E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS)
ISSN – Online 2720-7722 | Print 2821-8949
Volume 5 Issue 15 November Special Issue 2024 pp 43-57
Available online at: https://noyam.org/journals/ehass/
DOI: https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20245154

An Assessment of Gender Stereotypes and Messages contained in Zulu Traditional Wedding songs – A Case Study of the Mandeni Community

Zinhle Primrose Nkosi[1], Alexandra O'Neil [2], Rejoice Lindiwe Gugu Cele [1] & Silindile Nonkululeko Thethwayo[1]

[1] Languages & Arts Education, School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
[2] Indiana University, Bloomington, USA.

ABSTRACT

Traditional wedding songs provide a source of entertainment to wedding attendees while communicating messages. However, some songs depict problematic themes, including references to negative stereotypes about men and women in marriages. The primary purpose of this paper was to investigate messages contained in isiZulu wedding songs in Mandeni, KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. Secondly, it investigated the gender stereotypes contained in isiZulu wedding songs. This study used qualitative case study methods, under the interpretive paradigm. Twenty Zulu traditional wedding songs are used in the analysis. The Oppression Concept was used as a theoretical framework. The study revealed that some Zulu wedding songs contain messages that are intimidating to the youth and women, as they portray and endorse challenges that women face once they are married. This study also illuminated the gender stereotypes found in these songs, such as the portrayal of an unfaithful and abusive husband, female dependence on men for survival, obligatory submission of wives to husbands, and the normalisation of abuse from in-laws. The study concluded that Zulu wedding songs have the potential to discourage the youth from entering into marriages. The study recommended that young members of the Zulu communities and wedding participants should be discerning in which songs they sing, instead opting to sing the traditional wedding songs that do not contain gender stereotypes or recomposing The analysis of Zulu wedding songs is necessary to balance the constructive and destructive impact of these songs, that sections of the songs should better reflect modern Zulu values that support the liberation of women.

Keywords: *Gender Stereotypes, Wedding Songs, Zulu Culture, Ubuciko Bomlomo (Zulul oral art), Oppression, Messages In Songs, Marriage.*

Correspondence:
Zinhle Primrose Nkosi
Email: nkosizp@gmail.com / Nkosiz@ukzn.ac.za

Publication History:
Received:
28th June, 2024
Accepted:
20th November, 2024
Published online:
11th December, 2024

INTRODUCTION

As a part of the Zulu tradition of *ubuciko bomlomo*, translated as Zulu oral art, many major life milestones are celebrated in Zulu culture through songs. Music, as a form of media, holds immense potential to shape or disrupt societal ideologies. It can stimulate contemplation or amplify existing beliefs about marriage, including wedding ceremonies. This paper therefore argues that music, particularly wedding songs, has

the ability to either advance or impede progress toward the manner in which the institution of marriage and the wedding ceremony are perceived.

Zulu wedding songs encode an abundance of information about cultural beliefs and morals. Wedding songs are of particular interest because traditional gender roles and expectations for marriages often contradict modern values. While it is important to acknowledge and chronicle traditional gender roles and beliefs of a culture, these beliefs can be at odds with the circumstances of modern people and used to mask modern gender stereotypes. At the same time, other messages in Zulu traditional wedding songs are still considered to be sage advice for couples and give couples confidence in building their marriage. This dichotomy necessitates a thorough analysis of the messages contained in wedding songs, with special attention paid to any inclusion of gender stereotypes. This study aims to address this need by analysing the messages in Zulu wedding songs sung in Mandini and presenting a qualitative content analysis of the sampled songs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature on Zulu wedding songs highlights the importance of wedding songs for preserving moral and social values in Zulu communities, especially as other traditional wedding practices, like paying *ilobolo*, a bride-wealth traditionally paid using cattle, are increasingly difficult.[1] Further, Dlamini-Myeni and Mbokazi note that wedding songs have immense value in educating couples and providing a medium for community members to give advice.[2] Their findings reveal that although a cursory glance at Zulu wedding songs would give the impression that most of them are meant just to entertain people, a deeper, more careful examination of them shows critical elements of communication and education among the Zulu people. Further, in preliminary work on gender and Zulu songs, Zondi notes that Zulu women are able to use songs as a way to express themselves, but that these songs also evidence their oppression by men and other women in their community.[3]

Literature on Zulu weddings also grapples with contradictions between tradition and modernity. Posel and Rudwick suggest that the declining marriage rate amongst Zulu men and women is partially attributed to a strong respect for the continued observation of paying *ilobolo* which is inaccessible for many due to limited economic opportunity and low wages being available for African men in South Africa.[4]

Similar work on the role of gender and messaging in wedding songs has been done for other cultures. Dlamini studied the role of gender in Lutsango and Siswati wedding songs and argued that women use wedding songs as a way to subvert traditional gender expectations, with songs giving voice to the thoughts of women in a context that is void of the heteropatriarchy.[5] A study by Ndebele on Ndebele wedding songs defines the utility of wedding songs in their ability to lower divorce rates and resolve marital conflicts through the advice given in the lyrics.[6] Contrastingly, Nhlekisana surveys the place of gender in Setswana wedding songs, emphasising the process of marriage in Setswana culture as a union of families wherein wedding songs perpetuate patriarchal expectations and gender roles.[7] According to Monnig, all marriages in the context of an African cultural worldview are a contract between two families rather than between two individuals.[8] The success of such a marriage becomes thus the concern of all members of the two groups.

[1] Phalandwa Abraham Mulaudzi, "The Role of Indigenous Weddings Songs in Modern Times," *Muziki* 10, no.1(2013):42–51.
[2] Bongephiwe Dlamini-Myeni and Samkelisiwe Diligence Mbokazi, "Ubuciko Bomlomo: Wedding Songs as an Effective Means of Communication and Education among The Zulu People.," *E-BANGI Journal* 21, no. 1 (2024).
[3] N. Zondi, "Bahlabelelelani–Why Do They Sing?: Gender and Power in Contemporary Women's Songs ," Taylor & Francis, 2008.
[4] Dorrit Posel and Stephanie Rudwick, "Marriage and Bridewealth (Ilobolo) in Contemporary Zulu Society," *African Studies Review* 57, no. 2 (2014): 51–72.
[5] Nonhlanhla Dlamini, "Power, Sexuality and Subversion in Lutsango and Siswati Traditional Wedding Songs" (2009).
[6] Lickel Ndebele, "Negotiating Marital Challenges through Classic Wedding Songs: A Case of the Ndebele in Zimbabwe," *South African Journal of African Languages* 42, no. 3 (September 2, 2022): 272–82, https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2022.2132692.
[7] Rosaleen Oabona Brankie Nhlekisana, *Wedding Songs in Botswana: A Reflection of the Dynamics of Marriage, Gender Relations and Familial Conflicts* (Indiana University, 2005).
[8] H.O. Monnig, *The Pedi*, 2nd ed. (Cape Town: National Book Printers, 1978).

Many studies have revealed that women are frequently portrayed negatively in literary texts; [9] and in music.[10] Most researchers who focus on the portrayal of women concur that women are often presented unfairly and stereotypically in these modes.[11] For example, Mapengo, Chauke and Sebola did a content analysis of stereotypical representations of women in selected Xitsonga songs.[12] In the stereotypes used, women's identities and roles are largely associated with weaknesses, greed, immorality, poor intelligence, promiscuity, laziness and lack of credibility, and opportunism, often referred to as being a "gold-digger."

Sortum, Nabukonde, and Achieng found that women in contemporary song genres in the Nandi language of Kenya are generally not depicted in powerful roles, thereby limiting how they are perceived in society.[13] Shandil did a feminist analysis of Indo-Fijian wedding songs (vivah ke geet) in Fiji and in the diaspora, demonstrating that songs reflect patriarchal ideologies, with an emphasis on stereotypical feminine attributes, particularly with respect to certain cultural and ethnic contexts.[14] She states that even though the songs are performed through women's voices, the language largely fails to embody the qualities required to function as subversive to phallic ideologies. For Pakistani-Urdu wedding songs, Zaidi analysed lyrics to reveal gender-based stereotypes and themes of gender hierarchy.[15]

Masele and Lakshamanan examined manifestations of power and marginality in Sukuma marriage practices in Tanzania.[16] The results obtained showed that Sukuma marriage songs present and disseminate imbalanced gender roles. It was further found that these songs impliedly reinforce gender inequality leading to women's subordination and men's authority over women in Sukuma society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study uses the concept 'oppression' as the conceptual framework. The word 'oppress', according to *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary,* means the unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power and is also a sense of being weighed down in body or mind. To Glasberg, oppression refers to the subjugation and marginalisation of specific groups of people, such as women, people of colour, religious communities, and more.[17] A common conception of social oppression is seen when a single group unjustly takes advantage of, and exercises power over another group, using dominance and subordination.

McAfee mentions that one of the types of oppression is gender oppression.[18] This agrees with Postl who states that historically, gender oppression occurred through the domination and subordination of men over women.[19] Pharr talks about 'the norm' and 'the other'.[20] She states that those who oppress others define themselves as the norm, and those whom they oppress, are defined as 'the other'. Pharr observes that those who are not part of the norm are marginalised and oppressed. According to Pharr, those defined as 'the other', are seen as abnormal, deviant, inferior, marginalised, and not "right". Pharr comments that one of the elements of oppression is stereotyping and blaming the victim wrongfully. Moreover, Freire

[9] Norma Masuku, "The Depiction of Mkabayi: A Review of Her Praise Poem," *South African Journal of African Languages* 29, no. 2 (2009): 121–30; Moffat Sebola, "Female Images and Voices in Kanakana Yvonne Ladzani's Selected Poetry," *African Journal of Gender, Society & Development* 10, no. 1 (2021): 211.

[10] K. Lembethe, "25 Women in Music," 2013, https://journalismiziko.dut.ac.za/feature-review/25-of-women-in-music/; Helga Neidhart and Paul Carlin, "Pathways, Incentives and Barriers for Women Aspiring to Principalship in Australian Catholic Schools," *Retrieved October* 2 (2003): 2007.

[11] Masuku, "The Depiction of Mkabayi: A Review of Her Praise Poem."

[12] Tintswalo Mapengo, Osborn Risimati Chauke, and Moffat Sebola, "Stereotypical Representations of Women in Some Selected Xitsonga Songs: A Content Analysis," *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development (Formerly Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa)* 13, no. 1 (March 1, 2024): 5–25, https://doi.org/10.31920/2634-3622/2024/v13n1a1.

[13] B J Sortum, L Nabukonde, and L Achieng, "Unmasking Gender Stereotypes in Nandi Contemporary Song Genre and Implications on Social Cohesion and Equity: A Case of Mwalimu Kendagor Limo's Songs," *Journal of Popular Education in Africa* 4, no.9(2020):112–24.

[14] V.V. Shandil, "A Feminist Analysis of Vivah Ke Geet (Wedding Songs)," *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: Sociology & Culture* 20, no. 10 (2020): 1–16.

[15] Syeda Bushra Zaidi, "Gender Roles in Pakistani-Urdu Wedding Song," *JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies)* 3, no. 1 (2016): 1–27.

[16] Esther J Masele and Venkatachalam Lakshmanan, "Manifestations of Power and Marginality in Marriage Practices: A Qualitative Analysis of Sukuma Songs in Tanzania," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 22, no. 1 (2021): 386–400.

[17] Shannon Glasberg and Deric Davita, *Political Sociology: Oppression, Resistance, and the State* (United States of America: Sage Publication Inc., 2011).

[18] N. McAfee, " Feminist Philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Metaphysics Research Lab: Stanford University, 2018).

[19] G. Postl, *Language, Writing, and Gender Differences. The Routledge Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017).

[20] S. Pharr, *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism* (California: Chardon Press, 1997).

remarks that where oppression exists, violence is initiated by those who oppress, who exploit, who fail to recognize others as persons, and not by those who are oppressed, exploited, and unrecognised.[21] Freire also talks about the oppression of the oppressed by another oppressed.[22] With this, he suggests that sometimes those who fall under the oppressed group, also happen to see themselves as superior to others, thus oppressing and exploiting them because they regard themselves as better than them.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach, and it operated under the interpretivist paradigm. Content analysis was used to analyse Zulu traditional wedding songs, analysing messages and meanings contained in the songs, so as to find out how, according to the songs, is marriage life perceived, and what type of stereotypes are contained in the wedding songs. These traditional Zulu wedding songs are sung in Mandeni, a district in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. Such a study can be located under the African indigenous language songs and the messages they contain, and more specifically, gender stereotyping in isiZulu language traditional wedding songs. Therefore, the major objective of this study was to examine the gender stereotypes associated with both men and women in marriages, as well as the meanings with regard to the marriage institution as expressed in the discourse of Zulu traditional wedding songs. Twenty songs were selected, and out of those, eighteen were short-listed for analysis based on the suitability of the content. These songs were sung during one wedding ceremony. Some were sung by the groom's side, while some by the bride's side.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study. Five gender stereotypes were revealed in the data generated: (1) Women as servants in the household, (2) Women should submit to abusive husbands, (3) Women are "gold diggers," (4) Women's worth is their ability to have children, and (5) Women are immoral. Further, gendered stereotypes are echoed in songs depicting the relationship between in-laws and women marrying into the family, which are depicted in the subsections (6) An unwelcoming reception from the in-laws, (7) Lamentation from the mother-of-the-bride for her daughter, and (8) The new bride's reaction to her unwelcoming mother-in-law. These themes are discussed subsequently.

1. *Women as servants in the household*

Some wedding songs portray a married woman as a servant in the betrothed household rather than as a happy wife. Instead of lyricising the acceptance of the bride as a complete member of the family, these songs portray the woman as the new servant for the family, demonstrated by the below example:

Umakot' ungowethu! (The bride is ours)
Siyavuma. (We agree)
Ungowethu ngempela! (Of course, she is ours)
Siyavuma. (We agree)
Uzosiwashel'asiphekele. (She will wash and cook for us)
Siyavuma. (We agree)
Sithi helele, helele, siyavuma! (*We say hurray, hurray, we agree*)
Asimufun'emaphathini (*We do not want her at the parties*)
Asimufuni emabhishi (*We do not want her on the beaches*)
Asimufuni emadisko (*We do not want her in the discos*)
Simufun'emabhodweni (*We want her in the pots*)
Siyavuma. (*We agree*)
Sithi helele, helele, siyavuma! (*We say hurray, hurray, we agree*!)

As seen in the lyrics of the above song, this song constricts the movement of the woman by outlining permissible contexts in which she can exist. Specifically, this woman is positionally bound to the kitchen with the expectation that she will do the household chores, like cooking and cleaning. Further,

[21] Paulo Freire, "2000, Pedagogy of the Oppressed," *Continuum, New York*, 1970.
[22] Freire, "2000, Pedagogy of the Oppressed."

her ability to participate in recreation is restricted, as indicated by the lyrics expressing disapproval of the woman going to the disco, parties, or beaches. During the olden days, and even today, particularly in rural areas where Zulu tradition is practised extensively, a bride found in places like these is viewed as a very weak, immoral woman.

As the song progresses, rules are introduced, such as "*asimufuni emabhulukweni*" and "*asimufuni ethwizile,*" translated as "we do not want her to wear pants" and "we do not want her to tweeze." Conservative Zulu people abiding by traditional customs do not easily accept women wearing pants.[23] This sentiment parallels that of conservative Christianity in which some argue that women are forbidden from wearing pants in the Bible. However, authors like Catterall reiterate that women's trousers have long been a symbol of freedom in the Western world.[24] This presents a conflict in interpretation of the wearing of pants, as some interpret women wearing pants as a Western imposition and others understand it to be symbolic of their freedom and equality. However, if the main justification for banning women from wearing pants is in protest to the interjection of Western culture, its application demonstrates gender bias, as neither women nor men wore Western-style pants traditionally, yet conservative cultural pushback to Zulu men wearing pants is imperceptible.

Conservative Zulu people have similar reactions to cosmetic routines, such as tweezing or the application of makeup, as evidenced by the aforementioned lyrics. According to Mafra *et al*., women wearing makeup are perceived by others as more attractive, competent, dominant, and socially prestigious.[25] While individual frequency and quantity of application differ, many women in that study noted the role of makeup in boosting their self-esteem and receiving more positive attention. By discouraging cosmetic routines, women are robbed of the ability to experience these benefits to both self and societal perception. As both cosmetic routines and wearing pants are visually evident, the use of group shaming for these practices in wedding songs also creates a context for harassment of women who do not abide by these restrictions, thus perpetuating gender-based violence and hate towards women.

Wedding songs from the point of view of the bride further support this interpretation. For example, in the below song excerpt, the bride implores her husband about how she will be treated in their new home. She progresses to express her expectation that he will cast her aside to be the slave for his sisters. See the lyrics below:

We Vus'uyongenzenjani? (Hey, Vusie, what will you do with me?) X 2
Uyongenz'isigqila sezingane zakwenu. (You will make me your sisters' slave) X 2

These lyrics represent that the work expected to be performed by the bride surpasses reasonable expectations for housework. Additionally, the husband is not just complicit in this unfair assignment of household work, but he is expected to endorse it. In this way, the wedding songs normalise the overburdening of wives and the practice of favouring blood relations over your marital partner, a theme that is further discussed in subsequent sections about in-laws.

Expectations for the assignment of unpaid work to married women are apparent in many wedding songs. Below is a wedding song outlining the first task of the day for a married woman. It says by the time the rooster crows two or three times, the married woman in the house must wake up to go and fetch water.

Iqhude we ma (The rooster, hey mah)
Lakhala kabili kathathu (It crowed twice, thrice)
Sekusil'amanz'awekho ma (It is now dawn, there is no water)
Sekusil'amanz'awekho! (It is now dawn, there is no water)

[23] Rebecca Davis, "Trial of the trousers: African women fight for pants to be on the dress code." Sunday Times, 2017. https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/lifestyle/fashion-and-beauty/2017-08-12-trial-of-the-trousers-african-women-fight-for-pants-to-be-on-the-dress-code/ R. Byaruhanga, Masculinity and HIV: The impact of men's masculinities on risky behaviour in Umgungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa [Master's dissertation, Gothenburg University].(2018). GUPEA http://hdl.handle.net/2077/63191; Solomon Olusola Ademiluka, "The prohibition of cross-dressing in Deuteronomy 22:5 as a basis for the controversy among churches in Nigeria on female wearing of trousers." Old Testament Essays, 26(1), (2013); 9-19. http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1010-99192013000100001&lng=en&tlng=en.

[24] Catterall S., " Women's Trousers and Such," Humanities: The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities, 2020, https://www.neh.gov/article/womens-trousers-and-such.

[25] Anthonieta Looman Mafra et al., "The Contrasting Effects of Body Image and Self-Esteem in the Makeup Usage," *PLoS One* 17, no. 3 (2022): e0265197.

Historically, water in Zulu homes was retrieved from the river or a fountain by women. In houses without a bride, this could be any of the women in the house. However, this duty was first and foremost assigned to the bride. This song mandates that there should always be water in the house if there is a bride in the house and outlines that it is the responsibility of the bride (*umakoti*) to ensure there is enough water. Upon returning to the house with the water it is expected that the *umakoti* will prepare food for the entire family and begin daily chores, removing the ability of the *umakoti* to enjoy restful sleep and relaxation. Sharma quotes a woman who states "*Daughters-in-law should not be treated as maidservants in the house. She should be respected as a member of the house and treated equally as the other members of the family*."[26] These words are in line with the lyrics of the song discussed above. The passing on of this expectation further demonstrates cyclic oppression, as Freire observes, whereby the oppressed (the mother-in-law and the sisters-in-law) becomes the oppressor to another oppressed (the daughter-in-law).[27]

2. Women as "gold diggers"

A portion of traditional Zulu wedding songs portray a woman as an opportunistic "gold-digger." These songs imply that the woman only loves her betrothed husband because of his material possessions. The following song depicts a woman as being happy to have a man in her life just because he has a car and money. When the song is performed the movements of the song further demonstrate that the woman is saying she will marry whichever man is wealthy. The accompanying movements and lyrics later on in the song further indicate that wealth is determined through the man having a car and money. The song below reads:

We bhuti (Hey, brother!) X 2
We bhuti, mina ngihamba nawe! (Hey, brother! I am going with you!)
Ayi we bhuti, we bhuti ngihamba nawe (Hey, brother! I am going with you!)
Ngihamba nawe wedwa, (I am going with you alone) X 2
Mina ngihamba nawe! (*I am going with you*)

This parallels songs that depict a man who does not have cows as a failure in life, teaching women that the value of a man is derived from his ownership of cows, the traditional indicator of wealth in Zulu culture.[28] The language even has a proverb that suggests this: "*Ubuhle bendoda yizinkomo zayo*" (The beauty of a man is his cows). Such words encourage a woman to love a man based solely on his wealth as opposed to genuine love. The lyrics of the song not only suggest wealth based on the number of cows, but any form of wealth that the man might possess. While this wealth may attract a woman, he wants to be with in life, this song shows the woman as materialistically making this the only condition of her affection. Songs like the three below are a testament to this point:

1. *Ngeke ngimqome, (I will never love)*
   Umahlalel' (an unemployed/poor man)
   Ongenankomo (who does not have cows)
   Esibayeni! (in the kraal)

2. *Ubuhle bendoda 'zinkomo zayo. (The beauty of a man is his cows)*
   'zungalibali ntombazane. (Do not forget, girl)
   Uzuziphathe kakuhle. (Behave well)
   Emzini wakho ntombazane. (In the family you are married to, girl)

3. *Wesibali azibuy'ezakwethu (Hey brother-in-law, bring them back)*
   Ziphi na lezo nkomo ezasala kwaCele? (Where are the cows that were
   Outstanding from the Cele family?)
   Wangilobolelan'izinkom'ungenazo? (Why did you pay the bride's price for me
   if you did not have cows?)
   Wangilobola ngengcikangcika. (You paid a shaky bride's price for me)

[26] Nandita Sharma, I am a member of the family, not a slave for your convenience and pleasure!Women's Web. (2017). https://www.womensweb.in/2017/05/i-am-family-member-not-a-slave/
[27] Freire, "2000, Pedagogy of the Oppressed."
[28] Posel and Rudwick, "Marriage and Bridewealth (Ilobolo) in Contemporary Zulu Society."

All of the above songs represent women as dependent on a man for finances. Ballard states that over one-third of coupled women are financially dependent on their partner.[29] *The Holland Times* states that women were often financially dependent on their partners historically due to a lack of equal employment opportunities, limited access to education, and various social norms.[30] He remarks that this trend has changed in most parts of the world, as many women are actively contributing to their households or managing their finances independently. He goes on to say that the trend is reinforced as more women opt for education in the pursuit of gaining financial autonomy. Importantly, he notes that the change is not complete worldwide.

3. Husband is abusive towards his wife

The portrayal of an abusive husband is common in Zulu wedding songs as the songs often depict spousal abuse. Such songs portray a man as likely to cheat on his wife while he also subjects her to mental and physical abuse. Further, these songs culminate in their normalisation of abuse by emphasising the husband's ability to kill his wife. The following are two examples of such songs:

1. *We, mkhwenyan'ungadlali ngami!* x 5 (My husband, do not abuse me)

Another example is the one below:

2. *We sibali! (Hey, sister's husband)*
   Sibali sami! (My sister's husband)
   We sibali! (Hey, sister's husband)
   Mbuyisel'ekhaya. (Bring her back home)
   Usiz'ungamushayi! (Please help, do not hit her)
   Ungambulali! (Do not kill her)
   Um'ekwehlula! (If she fails you)
   Mbuyisel'ekhaya. (Bring her back home)

The first song depicts a woman euphemistically pleading with her husband to not abuse her, by using a word that directly translates to "play." This euphemistic speech softens the consequence of such abuse, as the culture discourages holding husbands responsible for spousal abuse. In the second song above, the lyrics are delivered from the perspective of a sister of the bride, pleading with her sister's husband that he must bring her back home if he is tired of her, and that he must not beat her up nor kill her if he gets fed up with her. Such songs are intimidating to the bride due to the depiction of physical abuse or murder, suggesting that the marriage institution is scary, as further seen in the song below:

Gana wesab'ukugana mntanami
(*Get married, you are scared to get married my child*)
Jika, le nqol'iyajika mntanami
(Turn back, this vehicle is turning back, my child)

The words in the above song are written from the vantage of the bride's parent, who is telling her daughter to go and get married, and that she must not be scared. This suggests that the bride is scared to get married and requires reassurance from her parents because marriage is not a happy union to enter. However, in the second line of this song "*Jika, le nqol'iyajika mntanami*" (Turn back, this vehicle is turning back, my child), the speaker seems to be agreeing with the doubts of the bride and tells her to turn around, equated to turning the vehicle around. This is also visible in the performance wherein the singers turn back, indicating a reversal from making the decision to pursue marriage. These lyrics depict women as inferior and helpless compared to men.

[29] J. Ballard, "Over One-Third of Coupled Women Are Financially Dependent on Their Partner," May 27, 2021, https://business.yougov.com/content/36144-financial-dependence-couples-partner-poll-data.
[30] The Holland Times, "Many Women Are Financially Dependent on Their Partners," The Holland Times, 2023, https://www.hollandtimes.nl/2023-edition-9-january/many-women-are-financially-dependent-on-their-partners/.

Dangor, Hoof and Scott argue that traditional South African society is extremely patriarchal in nature, and is still constrained within the limits of male supremacy.[31] Further, domestic violence and long-term subjugation to abusive relationships are some of the most common crimes committed against women in South Africa, and most frequently, women suffer this at the hands of their spouses.[32] Lambie *et al.*, remark that such crimes are underreported, and as a consequence, statistics on these crimes tend to be unreliable.[33] Further, these cases are often neglected or misinterpreted at the expense of the victim. This echoes established research showing that women disproportionately suffer from these forms of abuse and violence, especially by their partners.[34]

4. Women's worth as their ability to have children

As many Zulu women view children as a divine gift, it is unusual in Zulu culture for a married woman to not want to bear children. Understanding this as a majority opinion in Zulu culture, it is especially harmful to fault women for infertility problems. However, there are wedding songs specifically critiquing women who cannot bear children. These songs take the tone of teasing a woman for her inability to conceive. For example, the song:

Gabi gabi mfaz'ongazalanga
(You know nothing, woman who does not have children) x 2
Uyothi wabonani mfaz'ongazalanga
(What will you say you have seen, you woman who does not have children?)

As evidenced in the lyrics above, these songs can be painful and offensive to women suffering from infertility problems, suggesting infertility problems are in the control of women. Baloyi remarks that in many South African communities, women are seen as objects in the marriage, while their male counterparts are seen as agents.[35] Married women are blamed for challenges related to infertility, as a common belief in such patriarchal communities is that 'men cannot be infertile.' This aligns with Pharr's argument that one of the elements of oppression is stereotyping and wrongfully assigning blame to the victim.

Howe *et al*. studied the social and cultural meanings of infertility for men and women in Zambia, and found that fertility is necessary to be considered a full adult.[36] In Zambian culture, a real man or woman must be able to leave a legacy after death. Accusations of infertility are often placed on women without any medical evidence, while the inverse is rarely imposed upon men without extensive medical evidence. Dyer et al. state that while infertility is stigmatised for both genders, the social consequences for women are greater.[37] The same is reported by Fledderjohann and Barnes, Stellar *et al*., and Ofosu-Budu and Hanninen who confirm that, due to infertility problems, women experience increased domestic violence from husbands and in-laws, which sometimes result in death.[38] Therefore, it is unfair that womanhood is defined through motherhood.[39] This aligns with what Pharr mentions as one of the elements of oppression "stereotyping and blaming the victim wrongfully."

---

[31] Zubeda Dangor, "Woman Abuse in South Africa: An Exploratory Study," 1996.
[32] Lloyd Vogelman and Gillian Eagle, "Overcoming Endemic Violence against Women in South Africa," *Social Justice* 18, no. 1/2 (43-44 (1991): 209–29.
[33] Ian Lambie et al., "Resiliency in the Victim–Offender Cycle in Male Sexual Abuse," *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* 14 (2002): 31–48.
[34] Freire, "2000, Pedagogy of the Oppressed"; Pharr, *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*.
[35] Gift T. Baloyi, "An African Woman's Dilemma in The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives: A Bosadi Perspective on the Challenges and Pains of Infertility," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 40, no. 1 (October 24, 2019), https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v40i1.1957.
[36] S Howe et al., "The Social and Cultural Meanings of Infertility for Men and Women in Zambia: Legacy, Family and Divine Intervention," *Facts, Views & Vision in ObGyn* 12, no. 3 (2020): 185.
[37] Silke Dyer, Carl Lombard, and Zephne Van der Spuy, "Psychological Distress among Men Suffering from Couple Infertility in South Africa: A Quantitative Assessment," *Human Reproduction* 24, no. 11 (2009): 2821–26.
[38] Jasmine Fledderjohann and Liberty Walther Barnes, "Reimagining Infertility: A Critical Examination of Fertility Norms, Geopolitics and Survey Bias," *Health Policy and Planning* 33, no. 1 (2018): 34–40; Carmen Stellar et al., "A Systematic Review and Narrative Report of the Relationship between Infertility, Subfertility, and Intimate Partner Violence," *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 133, no. 1 (April 2016): 3–8, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgo.2015.08.012; Dorcas Ofosu-Budu and Vilma Hanninen, "Living as an Infertile Woman: The Case of Southern and Northern Ghana," *Reproductive Health* 17, no. 1 (December 20, 2020): 69, https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-020-00920-z.
[39] Sónia Silva, "Mothers of Solitude: Childlessness and Intersubjectivity in the Upper Zambezi," *Anthropology and Humanism* 34, no. 2 (2009): 179–202.

5. A woman as an immoral being

Some songs depict a woman as immoral, especially in the context of having multiple intimate relationships.

Linye we mah, isoka lami (I have one boyfriend) X2
Woza nalo we mah (Come with him, hey mom) X2
**Wen'uqamb' amanga, sibabili sibathathu (You are lying, we are two or three)*

The song above is a wedding song from the perspective of an unmarried female. The words are of a woman who prides herself on her good morals, evidenced by only having one boyfriend. However, the response to the statement, sung by the boys, refutes this by saying the girl is a liar and that she has two or three boyfriends. Such words suggest that a man needs to assess the morality of his bride and cannot trust her own account of her morality. A similar message is evidenced in the below song lyric:

Ngizwa bethi usuqomile (I hear people saying you now have another love affair)

Both songs portray a woman as immoral because she has multiple romantic partners. However, this depiction of immorality based on multiple premarital relationships is only aimed at women in Zulu wedding songs, never men. This echoes norms in Zulu society wherein a woman who has loved more than one man is judged, while a man who has multiple relationships is normalised.

In the Zulu language, the word '*isoka*' is used to compliment a man who has many girlfriends, expressing a positive connotation. On the contrary, a girl who has more than one intimate relationship has swears directed at her, such as '*isifebe*' (whore). This reflects Zulu societal norms, in which swears are directed at a woman for perceived 'weak morality,' while a man is not criticised, and might even be praised, for the same behaviour. These claims of immorality do not require evidence to harm women. For example, a woman could be blamed for having multiple love relationships simply because they were seen in the company of the opposite sex, whereas a male's masculinity is seen as validated through the experience with multiple women, both in polyamorous and monogamous relationships.

The synchronicity of the relationships is often irrelevant to discussions of morality for women in Zulu culture. Sometimes a female is negatively portrayed if she has been a partner to more than one person at separate times. This is demonstrative of a gender stereotype that favours males and condemns females for the exact same behaviour. This perception contributes to conflicts between the in-laws and the married woman. For example, in-laws may use prior information obtained about the woman's previous relationship to mock or gossip about her. Even in the case that the husband has similar experiences that the in-laws are aware of, the in-laws would not condemn or taunt the husband about his previous relationships in the same way. The above is in line with the stereotype that views multiple sexual experiences in males as evidence of manhood, demonstrating power and attractiveness to females, but forbids the same actions from females and instead considers having the former romantic partners as promiscuous.

6. An unwelcoming reception from the in-laws

Another theme found in Zulu wedding songs is the negative reception of the bride by the in-laws. Part of the traditional Zulu wedding is the practice of the bride giving gifts to her future in-law, called *umabo.* During this time, the youth accompany the bride, singing sets of songs reserved for the *umabo*. Below is an example of a common *umabo* song:

Aniboyilond'intandane kababa! (You should look after my father's orphan)
Aniboyilond'intandane. (You should look after my father's orphan)
Kusasa nizoth'uyeba, (Tomorrow you will say she steals)
Nith'uyathakatha, (You will say she is a witch)
Nith'udl'amaqand'umakoti. (You will say the bride eats eggs)
Umthetho wasemzini (This is the case with the groom's family)

The word '*intandane*' in the first two lines of the song means 'orphan,' but is not used in a literal sense, as this song does not discriminate if it is sung for a bride who has parents or not. The word is used figuratively to foreshadow the hardships the woman will confront as she becomes part of the new family. Orphan is used to metaphorically describe how the transition away from her family to the new family will

feel as if she has been neglected, as she will not have parents to protect her and will have nowhere to go. The singing group is pleading with the groom's family to not mistreat her. As seen in the next three lines, the bride is expected to face baseless accusations and character assaults from in-laws, such as witchcraft, theft, and eating eggs. Historically, a bride was not allowed to eat eggs. As eggs are considered high-value in the household, the new bride is not considered worthy of eating them and would thus resort to stealing the eggs. The married woman will have to shoulder the burden of these accusations and will be alienated from the rest of the family. The last line explains that this is a standard custom in the groom's family.

Another Zulu traditional song symbolising the hardships to be faced by the bride in her new family, that was analysed is the one with the following lyrics:

Wobekezela mntanomunt' wobekezela!

(You should persevere child of someone) x 2

Noma bekukhomba ngoseven wobekezela!

(Even if they point at you by seven, you should persevere) x 2

This song uses the gesture of pointing to represent in-laws accusing the married woman of misdeeds but urges her to persevere in spite of this. Such a song intimidates the bride, by telling her that she should both be prepared for and endure the hardships she will be confronted with when she lives with her husband's family. The meaning of "Even if they point at you by seven" is that even if they point at you for whatever wrong reasons, you should persevere. The significance of finger number seven here is that it is a pointing finger. One does not use any other finger to point at something, but that is the duty of finger number seven. Therefore, in this case, the in-laws- will point at the woman who is a bride, wrongfully accusing her of everything. With this, the abuse, the exploitation and the marginalisation of the daughter-in-law by the people of her gender becomes evident. This can be compared to what Freire calls 'the oppression of the oppressed by another oppressed (in this case, the mother-in-law and the sisters-in-law, against the daughter-in-law; all of which are females, representing the oppressed gender.

Ragavan and Iyengar; Tasnim *et al*. and *Waila* et al. have commented that in-laws are a significant source of domestic abuse in households.[40] These researchers express that violence by in-laws can be emotional, economic, sexual, or physical in nature. The advice to persevere in this song is dangerous, as it could be applied in situations involving domestic abuse, and, in some cases, this abuse can result in death. As any form of abuse should not be tolerated in a marriage, the lyrics of this song need to be discouraged, whether by substitution for something less harmful, removal from the song, or simply not singing this particular song.

Many studies have characterised the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship as negative in nature.[41] According to these researchers, daughters-in-law are generally characterised as relatively powerless, suffering from domination, criticism, and abuse at the hands of their mothers-in-law. This is supported by the study from Zahrakar *et al.* that evaluates the factors influencing conflict between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law in Iran.[42] Shih and Pyke note that the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship in Chinese families is portrayed as "inherently conflictual", while also Kandiyoti further states that the domination of the daughter-in-law by the mother-in-law is part of the patriarchal bargain.[43] This can be compared to what Pharr explains as 'the norm' and 'the other'. In this case, it becomes evident that the in-laws do not accept their daughter-in-law because she is not their blood relative, she comes from

[40] Maya Ragavan and Kirti Iyengar, "Violence Perpetrated by Mothers-in-Law in Northern India: Perceived Frequency, Acceptability, and Options for Survivors," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 35, no. 17–18 (September 15, 2020): 3308–30, https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517708759; Fowzia Tasnim et al., "Exposure to Domestic Violence and the Risk of Developing Depression within 6 Months Postpartum in Bangladesh," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 56, no. 7 (July 3, 2021): 1189–1200, https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-020-01998-3; Jacinta Mukulu Waila et al., "Physical Abuse Perpetrated by In-Laws: An Analysis of Nationally Representative Survey Data from 47 Low- and Middle-Income Countries," *Journal of Family Violence*, August 22, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-023-00620-9.

[41] L. Minturn, *Sita's Daughters: Coming out of Purdah* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993); A L Pagente, "Social Construction of a Mother-in-Law and Daughter-in-Law Relationship: A Case Study Perspective," *Science International* 35, no. 6 (2023): 815–18.

[42] Kianoush Zahrakar, Farshad Lavafpour Nouri, and Farshad Mohsenzadeh, "Exploring Factors Affecting Conflict between Daughter-in-Law and Mother-in-Law: A Qualitative Study," *International Journal of Health Sciences* 6, no. 7 (n.d.): 6340–67.

[43] Kristy Y Shih and Karen Pyke, "Power, Resistance, and Emotional Economies in Women's Relationships with Mothers-in-Law in Chinese Immigrant Families," *Journal of Family Issues* 31, no. 3 (2010): 333–57; Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender & Society* 2, no. 3 (1988): 274–90.

another family, and therefore, she is seen as 'the other'. As stated previously, Pharr observes that those who are not part of the norm are marginalised and oppressed, and are seen as abnormal, deviant, inferior, and not "right", and this is what the songs discussed above portray.

7. Lamentation from the mother-of-the-bride for her daughter

Another recurring theme found in Zulu wedding songs is the lamentation of the mother for the transition of her daughter into another home. Such songs depict the mother of the bride as grieving her daughter's future because her daughter will not have a mother in the new family and no one will be taking care of her. For example, the song:

Anibong'khulisela (Please bring her up)
Isencane le ngane (This child is still young)
Anibongilekelela (Please help me)
Isencane le ngane (This child is still young)

The above song is an instruction that the mother of the bride is giving to her in-laws, that they must take care of her daughter because she is still young, and they must help her (the mother) in the continued nurturing of her child. There is no doubt that, according to the lyrics of the song, the mother of the bride experiences distress at the idea of her daughter leaving the homestead to join another family, especially as she is concerned about the treatment of her daughter in the new family. The words in this song suggest that the mother-in-law is not expected to love the bride nor accept her as one of her own children, but that this is something the bride's mother must beg her daughter's future in-laws to do.

According to the Zulu culture, before leaving the homestead, the elders take the bride to the cattle kraal to report to the ancestors that she is now leaving the homestead to be with the other family, so the ancestors must look after her. This is a sad moment, rather than a happy one.[44] During this time, Zulu traditional hymns are sung by both young and old. These hymns are usually very touching, suggesting the sadness felt by the bride's family, as their loved one is leaving them to be with another family. This pain is exasperated by the unease they feel about how she will be accepted where she is going. The tension that occurs during this time expands past the mother to other members of the family. An example of the hymns sung during this time is the following:

"*Ubab'udayisile ngami, kubafokazana*" *(My father has sold me to strangers.)*

This 'selling of the bride' relates to the fact that, according to the Zulu culture, the groom pays the *ilobolo* (bride's price) to the bride's family, if he wants to marry her. This bride price must be paid in order for the groom to be able to marry the bride.[45]

8. The new bride's reaction to her unwelcoming mother-in-law

Another recurrent theme in Zulu wedding songs is the bride reacting to her unwelcoming mother-in-law. The mother-in-law dislikes her son's bride because she believes that her son could marry a better woman. These songs contain lyrics from the bride, pleading with the family to pray for her as she is going to leave with 'the woman who is not her mother,' referring to the mother-in-law. The following are examples of these songs:

Mamezala, ufun'onjan'umalokazana
(Mother-in-law-, what type of a daughter-in-law do you want?)
Ufun'onjani (What type do you want?)
Sish'umama kamkhwenyana (We mean the groom's mother)
Sivulelen'amasango singene (Open the gates for us to enter)

The above lyrics demonstrate that the mother-in-law is not expected to welcome her daughter-in-law. She instead is 'closing the gates', denoting that she does not want her daughter-in-law in the home. The bride responds to this hostility by asking what kind of a daughter-in-law she wants; pleading with her to open up gates for her. This is further supported in the below example.

[44] Umgosi and Media, "Traditional Zulu Wedding before Leaving Home She Pass by to the Kraal with Tears.," 2023, https://youtu.be/j5mr2zP9RkA?si=1spB0SzeyRX4_iSa.
[45] Posel and Rudwick, "Marriage and Bridewealth (Ilobolo) in Contemporary Zulu Society."

Ngithandaziseni zihlobo (Pray for me, relatives)
Ngiya kwamfaz'ongemama (I am going to the place of a woman who is not my mother)
Uzuz'iphathe kahle mntanomuntu; kunzima la uya khona
[Behave well, someone's child, it is difficult where you are going]

The content of these songs surely intimidates brides. Farouki contends that mother-in-law problems are worse for women in that the relationship between female in-laws is far more tense than the one between a man and his wife's mother.[46] This increased tension is the result of the bride leaving her home to live with the groom's family. For this reason, many modern married couples prefer to start their own families independent of their in-laws. This displays a gender stereotype, as it is not clear it is always the woman who leaves her home to stay with her new husband's family. To support gender equality, the woman and the man should be given equal voice in the decision of where to stay at the beginning of their marriage. In some cases, the decision to live separately from their mothers-in-law might reduce conflict, especially in a situation where the mother-in-law feels validated in openly voicing contempt for her son's marital choice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends that youth and wedding participants carefully consider the lyrics of the songs they are singing and evaluate whether the content of those lyrics contains constructive or destructive messages. If the message reinforces gender stereotypes that oppress women or perpetuates the standardisation of abusive relationships with in-laws, the singers should consider using a substitution of lyrics, omit that part of the song, or choose to sing one of the other Zulu wedding songs used for the marital event that they wish to celebrate. This process of revising Zulu wedding songs and reevaluating the canon in order to liberate women instead of oppressing them presents the opportunity to open intergenerational dialogue in Zulu culture.

CONCLUSION

The analysis presented in this paper evidences many problematic themes that are perpetuated in the lyrics of Zulu wedding songs. These themes both support gender stereotypes and normalise abusive relationships between in-laws and married women. While messages in Zulu wedding songs can be constructive to new couples, a subsection of these songs contribute to the oppression of women and their continued use at weddings must be re-evaluated. The younger generations have the ability to use their creativity to shape the wedding songs to suit the changing needs of modern Zulu people, contributing to the vibrant tradition started by Zulu ancestors wherein wedding songs are composed to both entertain and guide couples to a prosperous marriage.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ademiluka, Solomon Olusola. "The prohibition of cross-dressing in Deuteronomy 22:5 as a basis for the controversy among churches in Nigeria on female wearing of trousers." *Old Testament Essays,* 26(1), (2013); 9-19. http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1010-99192013000100001&lng=en&tlng=en.

Ballard, J. "Over One-Third of Coupled Women Are Financially Dependent on Their Partner," May 27, 2021. https://business.yougov.com/content/36144-financial-dependence-couples-partner-poll-data.

Baloyi, Gift T. "An African Woman's Dilemma in The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives: A Bosadi Perspective on the Challenges and Pains of Infertility." *Verbum et Ecclesia* 40, no. 1 (October 24, 2019). https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v40i1.1957.

Byaruhanga, R. Masculinity and HIV: The impact of men's masculinities on risky behaviour in Umgungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa [Master's dissertation, Gothenburg University]. (2018). GUPEA http://hdl.handle.net/2077/63191

[46] Farouki J., "Mother-in-Law Problems: They're Worse for Women," 2008, https://time.com/archive/6945080/mother-in-law-problems-theyre-worse-for-women/.

Catterall S. " Women's Trousers and Such." Humanities: The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities, 2020. https://www.neh.gov/article/womens-trousers-and-such.

Davis, Rebecca. "Trial of the trousers: African women fight for pants to be on the dress code." Sunday Times, 2017. https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/lifestyle/fashion-and-beauty/2017-08-12-trial-of-the-trousers-african-women-fight-for-pants-to-be-on-the-dress-code/

Dangor, Zubeda. "Woman Abuse in South Africa: An Exploratory Study," 1996.

Dlamini-Myeni, Bongephiwe, and Samkelisiwe Diligence Mbokazi. "Ubuciko Bomlomo: Wedding Songs as an Effective Means of Communication and Education among The Zulu People." *E-BANGI Journal* 21, no. 1 (2024).

Dlamini, Nonhlanhla. "Power, Sexuality and Subversion in Lutsango and Siswati Traditional Wedding Songs," 2009.

Dyer, Silke, Carl Lombard, and Zephne Van der Spuy. "Psychological Distress among Men Suffering from Couple Infertility in South Africa: A Quantitative Assessment." *Human Reproduction* 24, no. 11 (2009): 2821–26.

Farouki J. "Mother-in-Law Problems: They're Worse for Women," 2008. https://time.com/archive/6945080/mother-in-law-problems-theyre-worse-for-women/.

Fledderjohann, Jasmine, and Liberty Walther Barnes. "Reimagining Infertility: A Critical Examination of Fertility Norms, Geopolitics and Survey Bias." *Health Policy and Planning* 33, no. 1 (2018): 34–40.

Freire, Paulo. "2000, Pedagogy of the Oppressed." *Continuum, New York*, 1970.

Glasberg, Shannon, and Deric Davita. *Political Sociology: Oppression, Resistance, and the State*. United States of America: Sage Publication Inc., 2011.

Howe, S, J M Zulu, J Boivin, and T Gerrits. "The Social and Cultural Meanings of Infertility for Men and Women in Zambia: Legacy, Family and Divine Intervention." *Facts, Views & Vision in ObGyn* 12, no. 3 (2020): 185.

Kandiyoti, Deniz. "Bargaining with Patriarchy." *Gender & Society* 2, no. 3 (1988): 274–90.

Lambie, Ian, Fred Seymour, Alan Lee, and Peter Adams. "Resiliency in the Victim–Offender Cycle in Male Sexual Abuse." *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* 14 (2002): 31–48.

Lembethe, K. "25 Women in Music," 2013. https://journalismiziko.dut.ac.za/feature-review/25-of-women-in-music/.

Mafra, Anthonieta Looman, Caio S A Silva, Marco A C Varella, and Jaroslava V Valentova. "The Contrasting Effects of Body Image and Self-Esteem in the Makeup Usage." *PLoS One* 17, no. 3 (2022): e0265197.

Mapengo, Tintswalo, Osborn Risimati Chauke, and Moffat Sebola. "Stereotypical Representations of Women in Some Selected Xitsonga Songs: A Content Analysis." *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development (Formerly Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa)* 13, no. 1 (March 1, 2024): 5–25. https://doi.org/10.31920/2634-3622/2024/v13n1a1.

Masele, Esther J, and Venkatachalam Lakshmanan. "Manifestations of Power and Marginality in Marriage Practices: A Qualitative Analysis of Sukuma Songs in Tanzania." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 22, no. 1 (2021): 386–400.

Masuku, Norma. "The Depiction of Mkabayi: A Review of Her Praise Poem." *South African Journal of African Languages* 29, no. 2 (2009): 121–30.

McAfee, N. " Feminist Philosophy." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. Metaphysics Research Lab: Stanford University, 2018.

Minturn, L. *Sita's Daughters: Coming out of Purdah*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Monnig, H.O. *The Pedi*. 2nd ed. Cape Town: National Book Printers, 1978.

Mulaudzi, Phalandwa Abraham. "The Role of Indigenous Weddings Songs in Modern Times." *Muziki* 10, no. 1 (2013): 42–51.

Ndebele, Lickel. "Negotiating Marital Challenges through Classic Wedding Songs: A Case of the Ndebele in Zimbabwe." *South African Journal of African Languages* 42, no. 3 (September 2, 2022): 272–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2022.2132692.

Neidhart, Helga, and Paul Carlin. "Pathways, Incentives and Barriers for Women Aspiring to Principalship in Australian Catholic Schools." *Retrieved October* 2 (2003): 2007.

Nhlekisana, Rosaleen Oabona Brankie. *Wedding Songs in Botswana: A Reflection of the Dynamics of Marriage, Gender Relations and Familial Conflicts*. Indiana University, 2005.

Ofosu-Budu, Dorcas, and Vilma Hanninen. "Living as an Infertile Woman: The Case of Southern and Northern Ghana." *Reproductive Health* 17, no. 1 (December 20, 2020): 69. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-020-00920-z.

Pagente, A L. "Social Construction of a Mother-in-Law and Daughter-in-Law Relationship: A Case Study Perspective." *Science International* 35, no. 6 (2023): 815–18.

Pharr, S. *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*. California: Chardon Press, 1997.

Posel, Dorrit, and Stephanie Rudwick. "Marriage and Bridewealth (Ilobolo) in Contemporary Zulu Society." *African Studies Review* 57, no. 2 (2014): 51–72.

Postl, G. *Language, Writing, and Gender Differences. The Routledge Companion to Feminist Philosophy*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Ragavan, Maya, and Kirti Iyengar. "Violence Perpetrated by Mothers-in-Law in Northern India: Perceived Frequency, Acceptability, and Options for Survivors." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 35, no. 17–18 (September 15, 2020): 3308–30. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517708759.

Sebola, Moffat. "Female Images and Voices in Kanakana Yvonne Ladzani's Selected Poetry." *African Journal of Gender, Society & Development* 10, no. 1 (2021): 211.

Sharma, Nandita. I am a member of the family, not a slave for your convenience and pleasure! *Women's Web*. (2017). https://www.womensweb.in/2017/05/i-am-family-member-not-a-slave/

Shandil, V.V. "A Feminist Analysis of Vivah Ke Geet (Wedding Songs)." *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: Sociology & Culture* 20, no. 10 (2020): 1–16.

Shih, Kristy Y, and Karen Pyke. "Power, Resistance, and Emotional Economies in Women's Relationships with Mothers-in-Law in Chinese Immigrant Families." *Journal of Family Issues* 31, no. 3 (2010): 333–57.

Silva, Sónia. "Mothers of Solitude: Childlessness and Intersubjectivity in the Upper Zambezi." *Anthropology and Humanism* 34, no. 2 (2009): 179–202.

Sortum, B J, L Nabukonde, and L Achieng. "Unmasking Gender Stereotypes in Nandi Contemporary Song Genre and Implications on Social Cohesion and Equity: A Case of Mwalimu Kendagor Limo's Songs." *Journal of Popular Education in Africa* 4, no. 9 (2020): 112–24.

Stellar, Carmen, Claudia Garcia-Moreno, Marleen Temmerman, and Sheryl van der Poel. "A Systematic Review and Narrative Report of the Relationship between Infertility, Subfertility, and Intimate Partner Violence." *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 133, no. 1 (April 2016): 3–8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgo.2015.08.012.

Tasnim, Fowzia, Mymuna Rahman, Md. Monimul Islam, Mahmudul Hasan, Md. Golam Mostofa, and Md. Mosfequr Rahman. "Exposure to Domestic Violence and the Risk of Developing Depression within 6 Months Postpartum in Bangladesh." *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 56, no. 7 (July 3, 2021): 1189–1200. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-020-01998-3.

The Holland Times. "Many Women Are Financially Dependent on Their Partners." The Holland Times, 2023. https://www.hollandtimes.nl/2023-edition-9-january/many-women-are-financially-dependent-on-their-partners/.

Umgosi and Media. "Traditional Zulu Wedding before Leaving Home She Pass by to the Kraal with Tears.," 2023. https://youtu.be/j5mr2zP9RkA?si=1spB0SzeyRX4_iSa.

Vogelman, Lloyd, and Gillian Eagle. "Overcoming Endemic Violence against Women in South Africa." *Social Justice* 18, no. 1/2 (43-44 (1991): 209–29.

Waila, Jacinta Mukulu, Michael Lowery Wilson, Till Bärnighausen, and Anne Abio. "Physical Abuse Perpetrated by In-Laws: An Analysis of Nationally Representative Survey Data from 47 Low- and Middle-Income Countries." *Journal of Family Violence*, August 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-023-00620-9.

Zahrakar, Kianoush, Farshad Lavafpour Nouri, and Farshad Mohsenzadeh. "Exploring Factors Affecting Conflict between Daughter-in-Law and Mother-in-Law: A Qualitative Study." *International Journal of Health Sciences* 6, no. 7 (n.d.): 6340–67.

Zaidi, Syeda Bushra. "Gender Roles in Pakistani-Urdu Wedding Song." *JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies)* 3, no. 1 (2016): 1–27.

Zondi, N. "Bahlabelelelani–Why Do They Sing?: Gender and Power in Contemporary Women's Songs." Taylor & Francis, 2008. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=U5jTEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT7&dq=wedding+songs+and+gender+zulu&ots=W92Y-j01IY&sig=pe4pq3TCJgXEsJHMV0oTtUUbtJw.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr. Zinhle Primrose Nkosi is a Senior Lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa), Languages & Arts Education, in the School of Education. Her research interests include language and education, literature and linguistics.

Ms. Alexandra O'Neil is a PhD student at Indiana University, Bloomington (USA) studying Computational Linguistics. Her research interests include language pedagogy, language documentation, and cross-lingual NLP.

Dr. Rejoice Lindiwe Gugu Cele is a lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa), Languages & Arts Education, in the School of Education. Her research interests include language and literature, and literacy in the foundation phase.

Ms. Silindile Nonkululeko Thethwayo is a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). Her research interests include language teaching and literature.