



Indlamu: An Image of Zulu Upper-class Culture of the Past

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ABSTRACT

Even though Indlamu dance has been a central feature of the Zulu nation, few historical studies address the social status of Indlamu. Indlamu has been largely overlooked as an image of Zulu upper-class people, even though the majority of people had ample access to Indlamu. Also, Indlamu is most often associated with Zulu culture untouched by Western influence, probably because it is regarded as a touchstone of Zulu identity. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that Indlamu has never been about war dance only for the peasants and migrants' workers (ordinary people), but rather 'an image of the Zulu upper-class culture of the past'. The demonstration is done by analysing Indlamu's history, structural form, performance, and appreciation throughout the decades. This paper employs a textual analysis approach and direct interviews with selected participants who possess extensive knowledge of Indlamu. This article argues that Indlamu is used as a tool to present a Zulu warrior/combatant as an ordered, disciplined, submissive, and obedient member of society. The findings demonstrate that according to the perceived Zulu nationalism and modern capitalism, an ideal Zulu warrior is submissive and obedient to their authorities. This is ascribed to Indlamu performance's requirements for complete regimental clothing, exact time, and unwavering posture. This article concludes by affirming that similar to ballet and how King Louis XIV would symbolise things like war or Apollo, implying authority and empire, Indlamu performers would likewise symbolise power and battle. This article is intended to bring an understanding of the role of Indlamu *in the* Zulu nation.

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INTRODUCTION

Abundant evidence clearly indicates that dance practice among the Zulu tribe has long played an integral part in maintaining the Zulu Kingdom and its traditions. Indlamu dance is commonly known as one of the Zulu team dancing styles associated with male migrant workers of the 1930s in South African industrial history. Writers have covered dance forms that are part of recreational activities or dance-songs used by Zulu male migrants as pastime activities in Durban and Johannesburg.¹ The

¹ Thembinkosi Israel Biyela, "Ucwaningo olunzulu lokuqhathanisa umculo kaMasikandi neSicathamisa njengobalulekile esikweni lesizwe samaZulu, kugxilwe kakhulu kuPhuzekhemisi kanye naMambazo Amnyama." PhD diss., 2001, <http://uzspace.unizulu.ac.za/handle/10530/291>; David Coplan, *In township tonight: South Africa's Black city music and*

researchers submit that the association of Indlamu with migrants was not confined to urban workers only. The dance was also part of the semi-urban or semi-rural and farm labour systems. The researchers' preliminary review of literary works on Isizingili revealed that they learned about it when they were working at the timer or sugar mills around Zululand. However, there have been significant changes with regard to participation in these cultural activities, whereby women and youth have also become part of performances.

Before continuing further with this analytical thread, it is essential to state briefly that in the early nineteenth century, travellers came to Zululand and learned about the uniqueness of Indlamu.² Unsurprisingly, nineteenth-century visitors to the Zulu Kingdom were in awe of the elaborate, flawlessly performed dances they saw. Most traveller stories attest that large-scale, incredibly well-organised dance performances were often performed with very particular purposes. They might last for hours or even days and involve thousands of individuals simultaneously. European observers and their African translators usually said that the dances were evidence of the Zulu king's dominance.³ In understanding Indlamu as part of the Zulu nation, it is important to view Indlamu as a dance that started before colonisation. The history of Indlamu has been largely overlooked, and the definition of Indlamu is ambiguous. The ambiguity arises from Indlamu being associated with rural peasants and migrant workers of the 1930s.

However, Indlamu was commonly performed by upper-class people in the Zulu nation, such as kings. The growth of Indlamu among the migrants and farm workers evolved from the profound and rich transformation of traditional Zulu culture.⁴ An early account by Firenzi reveals "a well-practised dance performed before a king of any stature that would require careful dedication and a strong sense of purpose from the dancers".⁵ It is also important to highlight that over the years that, Indlamu has continued to influence and find its way to theatre stages at home and abroad.⁶ Writing on Indlamu, Krige refers to Natal, and the researchers assume this is the territory south of the Thukela River and North of Mzimvubu known as the Republic of Natalia around 1838 under the Boers, but later annexed by the British from the Boers in 1844 and later in 1856 was officially declared a separate colony of the British Crown.⁷ It is important to state that after the defeat of the Zulu armies at Isandlwana, the whole province became a Natal colony under the British administration and as one of the British colonies in Southern Africa.⁸ Therefore, it becomes unclear which part and time of Natal history Krige is referring to.⁹

Around the time of Krige's writing, Indlamu had been vaguely described as a war dance due to its movements and attire, which in part resemble those of the regiments of ancient times. It is performed with drums and full traditional attire and is derived from the war dances of the warriors.¹⁰

theatre Johannesburg. (London Ravan Press/ Longman, 1985); Veit Erlmann, *African stars: Studies in black South African performance*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Sakhiseni Joseph Yende and Vusabantu Ngema, "Examining the autonomy of Zulu Ingoma from the 1930s to present: Image or authentic experience?." *HTS Theological Studies* 78, no. 3 (2022): 1-8.

² Tara Firenzi, "The changing functions of traditional dance in Zulu society: 1830–Present." *The International journal of African historical studies* 45, no. 3 (2012): 403-425.

³ Firenzi, "The changing functions of traditional dance in Zulu society: 1830–Present," 403-425.

⁴ Mduduzi Mtshali, "Interrogating the synthesis of African traditional rituals and spirituality in contemporary South African dance: critical reflections on the dance work of Vincent Mantsoe, Moeketsi Koena, and my own work." MA degree, unpublished, University of KwaZulu-Natal., 2020. Retrieved from: <https://ukzndspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/19842>.

⁵ Firenzi, "The changing functions of traditional dance in Zulu society: 1830–Present," 403-425

⁶ Motshidisi Shawn Manyeneng and Seda Owen, "Sincerity, Authenticity and the Artistic Imperative in contemporary Zulu indlamu dance costume". 8th International DEFSA Conference 2019, Design Education Forum of Southern Africa (2019).

⁷ Eileen Jensen Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1950).

⁸ Herbert Ntuli, "The Battle of Isandlwana in South African memory." *Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation* 8, no. Special Issue 2 (2019): 47-60.

⁹ Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

¹⁰ Yende and Ngema, "Examining the autonomy of Zulu Ingoma from the 1930s to present..," 1-8; Firenzi, "The changing functions of traditional dance in Zulu society: 1830–Present," 403-425.

Indlamu is a Zulu dance in the traditional idiom with leg movement likened to the sputtering of boiling water. The definition by Coplan has its roots in a definition given by Larlham, which states that the “Indlamu is a lively kind of dance, introduced from Natal, indulged in by the young, almost imitative of the spluttering of boiling water. Indlamu is one of the most original traditional dances performed by both boys and girls. There is no musical accompaniment during this dance.”¹¹

Although the definitions of Indlamu presented above do give answers to the questions of the structure and the origins of Indlamu, they still fall short in providing solutions to broader questions of the exact place and time of the origins, as well as the significance attached to Indlamu by those who invented and have continued to preserve it for future generations.¹² Therefore, this paper intends to demonstrate that Indlamu has never been about and for the peasants and migrants’ workers (ordinary people), but rather ‘an image of the Zulu upper-class culture of the past’.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

- a) Is Indlamu dance as old as it is believed?
- b) What was the purpose of Indlamu dance?
- c) How is Indlamu dance mobilised for modern purposes in a New South Africa post-1994?

The answering of the questions occurs through the textual analysis of available literature on the history and purpose attached to the performance, evolution, and preservation/transformation of Indlamu through the ages. Oral history and live performances are obtained through visits to cultural villages such as Shakaland in and around Eshowe and Phezulu Cultural Village in Pinetown (Durban) in KwaZulu-Natal.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To address the research questions listed above, the researchers chose to follow the theory of Gerard Rooijakkers as cited by Schouten as quoted from an interview in the *Volkskrant*.¹³ Rooijakkers theory is concerned with what he calls ‘social fiction’: the ‘mythomania’ around traditions, rituals, and customs, in short, the cult of heritage.¹⁴ His concern is not so much with the past as such but how the past is mobilised for all kinds of purposes. According to Rooijakkers, through social fiction, people give meaning to their time and space and shape their emotions. When Rooijakkers theory is applied to the South African situation post-1994, much ‘folklorisation’ and ‘musealisation’ of cultural practices like Indlamu are found, and he places the blame squarely on the local elite. The local elite always takes it upon themselves to preserve customs and traditions for their own purposes. He strongly holds a view that folklore is never innocent.

The actions of the elite in the preservation of a custom or tradition often result in transformation and fundamentally changing the traditions’ functions and significance. A typical example of such in a South African context is the use of *izibongo* (commonly referred to as praise poetry) for political leaders at political rallies and at the opening of parliament sittings. The bards highlight the brighter side of the leader, and the negative is forgotten or neglected. The purpose and significance of *izibongo* were never about a brighter side of an individual but an honest critique of the life and times of that individual. Hence, the researchers prefer to call it ‘criticism poetry’.¹⁵ With regards to Indlamu in a new South Africa, it has become more of a tourist attraction, or a museum of art packaged by cultural

¹¹ Peter Larlham, *Black theater, dance, and ritual in South Africa*. No. 29. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1985).

¹² Joseph L. Graves, "Science, Empire, and Imperialism." In *The Routledge History of American Science*, (London, Routledge, 2022), 231-242.

¹³ Frans Schouten, "Cultural tourism: Between authenticity and globalization." In Greg Richards, *Cultural tourism: Global and local Perspectives* (London; Psychology Press/ Routledge, 2007), 25-37.

¹⁴ Gerald Rooijakkers, "Slachting onder Brabantse boerderijen. Een onderbouwde raming en een kleurig zwartboek." *Noordbrabants historisch nieuwsblad* 16 (2002).

¹⁵ Yende and Ngema, "Examining the autonomy of Zulu Ingoma from the 1930s to present..," 1-8.

villages across the province of KwaZulu-Natal. As such, the purpose and significance of Indlamu have changed, and more importantly, have become an expression of the desire for nostalgia.

The question would be *who desires the nostalgic past and for what purpose?* In the researcher's view, the desire for the nostalgic past is driven by the beliefs that, in the past, things were better, commonly referred to as the 'golden era'. But Ngubane sees the inspiration behind Shaka's political, social, and military ideas as the desire to overthrow the conservative elite whose dominance was characterised by hypocrisy and greed.¹⁶ When Shaka was born, the conservative elite in the land of the Zulu had consecrated and sanctified tradition to make it the prison of the mind, which would stop events moving towards *imfecane* (changes). The elite arrogated to themselves the right to be custodians of tradition. Therefore, Shaka's mission was based on the desire to 'set the heavens on fire' or *gebhuz'izulu* (curve the skies with a spear). In the eyes of Shaka and his mother Nandi, this era was defined by the elite who saw themselves as the heavens with a right to determine the social status and position of an individual, not based on merits but on heredity and favouritism.

Although Shaka's reign is said to have been characterised by military drills by his combatants in preparation for war, there is no concrete evidence that suggests that the drills were in the form of dance to entertain spectators. However, his successor Dingane was very fond of display. Therefore, most of his time was spent arranging new dances, songs, and fancy costumes for women of the *isigodlo* (royal court).¹⁷ Krige goes further and states that there was an innovation too in the dress of the Embebeleni men, who, for the dance occasion, substituted for the rear tails of their *umutsha*, (thick ropy pendants of the fibre of a root hanging below like a loose tassel).¹⁸ As such, Dingane lived up to his reputation as a great inventor of dances.



Figure 1: Artist's impression of King Dingane in his dancing regalia

Source: South Africa Tours and Travel website. Rise of the Zulu people under King Shaka Zulu during the Mfecane/Difagane" war (2022).

Retrieved from: <https://www.south-africa-tours-and-travel.com/zulu.html>.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As indicated earlier, this paper employs a textual analysis approach and direct interviews with the participants. Therefore, it follows a constructivist paradigm that assumes that reality is socially constructed. Meaning that reality is not given by nature but is the result of the dynamic process reproduced by people acting on their interpretations and knowledge of reality. Max Weber posits that

¹⁶ Jordan K. Ngubane, "Shaka's Social, Political and Military ideas" in Donald Burness Shaka King of the Zulus in African Literature," 127-145.

¹⁷ Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

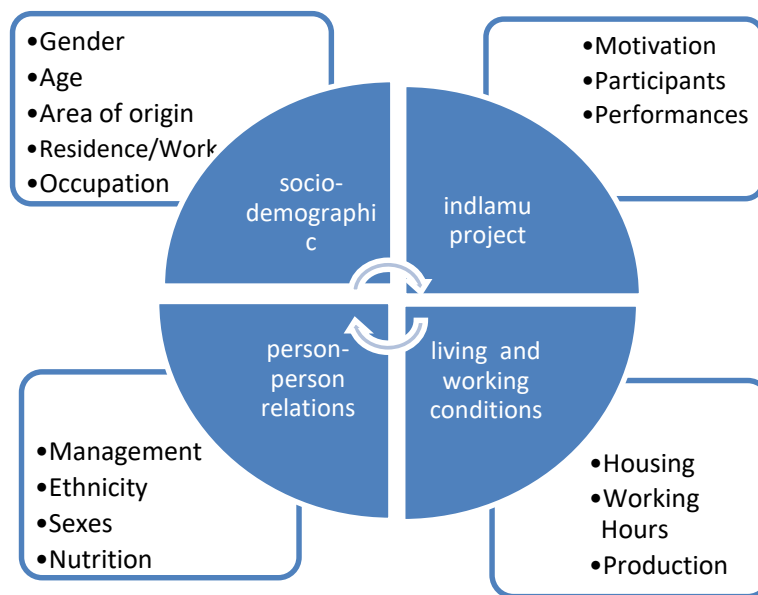
¹⁸ Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

‘there is no objective scientific analysis of culture...all knowledge of cultural reality...is always knowledge from a particular point of view’.¹⁹ But Weber also contends that reality is chaotic and self-contradictory, meaning it helps humans select, reduce, order, and make sense of complexity. To Weber, all knowledge of cultural reality, as may be seen, is always subjectively aligned to particular points of view.

If one is to accept Weber’s views on the analysis of culture as subjective and apply that to the analysis of Indlamu, it would be assumed that it is a product of human interpretation of reproduced reality. But the question is whose interpretation and whose reality? In this regard, Giddens and Myers believe that social sciences deal with a pre-interpreted world by standing on subject-subject relation to their field of study.²⁰ Their field of study is the pre-interpreted world of social actors. The social actors uphold and develop the symbolic social world; the social actors’ symbolic world enters the construction and production of that world. In this sense, the construction of social theory involves a double hermeneutic.²¹ As such, the task and main objective of this paper are to interpret Indlamu which already exhibits symbolic meaning.²² For the interviews for this article and the subject matter under investigation, that is Indlamu, the researchers preferred to use both convenience and purposive sampling. Interviewees were chosen based on their relative ease of access and expertise as practitioners of Indlamu dance in the past and present.

Conceptualising the Map for Indlamu Analysis

The following concept map is used to draw a picture for the reader of all the ideas related to the general question of the investigation into Indlamu:



Indlamu dance

Indlamu is often loosely referred to as a traditional dance associated with Zulu culture. It is performed with drums and full traditional attire. It is perceived as derived from the war dances of the *amabutho* (regiments). It is danced by men of any age wearing *amabheshu* (loin-skins), *imiqhele* (head rings),

¹⁹ Max Weber, Objectivity in Social Science. Archives for Social Science and Social Welfare (1903). Retrieved from <http://www.sociosite.net/topics/weber>

²⁰ Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*. (Redwood City CA; Stanford University Press, 1993); Michael D. Myers, "Hermeneutics in information systems research." *Social Theory and Philosophy for Information Systems* 32 (2004): 103.

²¹ Giddens, *New rules of sociological method: A positive critique of interpretative sociologies*; Myers, "Hermeneutics in information systems research."

²² Yende and Ngema. "Examining the autonomy of Zulu Ingoma from the 1930s to present: Image or authentic experience?." 1-8.

imitsha (ceremonial belts), *amafohlwane* (ankle rattles), *amahawu* (shields), and weapons *amawisa* (knobkerries), and *imikhonto* (spears).²³ While Indlamu uses similar steps as girls do for *ingoma*, it has a much more calculated, less frantic feel, showing off muscular strength and control of the weapons with mock stabs at imaginary enemies. Dancers are more likely to make eye contact with the audience. Various drums and whistles accompany the dance.



Figure 2: *Ingqayizivele Amazulu Ngoma* traditional Zulu dancers, Newcastle, South Africa

However, various scholars and institutions define Indlamu in slightly different ways. For instance, an excerpt from the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York City (New York) describes Indlamu as being frequently related to Nguni cultures, such as Zulu, Swazi, and Ndebele or Xhosa. It originated with the *amabutho* (warriors' war dances). Indlamu is executed with the exact time and unwavering stance, either individually or in a group. Its defining feature is heavy stomping, accompanied by similarly heavy *izigubhu* (drum sounds).²⁴ Many people of all ages dance to it. The best way to recognise it is by a complete set of traditional clothing items, such as an *amabheshu* (loincloths), and other traditional accessories, such as headpieces, belts, ankle rattles, shields, and weapons like knobkerries and spears.

According to Manyeneng and Owen, Zulu rites of passage and traditional cultural occasions are all celebrated through Indlamu dance.²⁵ The Zulu originally danced Indlamu as a military exercise to establish discipline among the nation's male members. Additionally, the dance served to get armed battalions ready for battle. Manyeneng further claims that Indlamu comes from the front lines of Zulu combat. Later, it became a dance performed to commemorate occasions like winning a war and crowning a king. Shaka the Great had a significant influence on this traditional dance.²⁶ The warrior dance of the Zulus, in particular, served as a sign of supremacy and self-control.²⁷ As a result, Indlamu emerged from the war dances of Zulu warriors. Whereas scholars agree on the association of Indlamu with war and regiments, one of the earliest descriptions of Indlamu by Zulu elder E.B Madondo associates Indlamu with weddings and courtship ceremonies. He describes Indlamu as follows, and his description is followed by an English translation:

²³ Mtshali, "Interrogating the synthesis of African traditional rituals and spirituality in contemporary South African dance..."

²⁴ Yende and Ngema, "Examining the autonomy of Zulu Ingoma from the 1930s to present..," 1-8.

²⁵ Manyeneng and Owen. "Sincerity, Authenticity and the Artistic Imperative in contemporary Zulu indlamu dance costume."

²⁶ Motshidisi Shawn Manyeneng, "Zulu Indlamu Dance Costume-the Theatrical Perspective." MA Degree. Tshwane University of Technology, (2015).

²⁷ Vusabantu Ngema, "Symbolism and implications in the Zulu dance forms; notions of composition, performance and appreciation of dance among the Zulu." Master of Arts in the Department of IsiZulu Namagugu at the University of Zululand, (2007).

*Indlamu lena ishaywa izinsizwa esencane, uma kukhona umdlalo othile njengokuqonywa kwensizwa uma kushaywa isigubhu nendlamu bayishaye. Uma intombi igcagca izinsizwa zincintisana ngayo, kuthi loyo odlule abanye abanjwe yilaba ababukayo bamphakamisele phezulu, bekhombisa ukuthi umncintiswano lowo ngowakhe.*²⁸

Indlamu is performed by young men when there is a ceremony, like the engagement of a young man, and is accompanied by a drum. It is also performed when a young girl is getting married to her young sweetheart and young men compete against one another. The winner is lifted by the onlookers to show that he is the winner.

If one were to focus on the association of Indlamu with war and *amabutho* (regiments), a reference would have to be made to the claims by Krige cited earlier about King Dingane's fondness for arranging new dances for his court.²⁹ What Krige is saying is that the dances were a result of King Dingane's love of display. Hence, innovations in dress for men and women were introduced. Krige relied on early recordings by writers, such as Adulphe Delegorgue, who claimed to have witnessed dance displays by regiments of dances, such as the *umgubho*, and annual dances at the royal courts of both King Dingane and King Mpande after the first fruit ceremonies.³⁰ According to Delegorgue, the object of the *umgubho* song and dance event was to create enthusiasm before embarking on *inqina* (great hunt), like competitive boasting between regiments before setting out on a campaign. The *umgubho* warmed the regiments up and made them keen. The *umgubho* was characterised by movements such as the imaginary stabbing of a buck and *ukugiya* (solo dance) display.³¹

The most spectacular and imposing of all Zulu dancing, according to Delegorgue, however, was that of the regiments in full regimental dress, as well as the annual dances at the royal court just after the *umkhosi wokweshwama* (Feast of the First Fruits), which presented the most brilliant and colourful sight.³² In this grand military review, the king himself took part after a review of his army seated in his chair of state.³³ Delegorgue describes the scenes at King Mpande's royal court as follows:

*The young warrior regiments arrived in six large masses of roughly 1000 each, charged quickly, then reorganised themselves and started dancing a war chant, creating a type of serpent-like shape from the three rings. Each regiment had a unique dance and song that they performed for hours on end. But when the king took part in the dancing, the women of the isigodlo (harem) usually joined in too. Below is one of the earliest illustrations of the Zulu king reviewing his troops after the feast of the first fruits.*³⁴

²⁸ E.B. Madondo, "Interviewed in Durban International Convention with Researchers", (2019).

²⁹ Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

³⁰ Adulphe Delegorgue, *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe: notamment dans le territoire de Natal dans celui des Cafres Amazoulous et Makatisses et jusqu'au tropique du Capricorne, exécuté durant les années 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843 & 1844*. Vol. 2. (Forgotten Books, 2018, www.forgottenbooks.com)

³¹ Delegorgue, *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe*.

³² Delegorgue, *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe*.

³³ Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

³⁴ Delegorgue, *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe*.



Figure 3: King Mpande reviewing his troops at KwaNodwengu, 1849.

Source: George French Angas, "King Mpande reviewing his Troops at KwaNodwengu. Plate 12 from the 'Kafirs' chapter in *The Kaffirs Illustrated*. (1849). Umpana reviewing his troops at Nonduengi, plate 12 from 'The Kaffirs Illustrated', reproduction, 1st Art Gallery website (1st-art-gallery.com)

Another dance form described by Krige, which the researcher thinks is associated with regimental prowess and almost similar to Indlamu, is *amagaqa*.³⁵ According to Krige, *amagaqa* is a lively, spirited movement with heavy stamping, as if charging an enemy and retiring to prepare a further charge.³⁶ However, in the description of *amagaqa*, Krige makes no mention of weaponry such as *imikhonto* (spears), *amawisa* (knobkerries), and *amahawu* (shields) as is the case with Indlamu.³⁷ The researcher has never witnessed such a dance themselves but assumes it was performed at wedding ceremonies and other similar occasions such as love matching and *umbongo*. Maybe this could be the same dance described by Madondo earlier, which assumed a form of competition and display of skills instead of warming up for war.

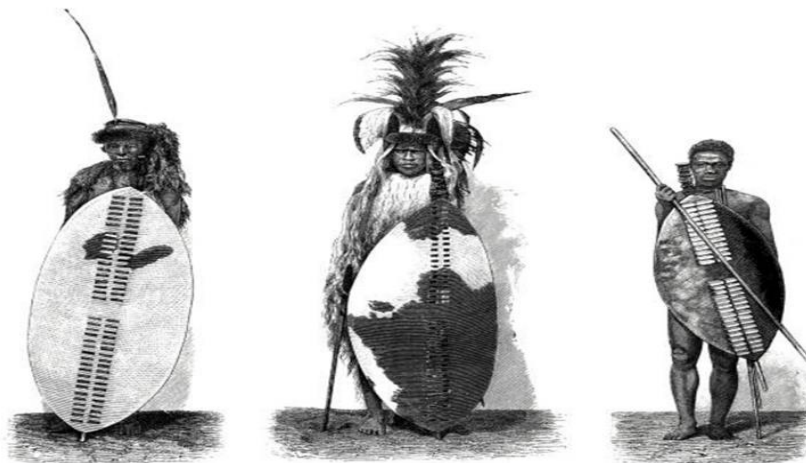


Figure 4: Soldiers of the Zulu King,
Source: Stock illustration from the 19th century.

Ngoma dancers characterise historical Zulu warriors as performers who sang and danced in preparation for combat in addition to tracing an epic military heritage. The history of the twentieth century of Ngoma, however, is separate from the epic tale of the Zulu War. The song and dance was a

³⁵ Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

³⁶ Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

³⁷ Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

practice of male migrants that combined singing and dancing with leisure activities and competitive performance.³⁸

The Dancers

Turner goes on to say that young men and women who have not yet married dance apart during these ceremonies.³⁹ Married men and women would occasionally join in. The men clap, the girls dance, and the married women ululate. Coplan claims that Indlamu was first developed among rural peasants and remains a favourite dance among Zulu male migrant workers.⁴⁰ The Zulu dancing that is mentioned by Krige is *ijadu* (love dance). It was an inter-clan occasion of young men and maidens with the objective of getting them becoming acquainted.⁴¹ According to Bryant, usually, the males compete alone on one day and females on another. They were prizes to be won by those who succeeded in putting into their performance the greatest verve by captivating the public eye. Generally, the prize for males was an *insimba* skin, while for females was beads and other such-like ornaments.⁴²

Purpose of Indlamu

Scholars have agreed that Indlamu has been an essential cultural practice for the Zulu nation to celebrate various events such as royal inaugurations, weddings, and military conquests.⁴³ Indlamu continues as a celebration of Zulu identity, a traditional cultural event, and a rite of passage.⁴⁴ This was echoed by Meintjes, who affirmed that traditional isiZulu dancing is an important part of the isiZulu culture.⁴⁵ Dancing is usually performed during a traditional isiZulu ceremony and is accompanied by vibrant singing and sometimes the beating of drums. IsiZulu dancing is spectacular, especially when the men and women are fully dressed in their traditional attire.

It appears from the above study by Mtshali⁴⁶ that historically, Indlamu has been part of the Zulu nation and has been a significant feature of recreation and 'heritainment'. The term 'heritainment' refers to traditional performances that show ostensibly authentic cultural forms while providing entertaining and imparting easily recognisable images and narratives.⁴⁷

Mobilisation of Indlamu for Modern Purposes

Indlamu was mobilised for modern purposes in New South Africa post-1994. Cultural productions from the Zulu nation in South Africa have achieved worldwide critical acclaim and established their artistic provenance through such shows as *Umoja* and *Ipi Ntombi*, among several others. These shows have toured the world and mesmerised world audiences with their colourful, exquisite, and elaborate traditional Zulu costumes while performing Indlamu. These shows have played a significant part in helping Indlamu to find its way to theatre stages at home and abroad.⁴⁸

In recent years, Indlamu has become a dance spectacle at home and abroad. In Zulu nationalism and modern capitalism, ideal Zulu warriors are submissive and obedient to their authorities. This is

³⁸ Louise Meintjes, "Shoot the sergeant, shatter the mountain: the production of masculinity in Zulu ngoma song and dance in post-Apartheid South Africa." In *Ethnomusicology Forum*, vol. 13, no. 2, (Western Cape SA; Taylor & Francis, 2004)173-201.

³⁹ Turner, Noleen, "Humor and scatology in contemporary Zulu ceremonial songs." *Humor* 31.1 (2018): 65-83.

⁴⁰ Coplan, *In township tonight: South Africa's Black city music and theatre Johannesburg*.

⁴¹ Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*.

⁴² Alfred T. Bryant, *The Zulu people as they were before the white man came*. Vol. 1. (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1949).

⁴³ Manyeneng and Owen, "Sincerity, Authenticity and the Artistic Imperative in contemporary Zulu indlamu dance costume"; Yende and Ngema, "Examining the autonomy of Zulu Ingoma from the 1930s to present..." 1-8.

⁴⁴ Manyeneng and Owen. "Sincerity, Authenticity and the Artistic Imperative in contemporary Zulu Indlamu dance costume".

⁴⁵ Louise Meintjes, *Dust of the Zulu: Ngoma aesthetics after apartheid*. (Durham; Duke University Press, 2017).

⁴⁶ Mtshali, "Interrogating the synthesis of African traditional rituals and spirituality in contemporary South African dance..."

⁴⁷ Craig T. Latrell, "Exotic dancing: Performing tribal and regional identities in East Malaysia's cultural villages." *The Drama Review* 52, no. 4 (2008): 41-63.

⁴⁸ Manyeneng and Owen, "Sincerity, Authenticity and the Artistic Imperative in contemporary Zulu *Indlamu* costume".

attributed to the full regimental attire, precise timing and uncompromised posture required in the performance of Indlamu.⁴⁹

DISCUSSION

The current study sought to present the point that Indlamu has never been only for ordinary people, but rather the dance is 'an image of the Zulu upper-class culture of the past'. Indlamu was established for the upper-class people.

Indlamu is described as a war dance and is typically performed to war tunes. Men and women dance energetically and flex their muscles while performing it. Indlamu is a longstanding Zulu traditional dance that is commonly performed with drums and full traditional attire and is perceived as being derived from the war dances of the *amabutho* (regiments). Men of all ages dance while dressed in *amabheshu* (loincloths), *imiqhele* (head ornaments), *imitsha* (ceremonial belts), *amafohlwane* (ankle rattles), *amahawu* (shields), and various weapons, such as *amawisa* (knobkerries) and *imikhonto* (spears). The dancers would need to give their all and have a clear sense of purpose to perform a well-rehearsed dance in front of a king of any height. This article argues that Indlamu is used as a tool to present Zulu warriors as ordered, disciplined, submissive, and obedient members of society. This article highlighted that Indlamu is a unique element of Zulu culture untouched by a Western influence and is a benchmark for Zulu identity. Even though Indlamu has transformed into a theatrical phenomenon, it offers insights into the relationship between honesty and cultural authenticity.

This finding corroborates the results of Mtshali, who affirms that Indlamu is the most common dance in the Zulu nation that is performed by men, mostly during weddings.⁵⁰ The findings of this article reveal that in the past, Indlamu was used as a fundamental part of Zulu culture to commemorate various occasions, including weddings, royal coronations, and military victories. Indlamu was commonly used by Zulu monarchs and upper-class people. This research revealed that the widespread and profound modification of traditional Zulu culture resulted in the development of Indlamu dancing among migrants and farm labourers. The Isizingili dancing technique embodies the cultural essence of the Zulu. One of the most inventive traditional dances is this one, which is performed by both boys and girls. This dance has no musical accompaniment at all. Girls are partially clad in woollen skirts and have seed pod rattles on their legs to emphasise their leg movements. Although traditionally the Isizingili was performed during hunting journeys, it is now largely performed at weddings.

SUMMARY

This research found that there is limited understanding of Indlamu as many historical studies have largely overlooked Indlamu as an image of Zulu upper-class people. This article recognised that Indlamu is a traditional dance that has historically played a significant role in Amazulu rituals. It also serves as one component of cultural knowledge that sheds light on a range of experiences that people in those communities have developed. This research also found that the Zulu tribe places a high value on Indlamu since they do it frequently during ritual events. To this end, the research findings point out that Indlamu is a dance that remains untouched by Western influence, probably because it is regarded as a touchstone of Zulu identity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this article's results and analysis, the authors recommend that scholars educate people about the origins of Indlamu as part of Zulu culture and identity.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Clegg, "An examination of the umzansi dance style." In *3rd Symposium on Ethnomusicology, Music Department, Rhodes University, Grahamstown*. 1984.

⁵⁰ Mtshali, "Interrogating the synthesis of African traditional rituals and spirituality in contemporary South African dance..."

CONCLUSION

Using textual analysis that was largely informed by the central tenets of Rooijackers social fiction theory, the article examined Indlamu as an image of the Zulu upper-class culture of the past rather than of the peasants and migrants' workers (ordinary people). By so doing, the article has argued and revealed that Indlamu was an essential symbol of power in the Zulu empire and was used for upper-class people. The approach and analysis in the article were informed by what the researchers view as a nexus that the purpose and the significance of Indlamu have changed, but more importantly, it has become an expression of the desire for nostalgia. This article concludes by affirming that similar to ballet and how King Louis XIV would symbolise things like war or Apollo, implying authority and empire, Indlamu performers would likewise symbolise power and battle.

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