer they have brewed for us) [Response from one male interviewee]

This is in sharp contrast to the song that women sing (Song No.5) and this man's comment actually helps to validate and justify the reason why women felt a need to compose a song that specifically protests about the role of beer in the family. The contrast also helps to show the naivety with which men in this context seem to view the role of women and in my view indeed the song seems to immediately elevate these women to a 'powerful' status that they had in actual fact aimed to achieve through the song!

The theme of women as resilient people, who sustain the families and the nation, is therefore beautifully depicted while at the same time also conveying the intricacies of and awareness of gender inequalities and power that women are subjected to. Through these songs the fact women are aware of these contradictions is a critical sign that they are reclaiming their equality through 'a powerful voice that is unchallenged - a song'.

The role of contemporary women's songs in particular, is clearly depicted in these songs which reveal the plight of women in modern times who have to juggle their roles as providers and housewives by going backwards and forward into traditional ways of doing things while being conscious of the changing systems needed for maintaining livelihoods through using agriculture. This agricultural form of sustenance helps women get money through selling in the markets.

6.3.2 Hardship and rejection in marriage

Scott (1990) argues that if subordinate groups have typically won a reputation for subtlety – a subtlety which their superiors find cunning and deceptive - this is surely because their vulnerability has rarely permitted them the luxury of direct confrontation. That is why in the responses the women argued that through song they find a voice over those that dominate, to gain power, even if through words, and just for that particular moment – before they go home from where they were gathered and face the domineering husbands and in-laws.

In an article entitled *Whose music?* Weiner Graebner (in Barber, 1997: 115) argues that songs and culture in general are not only about society, they do not just reflect, but are part of the social-cultural fabric. They articulate and mould life experiences at the same time. The analysis surrounding women's contemporary songs at Zwelibomvu is therefore a good illustration of the contestation of the dominant ideologies, the general characteristics of hegemony. And one of

such dominant ideologies expressed through these songs is mainly about hardship of women as a result of abuse by their husbands. This theme of hardship was so popular to an extent that even in the qualitative study of Chapter 5 it was the most popular argument put forward by respondents.

The following group of songs sung in various ceremonies such as *umemulo* and *umgcagco* conveys the extent of hardships that women have to endure in their marriages. Through this theme there are other embedded themes that are inextricable that will be discussed in the context of the songs as dealing with them in isolation would minimise the power of the songs and make the message quite artificial in analysis. In these songs the power of patriarchy is also well communicated in different forms that will be discussed.

7. Wayilobola ngenkomo

Leader: Wayilobola ngenkom'izokhalelani

Chorus: Ehe-he-e

Leader: We mame

Chorus: Ehe-e umntana wethu

Samtshinga ji

Chorus:Ehe-he-ee

8. Umkhwenyana

Leader: Umkhwenyana may'edlala ngami

Chorus: Ngizohamba

Leader: may' edlala ngami

Chorus: Ngizohamba

Leader: 'Ngcono ngigoduke

Chorus: Ngizohamba ngiphind'ekhaya

9. Wena uyadela

Leader: Wen'uyadela

Chorus: Wen'uyadel'osenobaba nomama

Leader: Wen'uyadela

Chorus: Wo mina ngiyintandane emhlabeni

Angisenabani

10. Kuyashis'emendweni

Kuyashis'emendweni

Wawuyangaphi?

Kuyashis'emendweni webaba

Uyangisind'umendo .We baba

Wawuyangaphi?

You paid cattle for her

You paid cattle for her why should she weep

O, yes

Yes, indeed

O, yes, we literally threw her far away

O, yes

My husband

If my husband ill-treats me

I will leave

I f he iltreats me

I will leave

It's better that I leave

I'll leave and go back home

Lucky you

lucky you

You who still has a father and mother

Lucky you

oh, I am an orphan in this world

I have no one

It's hot in marriage

It's hot in marriage

Where were you going?

Oh Father, it is hot in marriage

I can't handle marriage. My father.

Where were you going?

11. We Mama

We mama womnika umakoti

Isikhwama

We mama womnika umakoti

Isikhwama

12. Ngenzenjani

Ngimthand'angishay

Ngimzib'angishaye

Ngimbik'angishaye

Kanti ngangiyiswaphi

13. Ngibathe

Sibathe baba wezingane

Asuke angishaye ngenduku

Sengibathe ngipheka nkukhwana

Asuke angishaye ngenduku

14. O we nang'uMababaza

Leader: O we nang'uMababaza

Chrosu: Ngaliwa nje ngiyinkonyana

Leader: Ayi we baba zingaye

Ayi bo zingaye

15. Uyaliwa yini wean

Wagibel'itekisi

Ekuseni kangaka

Uyaliwa yini na?

Mother-in-law

Mother-in-law you must give the bride money

Mother-in-law you must give the bride money

What must I do

Love him, he beats me up

Ignore him, he beats me up

Report him, he beats me up

Why was I brought here?

I keep saying

I keep saying father of my children

And he simply beats me up

Even when I cook some chicken

And he simply beats me up

Here is mababaza

Here is mababaza

I am jilted yet I am a calf

Oh my father, its because of her

Are you being jilted

Why are taking a taxi

So early in the morning

Are you being jilted?

16. Wo bekezela

Leader: Wo bekezela

Chorus: Esithenjini kunzima wobekezela

Leader: Ukhala kuze kuse

Chorus: Esithenjini kunzima wobekezela

You must preserve

You must preserve eve

It is tough in a polygamous marriage

You cry until dawn

In a polygamous marriage it is tough
persevere

Song No.7 seems to validate what women narrated in the interviews about the abuse that they are subjected to in their marriages. Yet there is in the same song a sense of regret and loss conveyed through the word '*samtshinga ji*'. The song laments that while their girl child has been married off to the other family through the tradition of '*lobola*', there is a sense that she has been cruelly abandoned. At the same time the very song seems to celebrate the fact that tradition was observed and that the bride's family has actually benefited from this. *Lobola*, by tradition ensures that a man has more cattle and in effect is considered wealthy. For a man therefore, a girl is a symbol of wealth that he will possess once he marries her off. Therefore the more girls the man has, the more wealth he will have. In this regard, a girl is a good investment for a traditional man. That is why this song shows a tension between jubilation and lament. The girl is not supposed to cry or complain when she is suffering in her new home because she is meant to understand she was 'bought' through a high price. '*Ngenkomo*' may read like it is a singular noun but in actual fact when sung it is pronounced in plural, meaning '*ngezinkomo*' or many cows. The '*zi*' in *izinkomo* is swallowed and the '*nge*' gets dragged on in pronunciation. This form of plural has an added oral effect in that it also makes the song sound even more melodious and smoother when sung.

The big question that the reader may be asking him/herself is who actually sings this song? It must be remembered that in Chapter 5 one of the research questions posed to the different groups (men and women) was whether different songs are sung by different groups based on gender. Most of the responses were that indeed they are sung by different groups because these groups are inherently different. However, others did indicate that there are songs that both male and female sing together in ceremonies because they are neutral. For this particular study, it is worth pointing out that women and men sang this song during '*umgcagco*' and the song was found to be quite appropriate for this context. Victoria Bernal in her article on *Islam, Transitional culture and Modernity* published in Maria-Grosz-Ngate et al (1997) makes an

interesting parallel to issues raised in this study and specifically on the issue of songs sung during rituals and ceremonies such as weddings when she states:

Rituals such as weddings ... are a conglomeration of symbolic public statements about identity, gender, and social relations. ..They are areas of broader cultural creativity and repression in which villagers find themselves (1997: 146).

Therefore this further reveals the diabolic nature in which women find themselves, caught between a culture that they have to accede to and the alienating nature of this very culture. If one analyses the song further, the song is directed to the groom and is not an articulation of the groom's family. The assumption could be other people are talking to the groom or even the bride's family itself is addressing the groom. The latter may be more relevant since the song further points back at the bride's family, which articulates in the pronoun '[*Thina*] *samtshinga ji* [*umntwana wethu*]'.

However, in Song No.8 the voice of the bride comes out clearly where she declares in public what her expectations are of the groom. In contrast to the previous song in this group which shows the awareness of and acceptance of the role of *lobola* and therefore the place and position of a bride in marriage, this song clearly states that the bride will leave the groom if he as much as ill treats him. There could be many arguments and theories to analyse and support the reason for this bold attestation and potential defiance. One reason could be that in the modern context, while tradition is still practiced its weight has been clouded by the onset of modernity and with it the notion of understanding of human rights, dignity and social justice and that therefore women are no longer willing to suffer under men but realize that they too have a choice – to leave and 'go back home'. Another theory could be put forward that much as women know that they are under the spell of and the power of men, they are using this public forum to 'plead' with their men or to even 'threaten' them that should they think of ill-treating them they will 'leave' but that in reality they will not. Either way, these two assumptions do point to a basic need for woman to convey that they are human beings and that despite their perceived roles in society they are aware that they have to and need to be treated with dignity, honor and love.

In another interview Hleziphi stated, "Although we are not educated, we are aware of what is happening in the new democracy and we now know our rights. We are informed through the media especially through television and radio and we hear about what legal steps we can take if men carry on abusing us". Perhaps this song reveals another warning to this effect.

Talking about Power and Acting, Scott “(1990: 34) maintains that the “theatre of power can, by artful practice become an actual political resource of subordinates”. To support Scott’s arguments Stratton (1994) maintains that African women’s state of affairs is universal even in the literary world and views the place of African women in African literature as a precarious one. Her ideas on the patriarchal nature of societies present a clear argument that while all contemporary societies can be classified as patriarchal, in that each operates a social system characterized by male dominance, they are differently patriarchal, for each constructs gender differently. She goes on to say that there is also evidence to indicate that some societies are more flexible than others in their construction of gender. Some scholars have pointed to various oral strategies that women use as a way of critiquing their social discourse and for expression of conflicts that result from such a discourse. One such scholar argues that rituals of subordination may be deployed both for purposes of manipulation and concealment but further argues that such performances are ‘seldom ... entirely successful.’ Scott (1990:37) points out:

Dominant elites may well not know what lies behind the façade, but it is rare that they merely take what they see and hear at face value.

The same can be said with regards to Zwelibomvu women’s songs especially with regards to the interviews which were conducted with men to determine to what extent men were aware of what women were experiencing. Most of the men would respond ‘*bahleba ngathi*’ meaning that women gossip about them thus revealing the truth that they are in fact not oblivious of women’s protests even if these are conveyed through song. This brings forward another theme that emerges in women’s songs where gossip becomes the instrument of silent protest.

In fact, song No.10 confirms the Scott’s views where the woman acknowledges that marriage is indeed hard and ‘hot’! Others seem to ask why she decided to get married in the first place - the underlying meaning being that she knew anyway.

Two situations have to be pointed out in this group of songs. The first one is Song No 9 and the second one is Song No. 11. In Song No.9 there is an added sense of difficulty and hardship for one woman who is married but who no longer has parents. This seems to be an extra burden on the woman as it is assumed that she no longer has ‘shoulders to cry on’ when she is suffering. So by implication even though a married woman suffers under an abusive husband she can report this situation to her family and perhaps an intervention through the two families meeting

to resolve the problem can be made. But what happens for an orphaned bride? This song therefore further pushes another dimension of the plight of women in marriage.

Interestingly, Song No.11 reveals that not only are brides being abused by men who may have other women, as will be seen later on in this study, but also by other women in the form of mothers-in law. In this song the message that in-laws tend to expect their sons to give them the money to look after the family and not to their wives is implied when the women plead that the in-law must give the bride '*isikhwama*' in this case meaning money. Yet another dimension of suffering is conveyed where ironically a cycle of woman oppression is propagated by older women, who themselves had gone through the same oppression when they were brides.

What exactly do women suffer under men in marriage? Physical abuse, emotional, psychological and financial abuses are some of the issues mentioned in some of these songs. This sense of helplessness of women under abusive husbands who use different forms of abuse is well communicated in Song No.12 and 13 respectively, where they reveal that there is no solution to actions and options that the wife can opt for as whether, she 'loves' him, or she 'ignores' or 'reports', cooks nice chicken or even appeases or endears him by calling him 'father of my children' to him it is all the same she gets 'bitten up'. The word '*nkukhwana*' which in English is merely a diminutive form meaning 'small chicken' in this context has derogatory connotation which further emphasizes in the song how tired and fed up this woman is.

Song No. 16 seems to trivialize the issues in the songs mentioned above as it conveys the fact that even though they are aware that as a bride 'you cry until morning', it perpetuates this situation by advising the bride 'to preserve'.

The next songs while conveying the underlying sense of hardship demonstrate or spell out other reasons why the women suffer. These may be due to the fact that they are now being rejected by their men (Song No. 14 and 15) mainly as a result of a man having found another woman. The only difference between the two songs is in the **tone** of these songs which is mainly due to the person (1st, 2nd or 3rd person) singing. In Song No 14, the bride in first person, is singing and the tone is a sad one because she feels that another woman has been the cause of her rejection and in the next song, other women (third person) seem to be inciting the jilted woman who they see leaving too early. In this song there is a sense of jubilation or triumph that this woman has been

jilted and this sense comes through the tone. Again, the tension that comes through is interesting since ironically, other women seem to be rejoicing at another woman's suffering.

This precarious position that is held by women and which is further conveyed in the last song could well be a source of in depth research in yet another big study.

6.3.3 Polygny and jealousy

In the community being studied, the kind of oppression highlighted above is mostly obvious in the relationships that existed between and among co-wives. Whoever happened to be *intandokazi* (the most preferred wife) which in most cases was a younger wife, was maltreated by fellow co-wives and in some instances even by the mother-in-law. Whilst the man is the cause of "*isikhwele*" or jealousy that exists among co-wives, through songs sung by Zwelibomvu women, it becomes apparent that it is the *intandokazi* that gets teased and ostracised by other women including those who do not fall within the family.

Using *ilobolo* as the key to "owning" women, men who consider themselves "wealthy" and who thus can afford to 'purchase' more than one wife, engage in *isithembu*, polygyny, a custom that allows a man to have as many wives as he can pay for. This is a longstanding feature of many African societies, caused by the idea that, out of many children, some would survive the scourge of child mortality and go on to venerate and remember their *ubaba* (father), thus guaranteeing him some form of immortality. When viewed together with *ilobolo*, polygyny further aggravates the patriarchal superiority within such cultures. (Manqele, 2000). Polygyny as a practice has many negative consequences, such as husbands failing to treat their wives equally, thus hindering their rights as women and leading to hatred and competition among co-wives, which arguably has its roots in inequality for both wives and children. In such an environment, the 'love and mutual support' which is a general aim of marriage goes out of the window. Basing my arguments on the study undertaken at Zwelibomvu, our contemporary society still tends, to a large extent, to view a married woman as a property, or a commodity that was purchased.

The reason for the situation described above is that polygyny and *ilobolo* are still very prevalent within the Zwelibomvu community. These practices are better understood in the context of a traditional marriage system, still widely practiced in this community. In recent years however,

women elsewhere in Africa have been up in arms to call for an end to customs that have outlived their purpose (Gama, 2004). According to a survey conducted in Uganda, for example, women respondents were asked whether they preferred to be in monogamous or polygamous unions. Out of the 214 respondents 12% preferred polygamous unions as against 88% who chose monogamy. In my study, of all the interviewees to whom a similar questions was posed, an even smaller percentage indicated their support of polygamy, while the majority was unapologetically opposed to it (see Chapter 5).

In this section songs that portray misery and jealousy within this kind of social structure will be discussed where women show their disapproval of it. Some words that run through such songs, as it will be revealed, allude to dissatisfaction with co-wives where derogatory words are used where they are concerned. A theme of rejection therefore becomes part and parcel of what is covered in these songs. Through these songs it is obvious that women experience hardships in their marriages as this is openly alluded to. What is interesting is that through these songs young women are also socialized to fit in their society (Weedon, 1987, 1997). This comes out in some of the songs sung by girls at the ceremonies of their 'coming of age'. In all cases there is hope for a better future as women also do not take lightly to their social structure but rather at times pose a challenge through some of the songs.

17. Ubani obengaliwa

Ubani obengaliwa kanje
Jabula mnakwethu siyakubongela
Ubani obengaliwa kanje
Jabula mnakwethu siyakubongela
Jabula mnakwethu sengiyahamba

18. Ngiphelezele

Leader: Ngiphelezele
Chorus: Ngiyobon' sislingo somnakwethu
Awu lesikhophocwane
Leader: O sekunjan' ukwaliwa
Chorus: O sekunjalo nje
Leader: O sekunjani ukuhluphek
Chorus: Osekunjalo nje

19. Ngoneni

Ngoneni ngidleni kabani

Ngabika la ngabika la
Kwathi cwaka
Wawuvul' umnakwethu
Ngacish' ukugcwal' indlela

20. Kwagula mina

Kwagula mina kwathi du
Kwagul' uzakwethu kwashintshwa
Amasheke
Kwaphum' izimali

Why am I jilted

Why am I jilted in this way
Rejoice co-wife, we congratulate you
Why am I jilted in this way
Rejoice co-wife, we congratulate
Rejoice co-wife, I am now leaving

Accompany me

Accompany me
To see this nuisance of a co-wife
She is like a baboon
How does it feel to be jilted
It is just like that
How is it to suffer
It is just like that

What have I done wrong

What have I done and whose thing have I
eaten
I report here and there
I get no response
As soon as co-wife opens her mouth
I am almost chased away

When I get sick

When I get sick nothing happens
When my co-wife gets sick cheques
Are changed
Money gets dished out

The division among women caused by the practice of polygamous marriages is conveyed powerfully through women's songs. Due to inequality that is inherent in this kind of arrangement, there is bound to be jealousy and hatred among women who are competing for the same men.

In one of the interviews one man actually put it bluntly when he said

'akekho umfazi othanda ukuba nomunye endodeni. Isikhathi esiningi ziyakhohlisana lezi zinto'

(there is no way that any woman can like another woman who she is sharing her man with' he went on to say 'in most cases they [the women] pretend to like each other)

In Song No.17 the woman laments that she has been jilted as a result of another woman gaining his man's affections. In the song she is sarcastic when she says '*siyakubongela*' or 'we congratulate you'. This sarcasm is supported by Scott's (1990:25) assertion that "it is usually in the backstage realm of relative discursive freedom, outside the earshot of power holders, where the hidden transcript can be sought". The sense of sarcasm can therefore only be gauged through the form of song and performance which in this case represents the backstage for the subordinate group or in this thesis through confidential interviews held with the women who had the freedom to explain in detail how they felt about their plight and how they communicate this plight 'freely' through song.

In the Songs No 19 and 20 respectively the inequality is well depicted when through the song the one wonders as to what horrible thing she has done that makes her deserve such treatment that even when she keeps complaining about how sick she is not a word is said by her husband. The idiophone '*cwaka*' is meant to emphasize the seriousness of the situation. On the other hand when the co-wife complains she as the unfavoured seems to be the one to blame and is almost chased away. By implication there is an understanding that she is being accused of the co-wife's troubles by both the co-wife and the husband who unquestioningly believes the rival. The next song also conveys the same message but this time the consequence of the rivalry and inequality is manifested in the husband giving money only to one party to go find medical help while with the other party there is no reaction. Again the idiophone '*du*' is aimed at showing the seriousness of the situation. Commenting on the beauty of IsiZulu as a beautifully harmonious language Canonici (1996:1-2) concurs that ideophones belong to those aspects of this language that help bring out the beauty of this language. He writes:

[IsiZulu] is a beautifully harmonious language rich in expressiveness through its vocabulary, concordial agreement system...and especially through the abundant use of picturesque ideophones which express the emotions generated by the sounds, colours [and] feelings.

Talking about the inequality that manifest itself in financial inequality and poverty of one family, one woman when interviewed said at times they will sing a song when they see a co-wife passing by to let her convey a message to the husband that he must also look equally after both families. These messages are conveyed in deeply sarcastic ways that would also humiliate and hurt the other woman.

And so perhaps it is for such serious reasons that Song No.18 is composed which in essence conveys the deep sense of disdain and disrespect co-wives have for one another that they push them to poking fun at the other party's physical looks and attributes. The word '*isilingo*' (menace) also conveys the sense of hopelessness of the situation since by using this word the woman means there seems to be nothing she can do about the reality of the existence of this other woman.

Once again Scott (1990: 113) points out that "dignity is a very private and a very public attribute". He goes on to point out that one can experience an indignity at the hands of another despite the fact that no one sees or hears about it. However, the indignity is compounded when inflicted in public. In this argument he wants to point out that at times – much as the women that are being humiliated by the ill-treatment that men induce, especially where they spite them and degrade them in front of other co-wives – it may well be that through public performance and singing, where there is an audience, the powerful group which in this case are men, at that time, can also be stripped off of their dignity as the victimized, the scorned and jilted wife, publicly reveal what the dominant do to them. In this circle, where there is a 'public' reversal of power, therefore suddenly takes place, and the subordinate group gain a shared opportunity with others similar to them in jointly creating a discourse of dignity, of justice but still of temporary negation of being subordinates. And therefore with regard to this group of songs which reveal how men treat Zwelibomvu women and how they scorn them in front of other women, it may be liberating for these women, to know that they have a temporary platform to fight back.

6.3.4 Unfaithfulness

Whereas in the interviews there was a sense of shared understanding that even though polygamous relationships are not ideal and that they are not preferred, there was a sense that they were a social order that was openly acceptable as part of a culture. There was however a sense where even those that were from monogamous marriages took a defeatist view that they were no better off than the other group since by virtue of being men, men tended to cheat anyway. In fact, one could not help but detect a hopeless sense that if they had their way these men might as well put them in open polygamous marriages or better still a sense that there was no way out!

Talking about the influence that the powerful exercise on public discourse, Scott argues that there is an interesting link between language use and power. However, he points out an interesting observation that inadvertently and at times, the history of men's dominance has meant that women increasingly use men's language and this can be clearly noticed in some of the songs sung by Zwelibomvu women. Song No.21 below, for example, illustrates this very succinctly specifically where the use of the derogatory phrase '*uyodl'iqolo lo mfazi*' a translation which in English communicates the sexual act in contrast to a Zulu version which means a bawdy and almost vulgar physical and sexual part of a woman's body - the vagina, could be more considered being articulated by men and as more befitting (while not sanctioned) of men rather than women referring to other women!

In line with my assertion in the introduction that the themes isolated are not the end in themselves but can hide or evoke other themes this theme of **language** is yet another sub-theme that is evoked in these songs which if not highlighted could be ignored as if language as a discourse of power and domination is not noted in women's songs.

21. We bantwana

We bantwana uphi uyihlo
 Nanguy'sithela ngale kwentaba
 Uyo'dliqolo lomfazi

We bantwana uphi uyihlo
 Nang'uyosithela ngale kwentaba
 Uyodl'iqolo lomfazi

22. Yenzani le ndoda?

Yenzani le ndoda?
 Iphinga khona la
 Iphinga eduze

Yenzani le ndoda?
 Iphinga khona la
 Iphinga eduze

23. Wo yiveze

Wo yiveze yiveze ngewindi
 Awungivezele ngewindi
 Ngob'indoda umtshelekwano
 Awungivezele ngewindi

24. Uyinkunzenjani

Uyinkunzenjani
 Ekhwela ngaphandle
 Ekhaya zilele,
 Uyinkunz'enjani

Children

Children, where is your father
 There he disappears beyond the mountain
 To have sex with another woman

Children, where is your father
 There he disappears beyond the mountain
 To have sex with another woman

What is this man doing

What is this man doing?
 He commits adultery here
 He commits adultery nearby

What is this man doing?
 He commits adultery here
 He commits adultery nearby

Show him

Give him to me through a window
 Give him to me through a window
 Because a man is loaned to everyone
 Give him to me through a window

What kind of a bull are you?

What kind of a bull are you
 Who fornicates outside
 And leave home hungry
 What kind of a bull are you

25. Mubi lo muntu

Leader: Mubi lo muntu engihlala naye

All: Mubi

Leader: Waze wamub' umyeni wami

All: Mubi

Leader: Uthathwa yini umyeni wami?

All: Uthathwa yini?

This person is bad

This person I stay with is bad

He is bad

My husband is so bad

He is bad

What is taking my husband away from me?

What is taking him?

The above songs convey this sense of unfaithfulness very clearly and express the calasnousnes with which the women approach the subject of unfaithfulness by men (Song.21). I n fact Song No 22 express even more of horror as it reveals that the men do not have respect to such an extent that they cant even go and cheat far away but do this 'just nearby'. The word “ *phinga*’ (commit adultery) in this song not only conveys a sense t hat the man has been caught in the act but that he has managed to have a child from this infidelity. For this reason they seem to have come to terms with the fact that a man is a ‘thing that is passed on to every other person’ (Song No. 23) and women wonder that he has the guts to wander away when he does not perform his conjugate rights at home (Song No. 24). The imagery of a ‘bull’ again shows both the bestiality and sexual prioress that men seem to possess. This evokes a comment made by Furniss and Gunner (1995:15), where they argue that through their poetry “women engage in jealousy...[and] the pain of polygyn , the irony of unfaithful husbands who are impotent in their own beds”. And as if in ignorance of what makes them stray, Song No 25 conveys the sense of admission by women of how bad their men are.

Weedon (1997) elaborates on the ideas of power and argues that it is not perceived [only] as a property of powerful groups. Michel Foucault’s (1990) takes the argument further in his perception of it as something deployed in discourse. Bearing the above notions of power this section has explored how the power of discourse is interpreted and disseminated with regard to women and men as biologically and sexually distinct individuals thus resulting in wo men’s welfare being subordinate to that of men.

6.3.5 Societal expectations

The following songs demonstrate the way society is socialized and expresses how women in particular view their place in society. The issues that are prevalent are once again about what society expects of women and how women in particular respond to these expectations.

Dorothy Hodgson (in Ngate et al., 1997:112) when talking about gender and spirit of possession among Maaasai in Tanzania points out that:

Gender relation in Africa as elsewhere have never been merely a self contained matter of local ideas or local practices. Throughout history, and across space, local gender relations and ideologies have been constituted in interaction with translocal material, social, and cultural processes; both men and women take advantage of the opportunities and constraints provided by these translocal flows to either reinforce or renegotiate not only their relationships, but their dominant concepts of masculinity and femininity as well.

26. Ayimalanga

Chorus: Ayimalanga

Leader: le ntomb'ifun'ukugana

Chorus: Ayimalanga

27. Uyaphi weMaMchunu?

Leader: Uyaphi weMaMchunu

All: Soland'uMajazi

Leader: Abafaz'abangeni

All: Soland'umajazi somphelezela

28. Indukwenhle

Indukwenhle

Wo indukwenhle

Indukwenhle igawulw'ezizweni

Indukwenhle igawulw'ezizweni

Wozani nizobona

Indukwenhle

Indukwenhle

Wo indukwenhle

Indukwenhle igawulwezizweni

Indukwenhle igawulwezizweni

29. Izintombi zale

Wo lo lo ma

Awubheke amabele

Hhayi awubhek'amabele

30. Asimbonanga

Asimbonanga ephum'ukoshela

Asiazi ukuthi umqome kanjani

Asimbonanga ephum'akoshela

Asiazi ukuthi umqome kanjani

The girl did not jilt him

She did not jilt him

This girl want to get married

She did not jilt him

Where are you off to MaMchunu

Where are you going MaMchunu

To fetch Majazi

Women are not allowed in

We are off to fetch Majazi, we are
accompanying her

A beautiful stick

A beautiful stick

Wo, a beautiful stick

Is chopped from other countries

Is chopped from other countries

Come and see her

A beautiful stick

A beautiful stick

Wo, a beautiful stick

Is chopped from other countries

Is chopped from other countries

Those young girls

Wo lo lo ma!

Just look at their breasts

No, just look at their breasts

We did not see him

We did not see him coming from courting

We don't know how she became his lover

We did not see coming from courting

We don't know how she became his lover

31. Bathi uyala

Bati uyala ubaba kaSoli
Soshela ngenkani
Soshela khona
Soshela ngenkani

They say he refuses

They say Soli's father won't let her
How will we court by force
But we still will
We will court by force

32. Asinandaba

Asinandaba nobuhle bentombi
Sifunintombeziiphethe kahle
Sifun'isimilo
Sifun'isimilo entinjini
Asinandaba

We don't care

We don't care about a girl's beauty
We want good behaviour from a girl
We want good behaviour
We want good behaviour from a girl
We don't care

33. We mntanami

Wolalel abazali bekutshela
Yibon'abakuzalayo
We mntanami ngiyakukhuza
Wolalel'abazali bekutshela
Yibon'abakuzalayo

My child

You must listen to your parents
They are the ones that gave birth to you
My child I am warning you
You must listen to your parents
They are the ones who gave birth to you

Marriage especially for Nguni societies is still considered one of the most important institutions which represent a sign of respect and honor for both the bride's family and the bride herself. In these societies through acquiring a wife for himself, a married man elevates himself to 'a real man' and earns much respect among other men. After marrying someone, in the Zulu culture for example, a man can sit in an '*ibandla*' (men's special gathering) and contribute to what are considered manly discussions with other older men. In this song (Song No. 26), the extent of what marriage means to a woman is depicted by the fact that the woman decides not to leave the man against all circumstances simply because she is vying for marriage.

Song No. 27 reiterates the idea put forward by women in Chapter 5 that there are demarcations and places that are preset for women and man. Through song women are willing to challenge these boundaries even though they are aware of their entrenched existence. Majazi who represents men that are most likely cheating on their wives has a protected place in society which women have no access to. Women believe that as a group they can come together and

succeed in transgressing this entrenched rule and therefore feel obliged to accompany the unfortunate woman who represents all of them in her suffering.

Song No. 28 is a more optimistic song which celebrates the beauty of women. For a moment it seems as if women are oblivious of their pain and acknowledge the fact that a beautiful woman is usually from another place. There seems to be no animosity even among women as they gleefully invite others to come and see this beautiful woman. This song is taken from a Zulu proverb which in English literary translates into the above. However, it is a powerful proverb that advises men too, that they must not always think a wife is only conquered from locally but that someone from another place may perhaps bring in added values. The beauty is not also always meant to be physical but in this sense it is about that goodness and *ubuntu* that a bride from another place may embrace. From this song it can be seen that even though not everything is all glossy a society is glued together by a positive value system that everyone wishes to uphold.

This value system is emphasized by the contrast in Song No.29 which seems to shun upon the physical appearance of the young women of a certain district. This song conveys a message of girls that are not well behaved- this being evident by the structure of their breasts. In this regard they are no longer virgins. This song may be sung by other young women who are proud of themselves and therefore are poking fun at those that have 'fallen' or by older women who know more about how well-behaved young girls should look like and therefore are disgusted at these girls.

Song No. 30 and 31 convey a way of life in a traditional village where a good relationship emanates from a process of courtship which is supposed to be open and not secretive. It is believed that a good girl will allow a man to court her for quite some time so that he can even be eventually seen and known by neighbours. In this case, a girl has a chance to get advice from elders and '*amaqhikiza*' (senior girls) whether this is indeed a good man. Therefore matters of the heart are not only personal but communal as depicted in Song No. 30, which argues that the people are not aware how the man was accepted as a lover as he was never seen courting the girl. In a way, the song criticizes the girl for not following the correct and acceptable process. In the next song (Song No.31) it seems the father is against the man courting the girl but other men insist that they will do so by force.

One other song which promotes good behaviour in girls and women specifically and not necessarily in men is Song No. 32 where men argue that they are not interested in physical beauty but are more concerned about girls that have good morals. In this regard both men and women seem to have found common ground about what makes a good wife, these being demonstrated by the comparison of Song No.29 and Song No.32. It is ironic that men seem to be left off the hook with regard to morals and yet they are the ones that complain about women's infidelity.

And finally in this category a general message of advice to children to listen to their parents is simply but powerfully conveyed (Song. No.33). The complexity of gender relations in this modern context is therefore quite evident in the accepted and often taken for granted interactions between men and women. To further highlight this theme of what is considered 'normal' and acceptable expectations by society, Memela (2005: 96) argues that "socialisation has been used as a gender tool to perpetuate gender inequalities" and that as a socializing agent the family socializes its members to fit the kind of expectations required in that society. In agreement and as was highlighted earlier on in this study, Domingo (2005:69) asserts that 'gender is indeed socially constructed and determined by things such as culture and religion'.

6.3.6 Conclusion

The quoted songs, supported by interviews and focus group discussions, reveal the deep-seated meaning and scope of gender and power inequalities in Zulu women's songs. In fact, they serve as an indirect strategy to convey real life experiences, problems and suggested solutions. Furthermore, the women feel that they are, to a certain extent, empowered as they give vent to their pent up emotions when they are able to share and make known to others, including their husbands, their intimate concerns. With regard to the above statements concerning the empowerment of women through oral forms such as cultural songs, Satyo (in Zulu, 2004:158) oversimplifies the argument when he remarks:

A thoughtful examination of women disproves the assumption that women are necessarily powerless. In real life, despite male dominance of some sort or another, women are in most cases in control of themselves and their worlds. Even in folk performance genres, including women's stories, frequent examples of bold female voices are identifiable. Women are vocal and uninhibited.

It is obvious from the songs that have been cited above that most of them use repetition as a motif to enhance memory for the singers and the audience but also to illustrate the fact that these songs involve body movements and actions when sung. This is one of the critical reasons why Jousse's theory on the Anthropology of Rhythm and Geste is relevant for this study.

In response, I feel entitled to ask the rhetorical questions: "How far do those songs and speeches really go? Do they penetrate the minds and culture of the men they are intended for? Could they become popular enough to cause a change of attitudes in the entire society?"

The rationale behind an inclusion of men in the study dealing with women songs was to obtain a balanced view of the situation. After interviewing men as well it was not surprising to realize that the overriding concerns in the men's minds referred to their feeling that their absolute power over women was slipping through their fingers; that they, therefore, could no longer perceive women as "objects" that must be ready to satisfy their pleasure and do their bidding anytime or anyhow. The issue of *ilobolo* is also significant for the men, as they make reference to it during focus group discussions, and insist on the idea that the bride price gives them absolute rights on the women as their properties.

It has been observed that singing is an integral part of African societies; hence songs become powerful means of expression through which conflicts, resulting from power struggles encountered mostly in dysfunctional marriages, can be mediated. Through the communal medium of songs women learn to cope with, and escape from their entrapment.

CHAPTER 7: ORAL COMPOSITION IN CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S SONGS

7.1. Introduction

It was argued in Chapter 6 that information and theories used earlier on in this study will be incorporated into both Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. Songs selected for Chapter 7 represent songs that deal with other broader issues that affect this society in general, issues that are generally outside the realm of the home. These issues however broad in their category, may and still have a great bearing on issues of gender and power and hence their selection and compilation for this study. Therefore their separation into the next chapter does not in any way overlook this factor. It must be pointed out therefore that even with the categorization of the two chapters, there is an awareness that issues emanating from the discussions of songs collected are closely related in terms of context but have been separated purely for clarity of scientific analysis of specific issues that are critical for this study as well as for ease of navigation and readability.

To support my approach for the fact that the issues are quite intricately interwoven and not at all linear but seem to be outlined in this linear way only to achieve a structural objective, Weiner Graebner (in Barber, 1997:115) argues against critics who are:

‘...far too much concerned with the transparency and linearity of discourse, overlooking the possibility of ruptures, multiple interpretations, the juxtaposition of different topics in a song’.

The aim of this Chapter, therefore, is to carry on with the thematic analysis of Zwelibomvu women's songs begun in Chapter 6 with a specific objective of bringing in a new dimension. This element will come in a form of introducing and exploring the oral composition of women's songs. Thus a similar approach to that used in Chapter 6 will be followed again in this chapter.

Songs selected for analysis in this chapter represent songs that deal with other broader issues that affect the society of Zwelibomvu in particular and society in general. These issues represent social constructs such as politics and social commentary on issues such as disease, rape and witchcraft.

Oral composition is informed by certain aspects of the main people that inform the bases of this study. Jousse introduced the viewpoint of the Anthropology of Gesture and Rhythm as a means of

“understanding the human at a fundamental level that accounted for and transcended ethnic identity and individuality” Conolly (2001:26). The Anthropology of Gesture and Rhythm assisted Jousse in the explanation of the workings of the human, physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual operations.

The characteristics of oral songs with specific reference to their oral composition can be illustrated by Jousse’s theory that saw a link between memory, learning, understanding and expression in humans. He saw cultural expression as first and foremost the expression of the whole being. He also perceived the notion of culture as forming part and parcel of global phenomenon considering that culture is an integral part of a broader cultural strategy that includes ritual, custom and social convention. Conolly (2001) further reinforces Jousse’s argument with an argument that social-cultural archive is supported by gestures which enhance memory and which are referred to as mnemotechnically gestural-visual/oral-aural expression. This means that memory is enhanced through observed gestures as well through being heard over and over again. In my experience this is very true of Zwelibomvu women’s songs as I was able to sing and dance to most of the tunes by the time my research came to an end.

Mimism, formulism and rhythmism (Jousse, 1990) which were discussed in great details in Chapter 2 are therefore central features of oral composition and will be explored in relation to the songs that were collected and selected for this part of analysis. According to Jousse, formulism is readily observable in traditional texts such as proverbs, rhymes, songs and stories. It refers to a fixed pattern which is structured through constant and repetitive use of phrases or discrete units of meaning in human expression. It is balanced and rhythmical and therefore easy to remember. In fact, oral composition is also informed by orality which can be found through repetition and questioning as well as through leader and chorus elements of the songs.

Another interesting theory that I find relevant for this Chapter in particular is Scott’s model of public transcript which he argues is designed to be imposing, to assert and naturalize the power of dominant group and to mask or euphemize the dirty linen of their authority. This chapter will attempt to address and explore a number of questions such as :

- Who are the major audiences and how do the songs impact?
- How do songs circulate and what are the channels of circulation?

- Why do some songs circulate, get picked up and not others?
- Where do songs come from? TV news? Current Affairs? If so...?
- Who are the women's publics?

It is therefore appropriate to consider an eclectic interdisciplinary approach which suggests that oral texts be read in a way that combine a sociology with a poetics of oral literature.

In fact Barber's (1997:4) argument illustrates this latter point quite succinctly when she argues that:

[D]ifficult as popular forms may be to interpret, they undoubtedly talk about what the people themselves think is important ... in their own vocabulary, and through the form they feel appropriate. They also preserve memories by formulating them, giving us clues however partial and cryptic to past attitudes.

By also using a socio-constructivist approach and feminist approach which has been foregrounded by the theorists that underpin this study, this section will focus more on the songs sung by women who are rendered voiceless and who have devised creative ways of social protest through the medium of song.

7.2 Mobility and fluidity of songs

According to Turner (2003) mobility between different forms of poetic expression makes classification of songs difficult. Nevertheless, as I tried in both chapters to classify the songs through a loose thematic arrangement and in order to obtain a close critical reading of each song collected in both chapters, the following categories emerged in this chapter; political songs, songs that comment about the defining social fabric of a society such as witchcraft, songs that depict emerging situations that are threatening the social fabric of society such as diseases. These categories however, are not mutually exclusive since as it will be shown, the songs were generally sung in ceremonies that did not necessarily and explicitly represent these types of categorization. I do argue however, that oral composition is mainly informed by these contextual elements wherein textual or verbal elements, textural elements or performance can be analysed. It is these layers that inform the composition of songs that makes it hard to have a water-tight categorization. In this regard Scott (1990:161) argues that in fact,

[with regard to oral composition] “each enactment is ... unique as to time, place and audience as well as different from every other enactment...[and] ...like gossip or rumor, the ... song is taken up and performed or learned at the option of its listeners and in the long run its origins are lost altogether.

Again the transcendence of genre boundaries will be clearly noticed even in this chapter and therefore further problematise the classification of songs. So at times the placement of songs will be seen to be ambiguous as well. For example, the song on the spread of HIV and AIDS addressed to the government, entitled ‘*We Hulumeni*’, Song No.1 in this Chapter, draws from a political as well as social commentary discourse allowing it to fall into any of the two categories.

Barber (1997) asserts that popular art forms undoubtedly talk about what the people themselves think is important and express this in their own vocabulary and through the form they feel to be relevant. This is very true for Zulu society as well. Owing to the observations made during the performance of the songs in their respective contexts it therefore becomes necessary from the commencement of the study to argue for flows across genres. Barber (1997) argues for the porous nature of genre boundaries in which the performance style is permeable and allows flows across genres. The study therefore acknowledges and recognizes the prevalence of flows between genres. That is to say because of the porous genre boundaries, one form, without warning, often draws in another form. Songs sung during *umemulo* (coming-of-age ceremony) or *umgcagco* (traditional wedding) can still be found to fit in during other functions.

For example, typical of these porous genre boundaries is a group of women in Zwelibomvu who refer to themselves as *maskanda* (traditional music singers). Some of the songs that they sing are the same as those presented during *umemulo* and *umgcagco* genre of songs. The same applies to *ukushoza* which also takes place within the context of other ceremonies, for example just before *umemulo* (coming-of-age ceremony) and *umgcagco* (traditional wedding) even though only one or two women will perform them on this occasion.

During my preliminary observation at Zwelibomvu’s ceremonies (which is not part of DVD rendition presented in Chapter 4), on the occasion of *umemulo*, for example, that I attended, just before the young maidens’ departure from the hut in which they had been in seclusion for a week to *esigcawini* (March 19, 2005 at Zwelibomvu) the girl’s mother, repeatedly recited what I came to know as her *ukushoza* (women’s solo poem or song). She started quietly in what seemed like

a prayer, and then began to be emotional as she started clapping hands and was later on joined by other women gathered in the hut who performed the chorus part of her *ukushoza*. Finally all the women were dancing and sweating it out. The five line utterance which brought in other women gathered for the occasion ended in a spectacular dance which was music to the ear as women sang:

Mother: *Yini le ethi shalu?*

Other women: *Yindoda*

Mother : *Iyaphi?*

Other women: *Iya kwantandokazi*

All: *Kwantandokazi, kwantandokazi, kwantandokazi....*

(What's it that passes by swiftly?

It's a man.

Where is he going?

He is going to one of his wives whom he loves the most

To one of his wives whom he loves the most, to one of his wives whom he loves the most)

[Performed March 19, 2005, Zwelibomvu)

The occasions described above and which was *umemulo* (girl's-coming-of-age ceremony) and in which the *ukushoza* as a genre spontaneously took place, serve as a good context for women in a natural setting to describe what singing means to and for them. The same can be said of the occasion of *ilima* (women's communal work) gathering where some aspects of songs seem to have traveled from other ceremonies even if with only some slight variations thus proving that the notion of a fixed genre is almost absent in African societies.

7.3 Political commentary

In his Chapter on the Arts of Political Disguise, Scott (1990:167) makes an important point about oral composition in the context of political ideology in particular, when he argues that "if ideological sedition were confined to the ephemeral forms of gossip, grumbling, rumor and the occasional hostility of masked actors it would be marginal indeed"(1990:167). He further argues that the fact is that ideological insubordination of subordinate groups also takes a quite public form in elements of folk and popular culture.

This argument brought up by Scott is that given the political handicaps under which the realms of this folk culture habitually operate; its public expression is that it be sufficiently indirect and garbled that it is capable of two readings, one which is innocuous and another which could be offensive. As with euphemism, he goes on to argue, and however, useless it can be, it does provide an avenue of retreat when challenged. These ambiguous, polysemic elements of folk culture according to him mark off a relatively autonomous realm of discursive freedom on the condition that they declare no direct opposition to the public transcript as authorized by the dominant. This argument, although it can be challenged, may be valid in a country that has formulated policies that do not value democracy in a way that South Africa does and so on the one hand can be justified much against this background because even democracy is always overshadowed by ideologies of power for rule that may be masked.

Therefore, one can see nuances of Scott's argument at play in the song addressed to President Thabo Mbeki about the assumed agenda he was perceived to have against Jacob Zuma both popular ANC members who were assumed to be in line for the South African presidency. This song is provided below:

1. We Thabo Mbeki

UZuma wenzeni?

We Thabo Mbeki

UZuma wenzeni?

Hey Thabo Mbeki

What has Zuma done?

Hey Thabo Mbeki

What has Zuma done?

The context of this song and for the Msholozzi song that will be alluded to later should be briefly provided. Both these songs were composed immediately after South Africa's ex-Deputy President, Jacob "Msholozzi" Zuma made headlines in the media in the early months of 2006. The background of the circumstances leading to this state of things and also to the composition of the controversial "Msholozzi" song dates to 1997 when the then Deputy President of South Africa, Mr. Jacob Zuma and Shabir Shaik were said to have allegedly engaged in a corrupt arms deal relationship(http://www.news.24.com?News24/South_Africa_News). This nuance that is brought forward by Scott above can be analyzed to be playing itself off through Zwelibomvu women's, (Song No.1), who were heard voicing their protest indirectly against Mr. Mbeki by simply asking a question, '*uZuma wenzeni?* (What has Zuma done?) while knowing that at that particular moment he was not there and therefore they would not get a response or an answer. One can further argue that the women – in this case being subordinates within a bigger political

system and agenda that is seen to be on the verge of sabotaging an icon of their symbol of freedom from bondage who in this case is Mr. Jacob Zuma – and who see Zuma as being popular with the oppressed and the working class whom these women relate, are seeing Mr. Mbeki as a person standing in their way of freedom from such bondage. By comparison, and within the same democratic system Mr. Mbeki who is generally perceived by the general public as a mere intellectual who is out of touch about the issues that affect ordinary people that he is supposed to lead is being challenged by these women who seem to be demanding ‘an answer’ from him [Interview with Ngoneni, eMadwaleni]. According to Scott’s argument, the subordinates in this case, are therefore seen to be protesting indirectly in that their question is not directly confrontational since Mr. Mbeki; a powerful figure is not present at the time of the singing. The only vehicle therefore that they are using is the song that they hope through its intrinsic nature of fluidity and ease of spreading it will eventually get to be known and subsequently get transferred to others with the hope of gaining solidarity with those that support their thinking. Indirectly through and implied in the question, is the assumption that this group believes Zuma has not done anything wrong and therefore is being victimized by Mbeki. Through the song, the women probably hope that Mbeki will eventually get the message and understand what this community’s views are about this state of affairs. Therefore, this would further support the idea put forward by Stewart (1994) that performance can be a guise for direct confrontation.

In fact, Horn in Barber (1997:) argues relevantly when he states:

All art – be it the ‘high art’ of the intelligentsia, the popular commercial art produced for mass consumption, the critical art of both the progressive and the reactionary, or the folk art of traditional cultures – serves the ends of some sector of society. And as Ngugi wa Thiong’o has argued, ‘because of its social development, because of its thoroughly social character, literature in partisan: literature takes sides.

Hence the sides that one picks up in the songs sung by the Zwelibomvu women’s songs in this broad classification seem to reveal that in this case Mr. Mbeki is the dominant and that they are in solidarity with Mr. Zuma with whom they wish to collaborate.

However, a different argument that could challenge Scott’s argument with regard to South African political context is that our democracy came with freedom of speech and respect for the views of others. In this context it can be argued differently that this song in fact, is the direct opposite of Scott’s theory in as far as the textural analysis is concerned. In this regard it can be

argued that using the liberty and license of the constitution and with it the freedom to express their views, this group is in fact directly confrontational and is asking the president directly and challenging for answers about the unjust treatment of Zuma. In this analysis the question in the song, ‘*We Thabo Mbeki/ UZuma Wenzeni ? / Hey Thabo Mbeki/ What has Zuma done?*’ is clear and also addresses the person Mr. Mbeki directly by name.

One other comment in support of the argument that this is more a direct confrontation and that in fact it is a denigration of the president is that from a traditional and cultural point of view, only the *imbongi* (traditional bard or poet) has a licence to criticise important people such as the king with impunity. But as a sign of reverence and respect for a prominent figure such as the country’s President, it is expected that such figures be addressed by surname. This is generally a sign that this person is popular, holds a position of power and is respected. The surname in itself without being accompanied by the first name elevates him to an even higher status. If one thinks of praise poetry or of functions where a community has had a feast hosted by an *umnumzane* (head of a household), before the people leave, it is a tradition that they either stand up (especially men, and perform while women ululate) and they sing praises to this man by saying his clan names. In my case, they would then say praises such as “Zondi, Nondaba, Gagashi, Luqa” as well as other similar praises which may end up describing this man’s popular attributes, qualities and achievements. The surname is therefore what represents a man and his ancestors and not necessarily and always his first name.

To further illustrate this argument I present the following portion of *Izibongo zikaMbunda*, a great grandfather of the bride to be on her wedding day) that were performed by the member of family during a ceremony of *umgcagco* (traditional wedding) in one of the Zwelibovu districts (see DVD chapter 4):

2. Izibongo zikaMbunda

Laba Bantu **abakwaMbunda**

Umbunda ezalwa nguNdomba

uNdomba ezalwa uMazokololo

UmaZokololo ezalwa uLizwezwe

ULizwelwe ezalwa nguMgudi kaBantwini

Umgudi kaBantwini ezalwa nguMpepho

Iyona ke inzalabantu **yakwaXaba** leyo

.....

Mbunda's Praise Songs

These people belong to the **Mbundas**

Mbunda being born by Ndomba

Ndomba being born by uMazokololo

MaZokololo being born by Lizwezwe

Lizwezwe being born by Mgudi of Bantwini

Mgudi of Bantwini being born by Mpepho

This then is the birth lineage of **KwaXaba**

.....

In the above praises, as it was the case with Zuma, title of the praises provides only a surname of this family man and not his first name because this is not very critical when one sings praises about an important person hence the title Izibongo *zikaMbunda*.

When one looks at this praise song one observes a sharp contrast between the way in which the president and Jacob Zuma are addressed by the same performers. The president on the one hand is simply called Thabo Mbeki. He is not even given the status of president by being called President Mbeki. This address reduces him into a mere common man or even a child. In fact, he is called almost disrespectfully using the form “*We...*” which could be seen to mean ‘Hheyi *wena*’, translated as “You or hey” in English. I should assume that even in English to address a person in this way especially an adult person who is not your friend or acquaintance is considered rude and undermining. On the other hand, Jacob Zuma is elevated through song in his address by surname and this achieves the goals of the performers in communicating the unsaid message that they prefer him and respect him more and not the president. It also further communicates the unsaid message that they think ‘Thabo Mbeki’ is to blame for the state of affairs and that ‘Zuma’ is not guilty but is a mere victim.

Finally on the issue of why the Zwelibomvu women, by composing this song in particular, seem to be showing allegiance to someone whom they believe can relate to their issues at grassroot level [Interview with Lolo, ePanekeni] I will conclude with illustrating this with citing recent comments that were published in the Sunday Times of December 2, 2007, where the debate on who will be the next president between president Mr. Mbeki and Mr. Jacob Zuma was published. Written by Brendan Boyle, this article was titled ‘*Minds vs Hearts*’- *defining the role*

of intellectuals. The panel was made up of a number of intellectuals including Jeremy Cronin, Professor Kader Asmal, Professor Adam Habib, Raenette Taljaard, Frederick Van Zyk Slabbert and Xolela Mangcu.

Comments which I found relevant within this context of my study and against the background of both Scott's argument purported earlier and the song sung by these rural Zwelibomvu women, were those put forward by Mr. Xolela Mangcu where he was arguing about the role of public intellectuals. In his argument he stated that the **public** intellectual:

...is that person who transcends those limited publics and audiences and communicates with a much larger and broader audience..." He went on to say, "I think that what people in everyday life find offensive is the shutting down and the putting down of people... And again, "... we would be kidding ourselves if we pretended that the lady in the village who is a public intellectual in the village at a particular point of time, plays the same role as I do on radio, on television or in the newspaper. It seems to me we need to be focusing on those who are disproportionately affecting the public culture .

Clearly, Mangcu in these comments could be interpreted as being of a view that the audience is always important in any discourse (Jousse, 1990, Scott, 1990, Canonici, 1996). Furthermore the discourse used should take into consideration the fact that messages circulate in different contexts and at different class levels and therefore those communicating these messages which in this case would be those in power or the dominant should take this into consideration if they do not wish to be criticized or protested against.

Finally it can also be argued that all the arguments presented above can reveal an ambiguity that draws us to a conclusion that through song the disprivileged reflect an implicit protest against their worldly fate and as Scott argues, "that the distinctiveness of subordinate group cultural expression is created in large part by the fact that in this realm at least, the process of cultural expression is relatively democratic" (Scott, 1997: 157).

This brings me to the next discussion around oral composition which is the sites of circulation of songs.

7.3.1. Sites of circulation of songs

Given that ideological struggles tend to grow best when shielded from direct observation, I was led to examine the social sites where this resistance can germinate, which is through songs. This is because these songs provide a forum for a break in the pretence of how the dominant forces would want to be seen.

According to Johannes Fabian in his article *Popular Culture in Africa-Findings and Conjectures* in Barber (1997: 18), he makes a statement that:

political and social situations are reflected, albeit not always in obvious ways, by concrete setting in which a group of people for whom they serve as vehicle of expression, the historical-political situation and setting.

Therefore, unlike the locally circulated song addressed to Mr. Mbeki (Song No.1), the song that has come to be known as Msholoji song, *Mshini wami* became circulated even more through the media – namely TV and radio and therefore received more attention. However, it is only this form of circulation that gave it its popularity but the messages of both songs have the same weight.

The song directed to President Mbeki (Song No.1), mainly circulates through the communities of Zwelibomvu and the sites of circulation are generally during ceremonies and functions that are held by these communities. Generally people and the performers take advantage of the presence of the public to communicate the pressing issues that they have in mind. At times the song may be totally unrelated to the function at hand, but this forum usually gives the people the license to sing the song so that the message of protest or complaint can echo to those that it is meant to reach.

When interviewed the women of Zwelibomvu argued that the sites of circulation are critical in teaching them about what is going on around them. Therefore even though they were not in touch with what were the intricacies in the Zuma debacle, through TV and radio they would learn about this issue. Furthermore, the Msholoji song was flighted through radio and in public gatherings especially during concerts which were held nation-wide to raise funds for the Zuma court case. The Msholoji song therefore circulated in a different form and site but due to the fluidity of this genre as has been discussed above, people would then sing it in any other events.

Another political incident that has bearing on this study and in particular to the issue of circulation of songs refers to the Msholozzi song discussed earlier. The context for my analysis and observations needs to be provided. On November 2, 2005, while a cloud over the Shabir Shaik-Zuma case was still above his head, former Deputy State President Jacob Zuma, was alleged to have raped HIV activist at his Johannesburg home. The above narration provides a background to the conception of the song.

On the 6th of March, the first day of the trial at 19:00, during the news hour SABC 3 covered Zuma's rape case and showed the composers of the "Msholozzi" song.. This group called *Izintombi Zoma* is one of the biggest names in South Africa's traditional *Maskandi* music. It is made up of three Zulu women. On this day they sang their tribute to the former Deputy President who had been charged with rape. Briefly, the song loosely translated declares that Nelson Mandela, in the song referred to by his clan name, Madiba, said Zuma would become president at the end of his presidential term of office. It further declares that charges against Zuma must therefore be withdrawn so that he can be the next State President of the country. The track had been provisionally taken off UKhozi FM play list by the station's management for fear it could be interpreted as incitement drawing accusation of the anti Zuma bias. The Mercury Newspaper reported that:

The public broadcaster supported the KwaZulu-Natal radio station's decision to shelve the song as it prejudged a matter that was to be heard in court (09/02/06)
http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News

The album which boasts the track "Msholozzi" had, to that end, sold 50 000 copies. Commenting on the song, Lindo Sabelo of Izingane Zoma Music Promotions said:

Our song is not political; we just write about what is happening and what people think. We are not controlled when it comes to our music. (16/02/2006)
http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News

Gallo Records spokesperson speculated that they would have sold 100 000 by June 2006 by which time it was presumed the case would be over. (16/02/2006)
http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News

On the 6th of March 2006 the Zuma trial began in the Johannesburg High Court. Izingane Zoma danced live while singing the controversial and suspended track: “Msholoji”. COSATU pointed out that they were unhappy that the track had been banned. Outside the Johannesburg High Court two rival groups could be identified as One-in-Nine Campaign a collective name for different organizations of people opposed to any form of women abuse. This group largely consisting of women sang at the top of their voices even though they were subdued by an even greater crowd of Zuma supporters. The One-in-Nine Campaign members sang a song ordinarily sang at political rallies but only this time it was directed at Zuma:

Lent’oyenzayo, ayilunganga

Lent’oyenzayo, ayilunganga

(What you are doing is not right

What you are doing is not right)

On the opposite side Izingane Zoma performed live their controversial Msholoji song and was joined by a public most of who were Zuma supporters.

On the next day the 7th March 2006, as seen on SABC 3 19:00 news, conflict took place between the occupants of a taxi in which loud music of the same Izintombi Zoma controversial track uMsholoji was playing and the police who were trying to stop them to lower the volume. These people had come to support Zuma during the case proceedings. The purpose of the discussion engaged in serves as an illustration that informed by media, Zwelibomvu women, through their songs, demonstrate their political awareness of what is happening around them. As such they also compose their songs as reflected in their composition of a song “We Thabo Mbeki” (Hey Thabo Mbeki)

7.3.2. Figures of speech as a form of oral composition

3. Ilotho

We bhuti

Ongibheka kahle

Angiyona ilotho

Ongibheka kahle

Angiyon'imali yeqolo

Lottery

Hey young man

Beware of me carefully

I am not the Lotto

Beware of me

I am not a child grant

Another argument as to why songs can be a good vehicle for protest is that subordinate groups might wish to find ways to express dissonant views through their cultural life simply as a response to an official culture that is almost invariably demeaning. In this context, Song No.3 challenges the demeaning attitude that a man may have projected to the woman and so the woman retorts boldly through song loaded with metaphors by stating that she is not a prostitute or something that is gambled with like 'Lottery'. She further argues that she is not 'cheap' and or 'a free commodity' in the same way as *imali yeqolo* which is a government grant that is freely provided by government to young and unemployed women as a means for them to support their children. While legally child grant is not restricted to women, it is unusual for men to be part of the long queues that characterise the pay off dates when women go to collect this money. In fact at Zwelibomvu there is no question about this money being associated with men.

The money compared to lottery is perceived as a promotion of gambling with women's lives especially against the scourge of HIV and AIDS. The grant money is also perceived as a 'ticket' to earning money earned through getting pregnant. It is considered by some as quite demeaning to the culture and as opposing the promotion of good behaviour and virginity. In fact, during the field research most of those interviewed were very clear that even though the money has been accepted by most, in essence it is not a good thing as women abuse it and that the distribution of this money undermines their culture. Against the same background the money had political overtones as one woman interviewed argued that one of the reasons why Chief Mangosuthu of the Inkatha Freedom Party lost popularity and votes mainly in KwaZulu Natal which was once a stronghold for this political party was purely because he had made a stand against the grant and had said he would challenge the government to stop this grant. The controversy was therefore as a result of the clash between the beliefs and a way of life of a people and modernity.

A lottery is a legal and government initiated system that is aimed at raising hopes and dreams of people to change their lives by earning instant wealth through luck or chance. Its metaphoric use in the song is loaded. The loaded message conveyed by the women through this song and directed to the young men is that men must not think that women can be used as cash cows which are seen as a winning or lottery. This means that men might also have been taking advantage of women and always asking them for cash.

Therefore this song has layers of protest composed through the use of comparison but which on the surface seems to be mainly to protest against a man or rather seems to be a gender related song. Through a comparison with systems that fall within political domain it becomes and gains a powerful status of a song that communicates a strong message that issues of domination are interconnected and related. And Turner (2003) expresses this notion powerfully when she claims that for a rural Zulu woman, the personal is political in that she has entered a public arena of politics through songs of personal experience which assume the form of social protest.

The songs of contemporary rural women therefore demonstrate how women have exercised their freedom of speech through songs of protest and the freedom of artistic creativity through the medium of their oral poetry.

7.4. Topical songs and social commentary

Topical songs are those that insult, challenge and comment on issues of immediate social concern. A comment on the recent reed dance event should clarify issues which comment on songs. The event took place at Nyokeni royal residence on September 8, 2007. Responding to the passing of the new Children's Act which deems virginity testing of girls under 16 a criminal offence, in his keynote address Goodwill Zwelithini, king of the Zulu nation said that the Zulu nation would not be forced out of its tradition and stressed that the children who were tested prior to the reed dance were not doing so under duress (Sunday Tribune, September 9, 2007, page 2). His Majesty's words were confirmed in the song sung by maidens from all over KwaZulu-Natal gathered there. Zwelibomvu maidens also do participate in that event. In the song the young unmarried and virgin girls were complaining about the passing of that act in particular the stipulation about virginity testing. Furthermore they were complaining about child grant which they see as a source of evil in the Zulu nation:

Khuza uHulumeni mama (Tell the government not to do that mother)

Uyaganga sohlolwa thina (He is talking nonsense, we will maintain virginity testing)

Uhulumeni udlalile ngathi (The government has destroyed us)

Wathi asihole imali yeqolo (By providing child grant)

Imali yeqolo isigcwele (Child grant is full)

Isiyizinkulungwane thatha Mbeki (It's in the thousands, take it Mbeki)

This song demonstrates the topicality of composition which is characteristic of songs that deal with social commentary around changes that affect the structure of society.

Stewart's (1994) infers that women in the sugar plantation of her study, in the transitional stage in the history of South Africa, have found both a political and literary voice through the medium of oral poetry. Similarly the young reed dancers used the platform to air their views on the Act that seemed to affect their value systems. Moreover, the maiden's voices and messages reached beyond the gender boundaries of Stewart's women's songs that are sung only in the presence of other women (in Stewart 1994) as "*Izintombi ebeziseNyokeni bezibalelwa ezinkulungwaneni ezingama-36*" (approximately 36 thousand maidens gathered at Nyokeni royal residence) (Ilanga, September 10-12, 2007, page 1) and "the event was attended by several dignitaries" (Sunday Tribune, 9 September, 2007, page 2)

Fabian (1978) regards popular song as belonging essentially to public places of entertainment whereby images of separation and loss and everyday difficulties of married life are addressed. In his later work Fabian (1990) further argues that involvement in performance produces ways of perception that cannot always be condensed to verbal representation or analysis and therefore encourages moving from informative to performative ethnography.

Another dimension of songs presented by Vail and White in *Power and the praise poem* (1991) is that songs can also depict a society's protest against wrong doing and in that sense critique social history. This is adequately covered in their discussion and analysis of 'Paiva'; a satirical protest poem about the sugar company discussed in Chapter 3.

7.4.1 Songs about witchcraft

4. Uma ngigula

Umma ngigula

Ngek'ubabone

Uma kukhona inyama

Naba befika

5. Wayekhalelani?

Leader: Uzwe ngendlebe

Chorus: Wayekhalelani?

Leader: Wayekhalelani?

Chorus: Mubu lo

Leader: Wayengenza

Chorus: Upheth'umth'omubi

Leader: Uzwe ngendlebe, wayekhalelani?

Chorus: Mubi lo

Leader: Wayekhalelani?

Chorus : Upheth'umthomubi

6. Zijabhil'izitha

Leader: Zijabhil'izitha

Chorus: Wema wema

Leader: Ebezingibukela phansi

Chorus: Wema wema

Leader: Ziyojabhizitha

Chorus: Wema wema

Leader: Ebezingibukelaphansi

Chorus: Wema wema

When I am ill

When I am ill

You will never see them set foot here

When we have slaughtered

Here they come

Why was she is crying?

You heard with your ears

Why was she crying?

Why was she crying?

She is bad

What was she doing to her

She has a terrible concoction

You heard with your ears, why was she crying

She is bad

Why is she crying

She is carrying terrible medicine

Enemies have been dissaponted

Enemies have been dissaponted

Oh mother

Who were looking down upon me

Oh mother

Enemies will be dissapointed

Oh mother

Who have been looking down upon me

7. Baba wami

Baba wami baba wami
 We baba wami
 We baba wami
 Wangisiza wangimulisa

Sengikhathe' abathakathi
 Bethin uyinja
 Bethi awunamali
 Wangisiza wangimulisa

Saphel abathakathi
 Bethi awunankomo
 Wangisiza wangimulisa

8. Ihlulekile

Inyanga yakho
 Hamba uyoza
 Amany'amaqhinga

9. Ngathi uyangibusisa

Kanti uyangibulala
 Wo ngaze ngabonga
 Kant'uyangidlisa
 Ngaze ngaganga mina
 Ngadla ngabonga mina

10. Ngigula nginje

All: Uyamaz'owawubekayo
 Ngafa yisinge
 Uyawazowubekayo

My father

My father, my father
 Oh my father
 Oh my father
 I am grateful for giving me umemulo

We are tired of witches
 Who say you are a dog
 Who say you have no money
 I am grateful for umemulo

We are fed up of witches
 Saying you have no cattle
 Thank you for umemulo

Your witchdoctor failed

Your witchdoctor failed
 Go and try
 Other plans

I thought you were giving me a treat

Instead you were bewitching me
 I even thanked you
 Whereas you were poisoning me
 What a joke I even thank you
 I ate and I thanked you

As sick as I am

You know who planted it
 I am dying of back pains
 You know who planted it

11. Awukhuz’umfazi weKholwa

Nang’ekeketh’izindaba

Awu ukeketh’izindaba

Advise Christian woman

She is busy telling stories

She is so busy telling stories

12.Ngihambe phi?

Uma ngihamba emngeceleni

Kwaba isono

Where should I move?

When I move to in the borders

It is considered a sin

13. Uyadela wena

Ongasoze waqhuzuka

Ngoba sewayakha inqanawe

Lucky you

Who will never trip

Because you have erected your stronghold

Song No.4 and No.5 comments about the dynamics of life in the Zwelibomvu community. The songs comment on the way in which some members of their community conduct themselves. In these songs the issue of witchcraft as a biggest cause of dissent is discussed. Accusations of witchcraft are rife in this community and can sometimes have fatal consequences as communities gather and plot to kill the supposed ‘evil’ person within the community. The message is communicated in Song No.5 where a chorus sings that the ‘evil person’ is ‘carrying dangerous muti’. Song No.4 on the other hand is indirect as it implies that there must be something evil about the family that does not visit when they are sick but as soon as they feel that this singing family is doing well demonstrated through the feast, this evil family arrives. It could be that the family that is said to show up on happy occasions only is also jealous and does not wish others well. So it might be argued that the song is suspicious that the person on whom the song is addressed is the one that is bewitching them.

Song No.6 is boastful and jibes at those that hate this person perhaps because he/she has made a success of her life when they least expected and had thought she or he would be a failure. Unlike western societies who value individualism Zulu society is not rooted in such a culture. Song No.6 by Zwelibomvu women is indicative of the tensions that exist among Zwelibomvu families where people are ever minding other people’s business without restricting their concerns to what goes on in their homes.

Song No 7 is a form of thanksgiving by a young woman to her father for making it possible for her to have *umemulo* (coming-of-age ceremony). The message is however, accompanied by a message that there are witches and bad wishers that are vying for their blood who have been accusing them of being poor and looking down upon them. The word ‘*inja*’ (dog) shows how this family thinks it has been perceived in a demeaning way. So even in social formation there are power divisions that inform the social fabric.

Song No. 8, 9 and 10 continue with accusations of witchcraft and argue that some people pretend to love them but they use this pretence to poison them. Song No.9 conveys the irony of feasting (which is typical of a Zulu culture) and how witchcraft is usually associated with ‘*ukudlisa*’ (adding a poisonous concoction to the victim’s food) and generally takes the form of ‘food’ and feasting. It is believed that it is at this time of feeding that people are most gullible, trusting and therefore more vulnerable. The song expresses how the victim was grateful and even said ‘thank you’ for the food while in actual fact she was being poisoned. Other songs point at those that collaborate with the witch and generally challenge these to reveal the witches (Song No.10).

During my field research it was clear that one of the values of song was to indirectly sing to the people that were considered witches to show them that they were known and that they had to stop the practice before it was too late. The composer of a song is often a woman who is generally oppressed by the conditions of her life as confirmed by Caraveli (in Turner, 2003:85) when he states, “at times protest takes the form of an attack against a vast, all-encompassing category of evils, including war, natural disaster and death itself”.

Song No 11 has religious overtones and is directed at a Christian woman who is believed to go about gossiping about people. This is an *isigiyo* or *ukushoza* (women’s solo song) as Zwelibomvu women refer to it which usually is sarcastically directed to a person by other women and is a way to advise her to stop this bad habit. Generally the woman is part of the gathering but due to anonymity they feel courageous to tell her through this medium. It is supposed that she will realize that this message is directed at her and then change her bad habit.

Song No. 12 and 13, lament the fact that some members of the community are so ostracised that they do not know what to do anymore (Song No.12) and alludes to the fact that people are fallible (Song No.15) through sarcastically arguing ‘lucky are you that you do not trip’. As

Turner (2003) points out the chorus is an invitation to others for support in a form of a participative chorus, and by repetition or at least of parts of her song, the chorus affirms it and claims the poet's protest as their own, indicating mutual support of cause.

7.4.2 Songs about the spread of disease and rape

Earlier it was demonstrated through the songs sung at eNyokeni during the *Umkhosi WoMhlanga* (Reed Dance) that young women seize such opportunities to comment about present state of affairs. One such concern raised in the Reed Dance of 2 007 was the young girls protest against the Act which they considered immoral. One of the reasons perceived by the young maidens for continued virginity testing is to prevent the spread of HIV and Aids. The same reasons called for urgent composition by Zwelibomvu women in particular with regard to the spread of HIV and AIDS pandemic. In a society that was steeped in traditional practices such as polygamy and the culture of *ukulobola* (paying bride wealth) and respect where women are supposed to know their place in the family the women challenge the status quo. In a culture where they were not expected to question what a man says, women felt that this disease which was ravaging society needed to be curbed and the immediacy and urgency of the situation compelled them to compose songs that address this issue. Zondi (2007:1) argues:

Through the ages the notion of culture has been misused as a weapon for certain groups of society to marginalize, oppress and or abuse women. The traditional value systems that view women as inferior to men have led to various atrocities committed against this social group in the name of 'culture'. Oppressed women hope that the message of their songs will reach the hearts of their partners, while also sharing the anxieties of their life experience with women in similar situations.

Msimang (1986) states that life, in a traditional African society, is man's greatest asset and a gift from above, and the preservation and continuation of life are the central human concern. Traditional Zulu society saw marriage as the essential element for the continuation of the man's lineage, so that he could achieve the status of 'ancestor', revered and remembered by his descendants for several generations. A woman was 'brought in' as a kind of 'borrowing' to 'do the job' of producing children for the man and his clan. The idea of 'borrowing' soon became one of 'buying the services', due to the greed of the 'lending' family hence the institution of *ilobolo*, (bride price), and *ukulobola*, the process of obtaining a wife through the exchange of property.

Sex then becomes a grab for power, and to externalize subconscious repression. A common label used for women who try to indicate that they are not consenting to sex, is *izifebe* “whores”. Thus ‘bad’ women are taught the importance of abiding by tradition by giving in to unjust demands. They pay a high price in the form of their bodies being violated. Zwelibomvu women are therefore not out of order when they reveal their feelings about the situations they find themselves in when dealing with their men. The following response, attest to this truth where one woman on being interviewed stated how her husband coerce her into sex against her will:

“Ubani indoda layikhaya? Uma usukhohliwe ake ngikukhumbuze. Un gumfazi wean ngakulobola” (Who is the man in this house? If you have forgotten, let me remind you. You are a woman, and I paid bride price for you). [Interview with one woman from ePanekeni, March 15, 2006].

It is interesting to realize how most of the above ideas find expression in the simple songs of the women of Zwelibomvu.

Briefly then, the songs throw some light on the women’s perceptions of the spread of disease and other evils such as rape. My contention is that while women seem to be aware of the implications of HIV and AIDS and implore the government and their husbands to protect them, they are not fully aware that they are daily exposed to being raped by their husbands’ unreasonable demands for unprotected sex. It does not end with intercourse, because women’s health can be compromised. Tuttle (1986) explains that, because a woman has, at some point, consented to sexual intercourse, it does not mean that the man has the right to violate her any time it suits him. I argue, therefore, that in a marriage where mutual love and care are in short supply, even women are constantly raped, but due to ignorance they perceive such acts as part of their marriage packages.

The songs portray a somber picture of a woman’s life in a traditional Zulu marriage and relationship. In my field research I posed a rather general question, to the participants and a pattern of responses emerged around the issue of rape and infections. This opened the doors to responses encompassing a variety of issues. The question was: “In your opinion, what role do songs play in women’s daily lives?” I followed it up with: “How do your men respond to the messages conveyed in the songs?” I selected answers directly concerning the theme of the present paper and endeavored to draw pertinent conclusions. The answers have been summarized.

In a polygamous family, a woman stated: “If I do not give in to him, another co -wife will.” The fear of withdrawal of favours for herself and her children is a powerful motivation overriding all other considerations.

In a similar vein, another one declared: “We are two or three women to one man. It’s not only men that are a problem in our lives, but also co-wives. Polygamous life puts us against one another, in constant competition. At least through these songs we are able to share our lives.”

And another woman: “We are doormats for the men. Yes, they paid *ilobolo* for us, but we do not want to be treated like doormats. For example, they refuse point blank to use condoms. They say nobody enjoys a sweet wrapped in paper. If you insist on the use of condoms, you will end up being chased away and this will bring shame to your family. So we give in to unprotected sex knowing very well the risks.” The question is, would shame not be better than misery of illness?

Another participant said: “These songs keep our families together because we sing and laugh”, humour being used as a coping mechanism. She continued, “Our men just do not buy into negotiated sex. They even tell us they were not told anything about condoms when they paid *ilobolo* for us.”

And another: “Had it not been for these meetings during which we women meet and share our family lives, many families would have crumbled by now. Because of the sharing we engage in during these sessions we are able to tolerate any nonsense that our men heap onto us.”

Another woman: “We are in competition ourselves. We do not want to be scorned at by other women. The songs we engage in when we are together help us forget, even if for a very short time, that we have lions waiting for us back home.”

Another woman testified: “We enjoy and entertain ourselves as we sing. Our burdens seem to fly away for a few precious moments. We are thus able to present a straight face, to give the impression that all is well in our homes.”

And another: “Knowing that other women have worse experiences than I, helps me see my life in a better light. At least it’s not all the time that I am coerced into sex. We find comfort in the presence of other women. Through these songs we want our men to know that we are conscious of the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Of course, we have no saying when it comes to implementing our

wishes as far as sex is concerned. We let them get away with it. They demand and get sex whenever it suits them. Our interests are not taken into consideration.”

Against these responses and for a more balanced view of the situation, a small group of men were also interviewed. Here are some reactions from the men, who shamelessly bring forward ancient customs, culture and traditions as an excuse for their unreasonable demands:

“Why did they (women) get married? The gates are open if they have forgotten why they got married in the first place. We do not care for changed times. We still pay the same number of cattle as *ilobolo* even today.”

Another man: “The western ways of thinking are killing our culture. Women are only complaining because they want to live like white people. We are not whites.”

Another man complains that he spends money on his women, but is short -changed: “We do everything for them including buying them luxuries. They must comply with our wishes in return.”

A polygamist puts the problem in blunt terms:

Asiyizwa nje indaba yokunqaba uma kuyiwa kwezocansi ngoba sinabafazi abaningi ngakhoke uma kuyithuba lakhe umuntu angiqondi ukuthi anganqabelani ngaphandle -ke uma esezinsukwini zakhe. Uma eqhubeka nokunqaba semshiya kuzophinde kube nguye futhi okhonodayo athi angimnakile. Kanti bafunani labafazi ngempela? (We do not expect a ‘No’ to sex, because, since we have more than one wife, when her turn comes, I don’t understand why she should start making excuses except when she is menstruating. If she insists, I will ignore her, and she’ll start complaining that I neglect her. What do these women want?) [Interview with one man from ePhangweni, March 18, 2006]

Generally defined as “forced sexual violation” (Mills, 1991:205) and as “an act of sexual intercourse which a man forces on a woman against her will” (Tuttle, 1986:270), in the context of this chapter rape should be understood within the framework of patriarchal communities to which my research site, Zwelibomvu, belongs. In such a traditional environment, rape is still mostly seen as a crime against property; something one man does to another man, with the body of a woman as the medium (ibid). At Zwelibomvu, this phenomenon manifests itself widely in marriage situations where, as maintained by Tuttle (1986, 270 -271), “...on the basis of

...marital status...if a woman has at one time given her consent to sexual intercourse with a man who later rapes her...it is usually presumed that she can never again not consent: she has given up the right to her own body and is the sexual property of her husband.” In many countries of the world, for a rape charge to be sustainable in a court of law the victim must have made clear her refusal by saying “No!” at whatever moment of the intercourse process.

The radical feminist view on rape maintains that any time sexual intercourse occurs without it being initiated by the woman out of genuine affection and desire, it should be considered as rape. Such ‘rape’ instances would be, for example, when sexual intercourse takes place because a woman does not want to lose a man or to hurt his feelings or risk his anger, or if she is responding to pressure and fear, just as surely as if a man held a knife against the woman’s throat, against her will (Kramare and Treichler, 1985).

A less radical approach considers the sex act as a negotiated outcome, whereby a woman consents to the man taking pleasure in her body in return for his favors. In my opinion and supported by most modern literature, sexual intercourse is considered as an ‘act of love’, shared and greatly enjoyed by both parties. Of course, lust is not love but selfishness and disregards self-giving, and fear of disease accompanying the act of love prevents the endangered partner from enjoying a most rewarding experience. Thus while no definition of rape which supports my stance has been offered, I consider it as a rape when women expose themselves to risks of diseases simply because they are under duress.

Again another challenge is that the use of condoms is considered an unegotiated process and in this regard even women feel they have no power to protect themselves against their partners.

The above situations therefore reveal a critical issue around urgency in oral composition.

14. We Hulumeni

Leader: We Hulumeni

Chorus: Ngizwa ngishaywa luvalo

Leader: Ngathi ngiyoshekha

Chorus: Kwathiwa nginegciwane

Hey Government

Hey government

I have fear

I went for a test

And was told I have the virus

15. Kancane bobaba

Leader: Kancane bobaba

Chorus: Ee.....

Leader: Singalali

Chorus: Ji-e-e-e

Leader: Ingculaz'iyabulala

Chorus: Ake nimeni kancane

Wait a while longer our husbands

Easy, our husbands

Eeh...

We mustn't sleep

Ji-e-e-e

Aids kills

Just go easy.

16. Anowagqoka

Leader: Anowagqok'amajazi

ngob'ingculaz'iyabulala

Chorus: Anowagqoka, anowagqoka

Wear them

You must wear the condoms

because AIDS kills

You must wear them

17. Siye sahlala

Leader: Siye sahlala kabuhlungu

Ingculaz'ixakile

Chorus: Awuzwe we ngan'yami

Ingculaz'ixakile

What a sad life

What a sad life

Aids is unbearable

Listen, my child

Aids is unbearable

18. Ayi maye wemama

Leader: Ayi maye webaba nomama

Chorus: Angisahamb'ebusuku

Abadlwenguli baxakile

Angisahamb'ebusuku

Leader: O sebefun'ukungibulala

Chorus: Angisahamb'ebusuku

Abadlwenguli baxakile

Angisahamb'ebusuku

Oh Mother

Oh father and mother

I don't travel at night anymore

There are rapists at large

I don't travel at night

They want to kill me

I don't travel at night

Rapists are at large

I don't travel at night

This song (No.14) challenges government as the structure that is supposed to look after the welfare of people. Government has over the years after the diseases that threatened lives of people, called for all communities to know their status so that they can protect others but also so that they can live a healthier lifestyle. All the campaigns by both government and other organizations have contributed to communities seemingly as remote as Zwelibomvu composing songs that warn, alert and protest against the spread of this disease especially with regard to behaviour change and respect for others.

The fear of being confirmed HIV positive is communicated clearly in “*ngizwa ngishaywa wuvalo*” and the shock of the discovery that the woman is indeed positive.

Song No. 17 is another song that communicates and warns the youth about HIV. The line *siye sahlala kabuhlungu/* conveys a new evil that has befallen the world which has changed the very existence and fabric of society.

Song No. 15 is directed at husbands specifically and asks them not to expect to have sex because AIDS kills. The song pleads with them to ‘go easy’ with sex. The word ‘Ake’ is a formation that depicts that they are being pleaded with.

In contrast to the previous song, Song No 16 shows assertiveness on the side of the women and **commands** men to wear condoms. The imperative form “*A-*” in “*Anowagqoka*” illustrates this sense of command and assertiveness. The message is consistent that the AIDS kills.

Song No. 18 is a painful lament about the social degradation where men have become animals by raping young girls. The appeal and address to ‘mothers’ is an indication to parents who are considered the nurturers and advisers of society and especially young girls, that men are raping them. The young girls state that they are no longer free to move around in their own neighbourhood in constant fear of these rapists (Zondi in *Agenda*, 2007).

7.4.3 Evidence of oral composition: meeting with a Zwelibomvu composer

7.4.3.1 Background for the interview

The interview that will follow shortly serves to demonstrate that there is usually a story behind the origin of a song and supports the arguments of oral composition of songs mentioned in this chapter. While abridged, the interview version is unedited and represents a justification of songs that were mostly unique to one particular district within Zwelibomvu known as eZimbokodweni. I find it important to provide a background that directs the interview. Whilst I had been to a number of ceremonies on the occasion of the 2nd of September 2006 of the 15 songs I collected on this day most of them were mainly new songs. Only three songs were familiar having been heard from previous ceremonies. This phenomenon struck me as unique since even at later ceremonies attended in the same district the same songs persisted. Important about this event was that I came face to face with one of the composers of most of the songs sung on that day. I requested an exclusive interview with her which was accommodated. This is how the interview went:

7.4.3.2 Interview with a Zwelibomvu song composer -unedited

Researcher: Kambe uthe ungubani igama lakho?

(Please tell me your name)

Inteviewee: Ngingu Ntombiyenkosi.

(I am Ntombiyenkosi)

R: Ngicela ukubuza iminyaka yakho.

(And how old are you?)

I: Ngino 37

(37 years)

R: Yiqiniso ukuthi amaculo amaningi abeculwa ngale ntambama aqanjwa nguwe?

(Is it true that most of the songs sung this afternoon were composed by you?)

I: Empeleni ngingathi kunjalo ngiphinde ngithi futhi akunjalo. Awuthi ngikuchazele. Ee...mina ngizalwa esithenjini lapho ubaba eganwe amakhosikazi amathathu. Umama wami uyena owashada kuqala, futhi umkhulu wethu wayehlobene nenkosi, e-e ngeke-ke nokho ngangena kulokho. Kodwa ngizama ukuthi siwumndeni owawaziwa kakhulu kule ndawo. Ngaleyondlela

nginodadewethu abaningi ngokunjalo nabanewethu abaningi. Ngenxa yesizathu esithile yimina nodadewethu bakwezinye izindlu esaqamba lamaculo.

(It's partly true. Let me explain, I am from a polygamous family with my father having three wives. My mother is the senior wife and my grandfather was related to the chief....I cannot go into all the details- I'm just trying to say that we were a very well-known family. I have many sisters and brothers. Prompted by a certain incidence my half sisters and I composed these songs)

R: Unganginika isithombe esaholela ekuqanjweni kwawo?

(Can you please explain what led to the composition of the songs?)

I: Hmm..Njengaliphi nje?

(Give me an example of the song on which you want information?)

R: Njengaleli elithi **We Thabo Mbeki** elize laculwa kathathu kulo mcimbi

[For a full text and translation, see Annexure A Song No. 34]

*(Like the one called **We Thabo Mbeki** which was sung three times this afternoon.)*

I: Wo ngizokuchazela. Ngizokutshela indaba yalo ngoba lona liselisha kakhulu alikaqedi nezinyanga ezintathu laqanjwa. Mhlambe nawe ubuqala nje ukulizwa.

(I'll explain. I will tell you a story behind it because it's quite a new song which only dates back less than three months ago. Perhaps it was the first time for you to hear it today).

R: Ngempela bengiqala.

(Indeed it was.)

I: Uzobona-ke njengoba bekukhona nabakwezinye izigodi nje usuzolizwa -ke manje. Kodwa ngingathi nje thina la siyi ANC futhi asesabi lutho ngalokho. Leli culo liqanjwe njengoba kuqale lobunyoka obenziwa kuMsholozini. Ngoba ukube indaba ibiphakathi kwe -ANC neNkatha ngabe siyaqonda. Manje kusukeleka izikhulu zikaHulumeni weANC ziqhoqhobale uZuma asifuni nokuyizwa nje le yonto. Empeleni angazi ngempela nami ukuthi ubani oliqalile. Ngivele ngalizwa sekuyiculo nje nanoma izinsizwa zidlula zeshela ezihamba zilicula. Iqiniso ngempela angimazi okuwuyenayena ngempela oliqambile kodwa manje liculwa u wonkuwonke ngisho nayizingane ezincane mazokha amanzi noma ziya esikoleni. [Ubuzwa nangephimbo lakhe uNtombiyenkosi ukuthi imcasula sampela lento ephonsa nezandla emoyeni kunjeya].

Kodwa amaculo engingakutshela kahle ngawo ilawa athinta okuke kwenzeka em inyakeni engemingaki eyedlule komunye wabanewethu besende likababa lapho edlala intombi libalele kabha. Ngoba ngempela ikhiwane elihle ligcwala izibungu.

(You'll see, as they were people from other districts as well you will become familiar with this song. I can say we affiliate to ANC here and we are not scared to say that. This song was started since this Msholozisi "sell out" plan. If the conflict had been between Inkatha and ANC, for example, we would understand. But we cannot tolerate the ANC government's persecution of Zuma. In fact I do not know who composed the song but everyone now seems to be singing it, even young children as they go to fetch water or walk to school). [Even Ntombi's voice suggested anger leveled at those who are against Zuma as she was throwing her hands all over to make her point understood]

But the songs I can tell you more about are those which relate to what happened to one of my brothers a few years ago when a woman fooled around with him. As the saying goes; a beautiful fig is full of worms.

R: Yini usho kanjalo?

(Why are you saying that?)

I: Phela kwakungebona ubuhle bentombi lobuya. Umnewethu wayeselobolile wazikhipha zonke akwangasala neyodwa futhi sekusele usuku lomshado. Kwakulokhu kunezinkomba zokuthi lentombi yakuso lesi sigodi eyase iyingoduso yakhe yayingaziphethe kahle. Nathi -ke njengodadewabo savula amehlo nezindlebe sifuna ukulalelisisa nokubukisa okwenzekayo funa umnewethu asilethele iseqamgwaqo ekhaya. Nebala langa thize sayelamele ngaphansi kwesihlahla simbe nomlisa ndini. Kwasuka esinamathambo sihlasele lo mfokazi , kanti siwobani thina ?

(The woman was very pretty indeed. My brother, had paid all lobolo asked by her family. Only a wedding day had to be finalized. There were indications that this woman from the same district was not well-behaved. We, as his sisters opened our eyes and ears with an aim of observing what was going on lest he brought shame to the family. Indeed one day we spotted the woman holding hands with another man under a tree . We fought with this man. Hence the song Nang'ethint'amadelakufa [For a full text and translation, see Annexure A Song No. 49]

I: Sambuza ukuthi uyazi yini ukuthi umfazi womuntu lo ame naye wasiphendula ngokukhulu ukusichwensa lokhu wathi”noseyishayile akakayosi noseynosile akakayidli noseydilile usedle icala” Kwathi ‘ma ibuzwa yabe ilokhu ithi uyayeshela lomfokazi. Awu ntombi, kwaze kwashelwana ngendlela engajwayelekile. Yikho ke nje samchwensa:

(We asked him if he knew that the woman was someone’s wife to which his response was noseyishayile akakayosi noseynosile akakayidli noseydilile usedle icala” (Poetic expression used by men to indicate that no man can claim a woman for himself unless they were legally bound by marriage vows). When asked she said the man was asking her to fall in love with her. What a manner though! The song that relates to that incident is **O sengiyabuza ntomb’yami**

[For a full text and translation, see Annexure A Song No. 50]

I: Kodwa kuthe kungazelele yabonakala isisolisa kanti umnewethu wayengakayithinti. Bekuyaye kuthi-ke nje ima idlula kuculwe lama culo ukuze iphoxeke. Nomndeni wayo kwafanela ukuba ubuyise zonke izinkomo ngoba yiyona eyakhombisa ukuba yisifebe. Phela umfowethu wayengesona isishimane. Uzwani-ke ngoba naye lo owayeyimithisile wacina engasayithathanga ngoba ezwa ukuthi iyahlambalazwa. Nalo -ke leliculo elikhuluma ngesimilo elithi **Asinandaba nobuhle bentombi** lisaphathelene nayo lendaba.

[For a full text and translation, see Annexure A Song No. 32]

(Later, there were suspicions that the woman might be pregnant whereas their brother had not slept with her. Whenever she was seen walking past comments in the form of songs would be made so as to humiliate her. Even her family had to return ilobolo cows because it was the woman who had proved to be a slut. Our brother, mind you, had several girlfriends. Even the man that had impregnated her did not marry her because of all the bad names that were used against her. The song is still addressing her character.

R: Leli elithi **Ihlulekile inyanga** lona?

(What about the one called **Ihlulekile inyanga?***)*

[For a full text and translation, see Annexure A Song No. 39]

I: Nalo lisaxoxa yona futhi le ndaba ngoba phela nakuba umfowethu ayesebona ukuthi sengathi wenziwa isilima kodwa wayelokhu elulutheke emva kwayo lentokazi. Kwakubonakala nje ukuthi iyamqgabela nathi sasukuma njengomndeni samyisa ezinyangeni zamlungisa umfowethu sambona eya ngokuya ekhohlwa okwathi ngelinye ilanga yazama ukuzozidlisa satshanyana kumfowethu ngoba seyazi ukuthi sebayona manje isifuna ukuzosulela umnewethu ngenyam’angayidlanga. Samdonsa ngendlebe ukuthi ugebel’eweni. Welulekwa futhi wezwa ngoba wasihlebel’ukuthi akayithintanga.

(The song about a witchdoctor is still about the same incident. My brother had realized what kind of a woman his future wife was but was still running after her. It was obvious that this woman was using muti to make him love despite everything. As concerned members of the family we also approached a witch doctor who gave our brother some muti after which we noticed a change in him. One day the woman came to him knowing very well that she had been deflowered with an aim of pushing the blame on our brother. We warned our brother that he was herding for a great fall. He took our advice as he told us he had not slept with her on that night

I : Nangalobo busuku saphinda saqamba nalawa athi: Uyaliwa yini wena? kanye nelithi Ngingenzenjani?

(On the same night we composed the songs Uyaliwa yini wena? and Ngingenzenjani?

[For a full text and translation, see Annexure A Songs No. 15 and 51]

I: Ngawo-ke nje lamaculo sase siyihleka ngemizamo yayo engaphumelelanga

(Through all these song we were still mocking her about her failed efforts)

I: Emva kwalokho-ke kwagcina ngokuba kuyofunwa amalobolo ngodli yasala nobuhle bayo obumangazayo. Sesiyazicabngela-ke nje ukuthi ngaphakathi kuye kufanele ukuba iyakhala ngokuchitheka bugayiwe. Yingakho nje kunala maculo We ngane kamama, Umkhwenyana wakithi kanye nelithi Yimin'engaliwa kanje

Finally lobolo cattle were recalled and we assume the bride to be and her family must have been devastated hence the songs:

We ngane kamama, Umkhwenyana wakithi and Yimin'engaliwa kanje

[For a full text and translation, see Annexure A Songs No. 52, and 53 and 54 respectively]

7.5. Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion songs may be viewed as performing the role of memory preservation of people's histories addressed by Werbner (in Nyairo, 2005). Vail and White describe "Paiva" (1991:198) as a song that was passed down from generation to generation. Similarly the songs composed by my interviewee above and sung at public gatherings by young maidens from Zwelibomvu have been around for over a decade and the disgraceful event that took place in the area remains part of the Zwelibomvu's history and future generations will likewise come to know of it. There was no way of publicly putting this woman to shame. However, because of the notion of a set of conjectures about poetic performance held throughout Southern Africa that if the grievance was articulated in song, there would be no argument (Vail

and White, 1991) the composition and performance of those songs served a purpose for Zwelibomvu community. Through their songs, in their various guises, Zwelibomvu women depict what Ndebele, in Stewart (1994:3) calls “[women’s] daily existence as ordinary people in ordinary areas”.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

*I am poor, I have no right to speak
Poor and weak in front of the powerful
Weak as long as the powerful likes
A hare has no say in front of the lion
A rat does not promenade in front of the cat
The walking stick of the poor is paid by God
The poor have no rights*

Remmy Ongala (in Barber, 1997)

8.1 Introductory Statement

The poem that serves as a prelude to this chapter has been included as a way of illustrating the light in which I viewed Zwelibomvu women at the very early stages of my research and which changed a great deal by the time I ended my research. The aim of this study was to investigate the reasons for contemporary women's songs, hence the question 'Bahlabelelelani-Why do they sing'? The framing of the question was quite deliberate because the phrase is loaded as it enables an in depth enquiry into situations and contexts that trigger the need for women to engage in this genre of oral literature. The choice of women and specifically rural women as the subject of this thesis was a conscious and deliberate one. The conception of the study was informed by my perception that in a society that is characterized by gender inequalities as well as power relations, examination of women's songs in particular would promote a critical debate around issues of gender inequalities. The choice was also due to the fact that as a black, African woman of rural origin myself, and who grew up out of this rich culture of song, I have always been passionate about the powerful effect of African orality. The study, therefore, offered me an opportunity to dig deeper into an understanding of women's songs and to infuse theories and existing literature reviews in order to better understand what makes this culture so powerful and entertaining especially when read within a contemporary context.

I believe that my approach was quite unique and innovative in that my dissertation was based on a population of Zwelibomvu – a rural village near Pinetown in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This community is interesting in that it by the time of the conclusion of the study I came to a realisation that it while very traditional it also encompasses ‘the best of both worlds’, the traditional and the modern. I therefore felt that this village could best epitomize the essence of why African women in the contemporary world engage in song. Indeed, this was validated through the field research as well as through the critical analysis of the different songs.

In addition the study explored the very essence of the songs through an analysis of the nature of their oral composition. In the process of my research I observed that as women actively and consciously performed their songs they ceased to be invisible while actively formulating their own meanings and traditional value systems. In that way, through such songs these women found a channel through which to make their needs known and to resist the gender positions ascribed to them.

8.2 The study in essence

The first chapter began with a general introduction in which pertinent concepts were defined and clarified. An assumption was made that through their contemporary songs women find their voice within the oppressive African patriarchal societies. While initially a general assumption was that patriarchy is a major cause of dissatisfaction among African, other forms of domination emerged and songs were used as a channel of addressing some of the issues that women were concerned with. Thus through songs women communicated various issues including dissatisfaction with the way in which their men treat them. This chapter, therefore, described the nature of the problem as well as the key questions that the study sought to investigate.

The second chapter introduced the paradigms, conceptual and theoretical framework which informed the theories that were adopted. These paradigms further justified methods of research opted for and which were discussed in detail in Chapter 5. The premise taken for such a justification was that whenever a researcher delves into a research problem the inquiry has to be informed and guided by a particular point of view. As stated by Kuhn (1970, 1979) an adoption of a particular paradigm provides a basic orientation to the whole system of thinking that defines for researchers the nature of their inquiry (Neuman, 1997). Chapter 2 therefore provided critical theories and approaches which serve as paradigms that inform my scientific and social analysis.

This study relied and drew more on the multi-disciplinary approach while at the same time taking on some elements from positivist approach through the use of measurement based on quantitative methods as illustrated in Chapter 5. I found the approach suitable in investigating and understanding the key issues addressed in this thesis. Within this multi-disciplinary approach therefore, the theory of Jousse's Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm, Weedon's ideas on Social Construction and Post Structuralist Feminism and Scott's model attempted to bring the study to a coherent whole.

The third chapter reviewed the bank of literature that has been written on the issues that deal with oral expression in the form of song. This was done with a view to exploring the way in which this topic had been dealt with in order to gain more insight into the approaches used and the direction taken by these studies. By doing this, the main goal was to identify gaps from these works so as to determine the angle and dimension that my dissertation would take such that a fresh viewpoint would be presented that would contribute to the theories already proposed. While my study is located within South Africa, the literature that was reviewed was not only confined to the South African context but goes as far as the borders of Africa into the international arena. This was because I strongly believed that women's issues are based on shared experiences that can never be purely isolated from the experiences of women especially African women from the rest of Africa. Therefore, the literature review that was considered to focus on works that relate to my current study was consulted. Therefore I concur with Barber (1997:5) whose argument about related oral works in one of the publication of which she is an editor states:

The papers, then, take up a variety of aspects of the meaning of 'popular' and explore their possibilities in a diversity of overlapping ways. But taking all the papers together, one can sense the presence of common concerns. [first], there is a powerful sense of people naming the inequality they suffer from, and recognizing, with bitter humour and bitter irony, their own struggle and endurance. The songs are generated by people's suffering, giving collective voice to memories of pain to make them serve as a 'map of experience'.

While the first three chapters of the thesis laid the foundation from an academic and empirical point of view, the fourth and fifth chapters gradually brought forward that which the study is about; women's songs. Being an empirical research, chapter four, therefore, provided the DVD rendition of the songs, thus bringing in the sense of 'authenticity' into the study. Again, because the dissertation is rooted in orality and performance as being one of the key characteristics of

song, the chapter also brought forward some of the elements of orality as evidenced through visible performance. In this regard some of Jousse's Mnemonic Laws of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm were used to analyse the data.

Chapter 5 dealt with the field research and its aim was to begin to tease out the question which is the main subject of my study, namely, *Bahlabelelelani?* Through the use of qualitative and a degree of quantitative methodologies, the chapter provided detailed processes and approaches that were used to collect critical data from the people of Zwelibomvu. More importantly, the chapter brought in both female and male respondents albeit separately into focus groups in order to provide a realistic evaluation of as well as to provide a response to the guided questions of the qualitative methodology and approach adopted about why women sing.

Chapter 6 and chapter 7 even brought in my perspective with regard to the theories that underpin the study. Through analysis of songs, chapter six illustrated how these theories are practically applicable to the songs in printed form with a view that they had been performed in my presence as indicated in Chapter 4. The chapter therefore illustrated how issues of gender and power inequality are conveyed mainly through the medium of song. The chapter further explored other critical characteristics of orality that make women's voices heard. This was achieved through identifying certain themes that, following my analysis, seemed to be prevalent in Zwelibomvu contemporary women's songs. The themes, it was suggested, were not water-tight as there is never any clear line of demarcation as to where one issue begins and ends.

Chapter 7 being a continuation of chapter 6 had as its main focus prevalent characteristics of oral composition as depicted through songs. In dealing with the aspects of oral composition Scott's model of hidden and public transcript was found more appropriate as the textural aspects of songs were analysed.

8.3 General findings of the study

In the study conducted by Turner (2003) she demonstrates that Zulu people have oral strategies through which they articulate criticism in their social discourse. One such channel is through the science of onomastics (naming) which she views as an agent of conflict management. While Turner's work looks at a holistic picture of Zulu social discourse my study focussed on women and discovered that there are various forms of protesting that women employ in dealing with

their social discourse. Unlike popular belief that women are passive recipients of oppression and domination, in fact they do engage in some forms of protest; songs being one such avenue as the study demonstrated.

Song as a form of expression are present throughout generations as was illustrated through the various contexts which were covered in Chapter 4. These contexts took us through the kind of songs sung for particular occasion. By viewing women in performance it is observable that women are continually shaped into becoming what society wants them to believe about themselves. There is nothing innate about the way women perceive themselves but rather it is by social construct that they come to view themselves in whatever manner they choose (Weedon, 1987, 1997). However the observation I arrived at is that while women assume what the world 'dictates' to them they are aware of their predicament but choose not to quit as they remain in the cycle of subordination. Their resilience resonates in young girls who, through their songs as well as interviews, acknowledge that their mother's circumstances are precarious, but who, nevertheless eagerly await their turn to become wives one day.

In the same way as the traditional *imbongi* (praiser) is licenced to criticise the king with impunity, Zwelibomvu women feel 'licenced' to voice their concerns in the form of songs. Expressing themselves figuratively, they consider themselves empowered during the time of performance and hope that whatever is implied through songs may be taken further in the day to day living. To achieve optimal satisfaction they do not rely on verbal expression alone but they also employ gestures such as stamping, clapping and facial expression (see Jousse's theory).

By the same token despite *hlonipha* (respect) culture some of the songs are expressed crudely where women make use of very raw and vulgar language. This is evident, for example in the song titled, "We bantabami, uph'uyihlo? (My children where is your father?) The response to the question is a clear "...uyodl'iqolo lomfazi" (he is gone to have sex with another woman). The question that one might ask is, "When do women resort to such obscene language?" Would it perhaps be acceptable to assume that they resort to such a language when they have borne too much from society's expectation of gender inequality? From my observation it seemed that there was nothing wrong with the way women uttered the heavy words because no one seemed embarrassed at the pronouncement of such words. I therefore deduced that women derive their satisfaction in the poetic license provided through song.

8.4 Recommendations for further research

This study revealed that women are oppressed vertically by men and horizontally by other women. Through songs that women sing and from the interviews that were conducted the study critically revealed ways in which women are oppressed by men and how songs serve as the vehicle of self expression, discontent and protest. However, the second dimension which I refer to as a 'horizontal dimension' whereby women oppress one another was not explored as this element only emerged during the research and had not been hypothetical in the conception of the study. What would be recommended for further research, therefore, is firstly to determine to what extent and in which manner women are inclined to inflict the same kind of abuse on other women as inflicted on them by men. Furthermore there is a need to ascertain whether there is any evidence which supports a view that oral strategies have been used as a guise to express this condition. Secondly, the study could further explore whether, through song or any other form of oral expression, there is any conclusion that can be arrived at as to whether there is any connection that can be made between the manner in which women have been subjected to domination and abuse by men and their resultant ill-treatment of fellow women.

8.4 Concluding Remarks

Through their songs and in their various guises, Zwelibomvu women depict what Ndebele, in Stewart (1994:3) calls "[women's] daily existence as ordinary people in ordinary areas" and this has been seen in the various ceremonies such as *ilima* (women's communal work), *umemulo* (girls'coming-of-age ceremony), *umgcagco* (traditional wedding) and *amacece* (traditional functions) in which women performed their songs. Whilst their daily existence seem ordinary, in reality they also have burning issues with regard to their society that accepts the entrenched gendered mindsets which perceive women inferior to men.

In conclusion, the dissertation has presented a context in which Zwelibomvu women describe what singing means to and for them. Whilst the situations and conditions that call for performance of songs have been treated individually, in actual fact they should be viewed in the light of what Barber (1997) refers to as porous genre boundaries which means that while there are songs for each occasion they nevertheless permeate within different contexts. Bukenya, (in Kaschula, 2001), argues that African women are disadvantaged, exploited and oppressed, this being evidenced primarily in marriage institutions where, in accordance with their culture, their

voices have been silenced in what she terms 'de-oracisation'. On the contrary, Zwelibomvu women, through their contemporary songs, reveal that they are not totally silent or silenced. I can therefore confidently attest to the fact that whilst subjected to gender and power inequalities and discrimination, African women, with specific reference to Zwelibomvu women, have the means of dealing with their predicaments which render them capacitated. In this study I am not, in any way claiming that this work is conclusive but the conclusions arrived at are solely based on the data that I collected.

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ANNEXURE A: A COLLECTION OF ZWELIBOMVU WOMEN'S SONGS

1. Lo mhlaba

Lo mhlaba wakithi
Sondliwa yiwona
Sikhuliswa yiwona
Kodwa sililadi lokukhwela

Lo mhlaba wakithi
Sifundiswa yiwona
Kodwa sililadi lokukhwela

This soil

This soil of ours
sustains us
It helps us grow
But we are used as a stepping stone for
others to climb up
This soil of ours
It educates us about [how to live]
But we are used as a stepping stone for
others to climb up

2. Asiwafun'amavila

Asiwafun'amavila thina
Asiwafun'amavila thina
Kulo mbuthano wethu
Asiwafun'amavila thina

Asiwafun'amavila thina
Asiwafun'amavila thina
Kulo mbuthano wethu
Asiwafun'amavila thina
Asiwafun'amavila thina
Kulo mbuthano wethu
Noselibambil'ijoka lakhe
Akasabuy'abhek'muva

We don't want people lazy people

We do not want lazy people
We do not want lazy people
In this association of ours
We do not want lazy people
We do not want lazy people
In this association of ours
We do not want lazy people
We do not want lazy people
In this association of ours
Even the one who has taken on the yoke
Will never have to loose focus again

3. Imbenge

Imbenge

Wothath'imbenge

Imbenge

Wothath'imbenge

Sekunjenje kwenza bani?

Kwenz'imbokodo

A grass woven dish

A grass woven dish

You must take the dish

A grass woven dish

You must take the dish

Who is behind these improved conditions?

It is the rock

4. Singabasezimbokodweni

Wo suka sambe ilizwe silakhile

SingabaseZimbokodweni ngenkani

Wo suka sambe ilizwe silakhile

We are from Zimbokodweni

Oh damn, we have built the country indeed

We belong to Zimbokodweni indeed

Oh damn, we have built the country indeed

5. Utshwala bugayelwe bani?

Utshwala bugayelwe bani?

Sifa yindlala

Utshwala bugayelwe bani?

Sifa yindlala

For whom is the beer brewed?

For whom is the beer brewed?

When we are dying of starvation

For whom is the beer brewed?

When we are dying of starvation

6. Ngimthathe ngikhohlwe?

Ngimthathe, ngikhohlwe?

Myeke. Kakad'udla wena

Kant'ifunani le ndoda?

Myeke. Mshiye. Kad'umncenga

Should I take him back and forget?

Should I take him back and forget ?

Leave him. After all he is leaving off you

What does this man really want?

Leave him. You have been begging him for too long

7. Wayilobola ngenkomo

Wayilobola ngenkomo

Izokhalelani

Ehe-he-e

We mame

Ehe-e umntwana wethu

Samtshinga ji

Ehe-he-ee

You paid cattle for her

You married her

by paying cattle

O, yes

Yes, indeed

O, yes, we literally our child

We threw her away

O, yes

8. Umkhwenyana

Umkhwenyana um'edlala ngami
Ngizohamba
Um'e edlala ngami
Ngizohamba
Kungcono ngigoduke
Ngizohamba ngiphind'ekhaya

9. Wena uyadela

Wen'uyadela
Wen'uyadel'osenobaba nomama
Wen'uyadela
Wo mina ngiyintandane emhlabeni
Angisenabani

10. Kuyashis'emendweni

Kuyashis'emendweni
Wawuyangaphi?
Kuyashis'emendweni webaba
Uyangisind'umendo .We baba
Wawuyangaphi?

11. We Mama

We mama womnika
Umakot'isikhwama

12. Ngenzenjani

Ngimthand'angishaye
Ngimzib'angishaye
Ngimbik'angishaye
Kanti ngangiyiswaphi

My husband

If my husband ill-treats me
I will leave
If he ill treats me
I will leave
It's better that I leave
I'll leave and go back home

Lucky you

Lucky you
You who still has a father and mother
Lucky you
I am an orphan in this world
I have no one

It's hot in marriage!

It's hot in marriage
Where were you going?
Oh Father, it is hot in marriage
I can't handle marriage. My father.
Where were you going?

Mother-in-law

Mother-in-law
You must give money to your daughter-in-law

What must I do?

Love him, he beats me up
Ignore him, he beats me up
Report him, he beats me up
Why was I brought here?

13. Ngibathe

Ngibathe baba wezingane
Asuke angishaye ngenduku
Sengibathe ngipheka nkukhwana
Asuke angishaye ngenduku

14. O we nang'uMababaza

O we nang'uMababaza
Ngaliwa nje ngiyinkonyana
Ayi we baba zingaye
Ayi bo zingaye

15. Uyaliwa yini wena

Wagibel'itekisi
Ekuseni kangaka
Uyaliwa yini na?

16. Wo bekezela

Wo bekezela
Esithenjini kunzima wobekezela
Ukhala kuze kuse
Esithenjini kunzima wobekezela

17. Ubani obengaliwa

Ubani obengaliwa kanje
Jabula mnakwethu siyakubongela
Ubani obengaliwa kanje
Jabula mnakwethu siyakubongela
Jabula mnakwethu sengiyahamba

I keep saying

I keep saying father of my children
And he simply beats me up
Even when I cook some chicken
And he simply beats me up

Here is mababaza

Here is mababaza
I am jilted yet I am a calf
Oh my father, she is the cause
Oh my father, she is the cause

Are you being jilted?

Why are taking a taxi,
So early in the morning,
Are you being jilted?

You must persevere

You must persevere
It is tough in a polygamous marriage
You cry until dawn
In a polygamous marriage it is tough persevere

Why am I jilted?

Why am I jilted in this way?
Rejoice co-wife, we congratulate you
Why am I jilted in this way?
Rejoice co-wife, we congratulate
Rejoice co-wife, I am now leaving

18. Ngiphelezele

Ngiphelezele

Ngiyobon'isilingo esiwumnakwethu

Awu lesikhophocwane

O sekunjan'ukwaliwa

O sekunjalo nje

O sekunjani ukuhlupheka

Osekunjalo nje

19. Ngoneni

Ngoneni ngidleni kabani

Ngabika la ngabika la

Kwathi cwaka

Wawuvul'umnakwethu

Ngacish'ukugcwal'indlela

20. Kwagula mina

Kwagula mina kwathi du

Kwagul'uzakwethu kwashintshwa

Amasheke

Kwaphum'izimali

21. We bantwana

We bantwana uphi uyihlo

Nang'eyosithela ngale kwentaba

Uyodl'iqolo lomfazi

We bantwana uphi uyihlo

Nang'eyosithela ngale kwentaba

Uyodl'iqolo lomfazi

Accompany me

Accompany me

To see this nuisance of a co-wife

She is like a baboon

How does it feel to be jilted?

It is just like that

How is it to suffer

It is just like that

What have I done wrong?

What have I done and whose thing have I eaten?

I report here and there

I get no response

As soon as co-wife opens her mouth

I am almost chased away

When I get sick

When I get sick nothing happens

When my co-wife gets sick cheques

Are changed

Money gets dished out

Children

Children, where is your father?

There he disappears beyond the mountain

To have sex with another woman

Children, where is your father?

There he disappears beyond the mountain

To have sex with another woman

22. Yenzani le ndoda?

Yenzani le ndoda?

Iphinga khona la

Iphinga eduze

Yenzani le ndoda?

Iphinga khona la

Iphinga eduze

23. Wo yiveze

Wo yiveze yiveze ngewindi

Awungivezele ngewindi

Ngob'indoda umtshalekwano

Awungivezele ngewindi

24. Uyinkunz'enjani

Uyinkunz'enjani

Ekhwela ngaphandle

Ekhaya zilele,

Uyinkunz'enjani

25. Mubi lo muntu

Mubi lo muntu engihlala naye

Mubi

Waze wamub' umyeni wami

Mubi

Uthathwa yini umyeni wami?

Uthathwa yini?

26. Ayimalanga

Ayimalanga

Le ntomb'ifun'ukugana

Ayimalanga

What is this man doing?

What is this man doing?

He commits adultery here

He commits adultery nearby.

What is this man doing?

He commits adultery here

He commits adultery nearby

Show him

Give him to me through a window

Give him to me through a window

Because a man is loaned to everyone

Give him to me through a window

What kind of a bull are you?

What kind of a bull are you?

Who fornicates outside

And leave home hungry?

What kind of a bull are you

This person is bad

This person I stay with is bad

He is bad

My husband is so bad

He is bad

What is taking my husband away from me?

What is taking him?

The girl did not jilt him

She did not jilt him

This girl want to get married

She did not jilt him

27. Uyaphi weMaMchunu?

Uyaphi weMaMchunu
Soland'uMajazi
Abafaz'abangeni
Soland'umajazi somphelezela

Where are you off to MaMchunu?

Where are you going MaMchunu?
To fetch Majazi
Women are not allowed in
We are off to fetch Majazi, we are
accompanying her

28. Indukw'enhle

Indukw'enhle
Wo indukw'enhle
Indukw'enhle igawulw'ezizweni
Indukw'enhle igawulw'ezizweni

A beautiful stick

A beautiful stick
Wo, a beautiful stick
Is chopped from other countries
Is chopped from other countries

Wozani nizobona
Indukw'enhle
Indukw'enhle
Wo indukw'enhle
Indukw'enhle igawulw'ezizweni
Indukw'enhle igawulw'ezizweni

Come and see her
A beautiful stick
A beautiful stick
Wo, a beautiful stick
Is chopped from other countries
Is chopped from other countries

29. Izintombi zale

Wo lo lo ma
Awubhek'amabele
Hhayi awubhek'amabele

Those young girls

Wo lo lo ma
Just look at their breasts
No, just look at their breasts

30. Asimbonanga

Asimbonaga ephum'ukoshela
Asiazi ukuthi umqome kanjani
Asimbonaga ephum'ukoshela
Asiazi ukuthi umqome kanjani

We did not see him

We did not see coming from courting
We don't know how she became his lover
We did not see coming from courting
We don't know how she became his lover

31. Bathi uyala

Bathi uyala ubaba kaSoli
Soshela ngenkani
Soshela khona
Soshela ngenkani

32. Asinandaba

Asinandaba nobuhle bentombi
Sifun'intomb'eziphethe kahle
Sifun'isimilo
Sifun'isimilo entombini
Asinandaba

33. We mntanami

Wolalel' abazali bekutshela
Yibon'abakuzalayo
We mntanami ngiyakukhuza
Wolalel'abazali bekutshela
Yibon'abakuzalayo

34. We Thabo Mbeki

UZuma wenzeni?
We Thabo Mbeki
UZuma wenzeni?

They say he refuses

They say Soli'father wont let her
How will we court by force?
But we still will
We will court by force

We don't care

We don't care about a girls beauty
We want good behaviour from a girl
We want good behaviour
We want good behaviour from a girl
We don't care

My child

You must listen to your parents
They are the once that gave birth to you
My child I am warning you
You must listen to your parents
They are the once who gave birth to you

Hey Thabo Mbeki

What has Zuma done?
Hey Thabo Mbeki
What has Zuma done?

35. Izibongo zikaMbunda

Laba Bantu **abakwaMbunda**

Umbunda ezalwa nguNdomba

uNdomba ezalwa uMazokololo

UmaZokololo ezalwa uLizwezwe

ULizwelwe ezalwa nguMgudi kaBantwini

Umgudi kaBantwini ezalwa nguMpepho

Iyona ke inzalabantu **yakwaXaba** leyo

.....

Mbunda's Praise Songs

These people belong to the **Mbundas**

Mbunda being born by Ndomba

Ndomba being born by uMazokololo

MaZokololo being born by Lizwezwe

Lizwezwe being born by Mgudi of Bantwini

Mgudi of Bantwini being born by Mpepho

This then is the birth lineage of **KwaXaba**

.....

36. Ilotho

We bhuti

Ongibheka kahle

Angiyona ilotho

Ongibheka kahle

Angiyon'imali yeqolo

Lottery

Hey young man

Beware of me carefully

I am not the Lotto

Beware of me

I am not child grant

37. Uma ngigula

Umma ngigula
 Ngek'ubabone
 Uma kukhon'inyama
 Naba befika

36. Wayekhalelani?

Uzwe ngendlebe
 Wayekhalelani?
 Wayekhalelani?
 Mubi lo
 Wayengenza
 Upheth'umuth'omubi
 Uzwe ngendlebe, wayekhalelani?
 Mubi lo
 Wayekhalelani?
 Upheth'umuth'omubi

37. Zijabhil'izitha

Zijabhil'izitha
 Wema wema
 Ebezingibukela phansi
 Wema wema
 Ziyojabhezitha
 Wema wema
 Ebezingibukelaphansi
 Wema wema

When I am ill

When I am ill
 You will never see them set foot here
 When we have slaughtered
 Here they come

Why was she is crying?

You heard with your ears
 Why was she crying?
 Why was she crying?
 She is bad
 What was she doing to her?
 She is a terrible witch
 You heard with your ears, why was he crying
 She is bad
 Why is she crying?
 She is carrying terrible medicine

Enemies have been disappointed

Enemies have been disappointed
 Oh mother,
 Who were looking down upon me
 Oh mother
 Enemies will be disappointed
 Oh mother
 Who have been looking down upon me
 Oh mother

38. Baba wami

Baba wami baba wami
We baba wami
We baba wami
Wangisiza wangimulisa

Sengikhathel' abathakathi
Beth' uyinja
Beth' awunamali
Wangisiza wangimulisa
Saphel' abathakathi
Beth' awunankomo
Wangisiza wangimulisa

39. Ihlulekile

Inyanga yakho
Hamb' uyoza
Amany' amaqhinga

40. Ngathi uyangibusisa

Kanti uyangibulala
Won ngaze ngabonga
Kant' uyangidlisa
Ngaze ngabonga mina
Ngadla ngabonga mina
Ngigula nginje
Uyawaz' owawubekayo
Ngafa yisinqe
Uyawaz' owawubekayo

My father

My father, my father
Oh my father
Oh my father
I am grateful for giving me *umemulo*

We are tired of witches
Who say you are a dog
Who say you have no money
am grateful for *umemulo*
We are fed up of witches
Saying you have no cattle
Thank you for umemulo

Your witchdoctor failed

Your witchdoctor failed
Go and try
Other plans

I thought you were giving me a treat

Instead you were bewitching me
I even thanked you
Whereas you were poisoning me
What a joke I even thank you
I ate and I thanked you
As sick as I am
You know who planted it
I am dying of back pains
You know who planted it

41. Awukhuz’umfazi weKholwa

Nang’eqeketh’izindaba
Awu uqeketh’izindaba

42.Ngihambephi?

Uma ngihamba emngeleni
Kwaba isono

43. Uyadela wena

Ongasoze waqhuzuka
Ngoba sewayakha inqanawe

44. We Hulumeni

We Hulumeni
Ngizwa ngishaywa luvalo
Ngathi ngiyoshekha
Kwathiwa nginegciwane

45. Kancane bobaba

Kancane bobaba
Ee.....
Singalali
Ji-e-e-e
Ingculaz’iyabulala
Ake nimeni kancane

46. Anowagqoka

Anowagqok’amajazi
Nngob’ingculaz’iyabulala
Anowagqok’anowagqoka

Stop this Christian woman

She is busy telling stories
She is so busy telling stories

Where should I have freedom to move?

When I move to in the borders
It is considered a sin

Lucky you

Who will never trip
Because you have erected your stronghold

Hey Government

Hey government
I have fear
I went for a test
And was told I have the virus

Wait a while longer our husbands

Easy, our husbands
Eeh...
We mustn’t sleep
Ji-e-e-e
Aids kills
Just go easy.

Wear them

You must wear the condoms
Because AIDS kills
You must wear them

47. Siye sahlala

Siye sahlala kabuhlungu
Ingculaz'ixakile

Awuzwe we ngan'yami
Ingculaz'ixakile

48. Ayi maye wemama

Ayi maye webaba nomama
Angisahamb'ebusuku
Abadlwenguli baxakile
Angisahamb'ebusuku

O sebefun'**ukungibulal'**
Angisahamb'ebusuku
Abadlwenguli baxakile
Angisahamb'ebusuku

49. Nang'ethint'amadelakufa

Uzam'ukwenzani
Wathint'amadelakufa
Uzam'ukwenzani.

50. O sengiyabuza

O sengiyabuza ntomb'yami
Lomfan'uyakushela
Nom'uthandana naye

51. Ngingenzenjani ?

Uma lingishiy'ithemba lami?
Ngingenzenjani
Lingishiy'ithemba lami?

What a sad life?

What a sad life?
Aids is unbearable
Listen, my child
Aids is unbearable

Oh Mother

Oh father and mother
I don't travel at night anymore
There are rapists at large
I don't travel at night

They want to kill me
I don't travel at night
Rapists are at large
I don't travel at night

There he plays with fire

What's he trying to do?
he is playing with fire
What's he trying to do?

I'm asking you, my girl

I'm asking you, my girl
Is this boy asking you to love him
Or are you in love with him?

What can I do?

If my beloved one leaves me
What can I do?
If my beloved one leaves me.

52. We ngane kama

We ngane kama
Awu wengane kama
Usungijikele

Child of my mother

Child of my mother
Oh child of my mother
You have turned against me

53 Umkhwenyana wakithi

Umkhwenyana wakithi usesidukele
Sicel'ukumbona yena
Usesidukele

Our groom has disappeared

Our groom has disappeared
We want to see him
He has disappeared

54. Yimi'engaliwa kanje

Yimin'engaliwa kanje
Jabula mnakwethu
Siyakubongela
Kodwa mina ngeke
Ngikhishwe into enje
Kodw'uban'ebengaliwa kanje
Jabula mnakwethu

I'm the one being jilted like this

I'm the one being jilted like this
Be happy my co-wife
We congratulate you
But I will not
Be replaced by someone like this
But who would be jilted like this
Rejoice my co-wife

ANNEXURE B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

PHASE 1 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG FEMALES 15-35

(All interviews were conducted in Zwelibomvu's vernacular- isiZulu. The English version of the same questions is also provided for each phase.)

1. Ngabe likhona yini iqhaza elibanjwe abantu besifazane kwezomculo?
2. Bahlabelelelani abantu besifazane?
3. Ngaphandle kokuhlabelela uma kunemicimbi yesiZulu yiziphi ezinye zikhathi abahlabelela ngazo? Yini eholela kulowo mculo?
4. Ngabe ukhona yini umehluko emaculweni aculwa ngabantu besilisa kulawo aculwa abesifazane?
5. Zikhona yini izikhathi lapho abesilisa nabesifazane behlabelela kanyekanye? Chaza kuzwakale.
6. Njengomuntu wesifazane yini oyizuzayo ngokucula?
7. Ngokujwayelekile nicula ngayedwa noma nicula njengeqembu? Ngabe amaculo aculwa ezigodini ezihlukene ayafana yini?
8. Ngabe ukhona yini umbiko othile enizama ukuwudlulisa ngomculo?
9. Yiziphi izindikimba enizithintayo emculweni wenu?
10. Mayelana nokudluliswa kwendlela yokuziphatha ningathini mayelana nemali yeqolo kubantu besifazane abangashadile?
11. Uzalwa esithenjini noma cha?
12. Uma ushada wena yiluphi uhlobo lomshado ongaluthokozela?

1. Is there a role that women play in song?
2. Why do women sing?
3. Other than in traditional ceremonies and functions, during what other times do you and other women sing and what determines what you sing?
4. Is there a difference between songs sung by men and women in the functions/ceremonies? Elaborate.
5. Is there a point at which both women and men sing the same songs? Elaborate.
6. As a woman what is it that you GAIN through song?
7. Do you normally sing individually or as groups and why? And do you sing different songs in the different districts.
8. Is there a message/s that you generally want to convey through the songs?
9. What themes do you touch on through the songs?
10. With regards to social concerns mentioned above and particularly about promoting morality and good behaviour, what is your view on the issue of social grants for unmarried women with children?
11. Were you born out of a polygamous or monogamous marriage?
12. What type of marriage would you prefer?

PHASE 2 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG FEMALES 40-65

1. Ngabe likhona yini iqhaza elibanjwe abantu besifazane kwezomculo?
2. Bahlabelelelani abantu besifazane?
3. Ngaphandle kokuhlabelela uma kunemicimbi yesiZulugubo yiziphi ezinye zikhathi abahlabelela ngazo? Yini eholela kulowo mculo?
4. Ngabe ukhona yini umehluko emaculweni aculwa ngabantu besilisa kulawo aculwa abesifazane?
5. Zikhona yini izikhathi lapho abesilisa nabesifazane behlabelela kanyekanye? Chaza kuzwakale.
6. Njengomuntu wesifazane yini oyizuzayo ngokucula?
7. Ngokujwayelekile nicula ngayedwa noma nicula njengeqembu? Ngabe amaculo aculwa ezigodini ezihlukene ayafana yini?
8. Ngabe ukhona yini umbiko othile enizama ukuwudlulisa ngomculo?
9. Yiziphi izindikimba enizithintayo emculweni wenu?

1. Is there a role that women play in song?
2. Why do women sing?
3. Other than in traditional ceremonies and functions, during what other times do you and other women sing and what determines what you sing?
4. Is there a difference between songs sung by men and women in the functions/ceremonies? Elaborate.
5. Is there a point at which both women and men sing the same songs? Elaborate.
6. As a woman what is it that you GAIN through song?
7. Do you normally sing individually or as groups and why? And do you sing different songs in the different districts.
8. Is there a message/s that you generally want to convey through the songs?
9. What themes do you touch on through the songs?

PHASE 3 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG MALES 15-35

1. Ngabe likhona yini iqhaza elibanjwe abantu besifazane kwezomculo?
2. Bahlabelelelani abantu besifazane?
3. Ngaphandle kokuhlabelela uma kunemicimbi yesiZulu yiziphi ezinye zikhathi abahlabelela ngazo? Yini eholela kulowo mculo?
4. Ngabe ukhona yini umehluko emaculweni aculwa ngabantu besilisa kulawo aculwa abesifazane?
5. Nina ningabantu besilisa nihlabelelelani?
6. Njengabantu besilisa yilaphi lapho ningatholakala nihlabelela khona kanti futhi kusuke kwenenjani?
7. Yini eniyizuzayo ngomculo?
8. Ngabe ukhona yini umbiko othile enizama ukuwudlulisa ngomculo?
9. Luthini uvo lwenu mayelana nabantu besifazane abaholela izingane imali yeqolo bebe bebgashadile?
10. Wena uzalwa esithenjini noma cha?
11. Uma ushada wena yiluphi uhlobo lomshado ongaluthokozela?
12. Uthini umbono wakho mayelana nabantu besifazane abathi bacindezelwe ngabantu besilisa?

1. Is there a role that women play in song?
2. Why do women sing?
3. Other than in traditional ceremonies and functions, during what other times do women sing and what determines what they sing?
4. Is there a difference between songs sung by men and women in the functions/ceremonies? Elaborate.
5. As men why do you sing?
6. As men when and where do you sing?
7. What is it that you gain through songs?
8. Is there a message/s that you generally want to convey through the songs?
9. With regards to social grants what are your views with regards to unmarried women receiving it?
10. Were you born out of a polygamous or monogamous marriage?
11. What type of marriage would you prefer?
12. What is your view about women who say they are being oppressed by men?

PHASE 4 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR OLDER MALES 40-65

1. Ngabe likhona yini iqhaza elibanjwe abantu besifazane kwezomculo?
2. Bahlabelelani abantu besifazane?
3. Ngaphandle kokuhlabelela uma kunemicimbi yesiZulu yiziphi ezinye zikhathi abahlabelela ngazo? Yini eholela kulowo mculo?
4. Ngabe ukhona yini umehluko emaculweni aculwa ngabantu besilisa kulawo aculwa abesifazane?
5. Nina ningabantu besilisa kungaziphi izikhathi lapho nihlabelela khona nabantu besifazane?
6. Yini eniyizuzayo ngomculo?
7. Kungaziphi izikhathi nakuziphi izindawo lapho nacula khona?
8. Ngabe ukhona umbiko eniwudlulisayo ngamaculo enu?
9. Wena uzalwa esithenjini noma cha?
10. Kuyabajabulisa yini abantu besifazane ukuba sesithenjini?

1. Is there a role that women play in song?
2. Why do women sing?
3. Other than in traditional ceremonies and functions, during what other times do women sing and what determines what they sing?
4. Is there a difference between songs sung by men and women in the functions/ceremonies? Elaborate.
5. When do you as men sing together with women?
6. What is it that you gain through songs?
7. When and where do you sing?
8. Is there a message that is conveyed through your songs?
9. Were you born out of a polygamous or monogamous marriage?
10. Are women happy with the situation of polygamy that you generally put them in?

ANNEXURE C: EVIDENCE OF ADHERING TO RESEARCH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

Centre for African Literary Studies



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Website:

www.ukzn.ac.za

■ Edgewood

■ Howard College

■ Medical School

■ Pietermaritzburg

■ Westville

22 February 2005

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that Ms Nompumelelo Zondi is a doctoral student registered at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, who has chosen as her topic for the dissertation to work on the question of gender and power in some genres of Zulu song. Her work has just begun and she has three years in which to complete the whole project. I would be very grateful if you could assist her as far as is possible in her fieldwork which is vital to the success of her project. She will need to work with singers and various groups, to listen to them perform, possibly interview them, and perhaps film or photograph them. All this is a vital part of her field work and will help her to write a fine dissertation. Your co-operation will be much appreciated and will of course be acknowledged in all the written work that she produces. I think that Ms Zondi will make a much needed contribution to the dissemination of understanding about South Africa's rich performance culture and I thank you for your part in assisting her. Many many thanks.

Signed

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Liz Gunner".

Prof Liz Gunner, supervisor

Acting Director

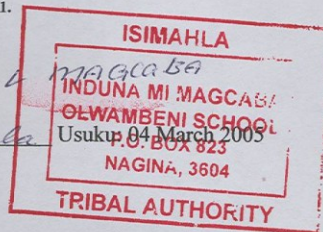
Centre for African Literary Studies.

Incwadi Yemvume evela enduneni uMnu. Israel Magcaba egunyaza ilungelo lokungena kwaZwelibomvu ngenjongo yokuthola ulwazi

Mina (Igama) ISRAEL MAGCABA induna yesigodi esibizwa ngokuthi kukwaZwelibomvu ngithole incwadi ephuma kuProf. Liz Gunner ongusupervisor kaMs Nompumelelo Zondi ukuba azothola ukusizakala ngocwaningo alwenzayo oluphathelele nomculo wabantu besifazane abakhele indawo ephethwe yomi. Emva kokuxoxisana kabanzi noMs Zondi echaza kabanzi ngalolu cwaningo lwakhe nami-ke ngiyavuma ukuba angene kule ndawo athole lolo sizo aludingayo ngokukhulumisana nabantu bami.

Igama Nesibongo: ISRAEL

Signature M. I. Magcaba



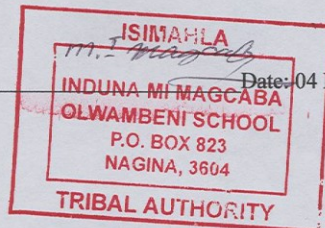
Letter of consent from Zwelibomvu headman, Israel Magcaba to access Zwelibomvu for research purposes

I _____, headman of an area known as Zwelibomvu received a letter from Prof. Liz Gunner who is a supervisor for Ms Nompumelelo Zondi requesting that she be allowed to access my area for the purposes of the research study which deals with women's songs that she is undertaking and after carefully listening to what her research is about, I grant her permission to access my area and my people to get the necessary information that she needs.

Full Names:

Signature _____

Date: 04 March 2005





UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
Faculty of Humanities,
Development and Social Sciences
School of IsiZulu Studies
Howard Campus
4041
25 February 2005

The Principal
Mr. J.V. Nzimande
Olwambeni Primary School
P.O Box 823
Nagina
3604

Dear Sir

Application for Permission to Access Your School For Zwelibomvu Related Research

My name is Nompumelelo Bernadette Zondi and I am a lecturer at the above institution. I am currently carrying out a research study for my PhD dealing with contemporary women's songs and I have selected to undertake my field research at Zwelibomvu area. I will be attending a number of traditional ceremonies in the area and will need to get some information from the children in your school regarding where and when a particular event takes place. I have also introduced myself to the *induna*, Israel Magcaba who is aware of my activities and who has also granted me permission to be in his area.

I will endeavour not to cause any disturbance in the daily activities of the school. I will adhere to the school rules and conduct any necessary discussions (with the permission of the parents) outside learning times as most of the events take place on week-ends in any case.

Herewith, I am attaching a copy of the letter written by my supervisor as well as a copy of the letter I am sending out with the children to their parents requesting their co-operation and assistance in the above matter. The letter provides a full explanation regarding my presence in Zwelibomvu area for the duration of two years.

I will be greatly honoured if my request is granted.

Yours truly

Nompumelelo Zondi (Ms)

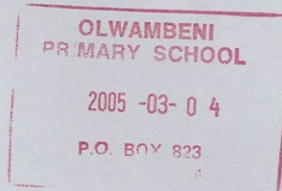
Letter of consent from the Principal of Olwambeni Primary School

I J. N. ZIMANDE agree that Ms Nompumelelo Bernadette Zondi has explained her intentions of visiting my school from time to time, and having read and understood the contents of the letters she presented, grant her (Ms Nompumelelo Bernadette Zondi) permission to access the school with an aim of assisting her in the study she is pursuing.

Full Names: JOSHUA VUSUMUZI - ZIMANDE

Signature [Signature] Date: 04 March 2005

School Stamp





Faculty of Humanities,
Development and Social Sciences
School of IsiZulu Studies
Howard Campus
4041
25 February 2005

The Principal
Mrs. Nkosi
Nqobane Primary School
P.O Box 2677
Pinetown
3600

Dear Madam

Application for Permission to Access Your School For Zwelibomvu Related Research

My name is Nompumelelo Bernadette Zondi and I am a lecturer at the above institution. I am currently carrying out a research study for my PhD dealing with contemporary women's songs and I have selected to undertake my field research at Zwelibomvu area. I will be attending a number of traditional ceremonies in the area and will need to get some information from the children in your school regarding where and when a particular event takes place. I have also introduced myself to the *induna*, Israel Magcaba who is aware of my activities and who has also granted me permission to be in his area.

I will endeavour not to cause any disturbance in the daily activities of the school. I will adhere to the school rules and conduct any necessary discussions (with the permission of the parents) outside learning times as most of the events take place on week-ends in any case.

Herewith, I am attaching a copy of the letter written by my supervisor as well as a copy of the letter I am sending out with the children to their parents requesting their co-operation and assistance in the above matter. The letter provides a full explanation regarding my presence in Zwelibomvu area for the duration of two years.

I will be greatly honoured if my request is granted.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "N. Zondi", written over a horizontal line.

Nompumelelo Zondi (Ms)

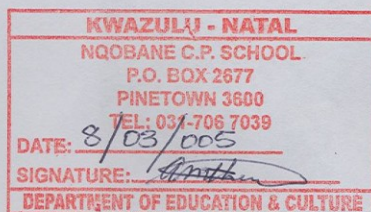
Letter of consent from the Principal of Nqobane Primary School

I Mthembu Agnes agree that Ms Nompumelelo Bernadette Zondi has explained her intentions of visiting my school from time to time, and having read and understood the contents of the letters she presented, grant her (Ms Nompumelelo Bernadette Zondi) permission to access the school with an aim of assisting her in the study she is pursuing.

Full Names: MTHEMBU Agnes

Signature [Signature] Date: 08 March 2005

School Stamp





UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
Faculty of Humanities,
Development and Social Sciences
School of IsiZulu Studies
Howard Campus
4041
25 February 2005

Mzali ohloniphekileyo

Ngiyakubingelela ngokukhulu ukuzithoba. Igama lami nginguNompumelelo Zondi. Ngingumfundisi nomfundi waseNyuvesi eseThekwini, ebizwa ngokuthi KwaZulu-Natal University. Ngenza ucwaningo oluphathelele namaculo abantu besifazane. Ngikhethe indawo yakwaZwelibomvu njengesizinda engizobenza ngaso. Ngicele imvume kuthisha omkhulu wasesikoleni sengane yakho ngacela ukukhuluma nabantwana ukuze bangazise uma kunemicimbi emakhaya. Ngicela usizo lwakho ngokuba ungivumele ukuba uma unomcimbi ozokwenzeka ekhaya lakho ngifike ngizothamela lowo mcimbi. Ngiyobe ngisebenzisa nezinto ezifana nemishini yokuthatha izithombe (tape recorder, camera and video-camera). Ayikho impoqo kulesi sicelo. Uma ukhululekile ngaso ngicela wazise ingane itshele uthisha ofundisa kulesi sikole nengixhumene naye ngale ndaba okunguMrs. Mzila.
Ngiyabonga

Yimina ozithobayo

Ms. N.B Zondi

Dear Parent

My name is Nompumelelo Zondi and I am both a lecturer and student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am currently carrying out a research study for my PhD dealing with contemporary women's songs and I have selected to undertake my field research at Zwelibomvu area. With the permission of your child's principal, I asked the children to let me know if there are ceremonies celebrated in their families. My request to you is to please allow me to be a guest in your home should you have such a function. I will be using a tape recorder, camera and video-camera to record the events of the day with an intention of using the information for my research. Please be informed that you are not obliged to accept my request. If you are happy with it and you want me to attend, please relay the message to your child who will inform my contact teacher, Mrs Mzila at the same school.

Thank you

Yours truly

Ms. N.B Zondi

RESEARCH DEALING WITH ZWELIBOMVU WOMEN'S CONTEMPORARY SONGS: GENDER
AND POWER

I MRS TEZIE MZILA.....(full names of participant) a
teacher, parent and community member of Zwelibomvu, hereby confirm that I understand
the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to
participating and assisting other members of the community involved in the above
research project with any clarification they may require.

I understand that I and any other person participating in this project are at liberty to
withdraw from the project at any time, should we so desire.

FULL NAMES : TEZI MZILA

DATE 04-03-05

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

Mzila