

**MEMORY, TRAUMA, SILENCES: NARRATIVES OF THE 1982
MASERU INVASION**



A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History, in the Department of History, University of the Western Cape.

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Submitted: November, 2017

Declaration

I, Pulane Matsietsi Mahula', declare that '**Memory, trauma, silences, narratives of the 1982 Maseru invasion**' is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Signed: Pulane M. Mahula

14th November, 2017



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Acknowledgements

My greatest debt of gratitude goes to my supervisor, Nicky Rousseau, for going above and beyond the call of duty, for painstakingly directing me towards submitting this thesis. It is through her support, guidance and supervision that this thesis is complete. Your warmth and commitment are much appreciated.

I thank God for giving me the strength to carry out this project. My sisters, Thabang and Motšelisi, and my mother-in-law, 'Matebatso deserve a huge vote of thanks for being the caring, loving guardians to my son in my absence, *kea leboha Bafokeng!* For his understanding, support and endless love during my studies, I thank my husband, Tebatso Mahula, your love and support are greatly appreciated, *le ka moso Mohlakoana!*

My sincerest gratitude goes to the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR), at the University of the Western Cape for funding my studies through affording me a Masters Fellowship in the Programme on the Study of the Humanities in Africa (PSHA), funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. CHR became an intellectual home par excellence. My thanks also go to Mrs Lameez Lalkhen, Dr Heidi Grunebaum and the Director of CHR, Professor Premesh Lalu.

I am grateful to the lecturers in the History Department for their willingness to listen and offer support when the need arose. I am thankful to Professors Ciraj Rassool and Leslie Witz, who were always available with encouraging words and welcome advice. I also wish to convey my thanks to Dr Paulo Israel, the Postgraduate coordinator in the department, Professor Patricia Hayes, Ms. Siphokazi Sambumbu, Ms Janine Brandt and Mrs Jane Smidt.

Key words

MEMORY, TRAUMA, SILENCES: NARRATIVES OF THE 1982 MASERU INVASION

1982 Maseru Raid

Operation Blanket

Lesotho

Historical narrative

Trauma

Memory

Silence

Oral history

Oral interviews

Official Memory



Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents, **Seferi Motsoasele** and **Kekeletso Leiee-Motsoasele**.

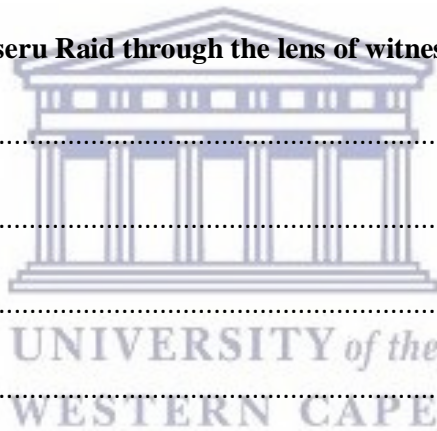


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Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
BAC	Basutoland African Congress
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BCP	Basutoland (later) Congress Party
BNP	Basutoland (later) National Party
BPA	Basutoland Progressive Association
PAC	Pan African Congress
PMU	Paramilitary Unit
PMF	Paramilitary Force
SADF	South African Defence Force
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
LEC	Lesotho Evangelical Church
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
LLA	Lesotho Liberation Army
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
UN	United Nations

Summary

The aim of this mini-thesis is to interrogate an incident that happened in Lesotho in 1982, where the South African Defence Force (SADF) invaded the capital, Maseru, under the guise of searching for ANC operatives and killed 42 people thirty of whom were South Africans, while the remaining 12 were Basotho citizens. A particular concern is how traumatic events are represented by witnesses, how they remember or, rather talk, about the event, and the secrets and silences which may arise.

A lack of literature on this period of Lesotho's history and the Raid itself has necessitated a wider engagement with Raid as it is the first raid that involved the SADF, perpetrated in Lesotho. The first chapter draws out and highlights the complicated relationships between Lesotho and South Africa and their respective main opposition political parties, namely, the Basotho Congress Party and the overall South African liberation movements including the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress. This brings me to conclude that the 1982 Maseru Raid and subsequent ones took place on the back of a period that was burdened with gross human rights violations in Lesotho and, this can be argued to explain why the Raid is not particularly spoken about.

The second chapter explores the archival accessibility of material that engages this Raid. However, because of some of the reasons mentioned in the preceding paragraph it is evident that the Raid is not only silent public, but that the silence goes back to moment when the attack happened.

Lastly, chapter 3 brings to the fore the fact that the Raid is not as silenced or repressed as initially thought. This is evidenced by the fact that most people still remember the details of the Raid,

what might be happening is that they do not have the proper platform that will enable them to fully engage with the Raid and other similar events that took place in the country.



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Introduction

Background

I first became interested in taking an in-depth look at the invasions that South Africa perpetrated on Lesotho during the apartheid period when I read an article in 2015 that was by Sebinane Lekoekoe in the *Archival Platform*¹, which discussed memorializing the invasions in Lesotho. This article, which focused specifically on the 1982 Maseru Raid, took me on a journey back to that day in 1982 as I tried to recall what I could about the event. Although at the time of the Raid I was fairly young, I had a vivid recollection of what happened on the morning after the night-time Raid. Owing to the fact that what I recalled was so limited, I started doing some research into this insidious event that was perpetrated by one sovereign state on another, albeit a less powerful and singularly land-locked one. To my dismay and regardless of how I worded my internet search parameters in both academic and mainstream websites, the information I found in connection with this event was very limited. Although there were some articles and booklets that were produced subsequent to the event, for example on behalf of IDAF² and by Phyllis Naidoo³, I felt that the research done did not fully explore the reasons behind and consequences of the Raid as well as how those who experienced the Raid attempted to deal with this incident, which might be viewed as undoubtedly traumatic. Since my interest in working on the event emerged, I also actively waited with baited breath to see what the government was going to do, by way of

¹ S.Lekoekoe, 'Memorilising a barbarous act of aggression: the first Maseru raid (1982)' *Archival Platform*, http://www.archivalplatform.org/blog/entry/memorilising_a/ Downloaded 09 September 2015. Sebinane Lekoekoe is an alumnus of the African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of the Western Cape and has just recently graduated from the University of Turin (Italy) with an MA in Heritage Development. Currently other than occasionally writing articles for the Archival Platform, he is a full time lectures at the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology.

² International Defense Aid Fund

³ An example of the accounts that I am talking about here can be found in the International Defence Aid Fund Fact Paper on Southern Africa No. 12 *Massacre at Maseru – South African Aggression Against Lesotho* and Phyllis Naidoo's '*Le rona re Batho – Narrative of the 1982 Maseru Raid*', and various articles that appeared in the Rand Daily Mail, The Star and The Citizen.

remembering the event during the anniversary of the Raid. For the years, 2015 and 2016, nothing was organised officially to commemorate this event.⁴

This provided an impetus for me finding it imperative - as a history student who is interested in how memory works in recollecting events of a traumatic nature - to explore this event further.

The fact that there was such a limited bibliography for an event of such significance was very disturbing to me as a history student because from what little information I could gather, this was the first but definitely not the last that was perpetrated by the South African Defence Force (SADF) on Lesotho, with subsequent ones taking place in 1983, 1985 and 1998 respectively, and of all the raids had the highest number of fatalities. Secondly, my reason for looking at this particular raid is undoubtedly personal as my family lived two streets down from the Sexwale home (a prominent ANC family) that was gutted, and I explicitly remember the anguish of another survivor who I knew only as *ntate* Tšeliso⁵ over the death of his wife. My scholarly motivation lies in my interest in trauma, memory and the silences – in the historical sphere - that might emerge out of the unwillingness and/ or failure to remember and observe such an incident, particularly in the case of Lesotho, and the repercussions of this unwillingness or failure.

Furthermore, an exploration of what kind of narratives were made available by those who had the power to construct particular narratives and have them written down as part of the history of

⁴ During my exploration of identifying people who would be willing to act as interlocutors in carrying out this research, I came across an ex-Lesotho Liberation Army combatant who indicated that he visits the graveyard where the victims of the Raid were buried - on the 9 December annually - in an attempt to ensure that he did not forget his friends.

⁵ Tšeliso Sehlabaka's wife was one of the victims who lost their lives in this fateful dawn Raid of 9 December 1982. The manner in which *ntate* Tšeliso demonstrated his anguish is still something that I remember, even thirty-five years after the fact. I remember looking at him pacing around in his yard (which was next to Mathabatha Sexwale's house) like a caged bear, unable to cry but clearly needing to release the emotions that were inside of him. While still looking on at him pacing, I remember him taking off his digital wrist watch and literally dismantling it with his bare hands. At that moment I got alarmed and ran off home, but the reaction stuck with me to this day.

Lesotho and what was left out and possibly why, was also of interest to me. This endeavour is not primarily to re-insert into the history of Lesotho those events that I feel have been elided from the historical narrative of the country, but is an attempt to understand how such incidents are observed, or not, both in the official sphere and within the imaginary collective which Benedict Anderson perceives the nation to be.⁶

The aim of this mini-thesis is to gather together the existing accounts of the Lesotho Raid, as well as to record oral history narratives from some witnesses, in order to analyse these representations. I also seek to understand how traumatic events in a person's life affect the manner in which they talk about the event after the fact, their secrets and silences, and what they are willing to talk about freely. I also want to look at whether power brokers in the particular society or community attempt to repress or construct alternative narratives about the Raid and if so, how that affects the way in which the event is recalled and related in the public domain. Additionally, the mini-thesis will consider whether the memory of the event confirms or challenges official accounts, which essentially is regarded as not an especially significant episode, a position that is reflected for instance, in the limited material in relation to the Raid.

Coming out of the interviews conducted, which form the most important section of this project, it became evident that over and above the exploration of how the Raid was recalled by those who experienced it, there were other salient factors that required me to look at not only the Raid but the prevailing political situation in Lesotho. The impetus for doing so emerged from the interviews done with two key informants whose interviews put emphasis on the internal political situation that probably had a bearing on this first invasion by South Africa. This led me to

⁶ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Verso: London, 1993). I believe a brief engagement with the concept of what a nation is relevant when talking about Lesotho because of how the Basotho nation came into being, which points to Moshoeshoe I bringing together disparate clans to form what is known as the nation of Basotho.

finding it essential to include a more detailed analysis of the relationship between apartheid South Africa and newly independent Lesotho at the time leading to the Raid, hence the exploration of the political environment in which the 1982 Raid took place.

Not only that but, at its inception my interest in undertaking this project lay in my interest with memory trauma and silences that emerge out of what I perceived as a traumatic episode in the history of Lesotho. As I held the belief that the 1982 Raid would generally be viewed as a traumatic event, I expected to not have a problem identifying and talking with those who had experienced it; for those interviewed to exhibit some elements of trauma however, this was not the case. Not only did I find a challenge of coming across people who were willing to talk about this incident, but from the interviews done with the limited number of interlocutors accessed did not present with this incident being a traumatic one. These discoveries threw me for a loop and required me to dig deeper in attempting to understand why this is the case.

This mini-thesis will contribute to the increasing literature that aims at engaging with trauma and whether this is an appropriate lens through which to understand the Raid. Also, it will make a contribution to the documenting of this historic event and attempt to go beyond the historical documenting, through inserting into it the interpretation of the narratives related by those who were affected by the Raid. This will in some way fill a void that I feel is an absence both in the public and official spheres of this significant event in the history of Lesotho. This brings me to thinking about the admissibility of viewing my limited engagement with the 1982 Raid as an attempt to construct a more verbal (written and spoken) narrative – as opposed to the current narrative which is characterised by the intensity of its silence by the power brokers in the country at the time as well as currently, and its repression in personal memory.

Leading from the above objective and motivation of the research, one of the issues that emerges as the perception of an absence in the historical narrative of Lesotho, which raises the question of whether it is going to be beneficial to revisit an event that has apparently been so successfully silenced on both official and collective memories.

This lack of engagement and the silences that I argue emanate from the absence of engagement with this Raid especially on the side of the government of Lesotho leads to one thinking about how narratives that shape the writing of history are produced. To this end, one of the ways that this can be thought about is through exploring concepts like constructivism – which is defined by Hacking, as a process of crafting certain beliefs into universally agreed norms in order to satisfy a particular social purpose. An example in this case can be argued to be the lack of engagement with this event in particular and others that followed for whatever reason inferred explicitly or implicitly by the government of Lesotho. Hacking continues to indicate that social construction emerged as a way of raising consciousness, particularly against the practices which are viewed as being the product of social construction⁷.

Moments of silence(ing) the 1982 Raid

Mention of silences and silencing in relation to the Raid is one of the threads that runs throughout this project and is reflected in the limited primary and secondary materials, which I encountered whilst undertaking the research. It is thus opportune to engage in a brief discussion of the moments that track these silences in relation to the Raid in question. The argument that the Raid is silent emerges firstly out of its limited presence in newspapers, especially in Lesotho, at the time when the Raid actually happened. Indeed, this is a silence which, I argue is replicated by the absence of documents in the Lesotho archives. Secondly, there seem to be

⁷ Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 6.

virtually no scholars who have done any substantial work in relation to this particular Raid. Thirdly, this and other Raids perpetrated on Lesotho by apartheid South Africa do not seem to have been commemorated in any way, except on occasions when South African diplomats visit the country.⁸ The government owned radio station, Radio Lesotho, as well as the television station, Lesotho Television, does not even refer to the Raid on 9 December each year. Finally, a large proportion of survivors and witnesses who were approached exhibited a reluctance to talk about this incident.

Drawing from the above, the argument of Trouillot, elucidated by Van Laun, points to the possible moments in which silences enter into the writing of history,⁹ These moments that became evident in the history writing endeavour include the actual processes that lead to writing about the Raid, that is the moment when the facts are created; the production of archival material relating to the Raid, pointing to a moment when the archive is generated; how what is found in the archives is used to determine particular narratives pointing to the moment of fact retrieval and finally how these narratives coalesce to make history in a moment of 'retrospective significance'.¹⁰ It can thus be argued, based on the above mentioned that silences form an integral part of the writing of historical narratives, with the Raid in question included, because the final narrative at any particular time are limited by these layers of silence.

The act of selecting specific narratives can sometimes itself be read as a manner of silencing that might require retrieval of the previously silenced. One way to move from viewing

⁸ An example of this assertion is the report by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) about a joint service in remembrance of South Africans who lost their lives during the Raid. SABC, 'Lesotho remembers Maseru Massacre victims' (9 December 2014) <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/b34c010046806954a0e7ea35f6399168/Lesotho-remembers-Maseru-Massacre-victims>, accessed 8 November 2016.

⁹ Bianca Paigè van Laun, 'In the Shadows of the Archive: Investigating the Paarl march of November 22nd 1962', (MA Thesis, University of Western Cape, 2012.), 112-113.

¹⁰ Michel-Rolf Trouillot, in Van Laun, 'In the Shadows of the Archive', pp.112-113.

this as an exercise to ‘retrieve’ what is argued to be the unsaid and silenced perpetration and repercussions of the Maseru Raid, is to recognise the limitations and to treat this engagement as an initial attempt to put it in the broader public sphere through doing the groundwork of drawing together archival and oral sources to engage with this historical moment. This thesis suggests exploring the contestations that emerge out of the seeming lack of historical texts relating explicitly to the 1982 Maseru Raid in particular and subsequent raids in general, through evoking the concept of *critical history*¹¹. Critical history in this case points to the effort to make use of what is found in the archive – regardless of limitations that abound – to attempt a deeper engagement with the event.


A narrative of silence

Although there is little evidence of a concerted effort on the side of the state in Lesotho to construct a particular narrative, there is nonetheless a certain narrative that has been disseminated – in this case this narrative is one of silence and reticence. As a way of highlighting the perceived silencing, a section of the second chapter brings to the fore the unequal treatment of the Raid from the moment it took place right through to post-apartheid South Africa and democratic Lesotho. What is peculiar in the exploration of these unequal treatments emanates from the fact that the Raid on Lesotho was not unique as other Southern African countries were also invaded by South Africa under the guise of ‘pre-emptive strikes’. However, in most of these other countries the Raids were, and continue to be commemorated (for example Namibians continue to observe Cassinga Day as a public holiday even after independence), something that is not happening in Lesotho.

¹¹ Critical history is used based on Premesh Lalu’s rendering of the term in ‘The grammar of domination and the subjection of agency: Colonial texts and modes of evidence’, *History and Theory*, Vol 39 No. 4, p. 45.

Furthermore, this observation of the event being silenced emerges from the fact that little or nothing is said about it. The argued silence emanates from the fact that the event is silent both in the case of the public and the government in as far as commemoration, memorialisation and overall engagement, pertaining to this particular Raid and others in the context of Lesotho. From the research that I have undertaken, it possible to argue that this silence probably emerges out of the complex and uncomfortable relationship that characterises the apartheid South African government, the autocratic Lesotho government and its main opposition party, at the time of the Raid. Based on this argument, a brief discussion of this complex relationship between the role players will be explored in the following chapter.

Methodology



Silence has extended to the availability of archival material, and has required a double move: looking for existing sources and documenting the non-existence of others. In Chapter 2, I engage this and the question of the archive further. Briefly, I have relied on media reports, but as there was not much media activity on the side of Lesotho at the time, other than the state owned broadcaster and a very limited number of newspapers, I had to rely largely on reports from South African radio stations and newspapers. In addition, I have gathered the few first person accounts of the Raid as well as a limited number of secondary sources.

I have also engaged in oral history work. The interviews conducted with selected Basotho who witnessed this Raid, and, which form a part of the archive for the purposes of this research project, will be explored for the manner in which the interviewees talk about what they deem as their individual experiences. Whilst the impetus of this research is not to confirm or refute the

interviewees' experiences, it is also important to point out the presence of concurrences and divergences and explore what could have brought them about. In cases like this, what I view as similarities/dissimilarities may be as a result of the length of time that elapsed between the time when event took place and the interconnected recollections. Alternatively, there could be other reasons, such as what people read at the time and later, leading to a blurring of what was reported in the media as what they deem are their individual experiences. I provide a more extended discussion of my approach to oral history in Chapter 3.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: This chapter will cover the broad history of Lesotho, particularly in the context of its relationship with the apartheid South African regime, the relationship between the main political parties in Lesotho at the time as well as situating political climate in country in the early to mid-1980s in context in an attempt to understand the environment in which the incident in question took place.

Chapter 2:

This chapter will deal with the in-depth narrative of the invasion and its resultant repercussions, as represented in the public realm by the Lesotho government and various newspapers, primarily South African media, and other accounts of the Raid. The aim of the chapter is to illustrate what has been presented in the public sphere and to compare what is presented to the public by the two countries in question.

Chapter 3: This chapter is going to look at the different recollections of people who were affected by the incident through oral history interviews. It will further make an exploration of the possibility of viewing the Raid as a traumatic episode in the history of Lesotho and how the interlocutors engaged with this situation.

Conclusion: The conclusion confirms what I perceived as a silencing, particularly in Lesotho, but is suggested as being more complicated than initially envisaged. The Raid is entangled with the prevailing political climate in the country at the time that the Raid and the attempt by both South

Africa and Lesotho of creating a particular narrative that is argued to have affected the manner in which the Raid is spoken about both at the time it took place and in the contemporary.



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Chapter 1: Power relations governing Lesotho and South Africa in the period post 1976 to 1985



Figure 1 Map of Lesotho¹²

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to outline the nature of the relationship between Lesotho and South Africa, as well as with Lesotho's own opposition political parties. It also traces the changes in policy, which saw these two countries shifting from cordial relations through understated animosity to outright hostility, characterising these two neighbours' relations in the

¹² Source: University of Central Texas, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/lesotho_pol90.jpg downloaded 04 April 2016.

period leading to the first SADF incursion into Lesotho in December 1982. These changes in policy included South Africa effectively working towards assisting the Lesotho's (outlawed) opposition and the Lesotho government providing support to South Africans attempting to overthrow the apartheid government. The chapter thus traces these convoluted relations between Lesotho's main opposition political party and the apartheid state and between Lesotho and South African liberation political parties at different moments, particularly the period between 1970 and 1982.

Relations between Lesotho and South Africa from 1966 - 1972

Lesotho gained independence from Britain on 4 October 1966. Because of the unique geographical location of Lesotho 'within' South Africa (as Figure 1 illustrates) and the fact that there was no significant infrastructural development during the time when the country was a British colony, this sovereign state was mostly dependent on South Africa's superior infrastructural developments, for instance on rail, road, air, telecommunications, to name a few.¹³ For the first two decades after independence, Lesotho experienced an increase in unemployment brought on by the decrease in the number of males migrating to work in South African mines, a lack of infrastructural development in comparison to what was inherited from coloniser and a

¹³ The majority of Southern African countries, Lesotho not being an exception and probably more so than the other countries, heavily relied on South Africa because their richer neighbour had infrastructural facilities that were more developed than theirs. Thus these countries, particularly the five landlocked ones, namely Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia, and Malawi also relied on South Africa's well-developed system of roads, railroads, and port facilities in order to keep in critical touch with the outside world. This reliance continued even when the various leaders continued to be quite vocal about their denunciation of the South African apartheid policy. For a more detailed discussion in this regard works by James H. Cobbe, David Hirschmann and ROK Ajulu can be looked at.

continued decline in the agricultural production which combined to render Basotho unable to sustain themselves regardless of governmental efforts to ameliorate the situation.¹⁴

The dependent nature of the relationship between these two neighbouring countries saw some scholars refer to the newly independent Lesotho as a hostage state¹⁵ because it was felt that this newly independent country was at the mercy of its more powerful immediate neighbour. Various analogies that different authors presented all pointed to the precarious nature of Lesotho in relation to South Africa. Hirschmann cites the following authors who, each in their own way defined the said relationship thus:

*'...Spence wrote of the 'Politics of Dependence', and Weisfelder [spoke] of a country 'totally ensnared within the South African sphere of influence', while Halpern and Legum used the 'hostage' state analogy.'*¹⁶

Similarly, the International Defence Aid Fund (IDAF) points out that Lesotho was for the most part susceptible to bowing to pressure from her better-off neighbour principally because exports and imports had to pass through South Africa. As a consequence the post-independence Lesotho developed policies that were vastly influenced by the government of South Africa.¹⁷

¹⁴ James H. Cobbe, Economic aspects of Lesotho's Relations with South Africa, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 26 No 1, March 198, 72; David Hirschmann, "Changes in Lesotho's Policy towards South Africa." *African Affairs* (Oxford University Press) Vol. 78, No. 311 (April 1979), p. 177.

¹⁵ International Defence Aid Fund Fact Paper on Southern Africa No. 12 Massacre at Maseru – South African Aggression Against Lesotho; p 2, C. Legum, 'Hazards of a free Basutoland', *Rand Daily Mail*, Johannesburg, 9 June 1966, p. 12, as cited in Hirschmann's journal article; further discussion about this can be found in Ajulu's chapter – 'Survival in a rough neighbourhood: Lesotho's foreign policy in the era of globalization; Neville Pule 'Politics since independence' in Neville W. Pule and M. Thabane (eds) *Essays on Aspects of the Political Economy of Lesotho*, National University of Lesotho, Roma: Morija Printing Works, 2002.

¹⁶David Hirschmann, 'Changes in Lesotho's Policy towards South Africa.' *African Affairs* (Oxford University Press) Vol. 78, No. 311 (April 1979): 177-196

¹⁷ International Defence Aid Fund Fact Paper on Southern Africa No. 12 Massacre at Maseru – South African Aggression against Lesotho, p 2. A decade or so after Hirschman published his article, Simon Raynham and Greg Mills referred to the vulnerable geographical location of Lesotho in relation to South Africa through referring to the 'geographical claustrophobia and military asymmetry' that the latter is saddled with; see Simon Raynham and Greg Mills 'Lesotho: Between Dependence and Destabilisation' *The World Today*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Mar., 1987), p 52.

This was deemed to be a way of ensuring that the country did not find itself in trouble with her more economically and technologically advanced and powerful neighbour. The majority of the policies developed were based on the expectation that Pretoria would look favourably toward its hemmed in neighbour and provide or facilitate much needed foreign and economic aid to assist this impoverished state. The inability to exercise independent decisions as indicated resulted in an arguably 'parasitic' relationship between Lesotho and South Africa.

Indeed at the time of independence, the government of Lesotho made a conscious decision to actively work together with the South African government because not cooperating with the South African government would amount to what one Lesotho government official referred to as committing 'national suicide',¹⁸ something that the newly independent country could barely afford to do. Not only this, but from the time when Lesotho gained independence, successive governments have sought to protect their precarious autonomy through playing more powerful external opponents against each other.¹⁹ This approach of the then ruling party, the Basutoland (later Basotho) National Party (BNP) of adopting foreign policies that would not estrange the South African government was formally adopted as BNP's policy and presented in election manifestos both in the pre and post-independence period.²⁰

In the early post-independence period, the BNP government continued to rely heavily on the assistance provided by South Africa, both in the financial and commercial spheres. This co-operation with South Africa, while benefiting the ruling party through strengthening its hold on power, failed to translate into improved living conditions for the broader populace of Lesotho.

¹⁸ Joseph. R.L.Kotsokoane, 'Lesotho and her neighbours', *African Affairs*, 68, 271, 1969, p. 138.

¹⁹ Roger Southall, 'Is Lesotho South Africa's tenth province?' *Comparative Monitor*, Vol 15, No. 4 (1998): p 84.

²⁰ Manifesto of the Basotho National Party (Maseru, 1965), p. 3, Foreign Relations para. e (ii) and (iii); and Basotho National Party Manifesto for the 1970 Elections, Maseru p. 4, relations with South Africa, para. b, both cited in Hirschmann, "Changes in Lesotho's Policy towards South Africa", p.178.

Additionally, ordinary Basotho also harboured an ‘anti-afrikaner’ sentiment²¹ probably because the majority of Basotho, who were working in South Africa as migrant labourers were also being adversely affected by the host country’s apartheid policy of racial discrimination. These opportunistic policy decisions combined with its reliance on assistance emanating from Pretoria contributed to a further decline in the political popularity of the BNP.

Additionally, this reliance on South Africa and the latter’s interference²² in the affairs of Lesotho then led to the foreign policies of Leabua Jonathan’s government’s being somehow more beholden to the South African government than other African states. As Hirschmann puts forth:

‘Maseru could simply not afford to ‘indulge in the luxury of an irrational and emotional policy’ towards Pretoria, and Weisfelder concluded that... any hope that this tiny black enclave will play a significant independent role requires considerable optimism and, possibly, a measure of credulity’²³

Leabua Jonathan went to extent of making presentations to the United Nations (UN) that advocated for and sought to substantiate the type of foreign policy that Lesotho had formulated, particularly towards its more powerful neighbour. In his speech at the General Assembly in 1967, he pointed to the unassailability of having a foreign policy that was contrary to South Africa as the two neighbours had a long-standing relationship. He called for understanding from the Assembly for his government’s actions because what had been done was a ‘matter of

²¹ Lesotho History and Politics, <https://www.issafrika.org/af/profiles/Lesotho/Politics.html>, Accessed 19 April 2016.

²² The South African interference in this case was in response to the South African government’s concern that if the Basotho Congress Party (BCP) won the elections, this would translate into Lesotho giving asylum to liberation movements’ members. (as cited in Smith and Tromp’s book: *Hani – A Life Too Short*)

²³ Hirschmann, "Changes in Lesotho's Policy towards South Africa", p.178.

geographical, historical and economic necessity.’ He further pointed out that any policy other than the one undertaken would result in dire consequences for the people of Lesotho.²⁴ This seeming heartfelt appeal, I argue, was based more on political rhetoric than on an implicit realisation of the need to collaborate with South Africa, as Lesotho’s closest and more powerful (only) neighbour. This contention, when explored through the genealogy of the establishment of the two main political parties in Lesotho,²⁵ is indicative of the thinking that adopting the policy of cooperation with South Africa was more aligned to serving the interests of the BNP and more a quid pro quo than a thought through national policy aimed at benefiting the overall population.

The main political parties in Lesotho at independence in 1966 were the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) and Basutoland National Party (BNP). The BCP was formed in 1952, emerging out of the Basutoland African Congress. From its inception the BCP aimed at being antagonistic to the missionaries, the royals and was advocating for self-rule. Its membership mainly comprised of the country’s middle-class intelligentsia and business people.²⁶ As a result of this ‘anti-traditionalism and its (BCP’s) outspoken opposition to South Africa’s racist policies’ the BCP was viewed by South Africa as a ‘radical’ political party, particularly in the period leading up to

²⁴ Lesotho’s Prime Minister, Leabua Jonathan’s speech to the UN General Assembly on the 15 September 1967 cited by S Santho, ‘Political Economy of Small States in Southern Africa: Dependency and Development Options Towards Regionalism in the Inner Periphery’, in S Santho and MM Sejanamane, *Southern Africa after Apartheid: Prospects for Inner Periphery in the 1990s* (Harare: SAPES Trust, 1991), p. 8.

²⁵ **The Basutoland Congress Party**’s pedigree (associated with the first political anti-colonial movement in colonial Basutoland, *Lekhotla la Bafo* (Commoner’s League), the Basutoland Progressive Association and the Basutoland African Congress) and emerged from associations and ideologies that marked it as the ‘national anti-colonial political party in Lesotho and had ties to the Protestant church, migrant workers, educated elite and ‘indigenous proto-commercial classes. The **Basutoland National Party** on the other hand is argued to have been established with the help of the South African government together with the Roman Catholic Church to curb the perceived radicalism of the BCP. Due to its ties with South Africa and the Catholic Church, the BNP harboured the ideology of the right-wing anti-communist outlook, hence the advocating for a policy of cooperation with South Africa’ Ajulu, ‘Survival in a rough neighbourhood: Lesotho’s foreign policy in the era of globalization’, p 55.

²⁶ For a more detailed discussion of the formation of the BCP, the following authors can be referred to: Neville W. Pule, Motlatsi Thabane eds, *Essays on Aspects of the Political Economy of Lesotho: 1500-2000*, (Roma: Dept. of History, National University of Lesotho, 2002), Stephen J. Gill, *A Short History of Lesotho*. (Morija: Morija Museum and Archives, 1993), Roger Southall, ‘Is Lesotho South Africa’s tenth province?’ *Comparative Monitor*, Vol 15, No. 4 (1998), to mention a few.

the first elections after the country's independence. This consequently saw the South African government getting involved in the internal affairs of the country through assisting with the formation of the Basutoland National Party.

The BNP was formed in 1958, allegedly through the assistance of the apartheid regime, by some disgruntled members of the BCP who were concerned with the outspoken stance that the BCP held, particularly regarding the monarchy. It mostly had strong connections with the chieftainship and a laissez-faire attitude towards its closest neighbour.²⁷

The BNP, initially under the leadership of 'Maseribane,²⁸ was the first political party to be elected into power in Lesotho in 1965, but by 1970 it had lost favour in Lesotho and thus lost support of Basotho as evidenced by the defeat of the then ruling party, the (BNP) in the 1970 elections. However, then Prime Minister Leabua '*... refused to accept defeat...and, encouraged by a South African government (which was) disturbed by Mokhehle's "radicalism", suspended the constitution and declared a state of emergency...*' thus refusing to relinquish power, effecting a coup d'état.²⁹ This refusal to accept defeat by Prime Minister Jonathan was made possible through the assistance of the South African government, which wanted to stop Ntsu Mokhehle, leader of opposition Basutoland (later Basotho) Congress Party (BCP), from ruling the country because of what the Pretoria regime viewed as the militant actions that were being portrayed by the Congress Party leader³⁰. This was a clear indication of the cordial relationship that Lesotho under the BNP had with the Pretoria administration at the time.

²⁷ Roger Southall, 'Is Lesotho South Africa's tenth province?', p 84.

²⁸ Prime Minister 'Maseribane was shortly succeeded by Chief Leabua Jonathan.

²⁹ Lesotho History and Politics, <https://www.issafrika.org/af/profiles/Lesotho/Politics.html>, Accessed 19 April 2016; Jane Smith and Beauregard Tromp, "Hani - A Life Too Short." Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2010.

³⁰ Lesotho History and Politics, <https://www.issafrika.org/af/profiles/Lesotho/Politics.html>, Accessed 19 April 2016; Jane Smith and Beauregard Tromp, "Hani - A Life Too Short." Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2010.

Barely two years after South Africa assisted with keeping Jonathan in power, cracks were beginning to appear in the relationship between the two countries, leading to Jonathan opting to review his policies in relation to South Africa. Some of the reasons that led to a shift in the relationship between Lesotho and South Africa included, although were not limited to, the perception that South Africa did not seem as committed to maintaining 'good neighbourliness' with its neighbour as Lesotho was.

Some unilateral actions taken by the South African government, which included the announcement of the economic and fiscal changes as well as ending grain subsidies that resulted in an increase in the price of grain, adversely affected Basotho. These actions by Lesotho's only neighbour were tantamount to what Maseru regarded as a '*total lack of concern for...in fact inimical*' to Lesotho's economic objective.³¹ One other reason that saw the Maseru administration opting to reassess its relationship with South Africa was the policy of apartheid itself.³² This was because Lesotho had a large number of its citizens working in the neighbouring country – through the migrant labour system – and as Africans, the apartheid policy of racial discrimination also affected them adversely, similar to other Africans in South Africa. This was evidenced in the living and working conditions of all Africans, who were regarded as third class citizens.

By 1972, the Lesotho government's standpoint with regard to the relationship with her powerful neighbour continued to shift. This dissatisfaction was made manifest through what the prime minister and his government viewed as the failure of the South African government to bring forth expected benefits that should have been forthcoming from Lesotho's adoption

³¹ Hirschmann, "Changes in Lesotho's Policy towards South Africa", p.180

³² Ibid.

of its policy of 'good neighbourliness'.³³ What should be noted at this juncture is the fact that it seems like the political leaders of Lesotho adopted the said policies not on their own volition vis-à-vis the development of this newly independent country, but through expected remuneration and economic benefits that could be accrued from adopting and maintaining certain policies that would put the country's administration in good stead with Pretoria.

Main political parties in Lesotho and their relationship (1972-1982)

After the botched 1970 elections and resultant repercussions, the BNP declared a state of emergency. M. Thabane and N. Pule point out that Leabua Jonathan demonstrated intolerance to all forms of opposition through widening the limits of what he deemed dissension to his rule and '...self-servingly interpreted rather complex, society-wide acts of resistance and opposition as attempts to topple the government'.³⁴ Increased repression led to 'outbursts of bloodshed and brutality'.³⁵ Although authors like Weisfelder talk about 'sporadic' incidences of violence, between 1970 and 1973, 250 people lost their lives, including amongst them the then leader of the opposition and at least nine Paramilitary Force members.³⁶ When comparing this statistic to the population of Lesotho, one can deduce that the violence was more than 'sporadic'.

³³ Smith and Beaugard, *Hani*, p.177.

³⁴ Thabane and Pule, 'Mooki Leepa's rebellion of February March 1970:Preliminary examination of motives', *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 35 No. 1 (2010), p 20.

³⁵ Richard F. Weisfelder, 'The Basotho Nation-State: What Legacy for the Future?', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (June, 1981), p 241. These 'outbursts' cannot be laid solely on the doorstep of the BNP because there were instances of violent altercations between both the BNP and the BCP. For more detail relating to some of these altercations see Bernard M. Khaketla., *Lesotho 1970: An African Coup under the Microscope* (Maseru: Morija Printing Works 2000).

³⁶ Lesotho, 1966 - , University of South Arkansas <http://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/sub-saharan-africa-region/lesotho-1966-present/> , accessed 28 January 2017. Also discussing incidents of repression and alleged state violence are B. M. Khaketla in his book *Lesotho 1970 An African Coup under the Microscope* (London: C Hurst and Co., 1971), pp. 66, 71 and R. B. Leanya, 'Church and State Relations in Lesotho: A Theological Reflection on Catholic and Reformed contributions 1833-2007 MA thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2013.

As a result of Leabua Jonathan's 1970 coup d'état, opposition party members, particularly members of the BCP underwent a period of arrests and torture which led to the leaders of BCP going underground.³⁷ Not only that but following a failed coup attempt in 1974, the BCP leadership which had fled the country, formed the Lesotho Liberation Army with the aim of destabilising the BNP government as Jonathan at the helm of the BNP was also using force to oppress those who opposed him.³⁸ With the assistance of the South African army, the LLA was able to successfully destabilise the BNP led government, resulting in the deaths of some leading members of the BNP.³⁹ The success of acts of sabotage by the LLA, aimed at destabilising the BNP government saw the Lesotho government being unable to contain them as the LLA was being assisted by the South African government. Furthermore, in response to the accusations levelled at South Africa that they were giving assistance to the LLA, accusations which South Africa did not deny; Ntsu Mokhehle denied any alliance with the South African government.⁴⁰

Leabua Jonathan also came to realise that his continued efforts to be on South Africa's good side were, by the mid-1970s, resulting in a weakening of his position both in Lesotho and across the continent. In an effort to regain acceptance from within his country, he came to the decision to be more hostile in his dealings with South Africa in a bid to repair the relationship with his electorate and with other leaders of independent African states. This decision was two pronged as he was also attempting to water down the support for BCP⁴¹ (as

³⁷ Mokete Lawrence Pherudi, 'The Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA): Formation, Mission and Schisms', *South African Historical Journal*, Volume 45 No. 1, p 267,

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p 270.

⁴¹ The Basutoland (later Basotho) Congress Party, henceforth referred to as the BCP.

the government's official opposition) among the electorate.⁴² The shift in Jonathan's attitude was also in response to increasing pressure from independent African states which had isolated the BNP led Lesotho government. Once this change in policy on Jonathan's administration became noticeable, there was visible inclusion of Lesotho in activities led by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and this worked in Jonathan's favour because co-operation with newly independent African countries resulted in the waning popularity of BCP. Thus, according to Ajulu, this 'policy about-turn' was not only to get back at South Africa but also as a strategy through which Jonathan attempted to safeguard the survival of the country's ruling élite.⁴³

The BNP's soured relations with South Africa resulted in Lesotho demonstrating a more supportive attitude to the liberation movements from South Africa. As a way to get back at Pretoria, Jonathan began to loudly advocate for inclusion of liberation parties, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the African National Congress (ANC) in organisations such as the UN to the chagrin of Pretoria. This change in policy on the side of the Maseru administration can be argued to also have been a strategic move on the side of the ruling BNP and resulted in positive financial benefits, especially from countries from the Eastern Bloc, '(this) was a policy that earned Lesotho considerable aid and support from the international community' as well as an attempt to consolidate the support of the government from Basotho.⁴⁴

⁴² Hirschmann, "Changes in Lesotho's Policy towards South Africa", p.182.

⁴³ Ajulu, 'Survival in a rough neighbourhood', p 58. This argument emerges from Ajulu's assertion that the policy of collaboration had not resulted in any economic benefits for the ruling BNP and as a consequence of this failure the Party was restricted from enlarging its social base.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

As a direct result of, Leabua Jonathan's drastically changed relationship with South Africa and his growing hostility toward Lesotho's only neighbour, an equally startling relationship between South Africa and the BCP was leading to a shift from suspicion and hostility to covert collaboration.⁴⁵ In retaliation the South African government attempted to coerce the BNP government to stop offering assistance to these banned political organisations through employing a number of tactics that included giving assistance to Jonathan's exiled opposition party leader, Ntsu Mokhehle. In the words of South Africa's Foreign Affairs minister, 'Pik' Botha, "(t)here would be no LLA, if you removed all refugees from Lesotho. If you want us (South Africa) to do something about the LLA camps you must do something about the ANC".⁴⁶ There was no doubt that the LLA had official South African support although it was only in the meeting held in August 1981 that South Africa allegedly publicly acceded to assisting the LLA.⁴⁷ While the leader of the BCP, Ntsu Mokhehle⁴⁸, was allegedly based in Botswana, it became apparent that he periodically came into South Africa and at times of his sojourn in the country he was in effect a guest of the South African government, residing at the headquarters of South Africa's police headquarters, Vlakplaas.⁴⁹ To rectify this state of

⁴⁵ TRC Report, Chapter 2, para 202; see also Pherudi, 'Lesotho Liberation Army', p. 270.

⁴⁶ Words uttered by South African Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha in a meeting with his counterpart from Lesotho, Mooki Molapo, in Cape Town on 19 August 1981 (cited in Chapter 3 of Phyllis Naidoo's book *Le Rona re Batho*).

⁴⁷ Pherudi, "Lesotho Liberation Army", p. 270.

⁴⁸ A more detailed discussion about the collaboration between the LLA and apartheid South Africa can be found in Pherudi's article 'The Lesotho Liberation Army: Formation, mission and schisms'.

⁴⁹ The TRC Report indicates that the BCP/LLA was used by the South African government primarily as an instrument for applying pressure on the BNP government – pressure which was relaxed when the BNP was negotiating or talking with South Africa and intensified when it was not. TRC Report, Chapter 2, para 206. Not only this but it could be argued that the decision of the Pretoria administration to provide assistance in the formation of LLA and was a way of 'getting back' its former ally, Jonathan, through providing assistance to Jonathan's foe, the same way that he offered refuge to the outlawed South African liberation parties.

affairs, Lesotho was offered Ntsu Mokhehle in exchange for Chris Hani of the ANC, a request that Lesotho refused.⁵⁰

From the foregoing it becomes evident that the relationship between South Africa and the BCP was an opportunistic one on both sides. On the South African side, the opportunity could be viewed as twofold, firstly, as a way of signifying its (South Africa's) displeasure with the policies and actions of the BNP led government. And, secondly, as a way of gathering intelligence on South African refugees (through assisting the BCP's military arm with security personnel to infiltrate the country) who were now blatantly being offered refuge in a Lesotho that had implemented a change in policy regarding diplomatic relations with South Africa. On the BCP side, the impetus stemmed from the realisation that a collaboration with the BNP's former ally could put them in good stead to gaining access and arms to Lesotho in order to carry out acts of sabotage against Jonathan's government. Secondly, collaborating with the South African government would ensure that they (BCP) received much needed financial and material assistance since their relationship with Botswana and Zambia had soured following the BCP's turn to violent solutions with the formation of its armed wing, the LLA to fight against Lesotho's BNP led government.

An unsigned letter found in the personal archive of John Daniels argued that South African policy geared towards destabilising Lesotho made use of internal political contestations for its own benefit. Thus, since there was an internal power struggle between the ruling BNP and the mostly exiled BCP, the South African government capitalised on this through sponsoring attacks that the exiled BCP perpetrated on Lesotho to continue with its destabilisation agenda. The author of the letter goes on to show that the 'apartheid regime was

⁵⁰ Naidoo, *Le Rona re Batho (An Account of the 1982 Maseru Massacre)*, Chapter 3.

in the business of removing heads of neighbouring governments as part of its destabilisation programme...'⁵¹ This contention was put forth for the argued complicity of South Africa in the military coup d'état that removed Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan from power in 1986.

Lesotho and South Africa's liberation movements⁵²

The Frontline States (Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Malawi and Tanzania) made a significant contribution to assisting the liberation movements in South Africa during their fight against apartheid. According to Padraig O'Malley, the assistance from South Africa's neighbours was crucial as they created an environment through which overseas help in the form of funding, overall support and sanctuary could be made available to the liberation movements in South Africa.⁵³ Not only that, but the cooperation from neighbouring independent states enabled provision of sites that could be utilised for military training and also as 'launching pads from which to infiltrate South Africa and impose other pressures on the apartheid government'.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Anonymous letter attached to the TRC Cross-border/External gross human rights violation form for the bombing incident that took place on the 5 July 1979 – File LESOTHO 1973 – 1988, John Daniels' personal archive.

⁵² Movement in this context is defined as encompassing the activities of all entities that participated in the struggle towards South Africa's democratic dispensation. Although the most visible political party in this case can be argued to have been the African National Congress, this section is aimed at exploring the overall assistance that Lesotho provided to the liberation struggle in South Africa – thus also including political parties like the South African Communist Party, the Pan Africanist Congress as well as the Black Consciousness Movement. This contextualization emerges from ideas presented by Balam Nyeko in his contribution to *Essays on Aspects of the Political Economy of Lesotho 1500 – 2000* (Roma: National University of Lesotho).

⁵³ Priya Pitamber, 'How the family of African states helped end apartheid' *Brand South Africa* <https://www.brandsouthafrica.com/people-culture/arts-culture/south-africa-s-neighbours-helped-to-end-apartheid> Accessed on 04 April 2015, see also the section on External Destabilisation in Coleman, M. (ed.). *A Crime Against Humanity: analysing the repression of the apartheid state*, (Johannesburg: Human Rights Committee, 1998).

⁵⁴ Priya Pitamber, 'How the family of African states helped end apartheid'.

The Kingdom of Lesotho was not excluded from offering such assistance to refugees who were fleeing South Africa for political reasons as well and enabling those who were looking for schooling to do so without hindrance. The link between the South African liberation movement and political leaders of some African countries in most cases dates back to and was influenced by these leaders having attended university or having worked in South Africa. For example, leaders like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Ntsu Mokhehle of Lesotho and myriad other African leaders were alumni of Fort Hare University. In the case of Mokhehle, during his period at the University of Fort Hare, he was successively a member of the ANC Youth League and the Pan-Africanist Congress and in this way alliances were formed between South African and Basotho political activists as both groups were advocating for suffrage.⁵⁵ When the African-led liberation political parties in South Africa were banned in 1960, members of political parties like the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress and the South African Communist Party⁵⁶ left the country to 'set up structures outside of the country' and a small number of these activists fled to neighbouring Lesotho.

Additionally, Lesotho like other countries neighbouring South Africa began more actively and openly offering refuge to those fleeing the country, as relationships between the two states soured. This had been happening on a small scale from the time of the Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa in 1960 and the consequent banning of political parties fighting for the liberation of all South Africans from apartheid. However, it was not until the 1976 student uprising that significant numbers of refugees began leaving the country and some of these

⁵⁵ David B. Coplan, 'In a state of emergency: Democracy, power and nationalist discourse in Lesotho', *Transformation*, Vol. 26 (1995).

⁵⁶ Kondlo, 'In the twilight of the Revolution': The exile history of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa), (1960-1990), unpublished D.Litt et Phil. thesis, University of Johannesburg, October 2003, p. 129.

were given sanctuary in Lesotho⁵⁷, leading to an increased number of activists and those looking to move away from the evils of Bantu education entering the country.

The liberation movements in South Africa welcomed the acceptance and assistance of the Lesotho government and an increasing number of South African refugees came into the country from 1976. In the early 1970s, several key people in the in the ANC settled in Lesotho. For example, Mathabatha Sexwale, Tokyo Sexwale's brother⁵⁸, moved to Lesotho in 1972.⁵⁹ The reason behind this move was because the ANC's infiltration route through Swaziland had just been publicised in a daily newspaper and thus compromised.⁶⁰ Chris Hani, variously known as Thembi or Temi Heni,⁶¹ also moved to Lesotho in 1974. One factor that made Lesotho to be a favourable base was that although landlocked, its mountainous ramparts were deemed to have the potential of protecting Hani's operation and of using Lesotho as a 'launching pad' into apartheid South Africa.⁶² Lesotho – 'The Island', as it was known in liberation circles – was a strategic place that could provide a space to train members of the outlawed liberation political parties. Not only that but these liberation movements used the country as a recruitment centre and an 'infiltration point' for those who had fled South Africa. In short, Lesotho became an important base for ANC's endeavour to fight against the apartheid regime back in South Africa and by the mid-70s, 'Lesotho went from being a side-

⁵⁷ Gregory F. Houston, *Military bases and camps of the liberation movements, 1961-1990*, Human Sciences Research Council Report, August 2003.

⁵⁸ Mathabatha, who was a member of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe, tendered a letter of resignation to the ANC; and in this letter detailed the activities of not only refugees but also activists during their stay in Lesotho.

⁵⁹ Mathabatha Peter Sexwale: Letter of resignation from the ANC
<https://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv03445/04lv04015/05lv04154/06lv04192.htm>
Downloaded 15 July 2015.

⁶⁰ Mathabatha Peter Sexwale: Letter of resignation from the ANC .

⁶¹ Smith and Tromp, *Hani - A Life Too Short*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2010, p. 126

⁶² Ibid.

show to being the main theatre of operations'.⁶³This was in part enabled and supported by the mid-70s policy shift of Jonathan's government.

The presence of South Africans political refugees and activists in Lesotho resulted in harassment; especially hard hit were the leaders of the liberation movement. Additionally, insurgent attacks by the LLA on Lesotho from their South African bases as well as periodic infiltrations of *askaris* working with the South African government into Lesotho aiming to destabilise the country as well as to harass political activists and those who were assisting them. When increased pressure on Lesotho to adopt a hard-line stance with regard to the liberation movements failed to garner results that were acceptable to Pretoria, the policy of destabilisation turned to the implementation of 'an undeclared war with the intention of toppling the Chief Jonathan's faction of the BNP'.⁶⁴ As a way of attempting to 'bring Chief Jonathan to his senses', the continued policy of destabilisation led to the 1982 Maseru Raid.⁶⁵ As a substantiation as to why South Africa invaded Lesotho, the Chief of the South African Defence Force (SADF), General Constant Viljoen, in a widely disseminated statement issued the following morning, pointed to a successful 'pre-emptive strike' that had been launched inside Lesotho to curb the activities of the ANC activists who were operating from within the country. The commandos had attacked 12 targets and as a result 30 'terrorists' had been killed. Although the 'force had strict instructions to avoid women, children and Lesotho citizens not involved with the ANC', there unfortunately were women and children who died 'in the cross-fire'.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid,p.132.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

An argument has been made that the Raid was successful partly due to the rivalry between two ANC leaders, namely, Chris Hani and Lehlohonolo Moloi. The consequence of this rivalry was a split between the ANC cadres in Lesotho and the infighting led to a failure to arm themselves in the belief that guns were not needed in the 'relative safety of Lesotho'. Thus, on the night of Raid only two of the cadres had access to any arms. This was confirmed in a subsequent analysis by one South African army general.⁶⁷

The Lesotho government's information note prepared by the High Commission of Lesotho to Britain, Note Number 83/82,⁶⁸ summarised the pattern of the wave of destruction thus:

1. At the residence of Mr Mathabatha Sexwale, at Ha Hoohlo, the house was completely destroyed and a neighbour killed when she peered out of the window.
2. At Kuena Flats, an apartment building in the city centre, where the strike force was looking for Mrs Hani, they went into the flat next to the one, which belonged to Mrs Hani, and instead found Ms 'Matumo Ralebitso, who in a panic threw herself out of the second floor window to her death. In another flat a refugee tried to put up a fight albeit unsuccessfully before attempting to escape through the window, resulting in loss of life.
3. At the suburb of Florida, a government owned house was bombed and four refugees were killed and a car destroyed.
4. At Upper Thamae township, two houses both belonging to Mr Lehlohonolo Moloi (himself a member of the ANC) were destroyed. In the one house, two people were

⁶⁷ Stephen Ellis and Tšepo Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid: the ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 167.

⁶⁸ This document is evidently an administrative report prepared on behalf of the Lesotho Government, by people working in the civil service. What I find peculiar in this is that this document was found in the collection that is held by Mayibuye Archives, at the University of Western Cape. None of the archival institutions I visited in Lesotho had it in their collections. This report is dated 9 December 1982.

burnt and one person was shot. In the second house, eight alleged ANC members were shot and killed.

5. At Lekhaloaneng, a residential area near Upper Thamae, two houses were bombed. In one house three people, who were all Lesotho nationals were killed and in the other house three people were also killed.
6. At Lithabaneng, fifteen kilometres from the city centre, a house belonging to Mr Hani⁶⁹ was bombed or burnt, without indication of any casualties.
7. In a house belonging to Mr Motaung on the way leading to Qoaling location, almost adjacent to Lithabaneng, four unidentified corpses were discovered.
8. At Mohalalitoe, five people, as yet unidentified at the time of preparing the report, were found.⁷⁰

Chapter Conclusion

It can be argued that from independence Lesotho's fate was deeply enmeshed with South Africa's stance. In the first period following independence, Leboa Jonathan followed a policy of appeasement. However, during the 1970s, post-independent Lesotho also experienced on-going *internal* repression and violence following the 1970 coup and Leboa Jonathan's suspension of the country's constitution and ruling by decree⁷¹. On the other hand, the opposition political

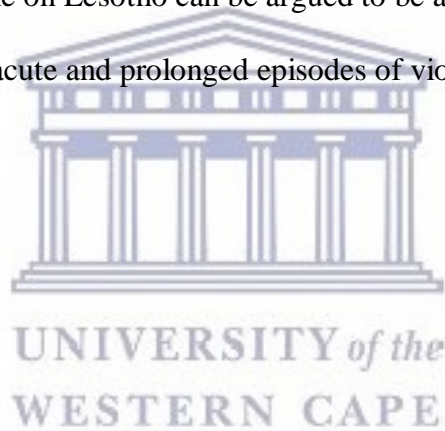
⁶⁹ Moscow House as it was known used to be the residence of Hani, however, since July 1982, following an attack from the Lesotho Liberation Army (with help from the South African security forces) the house had been evacuated. Newspaper reports pointed to the Hani family as residing in one of the apartment blocks in the city centre.

⁷⁰ High Commission of the Kingdom of Lesotho – Note # 83/82 'South African Defence Force attacks Lesotho under the guise of destroying ANC bases 01h00 9.12.82, Accessed from Mayibuye Archives MCH31 BOX 1834.

⁷¹ This argument is supported by the uncountable numbers of people who have been killed, tortured and/or maimed during the period in question. Reports pointing to this are evident in newspaper reports that have published both in and outside Lesotho around the forgoing. Also, this assertion is based on a research paper that I wrote in my third year of study at National University of Lesotho that explored how local newspapers reported on what was viewed as politically motivated killings in Lesotho from 1970 – 1990. This research paper involved an engagement with archival material in depositories managed by the state, the private sector and the university. Pulane Mahula, 'Politically motivated killings and how they are reported in Lesotho newspapers 1970-1990', unpublished research

party (BCP) was also contributing to this violence through perpetrating acts of violence against the government but affecting the country and nation as a whole. As a result of these actions there were violent reprisals allegedly perpetrated by both the state and the outlawed BCP's military arm, LLA,⁷² a consequence of which was a prolonged period of killing, maiming and overall harassment of those whose views did not fall in with those of the ruling party

The 1982 Maseru Raid and subsequent raids by South African commandos thus took place on the back of a period that was fraught with gross human rights violations in the Lesotho, as attested to by the UN as well as several authors⁷³. Thus, the period leading up to and including the first pre-emptive SADFstrike on Lesotho can be argued to be a period when the citizens of the country were experiencing acute and prolonged episodes of violence and trauma.



essay, Roma, 2012. This argument still stands even with Leabua Jonathan giving interviews to the contrary. For example, in an interview that Adrian Clark conducted with him, Jonathan emphasised the fact that the country was peaceful and human rights were in no way being denied. Also, he denied that Lesotho was following in the footsteps of South Africa of legislating against terrorism through substantiating that all countries 'legislate against terrorism' in their own way. See Adrian Clark, 'Jonathan – Botha is trying to destroy my government', *New African*, October 1982.

⁷² Through the support of the South African government in its endeavour to 'unseat' Leabua Jonathan from power .

⁷³ See also ROK Ajulu, 'Survival in a Rough Neighbourhood: Lesotho's Foreign Policy in the Era of Globalization', in *Globalisation and Emerging Trends in African States' Foreign Policy-making Process: A Comparative Perspective of Southern Africa*, ed. Korwa Gombe Adar et al (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2002), 51 – 70; articles in South African newspapers like the City Press and the Sunday Times, and Adrian Clark's article in the *New African*.

Chapter 2– Between disclosure and silences – politics of knowledge production

Introduction

Phyllis Naidoo records the following ‘At 1 a.m. on Thursday, 9 December 1982, Lesotho was held captive by the moon. It was a beautiful clear moonlit night as only Lesotho produces. Since industry is non-existent in the mountain kingdom, no smoke, no industrial filth scars the clarity of its skies. It is a precious and beautiful memory for those who have experienced it. Ironically, it was the moonlight that assisted the South African Defence Force in their killing spree on this night.’⁷⁴ I explore the events of that night and early morning of 9 December 1982 through the lens of how it is represented in different reports from newspapers, journal articles and books, which were produced contemporaneously as well as in the aftermath of this event. Prior to doing this, the chapter provides a brief discussion of the politics of knowledge production and the consequent silences that emerge out of the act of valorising some documents over others, and what that means for a critical engagement with archives and information depositories. As suggested in the Introduction, one of the main reasons behind this project is to address the perceived official and public silences, which I feel surround this and other similar incidents. This engagement aims to contribute to the somewhat lacking historiography of post-independence Lesotho.

⁷⁴ Naidoo, P., *Le Rona re Batho (An Account of the 1982 Maseru Massacre)*, South African History Online, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/le-rona-re-batho-account-1982-maseru-massacre-phyllis-naidoo-south-africa>, (1992) Downloaded 28 August 2015.

The majority of newspaper articles utilised here were accessed from the now defunct Institute of Southern African Studies (ISAS) of the National University of Lesotho.⁷⁵ Additionally, I have made use of the Mayibuye Archives at the University of the Western Cape and other secondary sources including two booklets produced in the aftermath of this incident, authored by IDAF⁷⁶ and ANC stalwart and a Maseru resident at the time, Phyllis Naidoo.⁷⁷ Finally, the personal archive of John Daniels relating to his work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Volume II and VII of the TRC Report⁷⁸ was also used. As suggested earlier, little of this material is written from the Lesotho point of view. Furthermore, as these documents were produced at different temporal moments, they provide some sense of how the Raid was represented in different time periods.⁷⁹

Most of the material used to produce this dissertation was accessed mainly from depositories in Lesotho and South Africa and in most instances the overarching narrative in material published in the period after the Raid is uncomfortably similar with regard to the facts that are reported therein.⁸⁰ It should also be borne in mind that these sources are potentially imbued with complexities that emerge out of the politics surrounding the production of ‘primary’ sources in

⁷⁵ ISAS made a compilation of newspaper clippings that deal with the incident. It is not clear what the criteria for selecting certain articles and not others was, but it is worth noting that for the purposes of this thesis most of the of articles explored were sourced from Lesotho document depositories however limited because the interest of this mini-thesis is to explore how the Raid was treated in Lesotho.

⁷⁶ International Defence Aid Fund Fact Paper on Southern Africa No. 12 *Massacre at Maseru – South African Aggression Against Lesotho*.

⁷⁷ Naidoo, P., *Le Rona re Batho (An Account of the 1982 Maseru Massacre)*, South African History Online, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/le-rona-re-batho-account-1982-maseru-massacre-phyllis-naidoo-south-africa>, 1992.

⁷⁸ Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Volume 2 Chapter 2, paragraph 426. <http://www.sabctrc.saha.org.za/reports/volume2/chapter2/subsection40.htm&tab=report>.

⁷⁹ During the time immediately after the Raid (10 December 1982 to early 1983), newspapers articles were used to explore how they reported on the Raid. The newspapers are categorized as local (from Lesotho), regional (mostly South Africa) paper and international (London, USA, France and Ireland). Phyllis Naidoo’s book was produced ten years after the Raid and the TRC Report in 1998.

⁸⁰ This discomfiture emerges out of the perception that the articles were produced from very limited reports that were used in producing these similar articles. A further discussion in this regard follows in the next section.

view of how states mediate the production of information. As a result of the politics surrounding the production of knowledge with regard to archival sources, I would recommend that reading of this section of the thesis be done through the lens of an attempt not to write an alternative historical narrative but as an attempt to explore the possibility of rendering a ‘critical history’⁸¹, this being tied with Lalu’s assertion that:

‘Whereas alternative history identifies its task as one of re-writing ... critical history, it is suggested, offers the opportunity to reconstitute the field of history by addressing the sites of its production and also its practices.’⁸²

However, critical histories generally rest on prior work. As this is lacking, I have had to engage in far more groundwork and suggest this is an initial effort, exploring the small existing body of media and other writings, combined with some initial oral history work with those who witnessed the Raid. Doing so will enable a multifaceted rendering of this historical moment that seeks to produce a more nuanced reading of the Raid, thus providing a critical history of this event.

The archive and its power(s)

During the colonial period, Lesotho was under the control of Britain and because of the coloniser’s policy of indirect rule, there were colonies that were turned into settler colonies that

⁸¹ This term emerges out of Premesh Lalu’s article titled ‘The grammar of domination and the subjection of agency: Colonial texts and modes of evidence’, *History and Theory*, Vol. 39, No. 4, Theme Issue 39: "Not Telling": Secrecy, Lies, and History (Dec., 2000), pp. 45-68 – in this work Lalu suggests that it would be a folly to ignore archival sources based on their provenance, rather such sources should be interrogated and *problematized* to come up with a more nuanced and richer reading of archival sources. It is through arguments like this and the challenge of accessing archival documents, more specifically in Lesotho (see also footnote 79), that I find it beneficial to invoke critical history discourse in attempting to overcome the challenge of inadequate literature for navigating this incident.

⁸² Premesh Lalu, ‘The grammar of domination and the subjection of agency: Colonial texts and modes of evidence’, *History and Theory*, Vol. 39, No. 4, Theme Issue 39: "Not Telling": Secrecy, Lies, and History (Dec., 2000), p. 45.

benefitted from extensive infrastructural developments from the coloniser, as there were a large number of expatriates living in such colonies. The same was not the case in Lesotho because there were not many colonial officials resident in the country and as such there was only rudimentary infrastructure put in place to enable running the colony. Additionally, in the context of Lesotho, colonial infrastructure is lacking because of what I perceive as the ‘by the way’ manner in which it came to be under British rule⁸³. As a result of this incidental coming under the British colonial banner, there was little overall development that took place during the colonial period, a consequence of which was the an inheritance of a state that did not have well run state-founded institutions like archives⁸⁴ and museums.

This posed a challenge when endeavouring to access documentation relating to this invasion⁸⁵, hence the decision to make use of newspaper articles. Most of the articles referred to here are those that were accessed from archival repositories located within the country as well as in South Africa. Some of the South African and international articles were accessed from Mayibuye Archives in the Western Cape.



There currently are three main archival depositories in Lesotho, the Lesotho National Archives, located in the city centre of Maseru, the Thomas Mofolo Archives, housed at the National University of Lesotho (NUL), and the Morija Museums and Archives (MMA), located

⁸³ This perception emerges from the fact that Basutoland was not viewed as having the resources or geographical position that might benefit Britain were it included in the British empire, and because it came under British rule when the country’s founder appealed to the Queen to help protect the country from Afrikaner harassment. For more on this discussion, works by a myriad of scholars such as Pule and Thabane, Ajulu, Eldridge, Gill can be examined.

⁸⁴ For a broader engagement with this state of affairs, an article by Lekoekoe (who at the time of writing the article was working in the National Archives); Sebinane Lekoekoe, ‘State of the Archives: Lesotho’ *Archival Platform*, 18 September 20123, http://www.archivalplatform.org/blog/entry/state_of_the_archives_lesotho/ and a report produced for UNESCO by J.R. Ede titled ‘Development of the National Archives Service and Construction of a Building for the National Archives’, Serial No. FMR/PGI/82/168 (Paris, 1982), p.3-4.

⁸⁵ Here, a note should be made that it is not only in the case of the 1982 Raid that archival material is hard to come by. The problem is widespread as attested to in an opinion piece in *Archival Platform* titled ‘State of the Archives: Lesotho’, http://www.archivalplatform.org/blog/entry/state_of_the_archives_lesotho/, accessed 12 November 2016.

in Morija. Although under normal circumstances the expectation would have been that first port of call in researching the Raid would be the National Archives, this proved not to be the case because most of the documents that I was looking for were not available.⁸⁶ The majority of documentation I managed to access came from the NUL Archives, where I was able to get some local, regional and international newspaper articles about the Raid, and the Morija Archives where I mostly found articles from *Leselinyana la Lesotho*⁸⁷ and the IDAF booklet previously mentioned.

To return to Trouillot's moments of silences with respect to the history writing enterprise,⁸⁸ this limited availability of information relating to the Raid is indicative of instances of such moments. It becomes apparent that the silencing of the Raid began at the very moment it happened, as well as at the moment of archiving. In the absence of written documentation, as well as public silence, the Raid will eventually be erased from the collective memory of Basotho as a nation as years pass on. What will be left are questions as to why this is the case and whether political players at the time were somehow complicit in some of the acts carried out at this time and seek to blur out their seeming involvement through an absence of recorded fact.

Reporting of the incident

The 9 December 1982 Raid began just after midnight on the night in question. About one hundred South African commandos; most of which were white Afrikaners, some with blackened faces and others wearing traditional Basotho blankets were airlifted into Lesotho's capital

⁸⁶ This was probably the case because as attested to by the UNESCO Technical Report on the Development of the National Archives Service from 1968 there were very limited new accessions being received. Report by J. R. Ede 'Development of the National Archives Service and Construction of a Building for the National Archives', Serial No. FMR/PGI/82/168, UNESCO, Paris (1982).

⁸⁷ This newspaper together with the Archives are owned by the Lesotho Evangelical Church, which traces its origins from the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society.

⁸⁸ See Introduction, p.6.

Maseru to undertake a ‘pre-emptive’ strike on ANC targets allegedly to curb planned MK operations over Christmas in South Africa. Their targets in this dawn Raid were the residences that housed ANC cadres, living within residential locations in the capital town. As the Raid was undertaken at night and because Lesotho did not have the military muscle to engage the SADF commandos, the commandos easily made for a cluster of houses on the outskirts of Maseru where members of the African National Congress (ANC) were believed to be in hiding. Meeting no opposition from Lesotho's tiny 2 000-man paramilitary force, they blasted their way through numerous homes. By morning 42 people were dead, 30 of them believed to be members of the ANC. The remaining victims were Lesotho residents, including five women and two children. Their mission accomplished, the members of SADF returned across the border to South Africa without incident.⁸⁹

The day after the midnight Raid, General Constand Viljoen of the SADF confirmed that the SADF had indeed raided Maseru in search of ANC cadres who were ‘regrouping in Lesotho for preparation for a series attacks that were planned for the Christmas holidays on targets in South Africa, Transkei and Ciskei’.⁹⁰ The SADF chief, Viljoen also reiterated that soldiers who were part of the battalion, which entered Lesotho were under very strict instructions to avoid civilians and members of the military force.⁹¹ In response to the Raid, the ANC condemned the attacks indicating that the targets were civilian houses and did not house uMkhonto we Sizwe cadres as alleged by the South African army chief. The ANC also pointed out that the raids on

⁸⁹ South African History Online, ‘South African Defence Force(SADF) raid Maseru in an effort to kill suspected members of the African National Congress’ <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/south-african-defence-force-sadf-raid-maseru-effort-kill-suspected-members-african-natio>, accessed 15 September 2016

⁹⁰ FR:- BLS Correspondence, ‘South Africa attacks Lesotho’ Daily News, 9 December 1982 MCH 31 Box 1834, Mayibuye Archives, University of Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa.

⁹¹ *The Rand Daily Mail*, ‘SADF tells why it struck Maseru’, 10 December 1982.

neighbouring countries were a result of South African ‘arrogance’ in curtailing the states’ ability to choose their own systems of government.⁹²

Depiction of the Raid in newspapers in its aftermath

In the aftermath of the Raid, the two prominent weekly newspapers in the country, *Moeletsi oa Basotho* (Advisor of Basotho) owned by the Roman Catholic Church and *Leselinyana la Lesotho* (Little Light of Lesotho) published by the Lesotho Evangelical Church, between them had no more than ten articles about the Raid, and none in immediate aftermath of the Raid. The first article that appeared, an editorial, days after the Raid was an editorial on page one of the *Leselinyana la Lesotho* newspaper. In it the author, presumably the editor of the newspaper, condemned this Raid by the SADF in the dead of night when people were least expecting anything traumatic to happen to them. The article went on to point out that the incident was especially unfortunate because it took place ‘at a time when the victims were sleeping and at their most relaxed’⁹³ and because the men, women and children who were victims of this attack were innocents. Apart from this condemnation, the editorial also criticised the general notion that Basotho were a nation that was not unified in their disapproval of the attack as reported by the national radio station, Radio Lesotho, indicating that instead of being united, Basotho held diverging views regarding this attack. The author of the article posits that rather than the populace being unified in their mourning, the opposite was the case.⁹⁴

These contrasting views indicated that in the streets of the capital city, there were groups of Basotho who seemed to be happy, seemingly unaware that such an unfortunate event had even

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ An excerpt translated from Sesotho as it appeared in the editorial, *Leselinyana la Lesotho*, ‘Editorial: Mookhotla ha a tsekisoe’ (loosely translated – Do not shoot the messenger), Vol. 116, No 25, 17 December 1982, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Local Lesotho newspaper, *Leselinyana la Lesotho*, ‘Editorial: Mookhotla ha a tsekisoe’, Vol. 116: 25, 17 December 1982, p. 1.

taken place in their midst; and this put the nation in a bad light, according to the report, because it painted a picture that contrasted with those who had a yearning of seeing all Basotho being compassionate in their outlook, those who portrayed sympathy toward those who had been directly affected by the incident. Secondly, there was the group which was saddened by the incident – of a foreign army invading and killing citizens of another country - and by the reaction of some of their fellow countrymen – of being ignorant of what was happening in their midst. The article argues that these contrasting views emanate from the fact that Basotho are not a united nation, rather they are separated along political allegiances and also brings to light the question of who was tasked with pointing out the houses where the victims resided. This editorial also called the warring political factions in the country and Basotho to unite and ‘clean up their house’.⁹⁵

The article titled ‘Lesotho’s appeal to the international community’ (*Boipiletso ba Lesotho Machabeng*), also on page one of that paper, and published only on 16 December 1982, dealt with the trip that His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II undertook to go to make an appeal to the UN in New York, regarding the attack on his country by South Africa. The article also mentioned in detail the places that were attacked and the estimated number of victims in each area, which are tabled below:

⁹⁵ Local Lesotho newspaper, *Leselinyana la Lesotho*, ‘Editorial: *Mooa khotla ha a tsekisoe*’, Vol. 116, No 25, 17 December 1982, p. 1.

Table 1:⁹⁶

	Place	Estimated number of Victims
1	Upper Thamae*	9
2	NTTC	5
3	Lekhloaneng	3
4	Ha Hoohlo	1
5	Ha Seoli/Lithoteng	12
6	Lower Seoli	7
7	City Centre	2
8	Florida	4
	Total	43

* Two separate locations in this area.

There are some discrepancies in the reporting: for example, the article reported that an estimated 42 people were killed in the Raid but when the number of people suspected to have been killed is tabulated, the count reaches 43, as indicated in the above table.

In the other newspaper, *Moeletsi oa Basotho*, there are also three articles, one is the leading article titled *Afrika Boroa e hlasela batšabeli* ('South Africa attacks refugees') and the second one is an article titled *Lipotso tsa Sechaba* ('The nation's questions') and an opinion-piece by the newspaper titled *Lipolao Maseru* ('Killings in Maseru'),⁹⁷ all of which appear on page one of the newspaper. In the opinion-piece, the paper reported that SADF 'has just'⁹⁸ killed members of the African National Congress and this attack also included Lesotho nationals. The report goes on to indicate that the ANC headquarters in Lusaka confirmed that those killed were their members.

⁹⁶ *Boipiletso ba Lesotho Machabeng* - details and indicate whether this is the table or you have compiled from information in the report.

⁹⁷ Local Lesotho newspaper *Moeletsi oa Basotho*, Selemo 50 No. 2426, 26 December 1982

⁹⁸ This is a translation of the Sesotho rendering that could potentially lead to a person reading the paper on the 26 December 1982 that the Raid had recently taken place instead of the reporting being more than two weeks (17days) late.

The piece also mentioned that it was a well-known fact that the policy of the ANC was to fight for the enfranchisement of the black South African through taking up of arms, and this policy is well-known by both black and white South Africans.

What is unfortunate is that amongst the ANC members who were killed there were those who were very young, and would have had a hard time explaining what they were fighting for. The claim in the paper is that these youngsters were lied to by people - although not specified I take it to mean the ANC- who promised them to cross the border into Lesotho to come and further their education, while in actual fact those who crossed the border were referred to as freedom fighters. The article concluded by calling for the apartheid government to escalate changes that would result in an administration that prioritised the welfare of South African so that all citizens could reap its benefits and by so doing avoid having to dig graves of South Africans in foreign lands.⁹⁹

In the lead article is the report that the SADF attacked the capital, Maseru, in the early hours of the 9 December 1982 when 42 people lost their lives. The report continued by indicating that houses and cars were destroyed by explosives and incendiary devices. According to eye-witnesses, foreign soldiers (some who were dressed in blankets and Basotho hats) were transported across the border by helicopters, some of whom left to go back to South Africa when the sun was already up. This article alleged that the South African soldiers were travelling with African soldiers who were wearing Lesotho Paramilitary Unit fatigues, suggesting state complicity. These groups of people were dropped off by helicopters at various places and walked to their targeted locations, where inhabitants were indiscriminately shot and those who lost their lives left sprawled where they fell until very late in the day before being transported to the Maseru mortuary.

⁹⁹ 'Lipolao Maseru' (Killings in Maseru), Opinion-piece signed *Moeletsi* (Advisor) *Moeletsi oa Basotho*, p. 1.

The King made a call for all Basotho to take the following three days after the Raid as days of mourning and all flags were to be flown at half-mast. Religious leaders, especially those of the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Churches strongly condemned this unfortunate attack on innocent people.¹⁰⁰ This incident was said to have greatly disturbed ordinary Basotho and those who had rented out their houses to refugees were showing signs of being unwilling to keep the refugees on their properties for fear that they would also be attacked in future. *Moeletsi* newspaper had three photographs of two houses that had been shelled (Cuba House and Moscow House) and one car that used to belong to Mr Hanani, which was burnt.

The article entitled *Lipotso tsa Sechaba* ('The nation's questions') presented questions that were overheard by the newspaper's reporters in taxis:

- What was the Lesotho Paramilitary Force, whose main job is to protect the citizens of the country, doing on the night of the 9th of December?
- Why had the alarm not sounded in Maseru when the attack was occurring?
- Why was the Police Chief, who normally talked to the nation periodically, so quiet in the aftermath of this attack?

In response the questions posed above and in an effort to refute SADF allegations emanating from South African media¹⁰¹ that Lesotho forces complied with the call to withdraw because the Raid was only targeting ANC members, a Lesotho Security Forces spokesman denied such reports, asserting instead that 'Lesotho Security Forces were engaged with the Boer soldiers in scattered areas of Maseru including the Polo Ground near the *Mohakare* (Orange River)

¹⁰⁰ 'Lipolao Maseru' (Killings in Maseru), Opinion-piece signed *Moeletsi* (Advisor) *Moeletsi oa Basotho*, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ Allegations that appeared in newspapers and news reports as emerging from the South African Defence Force chief of staff, Lieutenant-General Ian Gleeson – see 'Paramilitary Lesotho Unit in 2 hour skirmish' *Citizen*, 13 December 1982; Patrick Laurence, 'We pursued SA raiders – Lesotho', *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1982.

border...'¹⁰² In response to these statements from the Lesotho security structures, the SADF's Lieutenant General Gleeson indicated that the assertions, by the SADF of the withdrawal of Lesotho's security forces from the locale of the raid, were not intended 'to create the impression of collusion between its invading forces and the Lesotho government but merely to express "appreciation" for Lesotho's decision to withdraw its forces...'¹⁰³

The above claims - by Lesotho and South African security forces - present contrasting views in response to the question of why Lesotho's security forces 'did nothing' in light of the 9 December attacks'. Another angle, which further complicates an already contentious issue, is the report that contends that the Lesotho army was 'anticipating some sort of military-type operation' allegedly because one European visitor was told by a military sergeant out on patrol in Maseru '(not) to worry if there is any shooting tonight'.¹⁰⁴ Although the visitor accepted that what was heard and experienced could be viewed as amounting to the circumstantial, the witness was convinced that Lesotho authorities were 'aware that the South African raid was to take place'. This was apparently confirmed by the increased military presence in the capital.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, there were rumours of an alleged deal brokered between the governments of Lesotho and South Africa whereby the Raid on ANC targets was endorsed in return for the South African government withdrawing support to the Basotho Congress Party's Lesotho Liberation Army.

In response to such accusations Leabua Jonathan 'refused' this 'because it was immoral and unpolitic',¹⁰⁶ and further asserted that there was no agreement on such a deal. Based on his

¹⁰² Staff Reporter, 'We did respond to attacks, spokesman' *Lesotho Weekly*, 17 December 1982.

¹⁰³ Patrick Laurence, 'We pursued SA raiders - Lesotho', *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1982

¹⁰⁴ Ivor Wilkins, 'Lesotho expected raid' *Sunday Times*, 19 December 1982.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ 'Chief Jonathan denies deal with SA on Maseru raid' *Star* 14 December 1982.

response, it is evident there was some discussion between the two parties along these lines, otherwise Jonathan would have not emphatically said ‘*we refused*’ had there been no such proposal. However, no records were located which could confirm or refute these allegations.

On the morning of the 9 December 1982, the Star’s morning edition had a couple of articles that were based on the happenings of the dawn Raid although its extent might have not been evident had one made a cursory examination based of the titles of these articles (‘*Eyewitness accounts*’; ‘*2nd attack in 2 years*’ were the respective titles of the articles). In the latter article, a correlation was made to the 30 January 1981 raid on Matola in Mozambique, and emphasis was more on the Matola Raid than the one that had just taken place in Maseru. The former article concentrated on the accounts of eyewitnesses to the Maseru Raid and the indication was that twelve targets had been targeted and the death toll at this time was estimated at thirty people.

The following day the South African government sponsored newspaper, *The Citizen*, carried four single column articles that included the authorisation of the South African government for the Raid and support for the Raid by the South African white political opposition in parliament through their assertion that this pre-emptive strike was aimed at protecting South Africa.¹⁰⁷ The strike was deemed to be acceptable because the Maseru regime had repeatedly been warned against ‘allowing dissidents to gather for the purposes of organising or preparing for violence against South Africa’¹⁰⁸ thus leaving South Africa with no option but to order the strike.

¹⁰⁷ This continued argument that there was a need to ‘protect’ South Africa from the threat of destabilization emerging from Lesotho and that the strike was an attempt to do this is questionable. The questions that emerge from this assertion include making a comparison of this land-locked country’s military might when compared to its more powerful neighbour, on which Lesotho depended on for so much. At the time, Lesotho had a paramilitary force of no more than 2000 members that had been established at independence, (14 years prior) was negligent when compared to South Africa’s ‘superior fire power’ and its long history of military experience.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Warning unheeded’, *The Citizen*, 10 December 1982.

On the other hand, the Raid garnered widespread condemnation in South Africa among South Africa's extra-parliamentary opposition. Then Bishop Desmond Tutu condemned South Africa's actions of attacking neighbouring countries, arguing that doing so was 'an infringement of the territorial integrity of a sovereign state'.¹⁰⁹ The headquarters of the ANC, whose members were the main targets of the Raid 'vowed to retaliate' for the strike pointing to the fact that this was a 'cold-blooded massacre' and further refuting the premise that the refugees in the suburbs of Maseru were organising militarily to spring attacks on South Africa from Lesotho.

On the same day, *The Citizen* also set aside two full page spreads for the reporting of atrocities that were supposedly undertaken by the ANC on South African soil; both of these articles were said to be prepared by Sapa (South African Press Association). One article reported that in the year ending 1982, the ANC was alleged to have been responsible for 'five major sabotage incidents'¹¹⁰ and the cells responsible for these acts of sabotage were supposedly operating from Lesotho. Among these sabotage incidents were acts that resulted in the murder or attempted murder of civil servants and parliamentarians in South Africa in various localities including Cape Town, Ciskei and other Bantustans. This article also pointed to the movement of 'well-trained terrorists from other Southern African states to Lesotho',¹¹¹ to enable easy infiltration into South Africa, Ciskei and Transkei. These allegations were said to substantiate the order for the 'pre-emptive strike' on Lesotho, which was carried out in order to ensure that these planned 'deeds of terror' did not succeed. The articles by *The Citizen* concluded with General Constant Viljoen's - head of the SADF - reminder that 'ANC terrorists in Lesotho were influenced by the PLO (Palestinian People's Organisation) to eliminate among others, black

¹⁰⁹ 'Maseru raid slated', *The Citizen*, 10 December 1982.

¹¹⁰ 'Sabotage incidents linked to ANC', *The Citizen*, 10 December 1982.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

leaders...(and) small elements from the ANC Headquarters in Lesotho were to have carried out this instruction'.¹¹²

The other one-page spread concentrated on the bounty that was recovered at the locations that had been stormed by the South African Defence Force commandos. Among these were 'firearms, grenades and explosives of Russian origin'.¹¹³ Some of the items seized in the targeted locations included false 'Transkeian' passports, the ANC newsletters *Sechaba* and *Mayibuye*, Christmas cards 'signed *Unity in Action*', maps of prospective targets both within and outside Lesotho and false bottomed suitcases¹¹⁴ to mention just a few.

The South African newspaper articles similarly provided evidence of a 'war of words' going back and forth between South African government officials and their Lesotho counterparts. This had started to emerge even before the Raid where there was an exchange of words between the two parties regarding the inability to come to an agreement regarding the presence of ANC refugees in Lesotho and the BCP, through its military wing, LLA's presence in South Africa.¹¹⁵

Furthermore, the analysis of the South African newspapers pointed to the ideological positioning of these newspapers in their coverage, which indicated reports that were constructed based on who their target group was, meaning that although the events were not changed, they could however be argued to be constructed in such a way that they seemed to be leaning towards a particular group of readers.¹¹⁶ For instance, newspapers like *The Citizen* and *Friend*

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ 'Attack booty includes Red guns and grenades' *The Citizen* 10 December 1982.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Adrian Clark, 'Jonathan: Botha is trying to destroy my government' *New African*, October 1982; Mike Pitso, 'Lesotho launches a war of words against Malan'; *Rand Daily Mail*, 16 October 1982, 'South Africa's biggest mess, says Lesotho official, *Sunday Times*, 12 December 1982.

¹¹⁶ Readers in this context point not only to the South African public but also to other neighbouring countries where these newspapers were also in circulation, like Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, to name a few.

concentrated on reporting from the angle of the state and were predominantly aimed at the conservative reader. Also, as in the case of *The Citizen*, the state had some editorial control on what was reported because it has been indicated that the newspaper was being financed by the state, at that time.¹¹⁷ *The Golden City Press*, which targeted African readership¹¹⁸, in same way the manner in which the articles are written is meant to reverberate with those who supported personal freedom, people who in most cases were either living in a country that is coming to grips with its independence or is fighting for enfranchisement.

International newspaper reports

In the early 1980s, the South African government was saddled with allegations of covert assistance to opposition political parties in the southern African region. This was done through exacerbating internal divisions in countries that were already experiencing political unrest but at the same time were providing refuge to outlawed political groupings from South Africa. When attempts to persuade Jonathan to 'hand over the most wanted ANC activists in exchange for curbing the activities of the LLA'¹¹⁹ failed, the South African government turned to more violent means of persuasion, regardless of the negative backlash that would emerge from the

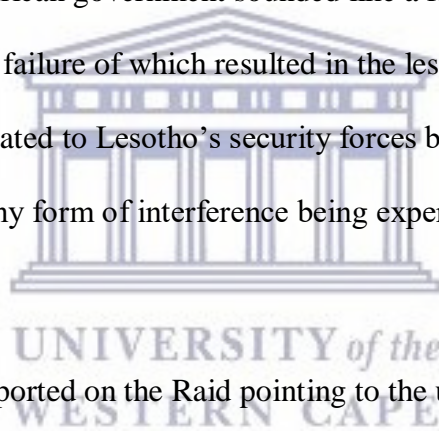
¹¹⁷ The government opted for their own propaganda war. The propaganda war started as early as 1973 following John Vorster accepted Mulder's plan to shift about R64 million from the defense budget to undertake a series of propaganda projects'. The plan entailed bribes of international news agencies and the purchase of the Washington Star newspaper and the secret establishment of a government controlled newspaper, *The Citizen*. An Afrikaner millionaire Louis Luyt apparently owned this newspaper. But funds to establish it were raised by the government using secret funds protect from public and parliamentary scrutiny. *The Citizen* was established by government to act as a counter voice of the Rand Daily Mail, an English newspaper influential in the formation of English public opinion. The government believed that this newspaper was part of the "hate South Africa crusade" South African History Online, 'The Information Scandal' <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/information-scandal#sthash.HoT3ApUN.dpuf>, Accessed 16 May 2016.

¹¹⁸ See Biography of James Bailey in <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/jim-bailey>, Accessed 16 May 2016

¹¹⁹ Michael Hornsby, 'South Africa's bad neighbour policy' *London Times*, 13 December 1982; see also Phyllis Naidoo's 'Le Rona re Batho' where she cites the South African Foreign Affairs minister's assertion that "There would be no LLA if you removed all refugees from Lesotho. If you want us to do something about the LLA camps, you must do something about the ANC." Chapter 3 – Historical Lesotho.

international community. This perspective dominated many of the international newspaper accounts, which I read.

The SADF refuted allegations of using bombs and heavy artillery and helicopters during the Maseru Raid but eyewitness reports point to the presence of ‘hovering helicopters (that) pinpointed houses with searchlights’. Other than the fact that South Africa registered regret over the killing of ‘innocent women and children’, the Pretoria regime substantiated carrying out the Raid by stating that they had ‘repeatedly warned governments of all neighbouring countries not to allow terrorists to use their territories as springboards against South Africa’.¹²⁰ This cautionary communiqué from the South African government sounded like a failure to do as an elder or more powerful person had requested, failure of which resulted in the less powerful being punished. Further warning was communicated to Lesotho’s security forces by telephone that ‘heavy retaliation’ would result from any form of interference being experienced from the Lesotho side.¹²¹



International newspapers reported on the Raid pointing to the unacceptable nature of the Raid on Lesotho through variously referring to act as the ‘South African slaughter’¹²², of ‘helpless Lesotho’¹²³ being raided by its more powerful neighbour.¹²⁴ Furthermore, because of the unplanned infrastructural nature of Maseru, which is ‘tiny, a little more than a village’ the contention was that there had to have been guides (pointing out the targets) because the area was

¹²⁰ ‘Pretoria’s midnight raid’, *Newsweek*, 20 December 1982; ‘South Africa terror rain on Lesotho’ *Irish Independent*, 10 December 1982.

¹²¹ Joseph Lelyveld ‘Lesotho asserts victims of attack were refugees not terrorists’ *New York Times*, 10 December 1982.

¹²² Allister Sparks, ‘Lesotho in shock after South African slaughter’ *London Observer*, 12 December 1982.

¹²³ ‘Boiling over in the South’, *Guardian Weekly*, 19 December 1982.

¹²⁴ While this is true for reports from international newspapers, it should however be noted that these news clippings were accessed from the archive. That said, more conservative reports could have reported on the Raid differently, thus suggesting that what is found in the archive also shapes what the user of the archive reads.

‘labyrinthine’ leading to reports concluding that the South African commandos were working with people who were pointing out the requisite targets. The expatriate community residing in Lesotho’s experience of the Raid was also reported on. In one such report, an Irish working for the UN ‘managed to get through’ to his family members in Dublin and told of ‘a night of terror’¹²⁵ that had gone on all night, not for a few hours as the news bulletins were reporting. The report went on to estimate that at least one hundred people were killed in the all night Raid that ‘was a massacre by all accounts’¹²⁶.

The *New York Times* produced a special two-day report that emphasised the innocence of the victims of the Raid through the assertion that they were not terrorists but were in fact refugees. Additionally, it suggested that the claim was that people who were not members of the ANC but had been killed was an accident (most articles cited General Viljoen’s press release citing that those killed were in the line of fire) was ‘absolute nonsense’.¹²⁷ This claim was questioned on the basis of questioning how people can be killed in the crossfire where the Raid targeted specific targets and took place in the dead of night when children and a large number of people were asleep and could not be said to be playing or walking in the streets when the Raid took place.

Written portrayals after the Raid

In the years following the Raid, especially in the period after 1994 when South Africa became a democracy, there have been a few articles that discuss the Raid, most of which appear on occasions when South African representatives have visited Lesotho. On such occasions, these dignitaries go to the graveyard where the ANC victims were buried to lay wreaths. The articles

¹²⁵ ‘Night of terror for Irish community in land-locked Lesotho’ *The Irish Press*, 10 December 1982, p 5.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Joseph Lelyveld ‘Lesotho asserts victims of attack were refugees not terrorists’ *New York Times*, 10 December 1982.

mostly concentrate on retelling the way the Raid happened and at other times concentrating on a particular victim's family and how they are dealing with the loss. The articles primarily appear in South African publications and their fundamental nature seems to be a reproduction of what has already been reported on in the media.

A decade after the Raid, Phyllis Naidoo, who was resident in Lesotho at the time of the 1982 Raid, published a book about her experience. In this book she indicates that the refugees who had survived, being understandably traumatised by this incident struggled to attain medical assistance to help them to psychologically deal and come to terms with what had happened in their midst, rather they were advised to 'externalise their trauma' hence her decision to write a booklet as a way of attempting to deal with the Raid. However, this attempt to externalise the trauma seems to have not been beneficial because she alludes to this 'exceedingly painful time' and indicates that a decade afterwards she is still experiencing the pain that emerged out of having borne witness to the Raid.¹²⁸

In her account Naidoo is at pains to mention each of the victims by name because she felt that 'the collective memory of the movement ha[d] wiped out the memory of these and other comrades' and that she '...wanted to bring these comrades to you, to stain them into our national memory'.¹²⁹ What emerges here is a crucial aspect of writing this booklet, which is clearly stated in the above excerpts and probably came to the fore because of the writer's fear that the victims of this Raid will at some point be forgotten. Naidoo's recollection is also permeated with elements of the horror that was experienced by those who bore witness to this event. What

¹²⁸ Phyllis Naidoo, *Le Rona re Batho (An Account of the 1982 Maser Massacre)* (1992) <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/introduction-16> Accessed 15 March 2015.

¹²⁹ Phyllis Naidoo, *Le Rona re Batho (An Account of the 1982 Maser Massacre)*, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/chapter-1-house-lower-seoli> Accessed 15 March 2015.

perplexes is the fact that the majority of the articles, which I came across concentrate on the South African victims while Basotho victims seem to be obliterated from the accounts that emerge in the decades following the Raid. The reason behind this state of affairs can be inferred but cannot be clearly established. The above realisation further affirms Trouillot's argument in relation to the fourth moment of silence, which points to the moment of retrospective significance.

An undated letter from Mathabatha Sexwale, whose house was one of the residences targeted for attack, provided the following narrative. On the night in question he was with his wife, Buni, his youngest sister, Mashdi, his two daughters and a visitor. He indicates that he was had a firearm and was able to return fire on the commandos shooting at his house. Of the people inside the house, only his youngest daughter, Kananelo, was injured by shrapnel, all the other occupants of the house were fortunately unharmed.¹³⁰ In a newspaper article published around the thirty second anniversary of the Raid, Kananelo Sexwale wrote a piece, which recalls what she remembers of the Raid. In it, she indicates that she was woken up by a 'loud bang' an hour after midnight on the night of the 9 December 1982. She recalls awakening to a burning room and remembers 'so many different scary sounds ...: gunfire, bombs, grenades and a helicopter flying above the house. There was a green liquid oozing from my numb thigh. I only found out later that it was actually blood and just looked green because of the orange blaze of the fire'¹³¹

¹³⁰ Mathabatha Peter Sexwale: 'Letter of resignation from ANC', <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv03445/04lv04015/05lv04154/06lv04192.htm> accessed 15 July 2015.

¹³¹ Kananelo Sexwale, 'Screaming silently in a burning house', *City Press*, 14 December 2014, <http://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/Screaming-silently-in-a-burning-house-20150429> accessed 24 March 2016.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³¹ Morija Museum and Archives, 'Leselinyana Newspaper', <http://www.morija.co.ls/museum/objects/leselinyana-newspaper/> Accessed 15 May 2016

Although she writes that all the children were saved by her father who entered their bedroom and told them to get down, a prompt for them to start crawling on the floor, while her father returned fire. She is grateful that she is alive and her leg was saved, but what she yearns for is the innocence that she feels was taken away way too soon.¹³²

Brief analysis of reports

During the early to mid-1980s, there were two prominent weekly Sesotho language newspapers in Lesotho. The first one was *Leselinyana la Lesotho* (Light of Lesotho) which is owned by the Lesotho Evangelical Church and is 'one of the pre-eminent sources for Lesotho history, and is the longest surviving vernacular newspaper in sub-Saharan Africa'¹³³. *Leselinyana* newspaper was one of the first to appear in an African language, and is the oldest continuously read newspaper by Sesotho speakers.¹³⁴ And second one is *Moeletsi oa Basotho* (Advisor of Basotho) which is owned by the Roman Catholic Church. These two religious denominations - the Roman Catholic Church and the Lesotho Evangelical Church¹³⁵ - are the ones that have the largest following among Basotho.

¹³¹Foko, Thato E., 'Media Integration in Lesotho: A comparative analysis of the on-line press and print press - A case study of Mopheme (The Survivor) weekly newspaper', MA Dissertation, p.10, http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za/Files/articles/MA_dissertations/thato1.pdf.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³Morija Museum and Archives, 'Leselinyana Newspaper', <http://www.morija.co.ls/museum/objects/leselinyana-newspaper/> Accessed 15 May 2016.

¹³⁴Foko, Thato E., 'Media Integration in Lesotho: A comparative analysis of the on-line press and print press - A case study of Mopheme (The Survivor) weekly newspaper', MA Dissertation, p. 10 http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za/Files/articles/MA_dissertations/thato1.pdf.

¹³⁵ Among ordinary Basotho the Catholic Church was viewed as pro-royalty and pro-Basotho National Party and the population that supported the then ruling BNP would most likely buy *Moeletsi* as opposed to *Leselinyana* which was very vocal in its criticism of the BNP administration and was seen as pro-BCP. R.B. Leanya's thesis details the relationship between the main political parties and the church in Lesotho ('Church and State Relations in Lesotho: A Theological Reflection on Catholic and Reformed contributions 1833-2007 MA thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2013).

On the basis of the newspapers that were used in producing this section of the paper, several salient points can be picked up. Firstly, in looking at the newspapers that come out of Lesotho, the reporting of the Raid does not seem to garner as much importance for the country in which it happened as it did in South African or international newspapers. The reasoning behind this conclusion emerges from the fact that only three articles were published in the period after the Raid took place. It thus becomes problematic to make a distinctive analysis because of the limited number of articles available in this case. The failure of Lesotho's media to engage in the substantial reporting of this and subsequent raids can be argued to have resulted in the inability of Basotho - collectively and individually - coming to grips with an event that required them to get acknowledgement and recognition of the violence that had been done on them.

The reports, present an ideologically contested landscape pointing to a rupture in Lesotho's internal political climate at the time. Furthermore, even though the Raid happened in Lesotho, its narrative is mainly subordinated to South African liberation politics with the identified ruptures taking on a superficial context in attempting to disentangle the historical narrative of Lesotho. There was also a 'war of words' that was being waged by the Pretoria and Maseru regimes and the stage was the South African media. I argue that the two governments were more invested in fighting their own ideological wars - on the South African side fighting 'terrorist' organisations posing as leading the struggle for equal rights for all South African citizens and on the Lesotho side fighting against the 'terrorist' threat that was being experienced from the outlawed BCP. Those who sought refuge in Lesotho from South Africa and the population of Lesotho were collectively put in the middle of the war that was being fought from both angles. For the two governments, what was seemingly crucial at that moment was not the ensuing killing of human beings but rather the need to portray the virtue of either grouping's actions, totally eliding or

forgetting that such actions are perpetrated on human beings and were thus bound to affect their physical and psychological well-being after the fact.

In all the local newspaper articles that were available to the researcher, the absence of witness interviews with those who were directly affected by the Raid, for instance those who had been injured and/or had been hospitalised was striking. However, one report suggested that interviews were interrupted by a group of ANC members who arrived at the hospital during visiting hours to look in on their injured compatriots, who allegedly stopped them owing to the failure of the South African reporter ‘to follow the right channels [get] to these two hospital beds’.¹³⁶ This reporter (one Desmond Blow representing the *Golden City Press*) was given clearance by the Lesotho government but the consent of the local ANC leader was not requested and thus not given, hence the interception.

Although several accounts have written in the post-1994 period, these are mainly witness or survivor accounts from South Africans and are primarily concerned with a fear of obliterating the memory of the Raid from collective recollections, and place emphasis on ‘not forgetting’.¹³⁷ However, this ‘not forgetting’ seems to pertain to the South Africans and South Africa’s anti-apartheid struggle. By contrast, the inverse was the case in Lesotho in the post-1993 period with the status quo of continued silence.

A cursory look at the treatment of the Raid in the two countries suggests a valorisation of the event in one country over the other, although even in South Africa there is evidence of some silencing as attested to by the seemingly anxious attempt of some South Africans as suggested before to ‘write back’ into the liberation history narrative details of how the Raid unfolded in

¹³⁶ ‘Mateboho Green, ‘ANCs intercept newspaper interview’ *Lesotho Weekly*, 17 December 1982.

¹³⁷ For example, articles by Khedama, Sexwale and Naidoo.

order to ensure that the it is not forgotten. While past covert operations enacted by the apartheid regime have been widely publicised in South Africa, there is still a quiet emanating from the now ruling ANC government.¹³⁸ Additionally, commentaries coming out of South Africa bring forth elements of the writers' discomfort that some incidents are remembered at the expense of others, such as the Maseru Raid. From this observation, the Raid appears to be one that is indelible in individual memories as opposed to collective memories.

Chapter Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to engage with the written records to explore how the 1982 Raid was reported on. This, however, has proven to not be as easy as initially envisaged because the written sources were few and are saddled with reports that indicate a bias based on who has produced the article. This could be as a result of the behind-the-scenes machinations of the 'secret' owners of the newspapers' owners. For example, in Lesotho, the Roman Catholic Church, which owns one of the two newspapers utilised was alleged to be pro-government at the time. Similarly, the *Leselinyana la Lesotho*, owned by the Lesotho Evangelical Church was also said to be pro-opposition. This could then be viewed as a contributing factor to the reports that emerged from these two newspapers. The same can be said of South Africa, where there was an ideological distinction, as previously discussed. Not only that but the then government censored photographing and publication of the areas that had been targeted by the Raid through restricting access for reporters and photographers to the scenes. The few photographs that were taken mostly belonged to foreign publishing houses and as a result are not available in the country.

¹³⁸ In her book, *Le Rona Re Batho*, Phyllis Naidoo bemoans this fixation with collective memories that would be popular to the broader public as opposed to individual memories.

This limited availability of written sources both in Lesotho and to a certain extent South Africa can be argued, in part, to be as a result of the complexities that surround the party(ies) that were responsible for the perpetration of this incident.

As this chapter has indicated, there is not one particular view that can be tied to how the 1982 Maseru Raid was treated in the country. There are however several trajectories that can be explored especially when grappling with the reasons behind the perceived silencing of the event in Lesotho. Firstly, there is the issue of the see-sawing relationship between Lesotho (in the 1970s) and South Africa, which at times was extremely cordial and shifting to explicit hostility, which was especially evident in the period preceding the Raid).

The second trajectory points to the complex relations between these two neighbours that at times involved elements of complicity that emerges out of the actions of the BNP government, the opposition BCP and the South African government through the SADF. The complex nature of the actions of the three above-mentioned groups could have resulted in those responsible attempting to repress their involvement through excluding elements that could potentially reveal any elements of complicity of either party.

Chapter 3: Recalling the unforgettable – Narratives of 9 December 1982

‘For stories are also lived and life is told’¹³⁹

Introduction

This chapter aims at working towards formulating and articulating the reasons why this Raid has been treated as it has in Lesotho through engaging with some of the people (particularly Basotho) who witnessed the Raid and exploring how they talk about it. The focus in this instance is less interested in the factuality of the recollections than a deeper reading of how what is said is verbalized and narrated by each narrator. In this regard, the aim is to bring to the forefront the experiences of Basotho¹⁴⁰ as a way of making this a less South African-centric narrative.¹⁴¹

Chris van der Merwe and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela posit that:

‘We are the narrators of our life stories, and we also play the part of the main character in them – therefore our stories are our ‘autobiographies’, unified by the actions of the main character striving towards a future and determined by a past...’¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Chris van der Merve and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *Narrating our Healing: Perspectives on Working through Trauma* (Newcastle: Cambridge, 2007) p 1.

¹⁴⁰ The reasoning behind restricting the focus on Basotho and not South Africans lies in the perception that there have been numerous reports from the South African perspective. The engagements that I am talking about here include but are not limited to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s witness testimonies about the Raid; newspaper reports, from South African newspapers on the event at the time and throughout the years (see articles in *The New Age*, *The Citizen*, *City Press*; to name a few, and the individual interest pieces that have been published in South African newspapers in the period after the Raid.

¹⁴¹ The history writing endeavour can be viewed as a process that puts emphasis on the collective rather than the individual, not taking away from this lies the understanding that collective history(ies) emerge out of individual narratives that come together to produce a collective narrative that can be moulded in a way that attempts to resonate with the greater public. Individual narratives emerge out of the attempt of individuals to make certain meaning out of the ordinary and extraordinary events that coalesce to shape the individual’s life.

¹⁴² Chris van der Merve and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *Narrating our Healing: Perspectives on Working through Trauma*, (Newcastle: Cambridge, 2007), p. 2.

Borrowing from the above quotation, the witness recollections point to a quest to write a biographically-centred account of a traumatic historical event, through the lens of the experiences of people affected by the event.¹⁴³

Memories are a part of life and at one point or another each of us goes back to the recess of our memory banks as part of living. In essence our lived experiences are a combination of what we experienced in the past, our present experiences and what might take place in the future and there is a definite interconnection between those moments, more so in the present. Furthermore, real time experiences are affected by a review of the past and a planning for the future, which might not come to fruition in the present if they are not influenced by past events. Gobodo-Madikizela and Van der Merve posit that narrating an event leads to the narrator being responsible for the construction whose end product is the narrator's life.¹⁴⁴

The motivation for the interview process in this case is to ask people who experienced a particular episode in their past to talk about what they remember through expecting them to travel back in time to the period that is of interest. Doing so affects different individuals in varying ways and as such has the potential to have a bearing on how they verbalise the particular experience. It is not a debatable fact that relating something after the fact will result in variations in the way in which each individual shapes how they tell their own version of events.

Recollections are mediated by what people have experienced combined with their present outlook and how they would like to see the narrative unfold; all these coalesce to result in a

¹⁴³ The term 'biography' in this instance is utilized because it is my understanding that the interviews that were conducted with the people who experienced the Raid contribute to each person's life story, and thus a piece of their individual biographies. As Christopher Colvin asserts "telling your story", i.e. recounting your experiences, has become a powerful, if ambivalent, way to contribute a new history..." see Christopher Colvin, "Brothers and sisters, be not afraid of me": trauma, history and the therapeutic imagination in the new South Africa', in Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (eds) *Contested Past: the politics of Memory* (London: Routledge, 2003), p 153.

¹⁴⁴ Chris van der Merve and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *Narrating our Healing: Perspectives on Working through Trauma*, (Newcastle: Cambridge, 2007), p. 3

particular way of narrating the story behind the event. Rather than seeing these variations in narrative as a limitation, I suggest that the different ways in which each person relates their experience be used to construct a narrative that is richer and more nuanced than just relying on a single narrative that comes to be tied to how a disparate group of people are expected to remember the incident. This enables those engaging with the different verbal recollections to explore not only how people felt when this was happening, but is also indicative of what they regarded as important for them, through analysing how they remember the event, the smells, sounds and what they saw or did not see.

The oral interviews that form the foundation of this chapter were conducted with individuals in the ordinary business of life. This was done to get an understanding of how they attempted to re-create selected memory moments in their lives and use them to tease out narratives that are shaped by their discrete experiences to produce their version of how the Raid is remembered in Lesotho. This is done bearing in mind how the silences that present at various moments, as discussed in the Introduction, might contribute to how the Raid is recalled in the contemporary time. This exploration of the interviews combined with the limited archive of the Raid in Lesotho, I believe, will assist to also explore whether trauma is an appropriate lens to look at this Raid through.

The main methodological approach that was used in conducting these oral history interviews, which took the form of life histories but with particular emphasis on the period of South Africa's destabilization of Lesotho, and, where people were willing to talk, the Raid and its aftermath. Aside from its qualitative aspect, I believe that life history interviews also allow the interviewee

more control over what they are willing to talk about.¹⁴⁵ Additionally, this approach also enables an understanding of how potentially trauma may or may not impact on the way in which individual life histories are recalled and verbalised.

These engagements, deemed crucial moments in the country's history, might assist in dealing with what is happening in the political sphere of the country in the contemporary. Doing so, I believe, will prove beneficial to the populace as a way of making it possible to work at the eventual recognition that events such as this one are also important in the overall history of independent Lesotho.¹⁴⁶ This chapter aims at troubling this prevailing status quo (as indicated in the preceding chapter) through engaging with oral interviews conducted with people who witnessed the Raid albeit in an indirect manner. Although the number of interviewees is limited, I believe that instead of this being a challenge, it should rather be seen in the light of enabling a detailed analysis of the interviews such that they are not merely used to extract data but also to engage with their form, non-verbal and dramatic elements.

...of memory and subjectivity...

As the main focus of this chapter relies on the interviews that were conducted, I find it prudent to echo Alessandro Portelli's assertion that '(a)s opposed to the majority of historical documents, in fact, oral sources are not found, but co-created by the historian. They would not

¹⁴⁵ Although this assertion points to the ability of individuals to evoke their agency in this regard, it should be borne in mind that the said agency manifests in a space that is influenced by the socio-cultural parameters that also act to somewhat limit the individual's said agency, thus in some ways evoking individual agency can be viewed as problematic because it can be argued to also be imbued with limitations. Making this assertion does not take away from this problematic, but rather works alongside this realization. See Laura Ahearn's arguments in 'Language and Agency', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30 (2001), p. 112.

¹⁴⁶ For a limited discussion of how events, which would be regarded as nationally important in other countries, are treated in Lesotho, especially in the mass media; see David B. Coplan's article titled 'In a state of emergency: Democracy, power and nationalist discourse in Lesotho' *Transformation*, Vol 26, No 2 (1995), <http://pdfproc.lib.msu.edu/?file=/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/transformation/tran026/tran026004.pdf> accessed 2 February 2017. Although not specifically about the Raid, Coplan tackles the state of media reporting in the Lesotho.

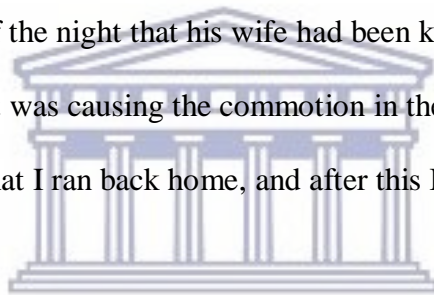
exist in this form without the presence, and stimulation, the active role of the historian in the field interview. Oral sources are generated in a dialogic exchange – an interview - literally a looking at each other, an exchange of gazes. In this exchange questions and answers do not necessarily go in one direction only.’¹⁴⁷ Thus the proceeding interviews should be understood as such a co-creation, and as a crucial element in both the recounting of and interpretation of oral interviews. Although there seems to be a tension between Portelli’s argument when viewing it together with Van Der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela’s argument, which argues that the narrator’s voice should be more important, I argue that this tension be viewed as a productive one, further highlighting the importance of the narrator’s voice as well as that of the historian/researcher, particularly in instances where the former is involved in the incident being narrated.

These interactions also have the potential of taking a direction that might not always lead to where I (as the researcher) would have liked to go but could possibly be guided by the interests of the interlocutors themselves, thus resulting in co-created narratives, along the lines of Michael Frisch’s argument, which puts emphasis on the ‘shared authority’ of the interview process, further pointing out that the process of narrative creation in oral history is a reflexive one and that both the interviewee and the interviewer are equally important in narrative production. The physical proximity of interviewer and interviewee and whether narrating the event affects them similarly or differently might assist in understanding the outcome of recounting potentially traumatic oral narratives on the psyche.¹⁴⁸ As I also experienced the Raid, the impact of the narration on my own psyche is also significant. At the time, my family and I lived at Ha Hoohlo township, two streets away from Mathabatha Sexwale’s house. Thinking back, I remember

¹⁴⁷ Allesandro Portelli, ‘A dialogical relationship. An approach to Oral History’, *Expressions*, http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/expressions_portelli.pdf, downloaded 16 September 2016.

¹⁴⁸ See Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

playing with one of his daughters, Matsobane. Although I did not directly experience the dawn Raid as I was asleep, the commandos who attacked the Sexwale home took a short cut through our yard, as evidenced by their footprints in our vegetable garden, which was pointed out by my sisters in the morning. I recall waking up in the morning of 9 December to the smouldering ruins of the Sexwale house and hushed tones of the adults recounting how the ‘Boers’ had attacked in the middle of the night. As I ventured out of the yard to take a look at what had happened, I remember coming across a man who I knew only as *ntate* Tšeliso walking around like a caged bear with an agonised look on his face, before taking off his chain link digital watch and dismantling it. I made out from the hushed tones of the adults who had come to also look at what had taken place in the middle of the night that his wife had been killed, shot as she peered through the window to see what was causing the commotion in the middle of the night. Watching this scene scared me so much that I ran back home, and after this I came to the realisation of how close to harm we had been.



It thus becomes apparent that in a bid to present a narrative of the Raid, not only does the resultant interpretation talk to and put to the fore the experiences of the interviewee, it implicitly includes my doubly subjective experience, as someone who was present during the Raid on one hand and the interviewer on the other.

Oral historians are seen as ‘recorders’ of events in history who enter particular spaces, be they private or public, in order to access human experience that is recalled through engaging memory for the benefit of ‘generations to come’¹⁴⁹. While there is the contention that doing (planning, conducting and interpreting) oral interviews has the potential to present a problem for

¹⁴⁹ Joy Parr, “‘Don’t speak for me’: practicing oral history among the legacies of conflict’, *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, Vol. 21, No 1, 2010, p.3.

the researcher in that there sometimes will emerge, in the process, moments of ‘evasiveness and omissions’ that might have a negative bearing on the (hi) story being narrated. I however am reluctant to wholly take on this assertion as I believe that while doing oral history interviews, both the interviewer and the interviewee enter the interview space where each has a motive, a motive that is more obvious in the former than the latter. The integration of the rationales – the obvious and the obscure – combine to produce a plot whose authorship is shared between the two role-players and results in a more nuanced reading of the interview.¹⁵⁰

The exercise of getting close the survivors of the Raid proved to be a challenge because of their unwillingness to avail themselves for interviews. In the recording of oral history interviews, particularly of perceived traumatic events, one of the reasons behind this endeavour is to provide a platform that will enable those who experienced the event to talk about their experiences. On the other hand, there is a potential of the survivors and/or witnesses– and I believe this is what happened in this instance – choose not to talk about the event and at moments where this happened, the witnesses’ views were respected and I did not attempt to convince them otherwise. One of the ways to overcome the challenge in such cases is to attempt to work out why this is the case. Based on the conducted interviews, combined with informal interviews the researcher had with prospective interviewees who were approached (as they had witnessed the Raid) but refused to be interviewed the conclusion drawn points to their obstinacy¹⁵¹, resulting in a powerful evocation of the strength that can be entrenched in an individual’s prerogative to not want to be a part of the recording and re-enactment of as a historical episode – traumatic or otherwise.

¹⁵⁰ See Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) and Alessandro Portelli, ‘A dialogical relationship. An approach to Oral History’, *Expressions*, http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/expressions_portelli.pdf, downloaded 16 September 2016.

¹⁵¹ One of the individuals approached for an interview asked why they should talk about ‘those difficult times’?

The people interviewed for this project were identified through the understanding (and confirmation) that they witnessed the Raid albeit from a distance. Of the four people interviewed, three of them were adults, while one had been a nine-year-old boy at the time. Of these, three are males and only one is female, posing a challenge because it meant that the narratives were going to predominantly be from a male perspective. Efforts to identify and engage with women were mostly unsuccessful as those approached exhibited an unwillingness to talk, citing safety concerns both for talking about the Raid and for fear of what was going to happen to their recorded voices.¹⁵² To overcome this challenge of unequal gender representation and to create a platform that will enable engagement with both male and female perspectives, I decided to use one of the TRC testimonies offered by a woman relating to the Maseru Raid. This gendered reporting might be looked at through thinking that history as a discipline is still saddled with this gender biased problematic.

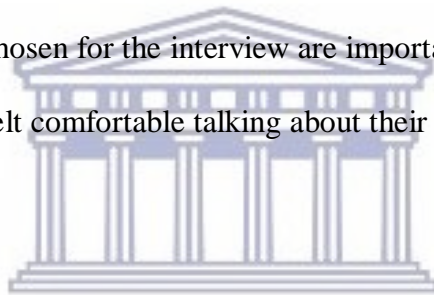
Due to the limited number of interviewees and the unbalanced gender representation of the respondents, this engagement should not be viewed as being demonstrative of those who had something to say about the Raid but rather as an initial step towards opening up dialogue to talk about this event and other similar events in the history of Lesotho.¹⁵³ It is suggested that the limited number of interviewees not be viewed as challenge but as a way that indicates that in Lesotho, there is still a need for a broader un-gendered engagement with moments that are

¹⁵² The concern with what was going to happen to their voices emanates from the traditional belief that people who practice witchcraft can take control of one's mind through taking an imprint of their voice. This is a myth that is still very common even in urban areas in the country. This fear emerges from the myth that when it is dark and/or you are not able to see who you are talking to, one is cautioned to keep quiet to ward off evil that might 'take their voices and gain access to their innermost thoughts' and thus lead to them losing their minds. So, by not agreeing to be interviewed, the women were protecting their sanity.

¹⁵³ The events referred in this instance are those that have taken place from the 1970s, when former Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan suspended the constitution and ruled by decree, to probably the present. For a more detailed discussion books by Stephen Gill, Bernard Makalo Khaketla, Pule and Thabane (eds), can be consulted.

deemed to be of importance.¹⁵⁴ Additionally, the call for the inclusion of a Basotho voice is important in contesting the current perception that this Raid was more important in South Africa than in the country that was raided.¹⁵⁵ Thus this project should be seen to position the event as being of equal important to Lesotho as in South Africa.

Of the five interviews conducted, two were with one interlocutor. The first interview was conducted at a restaurant in the city centre and the second one took place at the interviewee's home. Of the remaining three, the one interlocutor was adamant that he did not want to be interviewed at his house and alternatively choose his favourite 'drinking hole', not too far from his home, for the interview venue. The remaining two interviewees were interviewed in their homes. I believe the locations chosen for the interview are important as I feel they say something about where each interlocutor felt comfortable talking about their experiences and recollections.



Mapping the events of the Maseru Raid through the lens of witnesses

The fact that the interviewees were given an opportunity to choose where they were to be interviewed was an unconscious act on my part; however, it proved to be beneficial because each

¹⁵⁴ After protracted mulling over whether the 1982 Raid is an important moment in the history of independent Lesotho, I have come to the realisation that denoting the *important-ness* of events can be a subjective endeavour. To elucidate further, it occurred to me that I, as an individual, view this event as an important moment in the local history of the country, however this might not be the case for other Basotho. My view that this Raid is important might emerge from a quest to deal with the fact that at the time of the Raid I was in the middle of the 'war-zone' (I lived a few houses from one of the houses attacked and the SADF troops took a shortcut through my yard to reach their target) and could have easily lost my life as the limited literature available shows that most of those who lost their lives were asleep when the attacks happened. The discomfiture emerges out of the fact that I was unconscious of the attacks as they were taking place, as I was asleep; and only realized the carnage in the morning and this research is my way of my attempting to understand and deal with the event through getting an idea of how those who experienced it recall the event.

¹⁵⁵ This perception emerges from the position that was discussed in the first chapter that the Raid became important mostly in cases where South African officials visited Lesotho. This position points to what is deemed as a valorising of the South African experience of the Raid at the expense of the experiences of Basotho who also experienced the Raid. The exercise of interviewing Basotho nationals is thus a step towards contributing to a more nuanced reading and understanding of the event.

interviewee was able to select a space in which they were comfortable. This made the process of interviewing more amenable to the respondents and, I believe, resulted in them creating an important space for them to share their views. That two of the interviewees chose to be interviewed in public spaces, is something I regard as peculiar because the general perception is that a person's home is a space where one is able to feel safe and secure.

These interviews were analysed using narrative analysis technique. Narrative analysis in the sense in which it is used in this project is borrowed from Lynn Abrams's rendering of the term. She posits that this analysis is a way to identify and explain ways that people construct and make use of stories to interpret their world.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, the understanding is that the narratives are used in everyday interactions with one another; therefore it deals not only with what the story contains but also how it is told. In the telling of particular stories individuals go beyond merely talking about the 'sequence of events or fact'; how they arrange the story and the nuances that emerge is itself part of the particular story they tell. This brings me to the conviction that utilizing narrative analysis will result in a richer interpretation and understanding of the stories told as it is not only focuses on 'mining' the interview for data, but also explores other qualitative dimensions. In addition, questions that were posed concentrated on the individual's experience and were used in the interpretation of each interview for this research project. The questions asked provided key insights into the broader memory paradox in which people find themselves and the roles they identify with within this drama that they seek to both inhabit and challenge.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Abrams, Lynn, *Oral History Theory*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2016), pp 106 – 114.

¹⁵⁷ The term was taken from Kim Wale's paper 'Unpacking a Memory Paradox: Memories of Violence and the limits of Transitional Justice' Trauma, Memory and Representations of the Past Paper presented on 4 May 2015 in Post-Doctoral Lecture Series <https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider47/trauma-forgiveness-and-reconciliation->

Brief biographies of the interlocutors/relaters

Meshu Mokitimi is a ninety year Mosotho man, who in his long and illustrious life was a political activist and a very strong proponent of the ideas of Ntsu Mokhehle. His political activism began in the time when Lesotho was still under British rule and he was very active in the political arena when the BCP was engaged in fighting for self-determination for the country and during the period of autocratic rule by the Jonathan led BNP.¹⁵⁸ Although he seems to have substantially curtailed his political activism, which began in the 1950s, he is still very active as a visual artist (probably one of the most famous artists Lesotho has produced, evidenced by his works hanging in museums all over the world and also being owned by prominent people like Bill Clinton). I approached him to talk about the Raid because firstly, he was still active as a political activist at the time, and secondly, he witnessed helicopters dropping some of the SADF soldiers in the residential area of Ha Hooхло, not too far from the Maseru Border post. Additionally, Mr Mokitimi's experiences as a political activist - during the transition period, to Lesotho's self-determination -- may have shaped his response to the event and thus would provide insight into how this has shaped his outlook, particularly with regard to the socio-political historical setting of the country. He is the only person of those interviewed who did not request anonymity.

The second interviewee given the alias Thabo¹⁵⁹, is a forty-three year old husband and father who has lived at Lithabaneng, about 15km outside of Maseru, from the late 1970s. At the time of

studies-documents/ufs-mellon-foundation-studies-documents/dr-kim-186-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=0, accessed 28 January 2017.

¹⁵⁸ Some of the incidents of these periods, which Meshu found to be of importance to him are recorded in his recently published (2016) oral biography. See Meshu Mokitimi, *A life lived in love*, Self-published, Maseru, 2016.

¹⁵⁹ This interviewee was given an alias because he was unwilling to participate in the interview if his name was published. That some interviewees were unwilling to use their names in the interviews is another trajectory that brings to the fore the complex interaction with events such as the 1982 invasion and the argued

the Raid he was a nine year and lived with his parents and siblings in this township, not too far from Moscow House, colloquially referred to as such in struggle circles because it was the home of MK commander, Chris Hani. He agreed to the interview on condition that his identity was not revealed. He felt that talking about the Raid was a sensitive issue and felt that in order to protect his and his family's safety he should remain anonymous. The interest in talking to Thabo was his proximity to Hani's home, which placed him at the epicentre given that Hani was a key target. I also felt it would be worthwhile to explore – through the eyes and experiences of a then minor (as I also was) – whether there was a noticeable difference in how he related his recollections as opposed to how those who were already adults at this time did, and how I remembered it. This also enabled me to explore whether age and gender, at the time of the event, could be seen as contributing factor to how one talks about their experience in the present-day.

The third interview was conducted with another elderly (estimated to be in the mid-70s) Mosotho man (given the alias Mosia)¹⁶⁰ who has been a resident of Lithabaneng from the late 1970s to present. At the time of the Raid, as at present, he was working at the city's main market place as a carpenter. My interest in interviewing him in part emerges from the interest he portrayed when I told him about what my research entailed. Interestingly he is the one who volunteered to talk about this event, going to the extent of asking me why I had not asked him for an interview. He also professed to know some of the prominent refugees who were in Lesotho at the time, some of who lost their lives in the Raid.¹⁶¹ Over several informal meetings prior to conducting the interview, he proved to be a prolific story-teller who was at pains to share how he experienced this event. He also let slip that during the 1980s, he used his carpentry skills to build

silences that saddle such incidents in the country even though these interviews took place at a time when Lesotho has supposedly shifted to democracy.

¹⁶⁰ An alias given to the second interlocutor as he also did not want his identity to be revealed.

¹⁶¹ During the interview, Mosia mentions that he knew one Mavimbela, who was one of the victims of this invasion. Interview with Mosia , 22 June 2016.

coffee tables with false bottoms for some of the ANC refugees with whom he interacted. Mosia was willing to talk to me about his recollections on two conditions firstly, that his identity is not revealed; secondly that I interview him during the weekend as he did not want me to go to his home or his workplace. I acceded to these conditions without asking why this should be case although my interest was piqued by the reasons behind these conditions.

The sole female interviewee that I spoke to is a sixty-eight-year-old seamstress, who now resides in Virginia in the Free State province, although she still has family in Lesotho. At the time of the Raid she was a resident of Lithabaneng township and also had rooms for rent, some of which were rented to refugees. She too was willing to talk to me only on condition that her identity remained hidden. Not only this, but she was the only female interlocutor who when approached remembered the attacks, particularly on Hani's house and agreed to be interviewed.

The last interview, which is utilised, is taken from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Human Rights Violations Hearings. The testimony is given by Mrs Mrwanqana, who was in the same house when her ex-Robben Islander husband and two children were shot and killed in the 1982 Raid. Her recollections, even though recalled under very different conditions¹⁶², are thus important as she witnessed the Raid and will be used together with 'Matefo's¹⁶³ interview to explore the way in which women discuss the event.

As indicated at the beginning of this section the conception of constructing a particular narrative of the event can in some ways be equated with the construction of an individual's biography. This initially requires the evocation of memory, because the understanding is that the event's narrative involves engaging with happenings that took place not in the present but in the

¹⁶² Unlike the interviews done for this project, which were held in private and took the form of life history interviews, the TRC's Gross Human Violation hearings were mainly focussed on violations and were held in public, framed by the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

¹⁶³ An alias.

past. To start off with, as is the norm, the process of the any biography, begins with its inception or the time of its birth. For the purposes of this paper, and for the witnesses the birth of the event can be said to be the actual time when the event took place, between 00h30 and 01h30¹⁶⁴ - on the 9th of December 1982.

On the 9 December 1982 after midnight, the SADF crossed the Lesotho border, with the sole purpose of pre-emptively eliminating ANC members, whom they claimed were planning to perform acts of terror in South Africa.¹⁶⁵ The Raid was carried out through concentrating on twelve targets that were located in different parts of Maseru, with the furthest being about fifteen kilometres out of the city centre. Based on various reports, in the country, the region and internationally, the duration of the Raid is contested. Some newspaper articles report that it was over in about sixty minutes, while others point to the helicopters that came to pick the South African soldiers only arriving around 08h30 in the morning.¹⁶⁶

In the interview with Meshu Mokitimi, he had this to say about that night:

'... I realised later that this was what was happening, but at that time I remember seeing these guys carrying guns, coming towards my direction...They were a distance away but I could see them. Now I thought they were ehh...LLA¹⁶⁷ guys. What came to my mind was that Mokhehle has arrived... and I thought, yes! Our freedom has arrived... but then because I had no inkling as to whether they were LLA and we had heard that the LLA had guns and so forth and so on...the question of the South Africans invading us was out...completely out! I just thought here are our

¹⁶⁴ There are conflicting reports as to when the Raid commenced, but for the purposes of this paper, this is the time period that is used. Opting for this timeframe emerges from the interviews that I have conducted .

¹⁶⁵ This operation was code named 'Operation Blanket' and was sanctioned by the South African Defence Force

¹⁶⁶ Newspaper articles in *The Citizen*, *The Rand Daily Mail*, *The Saturday Day*, *The Friend*, to name a few

¹⁶⁷ Lesotho Liberation Army – the then outlawed BCP's military arm.

*guys coming to rescue us, and I nearly shouted. Then I realised that no, these are...That these are white people, so I hid behind a tree...I actually climbed this tree...'*¹⁶⁸

Mosia, on the other hand had this to say:

'...when I eventually looked outside to see who it was, no man! I heard the sound of gunfire coming from the direction of the airport...there near the stadium... And my first thought was that he was being toppled today, Leabua was being toppled today! We were happy thinking that finally they are overthrowing the government...that is what I was thinking – that finally Leabua is being toppled...'

Interviewer: *...you were happy?*

Mosia: *...yes, me in my heart. At the time I was with my wife in the room...I do not think I was the only one with this kind of thinking. Most of us were thinking that the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) had finished him...'*¹⁶⁹

When relating the events of the night, the third person interviewed, alias Mosia, portrayed signs of someone with a lot of charisma and with enough life experience to be confident in being interviewed. During the dialogue, he went through moments of extreme confidence, bordering on bravado. There was a pronounced change in personality when he spoke about the night of the Raid and the self-deprecating response to his own assertion that before he realised that it was the 'Boers' invading them, he had thought that the LLA had come to their rescue through saying '*...we were happy thinking that finally they are overthrowing the government...'*'; piqued my interest. In responding to the question of whether he was happy with the potential of the government being overthrown, he responded in the affirmative, although this feeling was not

¹⁶⁸ Transcript of the follow up interview with Meshu Mokitimi, 31 August 2016.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Mosia conducted by researcher on 27 June 2016.

verbalised as it was something he ‘felt in [his] heart’. This to me suggests moments of thinking that the BCP’s army was ‘coming to liberate’ Basotho, not only that but the interview also presented some helplessness that Mosia experienced brought about by the situation that was unfolding in the country at the time. This sense of helplessness bordering on vulnerability is contrary to what is generally espoused by masculinity and this, I argue, was a traumatic moment in the life of Mosia, even though he attempted to be nonchalant about it. As a way to reclaim his masculinity that was brought about by the out of character helplessness and vulnerability brought about by the invasion and the status quo in the country at that point in time, Mosia also showed signs bravery when he said:

‘I even started thinking that if something like this happened again, I would send my wife and children to their mother’s home at Ha Mofoka, I would stay alone in the house... No, I had told myself that I would stay at my house and die here.’

In the same way Mr Mokitimi also pointed out that there was a commotion while walking home from a night out in the town, and when he saw men with guns, the first thought that came to his mind was that Ntsu Mokhehle’s LLA had come to their rescue. This statement is followed by some laughter – that can be interpreted to mean that the expectation was laughable. Not only this, but the expectation –of being rescued from the situation that was prevailing in the country at the time points to some form of inability – of males inside the country- to change the political situation in the country. This inferred sense of not being able to do anything and relying on parties outside the country, in a patriarchal society can be argued to present a form of weakness on the side of those in the centre of the attacks, brought forth by the events of that night.

Additionally, he [Mr Mokitimi] indicates that once he realised that the men with guns were not the ‘good guys’ but were in fact ‘white people’, he actually hid by climbing up a tree.

Other than the act of climbing the tree being indicative of fear, it suggests an inability to protect himself and those close to him. He also turned this moment of helplessness into a positive one through positioning himself above what was happening on the ground, effectively physically removing himself from the carnage that was taking place on the ground.

It is worth noting that in both interviews the respondents (Mr Mokitimi and Mosia) talk about the outlawed and exiled LLA, ‘rescuing’ them from what can be construed to be a less than ideal life in Lesotho. At the time leading to the Raid and after, there were several reports by the Prime Minister of Lesotho and the President of South Africa each alleging that the other was harbouring ‘fugitives’¹⁷⁰ and that the people who had fled their countries should be handed over to their respective governments.

When talking about what they remember about the night in question, all of those interviewed spoke about hearing the sound of helicopters in the middle of the night:

Meshu: So, I walked from that point to Ha Hoohlo. When I was about three quarters of the way, just before I got into the house, there were some sounds ...and I realised later that these were helicopters...;

Thabo: We heard a strange sound that we retrospectively made out to be a helicopter...the sound was circling around the area that we were living at... it made a thundering sound, a periodical pounding (like thump, thump, thump) ...;

Mosia: I heard the sound of a helicopter that sounded like it was coming from the direction of town coming here...the sound was so big that it felt like the sound was reverberating in my feet even though I was lying down...

¹⁷⁰ The ‘fugitives’ referred to here are understood to be the African National Congress (then outlawed in South Africa and the Lesotho Liberation Army, outlawed in Lesotho).

'Matefo: we just heard a something like a plane making a very loud noise above us, the sound was very noisy...

These utterances are very peculiar as they appear at almost a similar moment of the interview process for all the respondents, that is, at the beginning, prior to the narrators continuing with what they did after hearing them. This peculiarity seems quiet profound to me because I believe that in relating an event I would begin with what I perceived as the most important moment. If I go along with this perception, it would mean that for the interviewees, the most important moment is what they heard on that night not what the repercussions - of people losing their lives - of these unfamiliar activities and sounds in the middle of the night were. One other way of looking at this can be that talking about the helicopters is important as the commandos who were responsible for the carnage that ensued were transported across the country's borders by these same helicopters. It is only Mrs Mrwanqana who did not specifically talk about a helicopter, instead just indicating that '... the Boers from South Africa came during the night, it was at 1 am, I could hear that there was a sound outside and then I woke my husband up and said I hear a sound outside...'¹⁷¹

Additionally, in all the recorded interviews, all those interviewed made use of almost the same descriptions in recalling the night of the Raid. Firstly, all the respondents talk about hearing the sound of helicopters flying overhead, at the time when the night should have been still.

'Matefo, the female respondent, initially talks about hearing 'something like a plane' making a very loud noise overhead and then continues by mentioning hearing this 'thing' more clearly when 'it' went to Hani's house, a house which was 'hit (by gunshots) to bits and pieces'. Aside

¹⁷¹ Excerpt from Mrs. Mrwanqana's testimony at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Hearings, 26 June, 1996, Port Elizabeth, <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans%5Chrype2/mpongosh.htm>. Accessed on 27 November 2017.

from the sound of helicopters, the respondents point out the sound of gunfire, all the respondents also talk about the dust that they saw caused either by the planes that were flying above their homes or by the guns that were shot after the invading commandos landed. Two of the interviewees made sounds that they deemed were similar to the ones they heard.

Although a cursory look at the interviews suggests that trauma is not evident, I would however argue that this is not case. The act of remembering the sounds, the dust, of hiding even though people were in their homes points to the abnormality of the situation. Barusch, citing Pierre Nora, indicates that there are ‘as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural and yet individual while history is universal, belongs to everyone and no one, hence its claim to be more authoritative thus somewhat ‘above’ memory.¹⁷² That being said, it is still beneficial to view these varied memories as having the potential to contribute meaningfully to the history-writing endeavour, enriching it through its very multiplicity.

When 'Matefo spoke about the refugees who used to live in one of her rental rooms, she initially recalled in passing that there were ‘Two (South African) boys sharing a room who used to live in my rental room’, who disappeared not long after the Raid. She went on to show that after her move to Welkom, South Africa, she recalled seeing one of these ‘boys’ who was grown up and ‘now was a man who had a name’. What was powerful about this recollection is that while in Lesotho, these refugees were nameless, just ‘Two boys’, but when she saw him in later on, she also used the name that he used while in Lesotho, although she quickly pointed out that

¹⁷²A.S Barusch,, ‘Refining the Narrative Turn: When does story-telling become research?’ *Gerontological Society of American*, Nov. 16, 2012, San Diego, p.9. <http://amandabarusch.com/wp-content/uploads/Refining-the-Narrative-Turn.pdf> accessed 13 September 2016.

he was no longer using the alias as ‘he now has a name because he is now a man who had a family and I did not know him anymore’. The move from remembering a nameless ‘boy’ to a ‘man’ who has a name denotes a powerful moment of giving an identity to someone who was a random ‘boy’, but is now a ‘man’.

During the interview with ‘Matefo, she went through moments of talking about what she recalled with respect to the Raid and her family and her recollections were more or less similar to what the other interlocutors spoke about.

’Matefo: ...we just heard a something like a plane making a very loud noise above us, the sound was very noisy...

Mosia: ...as we were sleeping I heard something like a knock on my door...it sounded like someone was knocking on my door (actually makes the knocking – tap tap...tap tap...tap tap - sound for the recorder) ...knocking again on the door and this time doing so very forcefully...when I eventually looked outside to see who it was, no man! I heard the sound of gunfire coming from the direction of the airport...there near the stadium.

Thabo: We heard a strange sound that we retrospectively made out to be a helicopter... the sound was circling around the area that we were living at... it made a thundering sound, a periodical pounding (like thump, thump, thump) ...there were also sounds like what sounded like gunfire.

Meshu: When I was about three quarters of the way, just before I got into the house, there were some sounds ...and I realised later that these were helicopters...

All the people interviewed similarly spoke about the noise and sounds made by the helicopters that were dropping the commandos at different locations in the city centre.

Other than that, she [’Matefo] also mentioned some rumours that she had heard regarding the Raid. She pointed out that she recalled having heard from the rumour mill that there was going to be an attempt on Hani’s life. Apparently this rumour was doing the rounds a few days before the December Raid. In the recording, she actually whispers when talking about the rumoured assassination attempt, but does not indicate from where she heard it. Furthermore, she also spoke about the possible informer who gave the attackers a list of the South African refugees through dangling the piece of paper from her office window although it was not clear how the attackers got hold of this list.

’Matefo: ... also, there is a woman by the name of Maleseteli¹⁷³ the one who ratted them out by using a book that was tied with a belt...

Interviewer: ...where was this book tied to?

’Matefo: ...just like you are looking at this window...the book was dangled from the window using a belt maybe from her dress...that is how it was found out that she is the one who caused this large number of people to be killed like this...I think I can still point her out if I came across her...

Interviewer: Uh huh, so this book had the names of these people...

’Matefo: ...of these refugees, yes. And also where they lived...

This was striking in that her account oscillated between the factual and the make-believe. It is my presumption that she used rumours to attempt to explain occurrences that she could not make sense of through ordinary means.

¹⁷³ An alias.

That is not to say that the perception that there were individuals who were responsible for pointing out the targeted areas was not a plausible one because the layout of most residential areas in Maseru at the time was not planned. In order for the SADF to know where exactly to go in the absence of street signs, the only way to get access to the targeted houses without people familiar with the areas pointing them out. Thus the alleged story of the book dangling from a belt might have been 'Matefo's fantastical attempt to understand how the South African commandos were able to wreak such havoc.

Although all the interlocutors were asked to relate the events of the night of 9 December, it became evident that the historical memory of women differed somewhat from that of men in the sense that what is viewed as important in relating past events is different, as proven by a comparison of interviews between males and females. To further clarify this assertion, reviewing the interviews with Mr Mokitimi and Mosia, it becomes evident that the way they relate the Raid is done with emphasis on the actions they did as opposed to the emotional aspects of how they related their experiences. Additionally, the women's 'embeddedness in familial life' can potentially shape their view of the world and what they regard as important in relating past events.

Both Mosia and Meshu talk about being outside while the Raid was ongoing. Meshu indicates that he '... actually climbed this tree and at that time...they [the neighbours watching through the window] watched me going up the tree and these soldiers just went past the tree...' ¹⁷⁴ whilst Mosia claims that 'as [he] got outside (to check who was knocking on his door), [he] realised that now the sound of gunshots was coming from the other side, from the side opposite the airport...[it] sounded like the sounds were coming from the side where Mr Hani's

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Meshu conducted by researcher on 22 June 2016.

house was located...'.¹⁷⁵ Adversely, 'Matefo mentions that she and a friend of hers '... hid the kids, hers and mine, under the bed together...she [the friend] ran to my house when the disturbance started and we were all together in my house... the children were all hidden under the bed...it was very scary for us because we were both expecting children when this happened...'¹⁷⁶

Based on the above recollections, it is becoming evident that for Meshu and Mosia what was important was looking at what was unfolding outside whilst for 'Matefo and her friend keeping their families' safe was more important than seeing what was happening outside. Furthermore, 'Matefo points out that they were scared [not for themselves] but for children they were carrying as '...[they] were both expecting children...' when the Raid took place.

Although the interview was mainly about the political situation prevailing in the late 1970s to early 1980s, Mr Mokitimi made it a point to talk about what he felt we should be discussing through inserting into his narrative the presence of the BCP, into a milieu that concentrated on the BNP and its relationship with apartheid South Africa. .

Meshu: There was an incident that one will never understand. I remember Ntate Ntsu saying about it that was the saddest day of his life. All the documentation of the BCP was collected from all over Lesotho, even at the office. All the literature...all the books...all...and there was a bonfire here at the...there used to be an abattoir here and Mr Fredrick Roche and other police people...they burnt those books¹⁷⁷

From the above excerpt he talks about how the state destroyed the opposition's documentation, but rather than engaging with his feelings when this destruction happened he

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Mosia conducted by researcher on the 27 June 2016

¹⁷⁶ Interview with 'Matefo conducted by researcher on the 28 August 2016

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Mr Mokitimi, 22 June 2016.

makes mention of what the founder of the BCP related as his feelings towards this incident, indicating that he recalls ‘...Ntate Ntsu saying that...[the incident of burning of the books] was the saddest day of his life.’ In so doing, it can be argued that Mr Mokitimi is trying to put back into the history of the country, the presence of Ntsu Mokhehle during the fight towards democracy, whose existence was somewhat removed by the burning of opposition’s documentation which was sanctioned by the state through the Paramilitary Force (Frederick Roche) and tainted by the allegations of (Mokhehle) cooperation with apartheid South Africa.

Trauma and the Maseru Raid

Although the analysis of the interviews may point to the interlocutors not exhibiting any explicit elements of trauma, which might lead to one thinking that they are not ideal respondents for the purposes of this project, or that trauma is not a useful concept in this context. I would argue that the very parameters that are deemed to be absent in this instance actually point to the potentiality of a trauma so deeply embedded in the psyche of respondents that they do not recognise or do not feel the requirement to engage with their trauma. On the other hand, it can also be argued that evidence of trauma being absent in this instance is because those interviewed are unable to voice their trauma as the language of trauma is not available to them. In this case talking about the event equates to disturbing previously covered memories that have resulted in the possibility of remembering what had previously been forgotten. An example of this is evident in the response that Mosia – a man in his mid-seventies – gave to question of whether he remembered anything about the night of the 9 December 1982, to which he responded ‘you make me remember things I have not thought about in a long time’.¹⁷⁸ Beginning with the wording

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Mosia conducted by researcher on the 27 June 2016.

‘you make me...’ points to some reluctance on his part, of talking about things that he had repressed and had not thought about ‘in a long time’.

A deeper engagement with the interviews conducted with Mr. Mokitimi also brought forth elements of the traumatic, even though he did not explicitly say so. The words that he used in talking about the Raid, referring to it as an ‘unfortunate incident’ that resulted in Basotho in general being saddled with ‘belated stress’, a term which could also be understood to refer to post traumatic stress arising from the event. The Raid can be argued to have brought forth elements of the traumatic as it is an event that to some extent interfered with the dreams of the people affected. On the other hand, Meshu was also at pains to emphasise the inherent resilience that Basotho are imbued with. In response to a request to outline how the Raid affected Basotho, he had this to say:

Meshu: ...there are shockwaves that people go through and they don’t necessarily change people but they shock people for certain period, but they do come back to their senses and continue their lifestyles as pre-determined by their destiny...you know they are destined to think like that...and they will continue, but ravages like those...they do leave certain impressions which from time to time they [survivors] will always remember that...this thing happened. But they cannot delve on that and change their lives because of that, they’ll just say that was a bad memory...that was a bad incident and we hope nothing like that happens again. This, I am convinced that the nature of our people as a mountain people makes them to be resilient and also not to over-exaggerate an incident...¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Meshu conducted by researcher on 31 August 2016.

Perusing the interviews conducted, it becomes evident that apart from the similarities that emerge out of these interviews, there are also recollections unique to each interlocutor. For example, one of the older male interlocutors, Meshu recalls the moment when one of his neighbours peers out through and is killed as a result. 'Matefo on the other hand brings to light a list of the refugees that was allegedly provided by a woman who worked in one of the government offices in exchange for monetary compensation. 'Matefo's response in this regard, arguably seeks to put the blame on the traitor who was allegedly working with the SADF commandos. Thabo recalls the adverse effects of the Raid on animals, that led to dogs fleeing from their homes in the aftermath of the commotion, whilst Mosia remembers walking through the neighbourhood and witnessing the death and devastation that was brought about by the Raid. The above examples are indicative of the multiplicity of recollections while discussing a similar event.

From the interview conducted with the only female interlocutor, there emerged some elements that had not been evident in the other interviews. Firstly, she claimed to remember the Raid 'very well' but rather than relating what of the Raid she remembered so well, she proceeded to talk about other things, like the fact that that at that time she was expecting a child and also that the Hani family house was next to site that that she and her husband had bought. She also pointed out that the Raid was not the first time that Chris Hani's house was attacked by South Africa. When asked to recount what she remembered, she seemed more interested in talking more about the people rather than about the Raid itself. She was also at pains to point out a site that her family lost that was close to Moscow House. It might appear that 'Matefo's inability to talk in more detail about her experience of the night does not tie in with the objectives of the project. However, this failure on her part is indicative of trauma that emerges from her going to

the moment when she still had a residential site (which was no longer there because the neighbours who knew about it were removed as a result of their house being shot ‘to bits and pieces’), the loss of a family home because of the actions of the dawn Raid. Greenspan’s discussion about the ‘irretrievable’ silence¹⁸⁰ of the survivors and/or witnesses is exhibited here by the absence of personal memory of the Raid, but rather of what affects her personally, in essence speaking about what she has lost. This is also evident in her utterance that ‘...some of [the victims] were killed very brutally...’¹⁸¹ looking at this observations along Greenspan’s elucidation, ’Matefo forgoes speaking about her experiences but rather highlights what happened to those who cannot speak for themselves.

The prospect of witnessing the unfolding of the Raid results in those experiencing it being aware that this event is threatening their lives (this threat is evidenced by hiding under the bed, climbing a tree and thinking of moving one’s family to the rural areas¹⁸²) and this is undoubtedly traumatic. In the case of an event like the Maseru Raid, this helplessness and powerlessness experienced by those witnessing ‘takes away the individual’s ability to react and take action’.¹⁸³ This inability to react leads to a rupture that shatters self and Van der Merve and Madikizela point to this as the ‘unmaking of the self’ – a psychic rupture that tears apart the psyche of the person experiencing the trauma. Attempting to re-make the un-made self, results in the

¹⁸⁰ Henry Greenspan, ‘The unsaid, the incommunicable, the unbearable and the irretrievable’, *Oral History Review*, Volume 41, Issue 2, Winter/Spring 2014, p. 241.

¹⁸¹ Interview with ’Matefo.

¹⁸² See interviews with Meshu, Mosia ’Matefo and Thabo. These came up when relating what they did when they realised that they were under attack on the night of 9 December 1982.

¹⁸³ Chris van der Merve and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *Narrating our Healing: Perspectives on Working through Trauma* (Newcastle: Cambridge, 2007).

individual using various ways to talk about the traumatic incident in a way that does not show evidence of vulnerability, especially in male interlocutors.¹⁸⁴

It is my contention that what could be denoted as a silencing or repression is in Lesotho actually a failure to deal with events of the past. This is because unlike in other areas like Argentina and South Africa the said events, which denote political instability, have not ceased and this makes it difficult to deal with a past in a present that is still saddled with actions that are more or less similar to those that could be remembered through memorialisation or commemoration.

In response to why he thinks that little or nothing has been said about the Raid from a Lesotho perspective, one of the interviewees responded by saying that Basotho are ‘not sensationalists’. Not only did he paint a picture of Basotho as being a people who shun melodrama, he also indicated that Basotho as ‘mountain people’ are not prone to taking sides in the cases of disagreements.¹⁸⁵ By doing this he not only spoke for himself as an individual but also on behalf of the nation as a collective and in essence confirming the contention that narratives are constructed through the interaction with individual, social and public space that the narrator feels he and the collective should be in at in that point in time. It not only points to the above assertion but also that the way in which the narrative is constructed points to the

¹⁸⁴ As attested to by Chris van der Merve and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *Narrating our Healing: Perspectives on Working through Trauma* (Newcastle: Cambridge, 2007).

¹⁸⁵ He went to extent of comparing Lesotho to Switzerland in attempting to show the neutrality that Basotho as citizens of the ‘Switzerland of Africa’ are people who do not publicize their pain and sorrow.

interviewee essentially ‘narrating the nation’¹⁸⁶, as later in the interview he complained about what he felt was a void in the practice of writing among Basotho at that time.

In the follow up interview with Mokitimi, in response to the question of how he recalled his reaction to the Raid, he did not respond to this question but rather to how Basotho as a collective reacted. He did this by reiterating his position that Basotho as ‘a mountain people who were not sensationalists’ were not prone to ‘over-exaggeration’ and that they were resilient. Thus although they (Basotho) acknowledged that the Raid was an unfortunate event that was ‘cardinally uncalled for’ and people experienced what he termed ‘shockwaves’ this did not curtail their daily activities.

Meshu: ...you know they are destined to think like that...and they will continue [with their lives], but ravages like those...they do leave certain impressions which from time to time they will always remember that...[the Raid] happened. But they cannot delve on that and change their lives because of that, they’ll just say that was a bad memory...that was a bad incident and we hope nothing like that happens again. This, I am convinced that the nature of our people as a mountain people makes them to be resilient and also not to over-exaggerate an incident...

Chapter Conclusion

¹⁸⁶ This expression emerges from Graham Smith and Peter Jackson’s article ‘Narrating the nation: the ‘imagined community’ of Ukrainians in Bradford’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol 25, No 3 (1999) p. 368, where the author evokes Homi Bhabha’s argument through indicating that ‘imagining the nation’ involves a process of narration—telling a national story from a particular perspective and for a specific audience. Doing so is thus viewed as an active process in the creation and publicising of fields of meaning and symbols of national life. The interviewee in positing a substantiation of the interviewer’s perceived silence of the event is essentially creating/recreating a national identity that seems to have been left by the way side.

The main objective of this chapter was to explore the recollections of select individuals in relation to the 1982 Maseru Raid within the methodological approach outlined at the start of the chapter.

The act of recording and writing what has been overlooked and thus not available in the public or scholarly field is at the centre of this project. This exercise entails not only engaging with what has [not] been written about the event in question – through exploring both primary and secondary sources- but also requiring the assistance of witnesses, those willing to talk about their recollections. The people interviewed, although separated by age and gender, point to some similarities in how they talk about the Raid. This, to a point, indicates that some of their recollections can be corroborated with what was reported in the media. This brings forth the question of whether what they are relating is also shaped subconsciously from what they read or heard in the media¹⁸⁷. Even if this were so, and though they recall the same events, their position and mode of narration is unique.

As a way to conclude this chapter, the following main arguments have emerged. Firstly, through engaging with the individuals, both those who agreed to be interviewed and those who did not, it becomes apparent that the Raid is not as silenced or repressed as initially thought. This is evidenced by the fact that most people still remember the details, and what might be happening is that they do not have an appropriate platform to enable them to fully engage with the Raid and other similar events that took place in the country. A question that begs an answer is whether Basotho are indeed as ‘non-sensational’, as attested to by one of the interlocutors. Could it be that there are rather limited platforms that ordinary Basotho can access to enable

¹⁸⁷ See Alesandro Portelli’s article, ‘The Massacre at the Fosse Ardeatine: History, Myth and Symbol’ in Katherine Hodgkin and Susan Radstone (eds) *History, memory, nation: Contested Pasts* (Oxford: Routledge, 2017), pp.29-41.

them to talk, analyse and work through this and similar events in the recent history of Lesotho? What does this lack point to regarding the history writing/recording endeavour in the country?

Secondly, as posited by scholars in the field of trauma studies, trauma can manifest in different ways and in the case of the limited number of Basotho engaged with in undertaking this project, it becomes visible in their perceived reticence or inability to identify and talk about traumatic events. This perception became evident in two of the interlocutors who indicated that there is no need for the commemoration of this and subsequent raids, the reason being that they did not want to be reminded of these unfortunate times. Also, based on the interviews conducted, it seems as if in the absence of an 'official' narrative of the period in general and the Raid in particular, the interlocutors were at pains to create their own version of how the events unfolded.

Although there is little evidence of a concerted effort on the side of state officials of constructing a particular narrative, I would argue that this failure/unwillingness resulted in there being a narrative of collective silencing and forgetting. There was however a seepage of news reports from Lesotho's only neighbour, South Africa, and this has in turn translated into what I view as accounting for some of the similarities in the interviewees' recollections. Whilst the impetus of this project is not to confirm or refute personal experiences, it is equally important to explore what could have brought them about. On the one hand these may be brought about by the length of time that has elapsed between the event and its recollections, and also the age of the interviewees then as opposed to now. On the other, inconsistencies might have been brought about by what each interviewee read or heard regarding the subject matter. Fourthly, the seeming unwillingness of some people, particularly women to take part in recorded interviews also brings one to question whether they were evoking their agency in their refusals or was rather a manifestation of a fear of not knowing or understanding why this exercise was being undertaken

now. On the other hand women's reluctance in taking part in the interview process might be brought about by the patriarchal notion that women should not be involved in politics. A point that should be recalled, having been discussed in the preceding chapter, is that politics in Lesotho during the period of the Raid was saddled with disappearances of those vocal in their disapproval of the political status quo at the time.

Lastly, the unstable political situation in Lesotho, which seem to be continuing today, albeit in a different manner, might have contributed to what is viewed as limitations in the nation-state and citizens' ability to engage and work through troubling moments in a place's history.



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Conclusion

‘In public pronouncement, nothing is ever cooking in Lesotho until it burns, no matter how acrid the smoke’.¹⁸⁸

The main aim of this mini-thesis was to conduct an exploration of how the raids undertaken by apartheid’s security forces on neighbouring countries, especially those that have been mostly silent in those countries, might have affected those who witnessed them. This exercise was taken through concentrating on the 1982 Maseru Raid, code named ‘Operation Blanket’ by the SADF by gathering media and other reports and recording and analysing oral history narratives of those who experienced it. An associated aim was to explore how traumatic events in a person's life might affect the manner in which they talk about the event in its aftermath. The presence of secrets and silences that emerge out of what witnesses are willing to talk about freely, through exploring how they talk about their experiences.

At the commencement of this project, the perception I had was that this Raid was a traumatic incident that might be explored through engaging with literature that was available in the sphere of oral history as way of writing back into history the event of the 9 December 1982. This was brought on by the realisation that the Raid was somewhat silenced, particularly in Lesotho both in the period before the return to democratic rule and in post-1993 democratic dispensation. However, the exercise of historians writing back into history events that they think should be included in the narrative of place is a contentious issue; to move from this problematic, I argue

¹⁸⁸ David B. Coplan, ‘In a state of emergency: Democracy, power and nationalist discourse in Lesotho’, *Transformation*, Vol 26 ,No 2 (1995), Michigan State University, African e-Journals Project, <http://pdfproc.lib.msu.edu/?file=/DMC/African%20Journals/pdfs/transformation/tran026/tran026004.pdf> accessed 2 February 2017, p 47.

that rather than doing this, the unfolding of the Raid and how it is recalled be explored in line with the critical history discourse- which not only concentrates about a re-insertion but goes beyond that to explore the making of the archive and also argues for a more richer rendering of the historical narrative through understanding the power of representation rather than just a re-insertion – writing back into the history of place – what has been silenced/repressed.

In undertaking the research project, it became evident that the perceived silences and the outcomes go much deeper than my previous assumption that the silence was a traumatic silence. While trauma was not without significance, a deeper look at the political climate in Lesotho in the period leading to and after the Raid brought forth an angle that this unwillingness or apathy might provide a more compelling explanation of the resultant silences. Added to this it becomes apparent that the relationship between Lesotho and South Africa was not as clear cut as attested to in the literature produced in these two countries at that time. Based on this, the unwillingness to talk about the event both in the public and official spheres can be read in more ways than merely looking at the trauma and its associated notions of the ‘unspeakable’ and the ‘incommunicable’¹⁸⁹.

The articles that appeared in newspapers and periodicals in the years after the Raid, particularly in the period after 1994, point to an increase in what is written about as pointed out in Chapter 2. In taking a closer look at some of these articles, it however becomes clear that the articles are in most cases contributions by ordinary South Africans, who could be argued not to

¹⁸⁹ The terms; ‘unspeakable’ and ‘incommunicable’; are borrowed from Henry Greenspan’s rendering of them indicating that interviews with individuals concentrated on possible traumatic moments result in different types of silences that the interviewee that are brought about by each individual’s complex interaction with the event at the time of the interview process. See Henry Greenpan, ‘The Unsaid, the Incommunicable, the Unbearable and the Irretrievable’ *Oral History Review* Vol 41, Issue 1, Winter/Spring 2014.

be journalists or academics.¹⁹⁰ The content of some of these articles present an uncomfortable emphasis of a call to ‘not forget’ the Raid. Both in Lesotho and in South Africa the obsession with calls not to forget the Raid can be interpreted as a fear of events such as this being obliterated from collective memory.

The ambiguous relationship between Lesotho’s main political parties (the Basotho National Party and the Basotho Congress Party) and South Africa’s apartheid government may be one of the reasons that the governments both in the period immediately after the Raid and in the return to democracy were and seemingly still are reluctant to talk about the Raid. This reluctance becomes evident in what I perceive as a lacuna in the archive of the Raid, hence my argument that power brokers can contribute to the broader narrative of a place.

In the period of the first democratic elections in South Africa, narratives about the Raid appeared to be more common in the country. In Lesotho, the case has proven to be the adverse as the status quo of having a limited engagement with the event continued. Although there is some evidence of some interaction with the Raid, there was still official silence at this time. This brings one to thinking that there may be greater freedom in voicing one’s thoughts in this democratic setting. There is, however, still a silence emanating from the now ruling ANC government. As Phyllis Naidoo contends ‘[t]he collective memory of the movement has wiped out the memory of these and other comrades...[and] [t]ime has obliterated 30 comrades and 12 Basotho from our collective memory’.¹⁹¹ Additionally the articles coming out of South Africa brings forth elements of a discomfiture on the side of the writers regarding what they see as a collective amnesia of the Raid. From this it can be deduced that the Raid seems to be more

¹⁹⁰ For example, articles by G. Khedama, Kananelo Sexwale and

¹⁹¹ Phyllis Naidoo, *Le Rona re Batho: An Account of the 1982 Maseru Masacre*, (1992) <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/introduction-16>.

indelible in the memories of individuals as opposed to collective memory not only in Lesotho as initially premised before undertaking this project but to some extent also in South Africa.

A deeper reading of the interviews conducted with interlocutors in relation to how and what they remember brought forward a trajectory that had not been anticipated: namely, the question of whether it is worthwhile to explore the Raid not in its singularity but rather as a component of the overall political climate in the country at the time. That being said, and based on the events that were happening in Lesotho at time, which included unexplained killings, disappearances and maiming through torture of politically active people in the country at the time, can thus be argued as period that was fraught with trauma. The silences that have been discussed as a ubiquitous thread throughout this piece of work can be argued to be a result of either the shame on the side of the rulers for being somewhat complicit in some of these violent acts or disappointment of broader public's inability deal with and overcome these insidious acts.

My argument is that what could be identified as a silence or repression in other places is in Lesotho actually a failure to deal with events of the recent past. This is because unlike in areas like South Africa and Argentina the said events have not ceased and this makes it difficult to deal with a past in a present that is still saddled with actions that are more or less similar to those that they would expect to commemorate and thus claim to never have them repeated. Furthermore, as this Raid took place at the time when the BNP was in power, this investigation took place at the time when Lesotho was governed by a procession of Congress parties, offshoots of Ntsu Mokhehle's BCP. As Wiesfelder posits. '[h]aving zealously defended his primacy against all challenges to his leadership...Mokhehle commands almost superstitious respect among the rank-and-file...[and] what seems more probable is that a B.C.P. regime would utilise the same nation-state format as its predecessor's personnel. Few new rulers take serious steps to dismantle the

institutions which they have so diligently struggled to control. Mokhehle seems unlikely to be an unlikely exception'.¹⁹² This excerpt is probably the substantiation as to why the Raid seems so silent in Lesotho's collective memory.



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¹⁹²Richard Weisfelder, 'The Basotho Nation-State: What Legacy for the Future?' *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 19, No. 2 (Jun., 1981), pp. 221-256 pp. 252-253

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